

# TRANSLATIONS, TRANSLATORS AND TRANSLATION CRITICISM IN LATVIA BETWEEN THE WARS (1918–1940)

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**Abstract.** Latvia's brief period of independence (1918/20–1940) saw book publishing on a massive scale. The range of source languages was growing, with English slightly ahead of German in the pre-war years (German was also the main intermediary language), and French and Russian following. The literature translated was also extremely varied, as was quality. The choice of works to be translated was very much in the hands of translators and publishers, who in turn thought of marketing interests. With the advent of cheap books, print runs grew longer and high-quality literature became accessible to a broader public. The authoritarian system since 1934 gently pushed the media in the direction of more substantial and classical values. Print runs were not very long: averaging around 2000. The percentage of translations seems to fluctuate widely, but in the domain of novels, translations always numerically surpassed native production. A large number of translators were also writers in their native Latvian, many were highly notable ones, but members of other professions frequently produced specialised translations as well. Gradually some individuals became professional translators from the favourite source languages. Translator visibility grew over time and depended on the status of the work translated. Visibility was high for high-quality texts and lower for the lower end. Translation criticism, however, remained very limited, mainly focusing on the quality of the Latvian, and lambasting pulp-literature translation in general.

**Key words:** translation, Latvian, source language distribution, translators, publishers, criticism, visibility

## INTRODUCTION

The translation scene during the independence period (1918/20–1940) is an almost untouched area in Latvian translation history, although the Baltic, Swedish and German literary contacts have been studied (Stepiņš, 1983; Kalnačs, 2005; *Latvieši*, 2008). There are some general studies of the literary scene in Latvia in this period, mostly statistical and focusing on original literature created and published during the independence years, and on publishers (Grāmata, 1999). It must be pointed out that the translation issues of the independence period were generally ignored during the Soviet period. Thus, Karulis's serious and comprehensive Soviet-period study of Latvian publishing paid little, and mostly critical, attention to these processes (Karulis, 1967).

Latvian national identity, which is language-centred, the literary polysystem and even the written language itself are all the result of translation. Translations have always constituted the majority of serious literary texts. Translation played an exceptionally important, even pivotal, role in the beginnings of written Latvian in the 16<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Translators (native German speakers) shaped, codified and modified written Latvian. Religious translations applied an approach of rigorous fidelity. Secular translations were localisations of easy-reading, sentimental German stories. Parallel to the rise of native literature in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the main approach gradually shifted from adaptation and domestication to foreignisation and fidelity. More ambitious translations of Western classics started, usually done by distinguished Latvian writers. Alongside the traditional, faithful translations, some were freely shortened and otherwise modified. After independence in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the volume of translation grew, and literature from more exotic sources was also translated.

Secular vernacular translation has often helped to initiate national literary traditions and even nation-building (Chernetsky, 2011: 34; Kumar, 2013). The Latvian nation emerged late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and did so as a cultural nation: the aim of national liberation was to develop the language and culture (Levits, 2012: 73–74). Latvian national identity is therefore very language-centred. This has already been emphasised by other researchers: ‘Latvian is the basic element of national identity’ (Bušmane, 2009: 160), ‘the Latvian language is undeniably an element of national identity; not the only one, but the most significant one’ (Druviete, 2012: 97). Many aspects of Latvian national identity have arisen and developed in contact with other languages and cultures. Many national traditions and artefacts were in fact creatively borrowed from other nations (song festivals, for example, were borrowed from the Germans). Because nation-building began late, various elements deemed necessary for nationhood had to be imported, adapted and modified. Thus, two attitudes could be seen working in combination: the *defective* stance against the alien (absorbing everything that is missing) and the *defensive* one (defending and absorbing through transformation) (Robyns, 1994). Usually this was done through the translation and dissemination of new ideas. Translation was used as a way of influencing the target culture and furthering literary, political and personal interests. The various people involved in this process can be viewed as *agents of translation* (Milton, 2009). Among them were Latvian writers and poets, most of whom were prolific translators in addition to writing their own works. Generally, they started with translations, where they looked for ideas, for trends to be replicated and adapted to the Latvian scene and necessities of the period. Thus, paradoxically, Latvian identity and language formation have translations at their very core (Veisbergs, 2012). With the establishment of the new state, these processes acquired new depth and intensity.

## 1 PUBLISHING IN GENERAL

Before the First World War, publishing in Latvia had developed fast, reaching 869 titles with a sizeable average print run of 3300 in 1913 (Karulis, 1967: 140). Publishing went into a sharp decline when war broke out, aggravated by censorship, the evacuation of printing houses and a shortage of paper. The German-Russian front crept towards Latvian territory: part of Latvia (Kurzeme, Zemgale) came under the German occupation in 1915, followed by Riga in 1917 and the rest of Latvia in 1918. As a result, the number of books published fell below 300 in 1914 and 100 in 1915. These were mostly small propaganda brochures. In 1916 most publishing is of political propaganda by the various sides, along with calendars and religious literature (some translated). In 1917 and 1918, also, around 200 titles were published each year. In 1919 there was a brief period of Soviet rule, during which publishers were nationalised and most publications were propaganda.

Once *de facto* independence was established and warfare ceased, publishing picked up: 70 titles in 1919 (Karulis, 1991, 2: 89). Pre-censorship was abolished, although the authoritarian regime reinstated it for a short period from 1934. Post-censorship was liberal, focusing mostly on moral issues, for example banning sales of D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Extremist literature was banned as well, but was still imported by Soviet or Nazi bootleggers.

A considerable number of original Latvian books were published in 1919: mostly patriotic literature, celebrating and boosting national feelings, as well as various translations and plays. In the post-war years paper quality was poor, the books were mostly small-print brochures, people had little money to spare and print runs were short. Translations were few but very varied: five works by Marx and Kautsky from the brief Soviet period, some German and French plays and operas (Baadsgaard, 1919; Heijermans, 1919; Werharns, 1919; Glass 1919; Tanheizers, 1919) and a volume of stories by H. G. Wells (*Angļu rakstneeka Uelsa noveles*, 1919) surprisingly adorned with a picture of the first Latvian head of government, Ulmanis. 1920 saw already around 750 books, 93 per cent in Latvian among them 194 calendars! (Karulis, 1991, 3: 90).

In 1921, 719 titles were published and by 1924 the number had doubled to 1536. Works of Shakespeare, Tagore, Wilde, Kipling, Conan Doyle, Wells, Heine, Kleist, Goethe, Maupassant etc. were published. The early 1920s were to a large extent the heyday of pulp literature, both translated and local. The *Old Wawerli* (1923–1925) dime novels about an American trapper (110 in total) were extremely popular, reaching 10,000 copies. Some quotes and expressions from them have entered the language even though hardly anyone has read them today. They had no connection to the novels of Walter Scott or Cooper's novels but came from the German series (*Hefroman*) *Der Neue Lederstrumpf* published by Dresdner Roman Verlag in 1912–25. No translator was mentioned. *Tarzan* sequels (22 volumes) appeared in the same year (Burroughs, 1923) with the translator mentioned. Some other popular series in the same years were

pirate stories (Sem, 1924) in 22 volumes, Frank Allan detective stories (Franks, 1923–1924) in six volumes, the German *Harry Piel* detective stories (*Harijs Pils*, 1923) in 20 volumes; and the German Robert Kraft *Detektiv Nobody* adventure stories in eight volumes (Krafts, 1923–24) with the translator named as Pastarīts (the nickname of Kārlis Dzelsskalns/Dzelzkalns/Dzelzkalējs). Eight volumes of Sherlock Holmes stories (*Šerloka Holmsa sērija*, 1923) were also translated by Pastarīts. Later, Allan Pinkerton's detective adventures were published (Pinkertons, 1928–1930).

Similar local production developed in parallel with these as a result of culture transfer: 40 volumes of true crime stories (*Bandīta Kraupēna noziegumi*, 1926–27), another series of 42 volumes (*Bandītu karālis*, 1926–27), 12 volumes of detective stories (*Pats Dāvuss*, 1925–27), 21 volumes of adventure stories set in the foreign legion (Vanags, 1934), 20 volumes (*Kapteinis Tāivaldis*, 1926–27) about the adventures of a Latvian boy on far-off seas. Interestingly, all of these publications were included in a list of 'pulp and obscene literature dangerous to youth' that was regularly updated and published in the government newspaper.

Some state-sponsored activities involving the Ministry of Education and Leta (the State Telegraph Agency) helped foster the recovery. The Culture Foundation subsidised some publishing and book acquisition by libraries. State involvement grew after the authoritarian regime was established in 1934. Though state support mainly went to original Latvian writing and reference literature, some serious translations were also involved, such as *La Divina Commedia* (Dante, 1921a), the Estonian epic *Kalevipoeg* (*Kalevipoegs*, 1929) and works of Thucydides (Tūcidids, 1930).

