



# Blossoming of Romance Language Literature Translations During the Era of Croatian Second Moderna: Translations of Spanish Literature in the Journal *Krugovi*

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**ABSTRACT** | Poets of second wave modernism in Croatian literature, and especially the generation of *Krugovi* journal poets, open up through translations from other literatures. There has been much talk about the importance of Anglo-Saxon translations penned by Antun Šoljan, Ivan Slamnig, and others, but it is also the generation that opened up to translations of Romance literatures. Translations from Romance literatures (especially Italian literature, and to a lesser extent Spanish) were viewed, due to post-war ideological and political circumstances, as somewhat subversive. However, with the appearance of the journal *Krugovi* (1952), translations of Italian, Spanish, and French literature experience a new boom. In this paper, I will examine the translation work of poet and editor of *Krugovi*, Nikola Miličević, and his translations of Spanish poets.

**KEYWORDS** | *Krugovi* journal, translations of Spanish literature, Nikola Miličević, Croatian Second Moderna

## Introduction

The present paper provides an overview of the translations of Spanish poetry in the journal *Krugovi*, a publication that is considered the flagship journal of the second wave modernism generation. From its very beginning, the editorial concept of *Krugovi* (1952–1958) focused on openness, freshness, and freedom. The young generation of poets and writers – Vlatko Pavletić, Nikola Milićević, Slobodan Novak, Ivan Slamnig, Antun Šoljan, Zlatko Tomičić, Vlado Gotovac, Josip Barković, Josip Pupačić, and others – opened up the space for literary expression that aimed to reject all the dogmatic expectations of social-realism. For such a concept of the 1950s journal to exist in an environment still under strong communist repression, it was necessary to have the courage and wisdom. Therefore, when selecting authors to translate from the languages of the people and countries that were on the other side of political regimes, they chose those who would not cause problems with their political convictions. In that sense, Nikola Milićević deserves great credit for mediating modern Spanish poetry. By choosing “resistance poets” to Franco’s regime in Spain, that is, poets who were mostly in exile, he brought Spanish lyric poetry to Croatian culture, which had literary touchpoints with Croatia since the 16th century. In this paper, by reviewing the translations of Spanish poetry in *Krugovi* journal over all seven years, I will try to show the generational role of the *Krugovi* group, as well as the personal role of Nikola Milićević, in mediating high Spanish literature to the Croatian readership in the second half of the 20th century.

## Spanish Literature in Croatia Until the Emergence of the *Krugovi* Journal

Spanish-Croatian translation and literary connections date back to the distant 16th century when two works of Marko Marulić were translated and published in Spain. As noted by the distinguished Spanish Slavist Francisco Javier Juez Gálvez, “After Marulić’s *Evangelistarium* and *Fifty Stories* were translated from Latin into Spanish and published in Madrid in 1655, more than a century passed before new translations of Croatian writers into Spanish.”<sup>1</sup> This

1 Francisco Javier Juez Gálvez, “Hrvatsko pjesništvo u Španjolskoj pedesetih godina,” in *Komparativna povijest hrvatske književnosti*, Zbornik radova V. – *Krugovi* i hrvat-

depiction of Spanish-Croatian relations persisted until the 20th century when mutual translation interests began to emerge. However, given the richness of Spanish literature, especially the widespread Spanish-speaking area, it was all quite modest and inadequate. In the 18th century, a work of world literature – Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* – came to Croatian literature indirectly through translations in Italian, German, and French.<sup>2</sup> This fact undoubtedly confirms that until the 20th century, translations of literary works dominated from the German and Italian speaking areas, meaning that literary works, mostly classics, were translated through these languages. Such a situation is clear and expected, given the well-known fact of Croatia’s socio-political status at the time. In the first half of the 20th century, Spanish translations began to appear directly from the originals. Iso Velikanović wrote and published the first Spanish-Croatian and Croatian-Spanish dictionary, grammar book, and textbook. Velikanović published the first Croatian translation of Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*.<sup>3</sup> This translation was later revised by Josip Tabak and the Velikanović-Tabak translation of *Don Quixote* is still used in Croatia today. Cervantes was also translated by Mirko Tomasović. Tomasović also wrote about translations of Spanish literature from the point of view of a traductologist.<sup>4</sup> This is an illustrative image of the weak literary and translational ties between Croatia and Spain. At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, several translations of shorter novels and plays by Spanish authors were published in Croatia in Croatia. Among the translators of these works was the poet August Harambašić.<sup>5</sup> However, with new modernist and avant-garde trends in art and culture, and the change in the European political and social scene, there was an increasing interest in a broader view of European literature, including Spanish literature, in Croatia. In that sense, Mirjana Polić Bobić emphasizes that “in the 1920s and 1930s, translations of works that represented the very

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ska književnost pedesetih godina prošlog stoljeća, ed. Mirko Tomasović and Vinka Glunčić-Bužančić (Split: Književni krug, 2003), 87.

