
This year's Jan Palach Prize awarded to translation studies graduate

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This year's Jan Palach Prize, bestowed by the College of the Dean of the Charles University Faculty of Arts, has been awarded to Mgr. Anna Rosová, a graduate of the Institute of Translation Studies for her Master's thesis titled "Inner Emigration of Jan Zábřana and Osip Mandelstam". The prize was awarded at the April session of the Faculty of Arts Academic Council.

Can you tell us what you focused on in your Master's thesis?

In my thesis I tried to combine the knowledge from both my fields of study. I concentrated on the quality of Zábřana's translations, on the examples on three poems which I compared to translations by Jiří Kovtun. Then I looked at how Mandelstam influenced Zábřana's own literary work. At the end of the paper I quoted the opinions of my fellow students from the Institute of Czech Studies as to how they liked the selected translations in the context of Czech literature without telling them whose translations they were.

Which influences did you observe in Zábřana's work?

We don't know when exactly Zábřana read Mandelstam, besides, most of his poems had been written before the translations. But because Zábřana kept rewriting his poems, he included certain influences and quotations. The theme of inner emigration caused by the difficulties with the system was inherent to both the authors' poetic styles. I also looked at what expression and the freedom of expression meant to either of the authors, which may have helped me win the prize because the Faculty of Arts declared 2011 the Year of Freedom of Expression.

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Why did you choose this topic?

I wanted to work on a topic in the field of translation studies and Zábřana was an obvious choice because he had translated my favourite authors. I like his own work as well. Initially I wanted to write about all Zábřana's translations of Russian poetry but I soon found out that it would make a doctor's dissertation. So I decided to concentrate on just one author, apart from that, Mandelstam is still relatively unknown in this country.

Are you going to follow up on the subject?

I am about to take entrance exams into the doctoral programme at the Institute of Translation Studies. In my dissertation I would like to examine all Zábřana's translations of Russian poetry, besides Mandelstam that is works by Yesenin, Pasternak and Svetlov. PhDr. Mgr. Stanislav Rubáš, Ph.D. should be my dissertation advisor.

Has anyone studied Zábřana's translations so closely before?

I would say that Zábřana is somewhat venerated for his moral positions and perhaps few people are prepared to possibly have to criticize him.

About the Jan Palach Prize

The prize is awarded for outstanding independent publications (including translations), for outstanding contribution of a Bachelor's or Master's thesis or for outstanding social activity raising the prestige of Charles University and the Faculty of Arts. It is the faculty's only official prize, bestowed in the memory of Jan Palach.

It is awarded to regular students of the Faculty of Arts no older than 26 years at the time of nomination. The award is accompanied by a prize of CZK 40,000. Proposals can be submitted by any member of the academic community of the Faculty of Arts (both lecturers and students).