A total of 1918 titles was published in 1925 and this figure held steady until the world crisis which hit publishing severely. In 1925, translations nominally constituted around 15 per cent of titles published, among them serious works by Poe, Shaw, Tammsaare, Hamsun, Plato, Wilde, Scott (*Ivanhoe*), Swift (*Gulliver's Travels*), but also adaptations of foreign works, such as a popular introduction to the Theory of Relativity by Liberts 'reproduced according to Schmidt' (*Relativitātes teorijas*, 1925). The original German version *Das Weltbild der Relativitätstheorie: Allgemeinverständliche Einführung in die Einsteinsche Lehre von Raum und Zeit* was published in 1922 by Harry Schmidt, and was popular. Some translations were done via intermediary languages, for example the *Decameron* by Boccaccio was 'compiled from German and Russian translations by Diženajo' (Bokatschio 1925).

A new marketing product, one-lats books, appeared in the mid-1920s (in fact a similar venture can be seen in Ansis Gulbis' *Universālā bibliotēka* launched in 1911). This new mode was introduced by the enterprising young Rudzītis, who established the company Grāmatu Draugs in 1926. These were substantial, often classical or modern books all costing one lats each, including home delivery (advertised as books for free, you pay only for P&P). The scheme turned out to be very successful: Rudzītis had calculated he needed to sell 5000 copies to make profit since the low price (a third or a fifth of standard levels) would be

offset by the high sales. A total of 24 such titles were produced in the first year: Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Balzac, Strindberg, Maupassant, Zola and Kellermann, reaching 18,000 copies. Latvia fell into a reading frenzy. At first, almost all books were translations: of the first 24 books only four were Latvian originals. Latvia had not joined the Berne Convention, so there were no royalty costs until 1938. The necessity to produce so many books within a short time meant translators had to work fast, and sometimes a single title was split between several translators to speed things up. For example, a book on Nordic exploration was translated by three people (Andrē, 1931), as was *Buddenbrooks* (see below). Rudzītis also expanded into publishing books in Estonian, Russian and Polish and was looking to the German publisher Ullstein for inspiration and new ideas. He published collected works by Nordic writers, encyclopaedias on accessible subjects (health, history of art, geography and travel, a youth encyclopaedia, practical tips) and other reference literature. His early success led him to establish his own print shop. Within a short period, the new paradigm spread: other companies (such as A. Gulbis) followed. They were less successful, but competition served to drive quality up. In two years from 1926, 34 publishers produced 444 cheap titles, of which Grāmatu Draugs had 101 and Gulbis 62 (Galdiņš, 1928: 386). Though there was much criticism of these new developments, objectively speaking these one-lats books filled the broad expanse between the pulp literature and elitist, classical literature and broke down the obvious border between these extremes.

The economic crisis hit publishing hard, the number of titles fell to 1513 in 1930, and still further to 797 in 1932. Translations of cheap literature saw growth. After the crisis, the situation stabilised and print runs grew to 2500–3000. Apart from quality literature, popular literature translations were also done (56 Edgar Wallace crime novels translated from English, and 106 titles by Hedwig Courths-Mahler translated from German in the interwar period (Karulis, 1997: 10)), frequently annotated as ‘free reproductions’.

In the late 1930s, Latvia ranked second in Europe after Denmark in titles published per 100,000 inhabitants (Denmark: 86, Latvia: 82). Altogether 27,000 titles were published during the period of independence, and the average print run was 2500–2800 (Zanders, 2013: 337). The largest print runs were for schoolbooks, calendars and translated fiction, often in the high 10,000s. A total of 83 per cent of titles were in Latvian, and print runs and book sizes were growing (Skujenieks, 1938).

The publishing industry in the 1920s and 1930s is characterised by several large companies with different agendas and specialisations (political, artistic, volume, quality) as well as a multitude of small publishers and individual, haphazard publishers. Thus, there were 479 publishers in 1939, among them around 200 occasional publishers (Kīploks, 1942: 145; Karulis, 1967: 183).

Various literary journals and magazines, *Latvju Grāmata* (1922–1931), *Sējējs*, *Burtnieks*, *Daugava*, *Ritums*, *Domas*, *Trauksme*, *Grāmatnieks*, *Ilustrēts žurnāls*, etc. discussed literary issues, problems and quality, but the focus was on native literature and news from abroad (see under Translation Criticism).



The largest publishers were:

- Valters un Rapa, who published around 3500 titles, mostly original Latvian works, schoolbooks, popular science
- Ansis Gulbis produced around 2000 titles, mostly Latvian literature and encyclopaedias, including the exhaustive general encyclopaedia *Latviešu konversācijas vārdnīca* (21 volumes), which remained unfinished due to the Soviet occupation. The latter was the result of work by the new Latvian intellectual elite and no doubt was much based on translated reference literature. He also published a History of the World Literature in 4 volumes that apart from descriptions had numerous translated samples of writing (Egle un Upīts, 1930–1934)
- Jānis Roze produced around 750 titles, mostly original Latvian literature
- Grāmatu Draugs (see below) produced 890 titles. This new publisher started as a business venture, in the beginning it mainly produced translations, but it later turned to original and quality literature, collected works of Nordic literature, encyclopaedic works (involving translations), the big Animal World encyclopaedia (see below), etc.
- Jessens produced over 350 titles, mainly small-scale editions for children, including two abridged versions of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, as well as Lofting, Swift, Hauff, Hedin, Brehm, Lagerlöf, Kipling, Twain, the Brothers Grimm and quite a range of Russian translations, among them Turgenev, Mamin-Sibiryak, Bianki
- The left-wing Kultūras Balss (under 200 books) offered socio-political literature: Russian and German socialist literature, some nonfiction (Faraday, Ostwald), as well as translations of Voynich, Strindberg, Tolstoy, Sinclair, Hašek, France. This publisher was very productive in the early years and the left-wing writer Jānis Grots who translated Hašek, Wells, Sinclair, Yesenin and Blok often published here
- Zelta Ābele, set up in the mid-1930s, specialised in quality prints: 48 quality titles with pictures were produced, also translations of Hoffmann, Lagerlöf, Poe, France, Musset, Wilde, Rilke, Kuprin, Pushkin, etc.
- Orients published fewer than 200 titles, almost exclusively translations and mostly easy-reading literature, including most Courths-Mahler novels
- Atis Freinats, a one-man publisher and book vendor (colporteur), produced over 50 books, among them translations of London (collected works 14 volumes), Ballantyne, Scott, Hamsun, Twain, Tolstoy, Pushkin, Golgol, Verne and De Coster, in addition to Latvian texts.

## 2 TRANSLATIONS

The literature translated was extremely varied, as was translation quality (Veisbergs, 2014a,b). The print runs were not very long: 2793 in 1938, when 1601

titles were produced. Translations fluctuated between 10 and 20 per cent of all publications, for example, they stood at 17.8 per cent in 1938 (Karulis, 1967: 143). Though translations nominally never surpassed the original books in total numbers, the figures show a different picture when subtypes of works are viewed. A rough estimate in a study of the early 1930s shows translations accounting for about 40 per cent of belles-lettres over a five-year period but, when print runs and volumes are taken into account, the figures turn in favour of translations. In novels, the proportion is 60 to 40 in favour of imported goods. Only in poetry is Latvian in the lead, by 90 to 10. The statistical study then becomes more biased and subdivides novel translations into welcome classical works (13), modern classics (around 60) and around 200 'modern kiosk belles-lettres boulevard novels'. Translations are often the work of unqualified or even unskilled people (*Literāriskais imports*, 1931: 481–483). Regrettably, the study does not subdivide native works, implying that they are all considered high-quality. A more detailed review in the late 1930s entitled '163 novels' informs us that the yearly output of novels consisted of 61 translated novels published as books, 38 novels translated in instalments in newspapers, 35 in collections. The figures for Latvian novels are 24 in book form and 39 in instalment or collections. Thus, the proportion has not changed. The author regrets that Latvian writers do not produce adventure novels (Erss, 1939). R. Egle has calculated that in the period between 1918 and 1938 1999 original writing publications and 1907 translations were done, among them 273 original novels versus 1070 translated novels (Egle R., 1989).

Latvia joined the Berne Convention in May 1938 (*Likums*, 1936). Until then translation was open to anyone, without permission or royalties or even any need to point out that the text was a translation. This certainly made translation publishing an attractive line of business.

The range of source languages was gradually growing. While German was the main source and intermediate language after the First World War, two decades later English was slightly ahead of German with the Russian, French and the Scandinavian languages following. This was a change from the total dominance of German as source and intermediary language until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (and even after the National Awakening in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, whose ideology was to a large extent anti-German). The 1920s saw an expansion beyond the traditional big quartet of source languages (German, Russian, English and French). Interest turned to the neighbouring literatures of Lithuania, Estonia and Scandinavia. Baltic cooperation, partly supported by governments, created a large turnover of these translations. These new trends are exemplified by the translation of the Estonian classic, Anton Tammsaare's monumental '*Tõde ja õigus*' (Truth and Justice) by the Latvian writer and translator Elīna Zālite (see below). The book was a bestseller: it ran to 5000 copies in 1936, with a second impression of another 5000 in 1937 (total sales exceeded those in Estonian).