- 2 Cf. Mirjana Polić Bobić, “Prevođenje španjolske književnosti u Hrvatskoj,” *Croacia España – Hrvatska Španjolska: povijesne i kulturne veze* (Zagreb: DHK, 2018), 28.
- 3 “Velikanović published the first Croatian translation of the complete text of *Don Quijote*, based on the famous edition by Francisco Rodríguez-Marín from 1913, in 1915–1916. Until then, Croatians had been reading Cervantes’ novel in translations into languages that were as unfamiliar to them as Croatian was in previous centuries.” Polić Bobić, “Prevođenje španjolske,” 28.
- 4 Cf. Mirko Tomasović, *Traduktološke rasprave*, Zagreb: Zavod za znanost o književnosti, 1996 and Mirko Tomasović, *Poeti i začinjavci*, Dubrovnik: Matica hrvatska – Ogranak Dubrovnik, 1991.
- 5 Polić Bobić, “Prevođenje španjolske,” 29.

top of Spanish literary prose started to appear in Croatia, either because of their avant-garde nature or their success among a wider readership.”<sup>6</sup> Among the translators, in addition to Josip Tabak mentioned before, Jakša Sedmak was particularly prominent. Until the 1950s, Milan Crnković, Ivo Hergušić, Vojmir Vinja, Ivan Večerina, and Drago Ivanišević also translated from Spanish. Along with Ivanišević, we find Tin Ujević in the older generation of poets, who were one of the first in Europe to translate a selection of poetry from the famous Spanish generation of ‘27.’<sup>7</sup>

Finally, when it comes to the translation of Spanish poetry, the poet Drago Ivanišević occupies an extremely important place. It is believed that he was the first to translate and publish Federico García Lorca’s poems in Croatian. Interestingly, Mirko Žeželj, Ivanišević’s biographer, testifies<sup>8</sup> that it was August

6 Polić Bobić, “Prevođenje španjolske,” 29–30.

7 At the International Scientific Conference “Zadar Philological Days 9” held in Zadar on November 12–13, 2021, F. J. Juez Gálvez spoke about these translations. I provide a summary of his presentation: “Tin Ujević (1891–1955) gained a reputation as a prolific translator of prominent works from many languages and literatures, but fortune did not smile upon him when it came to Spanish language literature. During his lifetime, he saw only two of his publications translated from Spanish: in 1934, he published three poems by three Spanish authors belonging to the so-called ‘Generation of ‘27’ (R. Alberti, D. Alonso, L. Cernuda) in the Belgrade Serbian Literary Herald, and in 1952, he published the collection of short stories ‘Trijem noći’ (original title: El patio de la noche, 1940) by the Argentine writer Pablo Rojas Paz (1896–1956) in the Zagreb-based publication *Zora*. In Ujević’s *Collected Works* (vol. 15, Posthumous I, 1966), around fifty translations of the poems of another twenty or so Hispanic authors [...] from the manuscript legacy, mostly Ujević’s contemporaries, including several members of the Generation of ‘27, were published. His translation of the first Spanish epic poem (Cantar de mio Cid) and translations of several prose works are still in manuscript. In addition to ‘Celestina’ and Cervantes’s three ‘Exemplary Novels,’ he translated the novels of his Spanish contemporaries (Pérez Galdós, Palacio Valdés, Blasco Ibáñez, Pío Baroja, Alberto Insúa).” Francisco Javier Juez Gálvez, “Tin Ujević, književni prevoditelj sa španjolskog,” in *Međunarodni znanstveni skup Zadarski filološki dani 9*, book of summaries, ed. Sanja Knežević and Adrijana Vidić (Zadar: Sveučilište u Zadru, 2021), 38–39.

8 Cf. “He was associated with the French Popular Front, with Spanish fighters (later with members of the Spanish emigrant government), and with our “Spaniards.” [...] August Cesarec (Guta) came from Moscow in knickerbockers in 1937, went to Spain in them, and returned to Paris in them. [...] They were pictured at a dance and poetry event for Spanish refugee youth. [...] The Spanish language and culture ‘captured’ Drago in Paris as early as 1928/29, with Cervantes and Ramon Gomez de la Serna. He began reading Spanish intensively before the Spanish Revolution, and Lorca during the revolution. Cesarec brought him *The Gypsy Ballads* from Spain, so he began translating it little by little.” Mirko Žeželj, *Zatočenik slobode* (Zagreb: Znanje, 1982), 112–113.

Cesarec who brought Lorca's *Gypsy Ballads* to Paris as a front-line edition and gave it to Ivanišević.<sup>9</sup> Ivanišević's selection of Lorca's poetry was published as a book under the title *Songs* in 1950 and marked a turning point in Croatian poetry, both in terms of the author's poetry production and a broader interest in translating Spanish poetry.<sup>10</sup> Finally, it is about the years when, after World War II, but also after the Informbiro, Croatian literature, despite communist totalitarian rule, began to open up to a freer artistic expression, but also to follow contemporary literary trends in Western Europe and the world. It is almost universally known and accepted in the history of Croatian literature that the appearance of the *Krugovi* journal in 1952 played an extremely significant role in the process of opening up – both authorial literature and translation interests for national literatures beyond the circle of communist and socialist countries. In this sense, based on an overview of translations of Spanish literature in *Krugovi*, I will offer a picture of Croatian-Spanish literary and translation links in the 1950s, that is, within the literary-historical period of Croatian Second Modernism.

