

THE BRIDGE ON THE DRINA. By *Ivo Andrić*. Translated from the Serbo-Croatian by *Lovett F. Edwards*. Introduction by *William H. McNeill*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977 [1945, 1959]. iv, 314 pp. \$4.95, paper.

The present edition of Andrić's most famous work, the novel which played a decisive role in his winning the Nobel Prize for literature in 1961, is a reprint of Lovett Edwards's 1959 English translation published by George Allen and Unwin and subsequently reissued in 1967 by the New American Library (in its Signet Classics series) with an afterword by John Simon. Except for replacing that afterword by William McNeill's introduction and certain technical changes in general format and typeface, the present edition is the same as its predecessors.

In attempting to render the essence of Andrić's complex work faithfully into English, Edwards faced a number of problems which surpassed the ordinary difficulties of finding appropriate Serbo-Croatian/English syntactic and idiomatic correspondences. Andrić's novel-chronicle, at whose center lies the ancient Višegrad Bridge built by Mohammed Pasha Soköllü in 1571, spans several centuries of life in a region that itself was a bridge between oriental and occidental influences in the Balkans, thus making its language a flavorful dialect of Serbo-Croatian, rich in assimilated Turkish expressions that give it a peculiarly archaic and poetic quality. This, and the distinctly epic dimension of Andrić's prose style, which frequently echoes both the subject matter and manner of Serbian folk poetry, represents a formidable obstacle for a translator interested in more than an accurate descriptive rendering of the work's general content. Much of the flow of the author's imagery, the directness of his colloquial expression, the lilt and flavor of regionalisms of both Turkish and Serbo-Croatian variety, is simply untranslatable. The title of the book is the best example of this: the original (*Na Drini Ćuprija*) is an inversion composed of three words, the first two (on the Drina) of Serbo-Croatian origin and the third (the bridge) an assimilated Turkicisms. In addition, the title as a whole is a very melodic six syllable expression in which a native ear easily recognizes the traditional meter of Serbian epic poetry (whose decasyllabic lines observe a four syllable-caesura-six syllable pattern). None of this could be captured in the novel's English title; in fact, were the English title accurately retranslated into contemporary Serbo-Croatian, the result would be *Most na Drini* and not *Na Drini Ćuprija*, which Andrić aptly chose in order to conjure up the stagnant semioriental ambience of his Bosnian world. These unavoidable limitations aside, the present translation is a conscientious and reliable piece of work that, in general, successfully transmits to the English-speaking reader the general content of Andrić's best creation and a number of its specific characteristics. And this is all that could possibly be expected from a pioneering endeavor to introduce a masterpiece of Serbian literature to the English-speaking audience.

Finally, although the omission of John Simon's excellent afterword to the previous edition—which offered a sensitive and well-integrated summary of Andrić's work and style—is regrettable, we can be grateful for William McNeill's accurate and concise new introduction, which provides a wealth of necessary background information that can prove useful to the general reader and nonspecializing scholar alike.

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