It should be noted that the vast majority of translations were fiction, biography and history books; the rest were religious books, popular science and practical advice books. The technical sector was covered by original Latvian

books, many of which were covert translations and adaptations. One should remember that professionals and most educated people could read German and Russian in the original. Encyclopaedic works naturally involved much browsing and translating on the part of the authors as well (see below). Apart from book format, there were many translations in newspapers and magazines. For example, the most popular Latvian tabloid *Jaunākās Ziņas* often had one or two translated novel instalments a third of a page long in every paper, mostly entertaining or romantic pulp literature by now forgotten authors (Max du Veuzit and Franke Sander in 1936, Dekobra in 1937, Frank Packard in 1938, Zsolt Harsányi, Stella Richards, etc. in 1939). Another popular tabloid, *Brīvā zeme*, though giving preference to serialisations of Latvian literature, published the popular novel *Vientuļās debesis* (*Einsamer Himmel*) by German-American author Katrin Holland (pseudonym of Martha Albrand), in 1939, the year after it was published. In 1937, *Brīvā zeme* serialised *Kalnu klusajā ielejā* by the Swiss novelist Ernst Zahn; in 1939, his novel *Bez ceļa* is serialised in *Kurzemes vārds*. The newspapers do not mention the translators. Some of these translations were also published in book form, and occasionally the author's name was Latvianised inconsistently: *Max du Veuzit* is *Vezi* in the newspaper but *Wesi* in the book (*Wesi di* 1936).

A new translation of the New Testament was published in 1937 after a special emendation commission was established in 1928. Eleven translators translated it from the original Greek. It was printed in the new orthography, the print run was 25,000 copies and it sold out within a year and a half. Another edition of 25,000 followed in 1939. The New Testament thus became Latvia's bestseller.

### 3 CHOICE OF TRANSLATION

The choice of what to translate was in the hands of the publishers. While some were investing in classics and serious books, others went for profit and published pulp paperbacks, still others tried to find middle road. Translators were often better informed about the current literary situation than publishers, and Germany often served as a model: what was translated there was soon translated into Latvian. Rudzītis started his new venture with one single translator, Kārklīņš, and at first they decided what to translate for themselves. Later, other translators brought ideas and manuscripts. As publishing only took a month and there was no editing or proofreading at first, standards were sometimes poor, witness the fact they were edited by a third party. Thus, a novel by Sudermann (*Zudermanns*, 1927) is subtitled 'translation edited by Pāvils Rozītis' (Rozītis was a writer himself and did some occasional translations). Most likely the translator had totally failed and an editor was needed to save the book in time for the deadline. We do not know who the translator was. The system was later improved and expanded and a sound team of expert translators and editors selected. When the publishers felt there was interest and they had prepared the ground, they issued a major series of translations, for example, of Nordic (*Hamsun* 15 volumes, *Lagerlöf* 15 volumes, *Undset* 16 volumes) and Russian authors (*Dostoyevsky* 16 volumes).



Some other publishers were very selective, for example, Gulbis and Zelta Ābele mostly published quality literature. Orients, on the other hand, published mostly pulp literature

#### 4 TRANSLATION SOURCE LANGUAGES

The proportion of translations from various languages changed over the two decades under consideration.

**German** literature translations totaled around 700 (including Austrian and Swiss authors) and retained their lead in the total count of the two decades of Latvian independence. They were, however, surpassed numerically by English in the second half of the 1930s. In addition, much translation from less-known languages was done via German. During and immediately after the war, there were hardly any translations, but their number picked up in 1922 and 1923. Classics such as Goethe and the Grimms' fairy tales were staples, and Kleist, Heine, Schnitzler, Heinrich and Thomas Mann were popular. Later attention shifted to more contemporary German literature (Kalnačs, 2005: 627). The late 1920s saw a whole series of Kellermann and Sudermann (collected works). Kästner was popular in the 1930s, and Remarque attracted much interest. Top of the German list, however, was Hedwig Courths-Mahler with 106 titles in the mid-thirties (Karulis, 1997: 10), peaking at 34 titles published in 1934 alone. These translations were frequently annotated as 'free reproductions'. They constituted about a fifth of German translations, ensuring its dominance over English. There were also serious translations, for example Nietzsche's *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, translated by the outstanding Latvian poet Plūdons (Nīcše, 1939). It is interesting that Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* was translated by a team of translators: Lizete Skalbe, (writer turned translator) Kārlis Štrāls, Zelma Kroder (Manns, 1930) with Štrāls harmonising their styles (Rudzītis, 1997: 91).

**English** (around 650 translations) was a rare source language in the early days: in 1915 there was only a translation of Conan Doyle stories, in 1919 a translation of H. G. Wells. Later, 1920 and 1921 saw a couple of translations, including some technical military texts, and 1923 saw a rapid growth. In the later 1920s there were around ten translations per year, works by Shakespeare, Kipling and very numerous translations of Oscar Wilde. It is worth remembering that the first English-Latvian dictionary was published only in 1924. Later the number of English translations overtook that of German, and works by Maugham, Cronin, Milne, Lofting, Walpole, Twain (collected works), Poe, Dreiser, London (two editions of collected works in 14 and 30 volumes), Mayne Reid (10 volumes), and Galsworthy (7 titles) were popular. Some Shakespeare's plays were published and an academic edition of his complete works was started, but only the first volume (5 plays) was published before the Soviet occupation (*Viljama Šekspīra darbi*, 1938). The English thriller writer Wallace had 56 books translated in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

**Russian** translations (around 350) picked up in the mid-1920s and focused on Russian classics. There were many translations of Chekhov, Turgenev (collected works), Tolstoy (collected works), children's tales and Dostoyevsky in the second half of the 1920s. After that, Russian translations declined in number and apart from classics (Dostoyevsky collected works in 16 volumes) focused mostly on Russian past or adventure, crime and occult stories involving émigrés, for example, nine novels by Olga Bebutova and nearly 20 novels by Vera Krizhanovskaya (Крыжановская, Вера Ивановна, pseudonym Rochester) were published in the 1930s (Krischanowska, 1932). Russian was also the second most frequent intermediary language for translations from less known languages. Some schoolbooks and medical texts were translated from Russian in the early 1920s.

**French** translations sustained a steep climb and then declined: translations per year averaged above 15 in the 1920s but below 10 in the 1930s. All in all over 240 titles were translated over the two decades, giving a good coverage of French literature both classical and modern. Maupassant was the most widely translated author, clocking up 38 books by 1933 (he was also the first to have his collected works translated), Dumas had 20, Rolland 17, Dekobra (a very popular subversive writer of the interwar period, now totally forgotten) 15, Verne 12, Zola 8, France 7, Balzac 4, Flaubert 4, Molière 3. A record of sorts was set when 12 volumes of Allain and Souvestre's *Fantômas* were published in a single year, 1933. The most frequent translators were Kroders, Ezeriņš, Upīts and Virza (the last three being notable writers in their own right). Of these, Virza produced the most congenial translations since he mostly translated poets and writers close to his own stylistic taste. Translation from French included also around 10 Belgian titles, among them Simenon, and Charles de Coster's *Légende d'Ulenspiegel* translated by Jaunsudrabiņš (Kostērs, 1927). Interestingly, the same work was translated in an abridged version by another Latvian writer residing in the USSR, Sudraba Edžus (Kostērs de, 1936).

**Norwegian**, amazingly, was the fourth most frequent source language. Around 90 works were translated during the two decades, mostly Hamsun (collected works), Undset (collected works) and Ibsen. The main translators were Lizete Skalbe, Otto Krolls, Elija Kliene and Jānis Akuraters. Perhaps a similar mentality and literary taste was the reason, or perhaps the fact that some literary Latvians had emigrated to Norway after the unsuccessful 1905 revolution.

**Swedish** followed, with around 60 translations, many in the early 1920s, then a certain decline followed, and again an upsurge in the 1930s. The most popular writers were Lagerlöf, with 36 books (half of all the Swedish works translated, including her collected works in 15 volumes). Her translations were frequently also published in periodicals (Stepiņš, 1983: 47). Other popular authors were Strindberg, the Swedish-speaking Finnish writer Salminen and Axel Munthe whose *Story of San Michele* (Munte, 1935/6) reached three editions. It was, though, translated from English (the language of the original) by A. Upīts. Most of the translations from Swedish were done by Elija Kliene.

**Polish** was represented by over 40 titles, including the collected works of Sienkiewicz in 24 volumes.

**Italian** translations amounted to over 30, with a tendency to decline in numbers. It is noteworthy that Italian translations started early. Perhaps this was due to the fact that Italy was the first of the major powers to recognise the new Latvian state. Apart from Dante, there were quite a few small translations and plays. *La Divina Commedia* was published by the Ministry of Education in 1921 (Dante, 1921a). It was followed by a work dedicated to the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dante's death, containing learned articles on the poet in addition to his immortal work (Dante, 1921b). It was republished in a revised version in 1936 and 1937 (Dante, 1936, 1937). Some translations were done from German, some were free adaptations (Kollodi, 1924, Deledda, 1937). The main translators from Italian were Kroders, Grēviņš, Krolls, Kārklīšs, Māsēns, Diženajo, Lessiņa.