9 August Cesarec published a book called *Spanish Encounters* (first edition in Toronto, Canada, 1938) about his time in the Spanish Civil War. In the chapter "In the theater and a meeting in the theater," Cesarec describes his meeting with the poet Rafael Alberti, in which they discussed the state of art and culture at the beginning of the war. When asked about art and artists in the war, Alberti gave an enthusiastic response which gives further insight into Lorca's position and sacrifice. However, Alberti also introduced Cesarec to the so-called "frontline publishing," from which he probably obtained a copy of Lorca's "Gypsy Ballads": "The Alliance of Antifascist Intellectuals of Spain – Alberti replied to my question – is the result of the Paris Congress for the Defense of Culture against Fascism (held in 1935). We are all in it today: writers, painters, composers, architects, regardless of parties and groups: socialists, communists, republican citizens, anarchists, syndicalists. We have now all put our forces at the disposal of the government during the war. But I am talking specifically about us writers and poets. We work on the front lines, in the countryside, in factories. We published the collection *El Mono Azul*. We collected about a thousand contributions for *Romanzero de la Guerra Civil*. The Spaniards love poetry... We received these thousand contributions from all over, but mostly from the front lines, and mostly in the form of poetry. So far we have published them in three volumes, each one with 30,000 copies. More would be needed, but the situation with paper is difficult." August Cesarec, *Španjolski susreti* (Zagreb: Zora, 1961), 39–40.

10 About the Croatian Loricians and intertextual connections between Croatian modernist poetry and the poetry of F. G. Lorca, more has been written in the essay: S. Knežević "The Intertextual Relationship between Federico García Lorca and Modern Croatian Poetry," *Athens Journal of Philology Quarterly Academic Periodical* 9, no. 2 (June 2022): 117–134.

## Spanish Literature in the Journal *Krugovi* (1952–1958)

In the periodization of Croatian literature, the year 1952 is considered relevant for the development of contemporary and free artistic expression. In addition to Miroslav Krleža's speech at the Congress of Yugoslav Writers held in Ljubljana in 1952, the launch of the *Krugovi* journal is considered a concrete turning point in the liberation of literary creation from socialist ideological dogma. This is evident not only in anticipation of completely new poetic and literary names, thus heralding a new, fresh generation, but also in anticipation of poets such as Tin Ujević, who were directly anathematized. The editorial board of *Krugovi* at that time was composed entirely of young Croatian intellectuals and writers (Vlatko Pavletić, Zvonimir Golob, Slobodan Novak, Nikola Milićević and Josip Pupačić), opening up space for freedom in national literature, literature from other Yugoslav republics at the time, as well as literature from Europe and the world. Literary historians unanimously emphasize the importance of *Krugovi* in anticipating young authors and their literary freedoms, together with their role in creating literary connections with the rest of the world through translated literature. In this context, Dunja Detoni-Dujmić summarizes the triple role of *Krugovi* journal in the creation of Croatian literature in the 1950s, emphasizing their simultaneous insistence on tradition, modernity, and openness:

They deserved the openness toward global literary events and examples, towards comparative information, but they never ceased to recall the national tradition and its continuity. Thanks to them, after a long break, the poetic styles of foreign literatures found a significant place in Croatian literary consciousness. The bridge to the Western European cultural circle, with the help of *Krugovi*, was once again raised.<sup>11</sup>

Writing about the *Krugovi* journal and its conceptual openness to other literatures, Miroslav Vaupotić, one of the editors and associates of *Krugovi*, also emphasizes:

*Krugovi* regularly published selected essay texts from foreign literature (T. S. Eliot, L. Moholy Nagy, V. Woolf, E. Wilson, etc.) from the beginning, handling the poetry of Apollinaire, Eluard, Dylan Thomas, Spender, Pasternak, Jiménez, from Hispanic-American, Indian and African poetry [...].<sup>12</sup>

11 Dunja Detoni Dujmić, *Krugovi* (Zagreb: Zavod za znanost o književnosti, 1995), 12.

12 Miroslav Vaupotić, "Časopisi od 1914–1963," in *Panorama hrvatske književnosti XX stoljeća*, ed. Vlatko Pavletić (Zagreb: Stvarnost, 1965), 846.

The interest of the *Krugovi* generation, equally for literary authorship as well as literary translation, is especially emphasized by Tatjana Jukić, believing that with such a concept, *Krugovi* truly differed from all other generationally close literary journals.<sup>13</sup>

In the *Krugovi* journal, we thus record a flourishing of translations and adaptations from Anglo-Saxon literatures, as well as, for example, from Scandinavian literatures. Finally, this is followed by a period of flourishing of Romance literatures – primarily French and Italian literatures, and only then Spanish literature. Interestingly, however, poetic cycles of contemporary Mexican poetry or poetry of African peoples in French-speaking countries were also translated. The situation is similar with literature from the Latin American Spanish-speaking region. Authors from other Slavic literatures (Polish, Czech, Bulgarian) are also being translated. Given the political positions of Yugoslavia at that time, the *Krugovi* translation project today can be considered a testament to the exceptional intellectual courage of its editors and collaborators. Tatjana Jukić, writing about the “language trauma” in Croatia in the 1950s, emphasizes the importance of contextualizing relationships with others (languages, cultures, peoples) which Croatian intellectuals, including young and old *Krugovi* members, experienced as direct repression. Let us consider Tatjana Jukić’s observations, which will also serve us in thinking about the position of Spanish literature in Croatia in the 1950s:

Traditionally multilingual communities in Croatia were subjected to multiple cultural and linguistic repressions in just a few years: from the domination of the German and Italian languages during World War II to the exclusion of German and Italian and the dominance of Russian in the period up to 1948, to later confinement in the problematic framework of the renamed national languages of former Yugoslavia. Therefore, the expressed trauma includes not only an inherent fear of censorship by political and other institutions, although such fear undoubtedly structured the writing of the 1950s, but also a highly specific linguistic competency that was formed by violent, accelerated and repeated crossings of linguistic borders, as well as consecutive violent interrup-

