

Smoothie for the health of the Croatian language

The text explores the diachronic and synchronic connections between the three Croatian dialects and justifies the 'golden formula' typology of the Croatian language 'ča - kaj - što' (Engl. what) advocated as the definitive theoretical and practical activity in the work of its author, Croatian writer and diplomat Drago Štambuk. The diachronic sequence makes reference to the works of the Ozalj Literary Circle, the works of Tituš Brezovački – and in more detail analyses the language used by Josip Šipuš in his work *The foundation of the grain trade*.¹ In the synchronic review, the paper also refers to Štambuk's collection of poems *When Mice Danced the Molfrina*, effectively a poetry manifesto in favour of the golden formula, utilising Štambuk's two metaphors that depict the formula as a water molecule or a mythical tree with three branches.

In challenging times, when the language should also testify to the right of the people to independence, it was Drago Štambuk who established and highlighted the true nature of the Croatian language – in a very active way. In 1991, he founded an annual poetry manifesto festival *Croatia rediviva: ča – kaj – što* in Selce on the Island of Brač, in which many poets from štokavian, kajkavian and čakavian regions have participated for 29 years now already.

Štambuk, as poet, theurgist and linguophile, manifests a belief in the word that is just as strong in his poetic speech as in his search for the identity and the defining nature of the Croatian language. The golden formula, like the golden ratio, is a canon that does not change, and its trinity is indivisible just like the sacred trinity. Štambuk's cosmogony, on the other hand, while following Christian beliefs, since 'in the beginning there was the Word,' none the less also follows many other beliefs that preceded Christianity, so he would represent this concept with the image of a mythical tree with three branches – 'ča – kaj – što' – that carry the world, the people, the language and the individual. On a stylistic level, this word-painting is baroque with its allegorical and hyperbolic imagery, almost presumptuous, but it also has a distinctively Štambukian-like charm because, at the same time as presenting a sublime and solemn tone, it corresponds to a picture capturing a modest Brač drink composed of daily burdensome life, a *smoothie* made of milk and red wine. The combination of the near and the far, the small and the large, the real and the mythological – this is exactly the estrangement that we recognise in Štambuk's poetics – and in language as a means by which we address both the visible and invisible worlds.

Key words: Croatia rediviva, smoothie, trilingualism.

References

1. Šipuš, Josip, *Temelj žitne trgovine / The foundation of the grain trade (Temelj žitne trgovine – polag – narave y dogacsajev razborito – po – Joseff Sipus – Horvatsanu Karlovacskome. – vu Zagrebu, 1796.)*. Reprint by Matica Hrvatska, Karlovac branch, 1993.
2. Goleš Glasnović, Biserka (2015) *Spomenek na Tituša Brezovačkog / A memorial to Tituš Brezovački*. In *Monograph of the Elementary School of Tituš Brezovački*, p. 157 – 159.
3. Goleš Glasnović, Biserka (2019) *Duhovni versovnik / Spiritual Hymnal*. In *Forum*. Zagreb. Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti. No. 10-12, p. 1344 – 1350.
4. Štambuk, Drago, *Theurgia*, Školska knjiga, 2017.
5. Štambuk, Drago, *Kad su miši balali molfrinu / When Mice Danced the Molfrina*, Naklada Đuretić, 2017.