**Estonian** translations exceeded 30. Small booklets of stories by Tuglas were popular in the early 1920s, some translated by Rihards Bērziņš (Valdess) and Alfrēds Ķempis/e. Later came larger works by Tammsaare, translated by Zālīte. She was also the translator of the Estonian epic *Kalevipoeg* (1929).

**Finnish** accounted for over 30 translations. Zālīte translated many works. The Finnish epic *Kalevala* was done by Laicens (1924). Salminen (a Finn writing in Swedish) and Sillanpää were popular.

There were around 30 books translated from **Danish**, with Andersen's fairy tales dominating: regular issues of 14 titles and his collected works were translated by Apsīšu Jēkabs with the translator's comments, most were older translations, presumably from German.

**Czech** translations amounted to under 20, among them Hašek and Čapek were the most popular. Translations were usually done through an intermediary language and are not of high quality (see further). Belkovskis translated three works directly from Czech.

**Lithuanian**, although a related language and Latvia's neighbour, was translated less, with a total of 16 titles. A bulky Lithuanian prose anthology was published in 1935 (*Lietava sveicina*, 1935), containing short works by 73 authors, with three introductions, including one by the translator, Emilija Prūsa. However, the choice of authors was somewhat subjective and some stories were shortened. The translator's introduction apologised for these shortcomings, blaming haste and bad planning. Fairly numerous short stories and poems appeared in press and magazines.

**Spanish** was represented by about 15 titles, including several editions of Cervantes' *Don Quijote*. The first was an abridged version translated from Russian by Birznieks-Upītis (Servantes, 1924). Another abridged translation followed in 1937 (de Servantess, 1937), followed soon after by a full translation from Spanish (de Servantess, 1937–1938) by Konstantīns Raudive, who also published some other notable works by Unamuno, Blasco and Ortega.

**Hungarian** accounted for around 15 translations, most of which were translated using an intermediary language, usually German (Kermendijs, 1938), or even French (Feldes, 1937).

**Dutch:** 4 titles were published, of which Herman de Man's *The Rising Waters* translated from Dutch by Jonase received acclaim (de Mans, 1939)

Classical **Latin** translations always attracted much effort and attention. Many were translated with commentary for teaching purposes: works of Livy, Phaedrus, Cicero, Virgil and Caesar. Others were meant for general interest: Plautus (Ģiezens), Caesar, Horace (Straubergs), Ovid, Virgil and Apuleius. The translators were usually noted philologists.

More than 10 classical **Greek** authors were translated, mostly by Ģiezens, Straubergs and Garais: Aeschylus, Aristotle, Sophocles, Longus, Homer (*Iliad* and *Odyssey*), Xenophon, Plato, Socrates and Thucydides. These were generally translations from the original, except in a couple of cases when the translation gave the name of the translator and also stated that Straubergs had edited or compared it to the original Greek (Sofokla, 1920, Longa, 1927).

The 1920s also saw translations of Eastern classics, Chinese, Arabic, Persian and Japanese literature, broadening the readers' vision and experience. Some translations were done by experts in the relevant languages. P. Šmits, for example, had studied in China and translated **Chinese** tales (*Ķīniešu pasakas*, 1936); the verse of Sikong Tu was translated by Frīdrihs Lācis, who had returned from the Far East in 1935 (Sikun-Tu, 1937). Other translations were done using an intermediary language, usually German. For example, e.g. *The One Thousand and One Nights* was translated by Kroders (*Tūkstots un viena nakts*, 1938) with an introduction by Enno Littmann's (Littmann had published a German translation in six volumes in 1921–28).

There were several translations of **Japanese** literature. An early translation of Japanese poetry was published by Švābe, who had just returned from the Far East. Several books of Japanese fairy tales were published later. Japanese texts were also translated via German: the play *Das Kirschblütenfest* by Klabund (Klabunds, 1929) was translated from German by Kroders as *Ķiršu ziedu svētki*, Klabund being a pseudonym of Alfred Henschke, who had freely recreated Takeda Izumo's work.

## 5 TRANSLATORS

### 5.1 ORIGINAL WRITERS AS TRANSLATORS

Most educated people in the 1920s had a good knowledge of Russian or German, as they had used them to study in schools and universities. Having grown up in the cultural and linguistic world of these languages made it natural to use them as sources of translation and inspiration. Moreover, many notable Latvian writers

(Blaumanis, Rainis, etc.) actually started off by writing in a foreign tongue. The most notable trendsetter was the greatest Latvian poet and playwright Rainis, who started his literary career in the late 1880s with translations of Pushkin, Ibsen, Ovid and Burns. Later he translated several major works by Goethe, Schiller, Byron, Shakespeare, Maupassant, Dostoyevsky, Chekhov, Sudermann and others. His translation of *Faust* was hailed as a remarkable example of modern Latvian overcoming the ancient divide between its literary written language created by non-Latvians and the live spoken varieties. In his time Rainis often confessed that translations were a way of earning money and but he also clearly stated that translation was an exercise in language use and development: 'originals never exercise the deft use of language that translations do. One also exercises creation of new words.' (Rainis, 1986: 436) and 'original literature, then, will make use of the new ideas provided by translations, adapt them to the local conditions and appropriate (*piesavināt*) them for the nation' (*Literārais mantojums*, 1957: 42). Rainis also grew interested in Eastern thought and ancient poetry (Mongolian, Persian, Armenian, Indian, Chinese, etc.). These poems were translated using German as an intermediary language. In the last decade of his life Rainis translated also Calderon and Byron's *Cain*. Continuing the tradition (Veisbergs, 2014a), many masters of native Latvian literature still practised translation to hone the literary skills, to borrow ideas and, of course, to earn extra money. Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Latvian literary scene had converged with the contemporary European literature, it followed Western trends and was part of them. Individual authors aligned themselves with various imported literary trends. Often this meant adding an extra language (French, Italian, Norwegian). Translations were naturally the source of these ideas and leanings, and a way of honing their skills. Few notable Latvian authors have not been prolific translators; Akuraters translated Ibsen, Twain, Hebbel and Wilde; Valdess/Bērziņš translated Estonian literature; Valdis translated Gorky, Chekhov and Mérimée; Plūdons did German and Russian poetry and Nietzsche; Mauriņa translated Rolland, Undset, Dostoyevsky, Hardy and Camus; Ezeriņš translated Wilde, Stendhal and other authors, though it seems mainly from German; Rozītis did Russian literature, as well as Wilde; Sudermann, Longus's *Daphnis and Chloe*. The productive Latvian realist-naturalist novelist Upīts was as prolific in translating realists and naturalists Gogol, Krylov, L. Tolstoy, Flaubert, France, Heine, Wilde, H. Mann and Giovagnoli; Jaunsudrabiņš translated Hamsun, Maupassant and De Coster; V. Eglītis translated Bryusov; Virza translated Hugo, Flaubert and French poetry; Laicens translated the Finnish *Kalevala*, Arab tales and tales of Africa, Australia and the Pacific; Ādamsons did Wilde and Byron; Jānis Grots translated Sinclair, Wells, Hašek, Żeromski, Yesenin and Blok. Austriņš did Merezhkovsky, Tolstoy and Turgenev. Elīna Zālīte translated Tammsaare and other Estonians, as well as Kivi and other Finnish authors, plus some French works. Veselis translated Plutarch, Reymont, Zola, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. The poet Krūza translated Pushkin and Polish poetry. Arveds Mihelsons translated Dumas, Busch and Wolf, as well as some nonfiction by



Casson and Marden. The poet and literarian Kārlis Eliass had some translations from French and English. It is noteworthy that the greatest Latvian fairy-tale writer Kārlis Skalbe started with Wilde's tales, Ezeriņš, the greatest Latvian novella writer, began with translations of Boccaccio's novellas. As national writers on their own account they were freer in their translations, using Latvian better and respecting the source text less. Another reason why many outstanding native writers and poets turned to translation was the Latvians' voracious appetite for translated poetry. The nuanced novella writer Ezeriņš said of his translation of Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*: 'it had to be done in such haste that I am ashamed to put my full name to it.' He would not sin like that in the future, and turned to original writing (Egle, 1928: 356). The prominent critic Veselis was pretty damning about Ezeriņš's work: 'There is not much good to be said about his translations, of Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*: he did not translate from the original languages and therefore they include many mistakes, superficialities and incongruences with the authors' texts. Furthermore, there are several omissions in Wilde's novel (Veselis, 1925: 84).