13 Cf. “The *Krugovi* project of the 1950s differed significantly from similar generational projects in the history of Croatian literature: it attributed equal symbolic value to authorial literary production and literary translation.” Tatjana Jukić, “Hrvatske pedesete i prijevodi s engleskog: Krugovaši i slučaj *Izdajica*,” in *Komparativna povijest hrvatske književnosti*, Zbornik radova V. – *Krugovi i hrvatska književnost pedesetih godina prošlog stoljeća*, ed. Mirko Tomasović and Vinka Glunčić-Bužančić (Split: Književni krug, 2003), 49.

tions in the sedimentation of the cultural memory of the community, whose discontinuity further complicated the expression of the trauma of war and post-war period. It could be said that the culture of the 1950s- with its dream of total exclusion of foreign and different cultural policies- was working with an unbearable excess of repression, because it had incorporated added value of active memory of previous exclusions.<sup>14</sup>

The cause for Tatjana Jukić's reflections on the "language trauma" were Šoljan's translations from English as well as the position of the English language as the "other." On that note, one can think even more drastically about the position of the Spanish language and culture in Croatia after World War II. Considering the victory of Franco's fascist regime in Spain, Yugoslavia had no diplomatic or cultural ties with this country. Of course, this was a hugely difficult factor in achieving an open climate for translating and following contemporary Spanish literature. If one adds to this the fact that Spain became an exile for a large number of Croats who fled the communist regime in Yugoslavia, the fact of the non-grata status of Spanish culture becomes even more obvious. In this context, Ivanišević's translation of Lorca gains additional importance. Thanks to Lorca – a poet of Andalusian province and a victim of fascist repression – he enters Croatian literature as a "poet of resistance" with whom the young Croatian poet generation, who experienced the horrors of World War II, identifies. "Poets of resistance" thus became the key to the entry of modern Spanish literature into the Croatian literary and cultural sphere.<sup>15</sup>

14 Jukić, "Hrvatske pedesete," 49.

15 In this context, the translator's "two-way" activity on the Croatia-Spain line is interesting. Namely, while Spanish poets in exile are translated in Croatia, Croatian authors are being translated by Croatian intellectuals in exile in Spain (e.g., Pavao Tijan, Luka Brajnović and others). Cf. more about that in the works of F. J. Juez Gálvez (e.g., "Jedan pokušaj predstavljanja hrvatskoga pjesništva u poslijeratnoj Španjolskoj," in *Drugi hrvatski slavistički kongres*, Zbornik radova II., ed. Dubravka Sesar and Ivana Vidović Bolt (Zagreb: Hrvatsko filološko društvo, 2001), 149–154; "Hrvatsko pjesništvo," 87–102).



## Nikola Milićević – Translator and Promoter of Spanish Poetry in *Krugovi*

Nikola Milićević,<sup>16</sup> one of the regular contributors and members of the editorial board of the *Krugovi* journal, occupies an important place in the Croatian literary canon among the generation of poets and translators who formed themselves thanks to the *Krugovi* journal.

It should be noted that Nikola Milićević's merits in translating Spanish literature and bringing it back to the Croatian cultural space are truly great. Interestingly, however, Milićević was not a Hispanist. From this fact, we can recognize that his desire to get acquainted with other (which also implies challenging) literatures led him as a young poet and translator. But also, the guiding principle that the editorial board of *Krugovi* set for themselves under the motto – “Let there be liveliness!” – which also means let there be diversity. Therefore, Milićević took on the affirmation of Spanish literature, according to his own testimony, “by chance.”<sup>17</sup> Milićević's “chance encounter” thus became a serious cornerstone in the Croatian-Spanish literary interpenetration. It is interesting to read his personal memories of his own translation work from Spanish. His notes are a real testimony to the experience of the “language trauma” and culture of the “other.”

And then came the Spaniards, with whom I was most engaged, and that was also a strange game of chance. Namely, around 1952, a small anthology of Spanish modern poetry, bilingual, Spanish-Italian, came into my hands. I was greatly impressed by some poets (Machado, Jimenez, Lorca), and the Spanish language, which I didn't know until then, seemed to me very similar to Italian, and I thought it could be learned without much effort. And I enthusiastically started the work: I obtained a Spanish grammar book in Italian and a Spanish-Italian dictionary, and in a short time, I immersed myself in this beautiful language. For pronunciation, I listened to Spanish broadcasts on foreign radio

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16 Nikola Milićević (1922–1999) was a Croatian poet, translator, and university professor. He belonged to the *Krugovi* generation of poets and was also part of the first year of editing the journal *Krugovi*, in which he participated in the editing throughout all seven years. He prepared and published a series of important anthologies of Croatian and world poetry. His poetry works that stand out include “Zlatna grana” [Golden Branch] (1952), “Obećanje žute zore” [The Promise of the Yellow Dawn] (1956), “Snijeg i crna ptica” [Snow and the Black Bird] (1964), “Prah zemaljski” [Earth Dust] (1974), among others.

