

A VERY SHORT POSTSCRIPT ON THE PROBLEM OF ŠTÚR'S TERMINOLOGY

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I am sincerely grateful to Alexander Maxwell for elucidating in detail the theoretical background of his article “Suppressing the Memory of Slovak Panslavism: The Historiographical Misrepresentation of Kollár and Štúr” published in *Historický časopis*, vol. 71 (2023), no. 2. Now it is clear to me that for him there is no such objective reality as the existence of a nation or a language, and his arguments are much less confusing in light of the social constructivist approach to languagehood and nationalism. I only regret that Maxwell has not found anything praiseworthy in my reaction to his aforementioned article. I, for my part, praised him at least for his conclusion. Be that as it may, I would like to assure Maxwell that in my reaction I did not intend to either ridicule or fight. Rather, my aim was to defend the reputation of those twentieth-century scholars whom he so scathingly accused of historical falsification. After reading Maxwell’s refutation of my reaction to his “Suppressing the Memory of Slovak Panslavism”, I still do assert the following:

1. Historical texts often require interpretation in order to be understood correctly.

This is also the case of Štúr’s *Nárečja slovenskuo alebo potreba písanija v tomto nárečí*. I do not at all question the necessity of faithfulness when it comes to direct quotation. However, we have to take into account that the twentieth-century scholars whom Maxwell criticized in his article did not use direct quotation in the proper sense of the word. Rather, they used translations – that is, interpretations – of Štúr’s words. That Štúr’s term *nárečja* needs interpretation is evident from my point 2.

2. Štúr’s term *nárečja* is a category pertaining exclusively to the Slavic and ancient Greek languages.

Therefore, it really is misleading to translate it as *nárečie* or *dialect* into modern languages because the modern term *nárečie/dialect* is not in any way confined solely to describing the Slavic or ancient Greek language. Štúr’s term *nárečja* denotes a linguistic entity that he did not imagine in any living European language except for Slavic. So, to remain faithful to Štúr’s way of thinking, we

should either use his original term *nárečja* or contrive a neologism to replace it. If we nevertheless choose to use the modern term *dialect* as the interpretation of Štúr's *nárečja*, we must do so only with the explicit note that we understand it in the sense of ancient Greek dialects which, as we know, were something very different from what today's linguists call dialects (the Greek dialects were, *de facto*, literary languages).

In my reaction to Maxwell's article, I argued that it is Štúr's term *rozličnorečja* that can be considered equivalent to the modern term *nárečie* or *dialect*. To support this opinion, let me quote from another Štúr's treatise – namely, from his *Nauka reči slovenskej* (V Prešporoku, 1846). In his foreword (*Predmluva*), he writes:

Ale tu zaraz . . . vistúpila i tá [mišljenka] v duchu mojom, či mi skutočne máme vlastnuo nárečja, či je to ňje len rozličnorečja Češtini, čo mi Slovenčinou, nárečím Slovenským volávame . . . (p. vii)

But, suddenly, still another thought came into my mind: whether we really have our own nárečja, whether that which we usually call Slovenčina and nárečja slovenskuo is not only a rozličnorečja of the Czech language...

We know that Štúr ended up writing a grammar of the Slovak language (*Nauka reči slovenskej*) because his inquiry led him to find out that Slovak was not only a dialect of Czech.

3. It is incorrect to translate Štúr's term *kmenovitost'* as tribalism.

Štúr himself explained his term *kmenovitost'* by the Latin phrase *divisio in stirpes*. Therefore, in my reaction I proposed to translate it into English as the *multi-stemmed character* of the Slavic nation. I would suggest there is a clear analogy between a language and a plant (i.e., a living organism): the Slavic language was, in Štúr's view, like a tree consisting of multiple stems. I do not think Štúr's term *kmenovitost'* is derived from that meaning of the noun *kmen* which denotes a tribe.

4. Ludevít Štúr was both a Slovak patriot and a Panslav at the same time.

I am convinced this must be evident to anyone reading Štúr's texts and understanding them as a whole. From this perspective, it is also easy to understand why Štúr chose to list differences between Slovak and Czech (Štúr, *Nárečja slovenskuo*, pp. 52-57), while simultaneously characterizing Slovak as uniting all Slavic *nárečja* (Štúr, *Nárečja slovenskuo*, p. 33).

Svorad Zavarský *A very short postscript...*

In the end, I would like to say it is a pity that Alexander Maxwell published his article “Suppressing the Memory of Slovak Panslavism: The Historiographical Misrepresentation of Kollár and Štúr” in English. If he published it in Slovak, I am sure he would receive much better feedback from Slovak scholars than I am able to give.

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