## 5.2. PROFESSIONAL AND SEMIPROFESSIONAL TRANSLATORS

Apart from the notable Latvian writers and random and occasional translators, a number of professional translators gradually emerged, usually combining translation with some other literary work as critics, publishers and smaller-scale writers. These were accompanied by many learned professionals who translated in addition to their main activities. Thus, academic philologists, historians and philosophers frequently translated classical literature and philosophical works: Spekke translated Latin poetry, Straubergs – Greek and Roman classics, Pauls Dāle translated Baudelaire, Tolstoy and Lucian. The linguist and journalist Fricis Garais translated Socrates, Plato and Thucydides. Even the two native founding fathers of Latvian linguistics tried their hand at translation: Milenbahs (Mühlenbach) translated Homer's *Odyssey* before the war and Endzelins translated Tacitus's *Germania* (Tacita, 1938), demonstrating their understanding of proper translation and the proper use of Latvian.

A typical semiprofessional translator could be Sigurds Melnalksnis, who had studied law in France, worked in the Tariff Department of Riga City Council and translated Hugo, Dekobra, Goncourt and some plays from Russian.

Rudzītis employed many translators in his Grāmatu Draugs translation conveyor, the most prolific being Valdemārs Kārkliņš, Roberts Kroders, Elija Kliene, Lizete Skalbe, Zelma Krodere, Voldemārs Dambergs and Eduards Virza. Texts for translation and publication were often selected by the translators themselves. Kārkliņš, who was a friend and collaborator of Rudzītis, reported that they first ordered large amounts of books from abroad, then sorted them, chose the most interesting ones and translated them. Kārkliņš also worked for Zelta Ābele, where a totally different atmosphere reigned. While the first company was led by a modern and bold entrepreneur, the other by an aesthete. But he got along

with both (*Trimdas rakstnieki*, 1947: 100–102). Kārklīņš translated over 70 books in the period, mainly from German, English and Russian. He also translated non-fiction and biographies. Kārklīņš also edited and translated a popular encyclopaedia entitled *The Art of Life* (*Dzīves māksla*, 1932).

Roberts Kroders was a prolific translator of both fiction and nonfiction, in addition to his work as a theatre critic and occasional nonfiction writer. He translated around 80 works by various authors, among them Hamsun, Roland, Maupassant, London, Kellermann, Sienkiewicz and Schnitzler. Emils Feldmanis translated around 100 works from German and English, including most of Wallace's novels.

Valts Dāvids, who wrote also poetry, translated mostly Russian, German and English authors, including many works by Tagore, and also Shaw, Collodi, Barbusse, Benavente, around 30 titles in total.

Elija Kliene worked solely as a translator from Swedish and Finnish, later also from German, French and Russian.

Lizete Skalbe translated around 30 works, mostly Undset and Hamsun but also Thomas Mann, Sienkiewicz, Dreiser and others.

Alma Gobniece, a teacher, translated around 25 novels from Swedish and French, numerous novels by Lagerlöf as well as Verne, Sienkiewicz, Lichtenberger, Daudet, Maurois, Andrée and France.

Zelma Kroder(e) translated nearly 30 works by various authors, among them London, Thomas Mann, W. J. Locke, Bjørnson, Undset, Dickens and Kellermann.

Otto Krolls produced over 30 translations, among them Dumas, Kleist, Hamsun and Kipling.

Augusts Mežsēts, an occasional writer and publisher, translated many works by Maupassant, Dostoyevsky, Dreiser, Zola, Turgenev, Maurois, Locke, Byron, Hugo, and Bebetova. He also produced a rather poor translation of D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (Lorenss, 1934), identifying himself by the initials A. M. This translation merits additional attention for a number of reasons. Firstly, it may have been done from Russian (the original was published in 1928, the Russian translation in 1932, German in 1930). Secondly, it applied an inconsistent approach to the four-letter words that Lawrence uses frequently. They were usually omitted or softened, but were occasionally translated intact, especially in the sex scenes. As a result the sex scenes feel coarser than the original, while other passages are cleaner. Thirdly, there are also other omissions, many of them relevant: nature descriptions, socio-political matters, foreign names, which exemplify a defensive attitude (Robyns, 1994). Needless to say, the banning of the book was a clear act of defensiveness against the alien.

Kārlis Miltiņš translated about 40 works, 30 of which were Courths-Mahler's novels.

Alise Jureviča translated fewer than 10 books, mainly French authors Sand, Verne and Malot.

Olga Ence translated over 30 works, mostly German and Russian ones, Krizhanovskaya, Bebutova and Courths-Mahler.

Konstantīns Vilde translated around 20 works from German and English.

Kārlis Dziļleja (Dzelsskalns/Dzelzkalns), a writer and productive literarian, translated detective stories under the pseudonym in the early 1920s, and later did occasional German and Russian translations.

Kārlis Štrāls, initially a writer, turned increasingly to translation and during the period translated Thomas Mann, Lagerlöf and Mérimée.

Kārlis Freinbergs, a critic and lexicographer, translated around 25 works by Tolstoy, Chekhov, H. Mann, Molnár, Järviluoma, Rolland and Swift, and many less known plays.

The writer and theatre critic Valdis Grēviņš translated Twain, Lofting, Walpole, Voynich, Chapek, L. Tolstoy, A. Tolstoy, Sholokhov, Zoshchenko and Pushkin. Some translations were done together with his wife Anna Grēviņa.

Vitolds Žibelis, a journalist, worked mostly for Grāmatu Draugs, translating novels from French, English, German and Russian: Duma, Kellermann, Sudermann, London, Hardy, Wadsley, Keun and Krizhanovskaya.

Roberts Fogels, who had translated *Tarzan* series under the pseudonym Legofs in the 1920s, produced a handbook of good manners which was in fact a covert translation in the 1930s (*Labais tonis*, 1934).

Valdemārs Dambergs, a writer and playwright, translated Rostand, Goldoni, Balzac and Calderone.

Marija Āriņa did Griesinger, de Amicis, Kiss, Tolstoy and several Kellermann titles. She also produced numerous cookery books.

Anda Līvontāle translated six works from French, German and English. She also edited Punka's translation of Rolland's *Gandhi*, while her translation of Paul Morand was edited by Sudrabkalns.

Teodors Lejas-Krūmiņš, a writer, playwright and translator, translated various stories and tales in the early 1920s, later turning to Scandinavian literature, especially Hamsun.

Kārlis Egle, a bibliographer, critic and translator, worked mainly with English and Russian texts. When wounded in the First World War, he happened to be treated in American military hospital in Kiev, got friendly with the staff and learned and grew fond of English, even corresponding in English with his brother (Karulis, 1980: 14). He translated Wilde, Kipling, Shakespeare, Maupassant, Strindberg, Tolstoy, Kuprin, Gorky and numerous works of Tagore. In some translations, like Kipling's *Jungle Book*, he resorted to explanations when dealing with wordplay. He also frequently used rare words from local dialects (Beķere, 1988: 174).

His brother Rūdolfs Egle, a literarian, translated Lermotov, Shakespeare and Hauff.

Kārlis Krūmiņš produced over 20 translations, mostly from German and English.

## 6 TRANSLATION APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES

Translation approaches generally depended on the status of the book. Pulp fiction was very freely translated, with frequent omissions, cuts and changes. A note under the title often stated that it was a rewrite, reproduction or free adaptation. Quality books were usually translated carefully and close to the original text, applying the German fidelity principle. Older classical texts were usually translated by knowledgeable experts and translators, frequently with introductions by translators or experts.

The medium-range popular literature quality and strategies depended on the translator, some were well done, others were sloppy.

Popular reference and encyclopaedic works were translated freely, with adaptations, cuts and additions. Sometimes this was stated openly, for example, one popular encyclopaedia is labelled 'after the English C. H. Butcher's *Encyclopaedia of Popular Science*, compiled and supplemented by Alnis' (*Populār zinātniska enciklopēdija*, 1933). One work on modern man (Bekers, 1928) has a note on the title page reading 'translated from a German edition of 1927 and adapted to Latvian conditions'. No translator is mentioned. Sometimes the fact of translation could be inferred from references, as in the encyclopaedia entitled *The Art of Life* (*Dzīves māksla*, 1932), edited by Kārklīšs, providing advice on how to be successful in society, with volumes on tact, looks, beauty care, parties, speech, sex, sports, law, etc. The first page of each volume has a short list of foreign-named sources, revealing that it is in fact a creative compilation of translations. On the other hand, there are some localisation elements: some prices (of a fridge, for example) are given in lats, there is a chapter on Latvian furniture, etc. As such this hybrid work tears down the strict borderline between translation and original writing. The same hybridity can be seen in many universal or specialised encyclopaedias.

## 7 TRANSLATOR VISIBILITY

Translators gradually become more visible (Venuti, 1995) over the twenty years of Latvian independence. One obvious element of the translator visibility or voice is the paratexts, the translators' footprints (Paloposki, 2010), or the translator's hand (Mainberger, 2001). We can distinguish between textual, paratextual and extratextual visibility (Koskinen, 2000: 99). Paratextual visibility comprises all paratexts and additions, and extratextual or social visibility can be found outside the translation, for example, in press releases, criticism or interviews about the translation or translator.