17 Nikola Milićević, “Pogovor,” *Izabrani prepjevi* (Zagreb: Naklada Croata, 1997), 407.

stations and started to acquire Spanish books as I knew and could, through acquaintances and friends, and when I started traveling to Italy and France, I bought as much as I could find there. So, after about ten years, I had accumulated a whole small library of Spanish books, and later even more. In our libraries, there were hardly any of these books. And so, since few people then dealt with Hispanics in our country (except for an excellent connoisseur, Josip Tabak, who mainly translated prose), people began to turn to me whenever they needed something from Spanish literature, and I wrote quite a bit about individual writers. I became a self-taught Hispanist. However, even as such, in the absence of anything better, I was sometimes useful. No one had systematically translated Spanish poetry, and before me there was a whole literary treasure untouched for us. Whatever I translated, it came to our people as a complete novelty, except for Lorca, whom D. Ivanišević published in 1950.<sup>18</sup>

In that vein, in the first year, second issue of *Krugovi* journal, Jure Kaštelan published a study titled “Gavran i konj” [The Raven and the Horse], which deals with the relationship between art and folk poetry, partly dedicated to Federico García Lorca.<sup>19</sup> Immediately after Kaštelan’s essay, Zvonimir Golob,

18 Miličević, “Pogovor,” 407.

19 We bring an excerpt dedicated to F. García Lorca from Kaštelan’s essay, in which Kaštelan does not hide his enthusiasm and inspiration from the Spanish poet:

“One great name in world poetry, and great for us, is Federico García Lorca, the most Spanish Spaniard, and equally modern poet. It would make sense to speak about him and his work based on the data provided by the work itself, based on the analysis of his style. It seems to me that through one of Lorca’s most significant poems, Lament for Ignacio Sanchez Mejias, the secret of his poetry and poetics can be revealed. Not now. The most sensitive and enduring component in Lorca’s work is the Spanish folk, restless, demoniac, passionate, free, senseless and boundless. Fatefully and madly in love with Spain, he knew all its sighs and its wounds, its sharp daggers and its gypsy and Andalusian passion, its singing and its agony, the brightness of its culture, the darkness of its stone towers and the rocking of its cradles. He did not get to know it with the poetic passion of a lover, but with passionate love of consciousness awakened and rebellious. Poet and dramatist, painter and musician, singer and actor Federico Garcia Lorca left written testimonies of his quest and his insights. His poetic workshop, the revolutionary nature of his simple and complex poetry, the sources of his inspiration, his specific Spanish tradition and his avant-garde sense and aspiration for modernity, were illuminated by the poet himself in lucid lectures, among which the most important are: ‘The Poetic Image of Don Luis Gongora,’ Granada, 1927, ‘Theory and Play of the Duende,’ Havana, 1930, ‘Spanish Lullabies,’ Havana, 1930. There are no more valuable sentences than these left by the poet. Speaking of F. Garcia Lorca’s views without applying them to his work would make no sense, and this incidental note is not its purpose. The essential thing that lives in every word of the poet, that kills and experiences, that loves and is fascinated, is Spain, its culture, its passion and its people. Although the folk, popular

a poet of the *Krugovi* generation who, like Kaštelan, later continued to translate Lorca, publishes a poem “No Sleep” from his cycle *Twelve Poems* and dedicates it to F. García Lorca.<sup>20</sup>

In the very first issue of the first volume of *Krugovi*, Nikola Milićević appears as a mediator of Spanish literature and brings a short contribution “Pedro Salinas, a well-known Spanish poet, has recently died in America.” Along with the translation of his two poems “My Faith” and “Excessive Question,” it also publishes a short note about the poet, highlighting the fact that he “was a friend of Juan Ramón Jiménez and Jorge Guillén, so like them he lived in America since the end of the Spanish Civil War, exposed to the usual fate of a refugee, wandering.” The bibliographical information is scarce. Furthermore, he highlights important features of Salinas’s poetics:

His lyricism, fragile and melancholic, which sings about roses, stones, waves, air, and birds, and above all, is saturated with the feeling of time, represents perhaps the happiest fusion between strong reason and sensitive reality. The most ordinary form of his expression is a question, and his lyricism, primarily love, is interwoven with abstract reflections and seems to move in labyrinths.<sup>21</sup>

The note also states that the mentioned poems were translated from Italian “due to the lack of the original text,” which further confirms Milićević’s recollection four decades later.

In the eighth issue of 1954, Milićević publishes a short, journalistically intonated essay “Something about Garcia Lorca (Dates of Birth and Death – Lorca in Today’s Spain).” The reason for his text is Zvane Črnjaš<sup>22</sup> introduction in which the exact year of Lorca’s birth is questioned. Milićević further conveys the views and testimonies of several experts on Lorca’s life, which testifies to his complete immersion in the exploration of Lorca’s life. By presenting different interpretations of Lorca’s birth and death dates, he also presents his own reflections on his life and tragic fate.<sup>23</sup>

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component, is not the only one in Lorca’s opus, it is the most serious. And if he were not the greatest Spaniard, he would not be what he is – Federico Garcia Lorca.” Jure Kaštelan, “Gavran i konj,” *Krugovi* 1, no. 2 (1952): 113

20 Cf. Zvonimir Golob, “Dvanaest pjesama [Twelve Poems],” *Krugovi* 1, no. 2 (1952): 121.

21 Nikola Milićević, “Pedro Salinas, poznati španjolski pjesnik, nedavno je umro u Americi [Pedro Salinas, a well-known Spanish poet, has recently died in America],” *Krugovi* 1, no. 2 (1952): 96.

22 In his text, Milićević only mentions Črnjaš’s initials – Z. Č.

23 Nikola Milićević, “Nešto o Garcia Lorki (Datumi rođenja i smrti. – Lorca u današnjoj Španiji),” *Krugovi* 3, no. 8 (1954): 626–629.

In the second issue of the *Krugovi* journal from 1955, Nikola Milićević published an article entitled “From Modern Spanish Lyrics.” In this text, he published a selection of poems by eight Spanish poets: Antonio Machado’s poems “Poplars on the Duera shore” and “Rainbow and Balcony”; Leon Felipe’s poems “Conversation between Poet and Death,” and “Only a Pilgrim”; Juan Ramón Jiménez’s poems “Strange is the Sky at Day,” “To Die,” and “It is Already Dark”; Pedro Salinas’s poems “Your Soul Was,” and “Deaths”; Rafael Alberti’s poem, “Three Heavenly Memories”; F. García Lorca’s poem, “Little Viennese Waltz”; Gerardo Diego’s poems “Guitar” and “Fan”; and Manuel Altolaguirre poems “Breeze,” “Female Nude,” and “Resting on My Shoulder.”<sup>24</sup>

At the end of the article, Milićević signed with initials a note titled “Notes on Spanish Lyrics,” through which he provides Croatian readers with an overview of Spanish modern poetry by offering brief observations on each poet. All selected poets are part of the Spanish literature in exile.<sup>25</sup> We bring Milićević’s note in its entirety:

In this small selection, poets from two generations that make up modern Spanish poetry of the 20th century were chosen, which is so distinctive, characteristic, and authentic in expression that it undoubtedly belongs today among the first places among the poems of great nations. Machado and Jiménez belong to the older generation, known as “Generation of 98,” which was formed around Ruben Dario, who was born in Nicaragua (1867–1916). All others belong to “Generation of 25.”

Most of these poets are at least partially known to us, so there is no need to provide special comments about them here. Lorca is the best known to us, and for the others, we will only mention some data. Antonio Machado was born on August 26, 1875, in Seville. He was a professor in Madrid and died in exile after the Civil War on February 22, 1939, in Colliure, France. J. R. Jiménez was born on December 24, 1881, in Magueru (Andalusia). To date, he has published more than thirty books of poems. He currently lives in the United States and still publishes poems in South American journals. Leon Felipe is almost

24 Cf. *Krugovi* 4, no. 2 (1955): 119–126.

25 Highlighting this fact is not insignificant because the editors of *Krugovi* had to be careful about the political-censorship aspect of editing and publishing the journal. Compare to: “Some young people [...] will continue in *Krugovi* which acts as a generational journal and depend solely on ideologically conditioned state subsidies, so it is objectively difficult for it, as a generational voice, to reconcile its own differences with the socially desirable profile without which – it was known – its survival was not guaranteed.” Vinko Brešić, *Praksa i teorija književnih časopisa* (Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 2014), 272.

entirely unknown to us. He was born in Tabara (Zamora) in 1884. He was a pharmacist by profession, but later dedicated himself entirely to literature and is now a professor at the National University in Mexico. He began publishing poems in 1920. Pedro Salinas was born in Madrid in 1892. He was a professor at Cambridge, then in Santander. After the Civil War, he fled to America and was a professor at a university in Baltimore. He passed away in Boston on December 4, 1951. Gerardo Diego was born on October 3, 1896, in Santander. A professor, he wrote many essays on poetry, compiling a famous anthology of Spanish poetry from 1915 to 1931. Rafael Alberti, of Italian origin (his grandfather was a Garibaldi fighter and an emigrant), was born in Puerto de Santa Maria on December 16, 1902. He was a very active political activist and fighter in the Civil War. He traveled to Russia and now lives in Argentina. Manuel Altolaguirre was born in Malaga on June 29, 1905. He was also an active fighter. He now lives in Havana and is involved in publishing magazines and books, as he did in Spain with passion.

Finally, Gustavo Adolfo Becquer (1836–1870), to whom Alberti dedicated “Three Heavenly Memories,” was one of the greatest and most interesting Spanish poets of the 19th century, both in his unfortunate life and poetic accomplishments. Modern Spanish poets have written and dedicated their verses to him, as they learned a great deal from him.<sup>26</sup>

Nikola Milićević also appeared in the sixth issue of *Krugovi* in 1955, when a group of poets translated a selection of poems from the Spanish classic Don Luis de Góngora. Therefore, alongside Olinko Delorko, Ante Cettineo and Drago Ivanišević, Nikola Milićević translates Góngora’s “Romance (A Spaniard in Oran).” Interestingly, in the note about Góngora, signed with the initials of Drago Ivanišević, an essay by F. García Lorca dedicated to the Spanish humanist from Andalusia is quoted.<sup>27</sup>

On the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of Rubén Darío’s death, in *Krugovi* from 1956 (issue 2–3), Milićević publishes an essay about Rubén Darío and a selection of translations titled “Three Nocturnes and One Sonnet.” In his essay, Milićević writes about Darío’s life, provides lucid insights into his poetic work, and contextualizes his creativity in Spanish, wider Hispanic, and world literature. However, he pays particular attention to his rootedness in Spanish literature and culture.