The usual types of translation paratexts include the translator's name: whether it is present and prominent, and where it is displayed. Some translations feature prefaces or introductions by the translator. Footnotes have broader function in translation. They are occasionally viewed as a sign of a translator's

failure, as shameful, as a 'black sheep' (Grafton, 1999: 25). Endnotes are similar to footnotes. Side notes and marginal notes (marginalia) are usually used for specific purposes: cross-references or enumeration, or explanations of specific items. Glossaries, indexes and appendixes are rare.

The paratextual visibility of translators varied between different text types in the period under discussion. Some translations contain several types of paratext, others omit even the translator's name. There are translations not identified as such (usually adaptations), and translations posing as original works. The interwar period of Latvian independence saw a degree of stabilisation and the establishment of a certain hierarchy as regards the basic paratexts (Veisbergs, 2014a): serious translations give the translator's name, usually also mentioning the language of the original. If the work was deemed very serious, notes and an introduction by the translator could be expected. Nietzsche's *Thus spoke Zarathustra* translated by the outstanding Latvian poet Plūdons (Nīcše, 1939) carries a prominent statement '*Introduction and translation by V. Plūdons*' on the title page. The introduction discusses Nietzsche and the translator also delves into various issues of language and translation. This is pointed out in reviews, also noting that the 'translation is immaculately good and euphonious and testifies to the translator's richness of language and deep understanding of the author's work' (K. U., 1939: 21). Similarly the above-mentioned Lithuanian anthology had an introduction by the translator.

The classic novel *Truth and Justice* by A. H. Tammsaare was translated by the Latvian writer Elīna Zālīte (Tamsāre, 1937). Immediately beneath the title *Land and Love* come paratexts: '*An Estonian novel (in the original "Truth and Justice"), translated with the author's permission by Elīna Zālīte*'. The permission related to the change of title. This shows a translator taking responsibility and suggesting a change of title to the author, as well as putting herself in a prominent position.

The first volume of the complete works of Shakespeare, the only volume of the set ever actually published, has an extensive foreword by the publisher and compiler, dwelling also on translation issues and passing judgement on translations in other languages (*Viljama Šekspīra darbi*, 1938).

Sometimes only the translator's initials are used. This usually seems to be the case for pulp or easy-reading literature. S. Fowler Wright's novel *Prelude in Prague: The War of 1938*, written in 1934, was translated in 1939 (Faulers, 1939), the translator Kārlis Eliass identified as K. El. The same approach was used for works of dubious moral content (by the standards of the time): D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (Lorenss, 1934) is identified as translated from English by A. M. The book was banned on moral grounds, and the use of initials might have served to protect the translator. Incidentally, Lawrence's initials are given as D. G., suggesting that Russian was the intermediary language. Judging by Ezeriņš remark (see above), we might suppose some translators used the initials when they were not happy about the quality of the source text or their translation.



Pulp literature translations, the quality of which was often beyond remedy, were frequently entitled 'free reproductions', for instance many of Hedwig Courths-Mahler's novels, which were very popular (Kurths-Mahler, 1934a,b; Courths-Mahler, 1935). Amazingly, despite the large number of her books translated, the spelling of the author's name was unstable and even her sex was unclear. In the lower quality range, the above-mentioned *Old Wawerli* (*Old Wawerli*, 1923) dime novels name neither the author nor the translator.

Occasionally the wording is 'translated from the [language]', and in such cases the translator is never mentioned. The most usual term accompanying the translator's name is 'translated' or 'translation'. Sometimes other terms are used: 'Latvianised' (Milna, 1938), 'compiled in Latvian' (Bokatschio, 1925) or 'reproduced' (Kollodi, 1924, Kurts-Mahlers, 1934b).

Some of these issues were neatly expressed in an article by the lawyer Mežaraupa in 1937. She maintained that, when an author's name is transcribed in Latvian (which occasionally led to several different transcriptions), the original name should be provided on the title page, as well as the original title. The title should be precisely translated and not altered to suit subjective preferences or the demands of marketing. If translators want to express their ideas about the work or title, they should do so in the translator's introduction. Also, the language from which the work is translated should be mentioned. If the translation is abridged or changed, this should be pointed out as well. The translator's name should be mentioned on the title page, as this would also signal the quality of the translation. An introduction with information about when and where the original was published, any intermediate translation, some information on the author and his other works should be provided and the reasons for deletions or changes to the text explained (Mežaraupa, 1937). This is clearly in preparation for the implementation of the Berne Convention in 1938. Thus, this period seems to have established a relatively stable correlation between the seriousness of translation and the degree of translator visibility.

## 8 TRANSLATION CRITICISM

Literary criticism in general was quite extensive and elaborate during the two decades, with a host of specialised periodicals, and many others less specialised, providing commentary on literary topics and new publications. However, traditional Latvian translation criticism, put simply, followed the following pattern: some information on the author, a brief description of the plot, the writer's style, and a short sentence on translation quality, usually simply saying it was good or bad. In the latter case some examples of literal translation or of mistakes in Latvian were provided. For example, a translation of France's novel *Histoire comique*, translated as *Greizsirdība* (Jealousy) is briefly commented upon, as "not his best. The translation is faulty". Two "faulty" Latvian expressions are quoted (*Bibliogrāfija*, 1928: 1464). Broader issues such as textual similarity or

equivalence and real translation problems are normally not touched upon. Thus, in reviewing Atis Rolavs's translation of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, the notable philosopher P. Dāle states that it is a 'good translation' (Dāle, 1932). Flaubert's *The Temptation of St. Anthony* merits the following statement: 'Virza's translation is subtle. Instances of unclear or uncertain style are rare exceptions' (Sūna, 1924: 440). A translation of another Flaubert's novel, *Madame Bovary*, earns a few words as well: 'Jūlijs Roze's translation fully transmits the harmonious flow of Flaubert's sentences, the Latvian epithets are as substantial as the original ones. There could have been fewer spelling mistakes' (Veselis, 1926: 190). Ezeriņš' translation of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* gets one sentence: 'Wilde's means of expressions are well represented' (Jēkabsonu, 1921: 5). One review of France's *The Revolt of the Angels* succinctly comments: 'As a stylist France is wonderful. Sudrabkalns has managed to preserve some of the beauty of France's language in the translation' (*Anatols Franss*, 1926: 410).

Another review of three translations limits the analysis to blanket terms ('good', 'correct') and points out some mistakes in Latvian (Grāvītis, 1931: 200–201). An extensive review of a translation of Pearl Buck's *The Mother* is equally succinct: 'Compliments to the translator. The language is quite pure' (Kreicers, 1937: 301). The total focus on Latvian can be exemplified by Veselis's review of Charles de Coster's *The Legend of Thyl Ulenspiegel and Lamme Goedzak* translated by Jaunsudrabiņš (a notable Latvian writer). After a lengthy description of its marvels comes the sacred formula: 'Jaunsudrabiņš's translation is to be viewed as generally good, because his language is close to the people's language, clear and simple' (Veselis, 1928: 377). A lengthy review of Rolland's *Mahatma Gandhi* (Rolāns, 1930) in the translation by A. Punka gets an even more abrupt and ambiguous comment: 'The translation is rather careful' (Rudzītis, 1931: 26). In some cases the comment is even more superficial, thus Radziņš, writing about the translation of *The Story of Mankind* by Hendrik van Loon, notes that the book is 'translated by Roberts Kroders, who knows Latvian well' (Radziņš, 1932: 91). Virza as a translator earns one single remark: 'congenial translation by Virza' (*Tulkojumi*, 1938: 17). This term is not elaborated on and the congeniality is not discussed or proved.

The translation of the Estonian epic *Kalevipoeg* reaps many extensive reviews. In most, the translator is just mentioned under the title (Baumanis, 1929, Ligoņņu, 1930), one provides a comment ('excellent translation') (Zālītis, 1931) and only one, the writer Upīts, allots two sentences: 'As far as I can judge, without comparing it with the original, Elīna Zālīte's translation is to be recognised as careful and poetically euphonious. No doubt the desicated language pedants will crawl forth to point out instances of insufficiently literal translation' (Upīts, 1930: 147).

V. Dambergs (himself a translator), reviewing Romans's translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*, expands a bit more and states that it is a 'mistaken view that knowing a foreign language will more or less ensure a good translation, or to suggest that a good translation can come from a translator-poet or prosewriter-artist, even if

he does not know the original language'. The translation is characterised as too literal and some examples are provided (Dambergs, 1928: 26).