26 Nikola Milićević, “Napomene uz španjolsku liriku [Notes on Spanish Lyrics],” *Krugovi* 4, no. 2 (1955): 126–127.

27 Cf. *Krugovi* 4, no. 6 (1955): 389–393.

He was considered a teacher by many poets of his language. Antonio Machado deeply respected him, J. R. Jiménez was his spiritual son, Pablo Neruda and Gabriela Mistral called him father, and García Lorca also considered him one of the greatest modern poets of the Spanish language. [...] Although Ruben Darío was a South American and only spent a few years in Spain, his influence on Spanish poetry was so strong that no history of Spanish literature can ignore him, and his poems are almost always included in Spanish anthologies.<sup>28</sup>

It is interesting that Miličević concludes the essay with Tina Ujević's assessment of Rubén Darío, apparently wishing to highlight the context of the continuous recognition of Spanish modern poetry in the Croatian cultural space.

Finally, let us mention the late Tin Ujević. He once said in an interview about Rubén Darío: "You know, he may not be a great poet in global relations, but his significance in the history of Spanish poetry is enormous."<sup>29</sup>

Nikola Miličević selects four poems from Darío's collection *Prosas Profanas*, and thus the cycle "Three Nocturnes and One Sonnet" consists of three poems entitled "Nocturne" and the sonnet "Gypsy woman."<sup>30</sup>

In the next year's issue of *Krugovi*, specifically in the first issue from 1957, Nikola Miličević publishes a selection of six poems by Juan Ramón Jiménez. These are the poems "The Hourly Return," "Ideal Epitaph for a Sailor," "Smoke and Gold," "In the Best That I Have," "Intimate Rose." In the editorial note, we find a statement that "the poet Nikola Miličević is also known as a translator from the Spanish language. As far as we know, he recently submitted a manuscript for an anthology of Spanish poetry for printing, and he also prepared a book of verses by the winner of last year's Nobel Prize in Literature, J. R. Jiménez. We present a small selection from that book."<sup>31</sup> The occasion of awarding the Nobel Prize to J. R. Jiménez opened space for Miličević's observation that "this high recognition was awarded through him and the entire Spanish poetry of the 20th century, which has produced a dozen outstanding poets, and especially Antonio Machado and Federico García Lorca, who were officially mentioned alongside Jiménez when this award was granted."<sup>32</sup>

28 Nikola Miličević, "Ruben Darío," *Krugovi* 5, no. 2-3 (1956): 83-84.

29 Miličević, "Ruben Darío," 88.

30 Cf. *Krugovi* 5, no. 2-3 (1956): 89-90.

31 *Krugovi* 6, no. 1 (1957): 40.

32 Nikola Miličević, "Juan Ramon Jimenez" (note), *Krugovi* 6, no. 1 (1957): 44.

Giving a brief overview of Jimenez's life and creative journey, Milićević also mentions his life in exile, emphasizing how the poet left his homeland after the victory of fascism:

Jimenez was born in Moguer, Andalusia, on December 24, 1881. He started writing at a very young age and published more than thirty books of poems. His first book, "Almas de Violeta," was published in 1900, and his last, "Animal de Fondo," in 1949 in Buenos Aires. It was a long journey of creation and continuous refinement. Jimenez was a great lover of words and one of the leaders in creating modern poetic expression.<sup>33</sup>

Already in the 10th issue from 1957, Nikola Milićević publishes a selection of translations from the younger generation of poets born in the 1920s, thus offering the first insight into recent Spanish poetry to the Croatian literary public. In the article "Today's Spanish Poets," Milićević publishes the following poets: Blas de Otero (1916) – the first poem is untitled ("Here you have a man in poetry and soul") and the poem "Man"; José Luis Hidalgo – two poems: "Destiny," "Birth"; Rafael Morales (1919) – three poems: "Idiots," "Sad Ones," "Bullfight"; Eugenio de Nora (1923) – poem: "Song to the Demon of Blood"; Lorenzo Gomis (1924) – poem "Sad Lion," Manuel Arce (1928) – poem "Now."<sup>34</sup> In the introductory letter to these translations, Nikola Milićević actually paints a picture of contemporary Spain:

We chose these six poets from almost a hundred names (born after 1915) that we encountered in various anthologies published in Spain and abroad in recent years. The choice was certainly not easy, and it does not even come close to providing a complete picture of the current state of Spanish poetry, which is very diverse and complex. We chose among the most prominent and interesting names for us. These verses do not require any commentary; they speak for themselves, speaking painfully and quietly about suffocation and pain. Unlike the famous generation of Lorca, they have slightly less artistry and virtuosity, but perhaps a bit more tension and real harsh pain.<sup>35</sup>

At the end of the article, Nikola Milićević provides a short biobibliographic note on each poet.

33 Milićević, "Juan Ramon Jimenez," 44.

34 Cf. *Krugovi* 6, no. 10 (1957): 809–819.

35 Nikola Milićević, "Današnji španjolski pjesnici," *Krugovi* 6, no. 10 (1957): 809.

In the issues 2–3 of the *Krugovi* journal from 1957, there is a notable study by Ivo Mihovilović entitled “A New Generation and Franco.”<sup>36</sup> In this study, the author presents information and reflections about the new generation of poets and artists who are capable of opposing and rebelling against the regime. In the last issue from 1958, there is not a single contribution about Spanish literature or translations from Spanish.