Frequently Latvian literature is contrasted to translations and there is a strong, often elitist, stance against the cheap books and their publishers: 'One-lats books lead to banalisation of books. They seduce readers with their attractive titles and provide shallow titillation. They are often unbearably bad translations of second and third-rate foreign authors' (*Ko jūrmalniēki uzzināja*, 1929). 'For more than ten years Grāmatu Draugs has flooded Latvia with its series. More than 90% of them were translations and retranslations. Of course, there were several outstanding authors and notable works among them, but a large part were such that they had no right to take up the Latvian reader's time and money' (Rudzītis, 1938: 1175). 'We often seek for pearls in the works of mediocre foreign writer, made even more unpalatable by bad translation, but do not read our own nation's works. Latvian writers are starving, but speculators publish pulp literature and earn a lot of money' (Students, 1930). Similarly, the Latvian author Līgotņū Jēkabs complains that 'our book market is flooded with bad translated literature, while our own writers works' are unknown to the people' (Līgotņū, 1929). Looking back from 1939, the Latvian poet Iklāvs again reiterates that 'since 1928, books suffered from a kind of inflation. Speculators who would sell their own mothers' hearts have turned the book into a prostitute by their greed for profit. In a way this was stimulated by the fact that we had not joined the Berne Convention. Books translated into an impossible language were on sale by the bushel for a few santims. The remarkably few good publications were swimming against this murky tide' (Iklāvs, 1939). Some others speak out against this stance, noting that the complainers have corporate interests, and saying that the one-lats publishers are accused of publishing poor books, but they are in fact by the world's most notable writers. And they are translated by well-known translators, like Kroders and Skalbe, who are certainly no fools. And the complaint that some translators do not know French but supposedly translate from it is rebuffed by a counter-argument: where are we to find someone who knows French? (*Māksla*, 1934: 5). The fact that many translations retain little of the original style is suggested by R. Egle speaking about a rare exception where 'in the flood of translations, it is the writer and not the translator who remains the author' (Egle R., 1924: 346).

Occasionally there is a hint of more than mere mistake-hunting. In the review of translation of *Tristan* by Thomas Mann, Mauriņa notes that it is 'a thoroughly musical novella, but there is little musicality left in the translation [...] It is not important if a phrase or two gets left out, but you should enter into the mood of the original and reproduce everything as an indivisible unity, poetically with your own words. In that way, the translation will read less like a translation' (Mauriņa, 1924: 53).

There are some rarer, more focused articles on translations in general. Juris Vidiņš, a journalist, writes a long article criticising the practice of changing titles to make them more attractive, thus Balzac's *La Femme de trente ans* was translated as *A Woman of a Dangerous Age*, Edmond Goncourt's *La Fille Elisa* as *The Woman's*

*Road of Suffering*. He attacks abridgements and omissions. He complains that *Don Quixote* is translated from Russian, Maupassant from German; also Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* and Undset's novels are not translated directly from the originals (the former was done by Ezeriņš). In his opinion, intellectuals should read books in the original. And second-rate literary translations are "unnecessary and harmful. Only the most select foreign litterati should be translated, only the greatest, and those should be translated well" (Vidiņš, 1932: 573–6).

In many ways a similar approach is seen in a long article by the prolific essayist, writer and translator Zenta Mauriņa. She is even more negative, stating that 'most of our translations have no value. They are false, they do not correspond to the original, they are not aesthetic. The style both internal and external, the language and even the choice of authors are beneath criticism. And they are not ethical, as it is immoral to provide the great authors in a mutilated form'. The art of translation has regressed in the postwar years. Translators have to find the golden mean between loyalty to the original and loyalty to the mother tongue. In the past, translations of the Classics were not necessary, as everyone who had been to secondary school knew Russian or German (there were no Latvian-language secondary schools, A. Veisbergs.). Now we will all become oiks if foreign language teaching is not increased. There is at present an epidemic of translation. Almost anyone who is not actually illiterate is writing translations'. She enumerates the cheap publishers where translators are not mentioned, book covers are abominable and are sold in huge print runs (6000 copies) due to advertising. Only Grāmatu Draugs and Gulbis could be excused, but even they produce a lot of pulp. Even the giants, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Rolland and France are published on the cheap, but there is an additional problem in that they have found no congenial translators. Great translators normally dedicate their efforts either to one master or to several masters of one style. If a translator translates different styles, nothing good can be expected. But in Latvia it is fragmented: Tolstoy is translated by Rucelis, Austriņš, Āriņa, K. Egle and Veselis. The same for Rolland: a motley crew of translators – Freinbergs, Kroders, Kārklīņš and Vīlīps. As a result the ingenious simplicity of Tolstoy will remain unknown to Latvians. Of course even the best translation can never be the same as the original. The relationship is that of a picture and a copy. But our translations are rough lithographs. She goes on to address omissions and provides examples in a translation of Claude Farrère, stating that not a single erotic or saucy word is omitted, but the 'boring' descriptions of countryside are. As a result it would be fairer to say Zelma Krodere had adapted or rewritten the work, not translated it. If it were translated back into French, the author would not recognise it (Mauriņa, 1928: 349–354).

Genuine analysis of a translation was extremely rare, and normally only happened when the translation was really bad. Thus Hašek's *The Good Soldier Švejk* ran in instalments in *Sociāldemokrāts* and was then published in book form (Hašeks, 1927–1929), translated by Jānis Grots. The analysis by Marta Grimma is devastating. She praises the decision to translate the work, but immediately

notes that it was done from Russian, and provides a host of Russicisms, Russian constructions and colloquialisms (some of these might have been deliberate, as most Latvians had served in the Russian army and army jargon mostly would have been Russian-based A. Veisbergs.). The translator has been careless, slapdash and arrogant. Mistakes are exemplified by comparing the Czech original to the translation. She has also discovered that the Russian source is in fact a translation from German, and that the Latvian translation bears precious little similarity to the original as a result. Hašek's particular style of humour is totally lost or it has been banalised. Grots has essentially failed (Grimma, 1928: 766–768).

The volume of Shakespeare, by various translators, is recognised as having the best available translations. The critic Vipers dwells on the different rhythmic structures of the original and the translations, which deprives the latter of equivalence, of Shakespeare's fluent and original charm. Adamovičs's old translation of *Richard III* is viewed as the best, it is 'precise and powerfully translated', apart from some unnecessary localisation of proper names. Others have more problems and then the critic falls into the usual trap of enumerating errors in Latvian (Vipers, 1938: 983–990).

A similar approach can be seen in Rudzītis's criticism of the Old French epic poem *La Chanson de Roland* as translated by Jēkabs Saiva. It is a considerably shortened variant with explanations and elements of reproduction filling the gaps. The translation is 'sometimes rather free. But otherwise it is creditable. The language throughout is euphonious and easy to read'. It would be even more creditable if it respected the original form more, but that seems to be impossible. However, shifting the tonic stress of Latvian words for the sake of rhyme is wrong (Rudzītis, 1936: 364–365).

Aside from literary criticism, there was an extensive discussion of legal translations, as new Latvian legislation was often formulated on the basis of older Russian or German laws. Accordingly, many legal language issues were of practical and immediate concern. In one such discussion on a compilation of old laws in translation (mainly of historical interest), the eminent historian, lawyer, philologist and translator Professor Arveds Švābe produced a detailed and devastating criticism, adding some remarks on translation in general: 'Three things must be demanded from every translator: 1. he should have a full command of the language of the original; 2. he should have a specialised education in the domain of the work to be translated, as otherwise he will never fully understand it; and 3. he should have a general literary education, or at least a practical command of his mother tongue, as otherwise the translation will have no literary value. Judging by his work, Mr Lauva [the translator] does not possess these qualities' (Švābe, 1933: 276).

As stated before, translation criticism generally failed to overcome a limited focus on linguistic mistakes. This trait was noticed and decried by an eminent Latvian émigré linguist, referring not only to translations: 'it seems ridiculous to me that, when describing some newly published book, the critic's short review



says not a word about the author's stylistic features, but insists on emphasising language mistakes (accusations which often turn out to be totally misguided anyway)' (Rūķe-Draviņa, 1976).

## 9 MICRO TRANSLATION AND LINGUISTIC ISSUES

The language of translations is naturally varied. While many serious works are translated with care and imagination, the translators showing their dexterity in Latvian, others are stylistically poor, often deviate from the normal Latvian owing to interference, and sometimes there are errors of spelling and grammar. Generally speaking, the finer and more sophisticated the original texts, the better the translation. There are, however, many exceptions to this general rule. In addition, native Latvian writers of substance have tended to provide better translations than the occasional and unprofessional (often novice) translators doing a book or two.

A factor to be taken into account when judging the quality of a translation, and its loyalty to the original, is the source language. With intermediary languages, as noted by some critics (see above) the differences were sometimes quite substantial, as much was lost at each stage of translation. An example is, *Švejk*, translated into Latvian from a Russian translation of a German translation of the original. On the other hand, it was only to be expected that the new nation would not have enough talent for rarer and more remote languages. In such cases, a quality translation from Russian or German would be a good second choice, as can be seen from some remarkably good translations, for example *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Generally, the combination of a sound command of the original language and a talented translator (usually a writer himself, such as Virza) would provide a good or excellent result.

With technical and LSP language, translators faced real problems. Latvian terminology was often nonexistent or patchy and many new terms had to be coined. These usually took the form of loans or loan translations, which occasionally were successful but often sounded alien. Interference was rife in lower-end translations, and the reader can often conclude after reading a page or two that the book is not translated from French, Italian, etc. as stated on the title page, but from Russian or German, since the text bears all the hallmarks of those languages.