After the closure of *Krugovi* in 1958, Nikola Milićević continued to translate from Spanish. In fact, the “game of chance” that had its origin in the journal became his life’s work. During his lifetime, he published collections of poetry by six Spanish-speaking poets (J. R. Jiménez, Gabriela Mistral, Antonio Machado, F. García Lorca, Pablo Neruda, Luis de Góngora). He continued to publish translations from Spanish in later Croatian periodicals (such as *Forum*, *Republika*, *Mogućnosti*). Milićević also compiled a series of anthologies, including those related to Spanish poets. He published an *Anthology of Modern Spanish Poetry* in 1959, *Modern Hispanic-American Poetry* in 1962, and *The Golden Book of Spanish Poetry* in 1972. All of this fits into the general picture of openness towards Spanish literature during the following two decades. The role of Nikola Milićević in the reception of Spanish literature in Croatia from the 1950s to the 1970s is highlighted by Mirjana Polić Bobić:

Even with those earlier translations, Nikola Milićević had already established himself as the best translator of Spanish poetry into Croatian. However, he showed his enormous ability to translate verses from all periods and styles of Spanish poetry in *The Golden Book of Spanish Poetry* (1972), his own anthology of Spanish poetry in Croatian translation, in which he included all important authors and works from *The Song of the Cid*, from which he translated 130 verses, to older generation poets today.<sup>37</sup>

Interest in Spanish poetry lasted until the 1970s, or as Mirjana Polić Bobić points out, until “the transfer of readers’ interest to American literature in Spanish.”<sup>38</sup> In the context of the *Krugovi* generation, the role of Nikola Milićević as a translator, who is still overshadowed in the Croatian literary canon by poets and translators such as Ivan Slamnig or Antun Šoljan, should be re-evaluated or at least considered equally valuable as Slamnig’s or Šoljan’s in mediating modern English and American literature. When it comes to translation

36 Ivo Mihovilović, “Nova generacija i Franco [A New Generation and Franco],” *Krugovi* 6, no. 2–3 (1957): 135–149.

37 Polić Bobić, “Prevođenje španjolske,” 31.

38 Polić Bobić, “Prevođenje španjolske,” 32.



literature in *Krugovi*, these two authors are most often emphasized. However, Milićević has jumped several levels out of the “language trauma” space, so Croatian culture should truly be grateful to him for not leaving it in the ideological blindness of undesirable languages, literature, and cultures. The fact is that Spanish language and culture are still somewhat exotic for Croatia today. There are only two Spanish language studies (at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Zagreb and at the University of Zadar), but Spanish is rarely offered in high schools, despite being one of the largest linguistic areas. Therefore, we have very few translators into or from Spanish. In the aforementioned foreword of the book *Selected Translations*, Nikola Milićević sadly noted in this context: “Today we have a chair for Spanish language and literature, we have all the necessary manuals and dictionaries, many young people know Spanish, but I do not see anyone seriously translating poetry, and that makes me very sad.”<sup>39</sup>

## Conclusion

An examination of literary translations from Spanish in the journal *Krugovi* leads to the conclusion that Nikola Milićević played an extremely significant role in mediating Spanish literature, particularly poetry, in the 1950s. After Drago Ivanišević, who first published a complete collection of F. García Lorca’s poems in 1950, Milićević translated and published other modern Spanish poets in *Krugovi*, mostly selecting the works of Spanish authors in exile. The *Krugovi* journal has a significant role in the history of Croatian literature precisely because of its conceptual openness and advocacy for diversity in poetic styles, reflections, and viewpoints. In this sense, in the 1950s, *Krugovi* were a flagship of translation literature and one of the few journals that offered a view of the cultures of other European and world nations. Translations of Spanish literature in *Krugovi* had an extremely important role in maintaining, albeit fragile, connections between Croatian and Spanish literature. Finally, the translation work of Nikola Milićević, one of the first editors of the *Krugovi* journal, has become a cornerstone for all future Croatian translators from Spanish. After the awakening of translational interest in Spanish literature in the interwar period, there was a justified fear that this interest would again wane after World War II. Therefore, I believe that the translation work of Nikola Milićević and his role in mediating Spanish literature in Croatian

<sup>39</sup> Nikola Milićević, “Pogovor [Foreword],” 407–408.

culture is extremely important but still insufficiently appreciated. In the context of reflecting on the development of Croatian poetry of second modernism and the overall development of culture after World War II, the *Krugovi* journal's outreach toward Spanish poetry undoubtedly confirms its role as the foundational journal of a generation that bravely turned its back on any ideological expectations.

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Sanja Knežević

Procvat prijevoda romanskih književnosti  
u razdoblju hrvatske druge moderne

Prijevodni rad španjolske književnosti u časopisu *Krugovi*

SAŽETAK | Pjesnici druge moderne u hrvatskoj književnosti, a među njima osobito generacija *krugovaša*, otvaraju se prijevodima s drugih književnosti. Često se govorilo o važnosti anglosaksonskih prijevoda iz pera Antuna Šoljana, Ivana Slamniga i drugih, međutim to je ujedno i generacija koja se otvorila prijevodima romanskih književnosti. Prijevodi s romanskih književnosti (osobito talijanske književnosti, nešto manje španjolske) doživljavane su zbog ideoloških i političkih postratnih okolnosti pomalo i subverzivno. Međutim, pojavom časopisa *Krugovi* (1952.) prijevodi talijanske, španjolske i francuske književnosti doživljavaju novi procvat. U tom smislu u radu ćemo razmatrati prijevodni rad pjesnika i urednika *Krugova*, Nikole Milićevića, i njegove prijevode španjolskih pjesnika.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI | časopis *Krugovi*, prijevodi španjolske književnosti, Nikola Milićević, hrvatska druga moderna

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