Some translations were done into antiquated Latvian. Thus, Andrejs Upīts attacks Roberts Bērziņš (a poet, who seems to have translated only this novel) whose translation of Sudermann abounds in phrases from the previous century: the use of *no* (loaned from German *von*) and other linguistic oddities 'seem to have crept out of the covers of some long-forgotten prayerbook in the Consistory's archives' (A. U., 1927: 207). Upīts concedes that cheap books often have superficial translators but remarks that, if the translator is well known and not desperately short of money, a correct translation should be expected.

A translation of the Ancient Greek Thucydides by Fricis Garais (Tūcidids, 1930) is peppered with 'Germanisms and Russicisms and archaisms', and 'it seems the translator is frozen in time 30–40 years ago' (Gailīte, 1931: 1384).

After the spelling reform, spelling was inconsistent and there were naturally many deviations from the correct forms. *Richet* is spelled as *Rišejs* (should be *Riše*), *Mirabeau* as *Mirabojs* (should be *Mirabo*), *Lavoisier* as *Lavuāzjējs* (should be *Lavuāzjē*), etc. However, *Curie* is correct as *Kiri* and *Thierrie* as *Tjeri*. *Bologna* has two spellings, *Boloņja* and *Boloņa* (Gailīte, 1931).

Thus, in a history of civilisation translated from French (Rišejs, 1931) there is confusion about the *French* and the *Franks*, the *Etats-Généraux* is translated as *generālkārtas* instead of *vispārējā kārtu pārstāvju* (sapulce), but the French phrase is added in brackets and helps the reader to understand.

Occasionally translators overuse foreign loans. Occasionally they try to make translations loan-free. The first is commented on in a review of translation of Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*: 'nacionālu konvulsiju gadījumā', 'neraugoties uz sava kompanjona steigu' which are inappropriate for a story set in the 12<sup>th</sup> century (A. V., 1926: 159). The origin of such slips can be found in interference.

In translating Botho von Keyserlingk's *Monte, der Rebell* (Keizerlings, 1937) the translator coins many new words: *noredze*, *atceļš*, *iegansts*, *atbrīve*, *uzkoda*, *skadināt*, *apkopa*, *ārdava valoda*, *apslāga*, *atriebe*, *dāvācis*, *noceļš*, *atstātne*, *svētīzdare*, *kailatne*, etc. As pointed out by the critic Lapiņš, some of them go on to establish themselves in literature (Lapiņš, 1937: 894).

Occasionally translators were linguistically bold, experimental or indoctrinated. Thus, the young philologist Ieva Celmiņa's translation of Agnes Sapper's *Die Familie Pfäffling*, that had been extremely popular in Germany, localised it as the linguists demanded, making heavy use of the Mühlenbach-Endzelins dictionary, in addition to words and expressions from Latvian fairy tales. The result is somewhat strange. But it was appreciated by the critics. 'Such Latvianisation can be accepted and recognised only by teachers of Latvian, a few literarians and the new unconservative generation of schoolchildren. However, school alone is enough for the impetus towards the Latvian and scientific to overcome obstinate conservatism. Ieva Celmiņa's Latvianized *Cīrulīši* shows a carefully cultivated style. Many will need time to get used to it, and to my ear it occasionally sounds strange and unusual' (Grīns, 1936: 561). The critic delves into the minute details of word formation and semantics used by the translator. Interestingly when she had approached the same critic before starting the translation she had been advised not to translate the book as the story was so dumb (Celmiņa, 1988: 144).

Some translations involved serious terminology work, an example being the 19<sup>th</sup>-century German zoologist Alfred Brehm's *Tierleben* (Brēms, 1927–28, 1935–36). Translating *Tierleben* involved an enormous text, (6000 pages long, slightly abridged for translation) with a lot of new translation challenges, involving zoological terminology that was often unknown to the Latvian reader.

Philosophy works, too, posed great linguistic challenges. Translating Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kants, 1931–1934) necessitated the coining of highly sophisticated new terms previously unused in Latvian. The critic points out some linguistic fallacies in this case: *Kontinuität* and *kontinuierlich* are wrongly translated as *vienmērība* and *vienmērīgs*, instead of the more correct *nepārtrauktība* and *nepārtraukts*. *Einerleiheit* should be *identitāte* or *tāpatība* and not *vienādība*, which is German *Gleichheit* (Stūrītis, 1932). Some attention is paid to differences or similarities of metre. Thus, commenting on the linguist Arvēds Švābe's translation of Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha* (Longfelou, 1937), Kārlis Eliass pointed out that Longfellow used trochaic metre under the influence of *Kalevala*, which sometimes goes against the euphony of English. 'William Matthews has testified that the Latvian translation is more euphonic than the original because the trochaic metre is exactly suitable for Latvian' (K. El., 1938).

Finally, individual translators had their own idiosyncrasies. Thus, publisher Rudzītis notes that Lejaskrūmiņš used a lot of compounds and would not allow them to be removed: *gadunasta, mūžavakars, maldutaka, cīņaslauks* (Rudzītis, 1997: 113).

## 10 SOME CASE STUDIES

An interesting comparison of translation strategies can be made when one and the same work has been translated by different translators within a short period. Thus, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde was translated by the Latvian novella master and translator Ezeriņš in 1921 (Uailds, 1921) (serialised in *Latvijas Sargs*, 1920) and by the professional translator and critic Roberts Kroders in 1933 (Uailds, 1933). It is worth noting that the first was published by Ansis Gulbis, who preferred quality and the second by Grāmatu Draugs, which was more of a business venture (Kroders' translation has a fair amount of spelling mistakes). Neither translation names the source language, but the linguistic analysis of wordplay and rendering of proper names points towards Ezeriņš translating from German and Kroders from Russian. They may have consulted the English original as well. Italian *Giambattista Cibo* is translated by Kroders as *Džionbattiste Čibo* (Russian *Джанбаттиста Чубо*), and *Džovanni Čibo* by Ezeriņš (German *Giovanni Battista Cibo*). *Agate of India* is translated by Kroders as *Indiešu agats* (Russian: *индийский агам*), while Ezeriņš uses the correct *Indijas ahāts* (German: *Indischer Achat*). English *antidote* is translated by Kroders as *pretinde* (Russian: *противоядие*), Ezeriņš uses *neitralizēs visas indes* (German: *ein sicheres Gegenmittel gegen Gift*). The English idiom *to go to the dogs* is translated by Ezeriņš as *zeme esot sabrukuma priekšā* (Russian: *страна идет к гибели*), Kroders goes for a calque *zeme būs laupījums suņiem* (German translation: *England komme auf den Hund*). Another fragment containing key words *handsom with a good horse, driver and sovereign* is translated by Kroders *kēbs ar labu zirgu, važonis, zelta nauda* (Russian *кеб с хорошей лошадью, кучер, соверен*). Ezeriņš uses *važonis ar veiklu zirgu, zelta gabals* (German *Droschke mit einem kräftigen Pferd, ein Goldstück*).

However, English *gourds* is translated by Kroders as *ķirbisi* (German *Kürbisse*), instead of the correct Latvian *ķirbji*.

Similarly interesting is the comparison of two translations of Giovagnoli's *Spartaco* done in the same year (Dšchiowaniola, 1932; Džovaņoli, 1932). The first is in the old Gothic script and 200 pages long. It is massively shortened and simplified, places rich in proper names are cut out, the end is also transfigured through omissions. The second amounts to 559 pages, is poetic and metaphoric and has an introduction by the translator A. Upīts expostulating Marxist vision of slavery and Spartacus.

## CONCLUSIONS

Latvia's brief period of independence (1918/20–1940) saw book publishing on a massive scale. Latvia ranked second in Europe in terms of book publications per capita and boasted a developed translation industry. The range of source languages was growing, with English slightly ahead of German in the pre-war years (German was also the main intermediary language), and French and Russian following. This was a change from the total dominance of German as source and intermediary language until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The literature translated was also extremely varied, as was quality. Print runs were not very long: 2793 in 1938 when 1601 titles were produced. The percentage of translations seems to fluctuate widely. It stood at 17.8 per cent in 1938. German and Russian occasionally functioned as intermediary languages. Yet, this figure is much larger when the size of the works translated is considered. Thus, in the domain of novels, translations always numerically surpassed native production.

A large number of translators were also writers in their native Latvian, many were highly notable ones, but members of other professions frequently produced specialised translations as well. Some individuals gradually became professional translators from the favourite source languages. The choice of works to be translated was very much in the hands of translators and publishers, who in turn thought of marketing interests. With the advent of one-lats books, print runs grew longer and high-quality literature became accessible to a broader public.

Translator visibility grew over time and depended on the status of the work translated. Visibility was high for high-quality texts and lower for the lower end (usually zero for pulp literature).

Generally the quality of both source texts and translation rose; pulp literature gradually disappeared, to be replaced by semi-sensational and glamorous books. Of course, the pulp literature of the 1920s was still in circulation due to the long print runs. With the advent of the authoritarian system in 1934, the media and the general drift of public thought also moved in the direction of more substantial and classical values.

Translation criticism remained very limited, mainly focusing on the quality of Latvian, and lambasting pulp-literature translation in general.

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