

THE BALTIC BOOK CONTACTS: TRANSLATIONS OF LATVIAN AND LITHUANIAN LITERATURE IN THE ESTONIAN BOOK PRODUCTION

AILE MÖLDRE

Institute of Information Studies, Tallinn University,
Narva maantee 25, 10120 Tallinn, Estonia
E-mail: aile@tlu.ee

In the light of differing views on the development of the common Baltic identity, based on analogous historical, political, economic and cultural features, the paper studies its manifestation through translations from the Latvian and Lithuanian languages into Estonian. The analysis is based on a catalogue of translations, which has been compiled with the help of bibliographies and bibliographic databases. A statistical analysis of the data is used to establish the most active periods of translation publishing, the most popular authors and genres. The first book translation from Latvian dates back to the 18th century, whereas the first book translated from Lithuanian was issued in 1954. Until 1918 when all the three nations gained independence, cultural exchange in this region embraced only the historical Baltic provinces. Lithuania emerged in the cultural space of Estonians more intensively since the 1930s. The most productive period in translating Latvian and Lithuanian literature was the Soviet period when the Baltic unity reached its peak. After regaining independence, the feeling of Baltic identity has diminished alongside with the decline in publishing of books translated from Latvian and Lithuanian.

Key words: Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, the Baltic states, Baltic identity, translations, publishing, book production.

INTRODUCTION

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are often treated under the geopolitical denominator “the Baltic states”. This concept is related to other issues such as Baltic unity and Baltic identity. The latter is based on the shared elements of the general geographic-historic-political-cultural experience [31, 12]. At the same time, the historical development of the three countries up to the beginning

of the 20th century was quite different and obtained clearly similar features only in 1918 when all of them became independent for the first time. Since 1918, the similarity of historical development has continued up to the present time when Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are facing similar problems and share similar aspirations for the future.

Nowadays, after regaining independence, the concept of Baltic identity is sometimes

questioned and characterised as a ghost from the Soviet times [1, 21]. Arguments contrary to the idea of common Baltic identity make the point that there is no such thing as the Baltic region and, as a consequence, there can be no Baltic identity. In the 1990s, Estonia and Lithuania protested publicly against labelling them as the Baltic states with the former aspiring to be considered a Nordic country and the latter stressing its position as a Central European state. The unity of the Baltic states was called to be a mere fiction that only exists in the minds of Western politicians [5, 59–60].

In the light of such controversial arguments, the paper aims at establishing the key trends in the development of cultural exchange between these countries, represented in the publication of books translated from the Latvian and Lithuanian languages into Estonian. It looks at the history and structure of the translations: when the first translations from Latvian and Lithuanian into Estonian were published, how extensive the translating activity was, how the number of translated books has changed over time, whether there are any differences in the development of translation of Latvian and Lithuanian literature, which genres and authors have been the most popular, or, shortly, what we can find out about the contacts among the Baltic states on the basis of book production in the Estonian language.

The Latvian and Lithuanian languages belong to the Baltic group of the Indo-European languages, thus being close to each other. Estonian is the Finno-Ugric

language and is closest to the Livonian and Votic languages.

The historical development is divided into several periods, mainly based on political history and the development of book production. From the 18th century till 1918, the Baltic countries were all part of the Russian Empire. The first period under study enfolds the end of the 18th century and the 19th century, when the first texts were translated from Latvian and Lithuanian, but their number was still very small (as was the general number of books issued in Estonian). The beginning of the 20th century (1901–1917) was the period of unprecedented development in all fields of life – industry, agriculture, political activity, education and culture. Estonians made a significant step towards becoming a civilised nation in the Western tradition. These were also the years of a notable increase in the Estonian book production. While during the above-mentioned periods Estonia was part of the Russian Empire, the next period – 1918–1940 – includes the independent Republic of Estonia. During the following first year of the Soviet occupation (in 1940–1941) and the German occupation (in 1941–1944), translations from Latvian and Lithuanian were published mostly in periodicals; therefore, no special section is devoted to these years, and the treatment of the topic continues with the period of the second Soviet occupation (1944–1990). Estonia regained independence in August 1991. The statistical analysis includes publications of this year in the Soviet period.

The latest period starts from the regaining of independence in 1991 and studies the trends of translation publishing until 2008.

The identification of the general trends is based on the statistical analysis of a catalogue of translations from the Lithuanian and Latvian languages. According to Anthony Pym's terminology presented in his book "Method in Translation History" [28, 42], a catalogue is a list aiming at maximum completeness. The compiling of catalogues is an aspect of translation archaeology, which in its turn forms part of translation history.

A catalogue includes translations published as separate books and enfolded all types of literature, first and re-editions published in the Estonian language in Estonia as well as the few publications published in Estonian outside Estonia. Besides the analysis of the translated books, translations published in periodicals are also briefly discussed, mainly while studying the earlier periods when periodicals were a more important channel for publishing translations.

The translations have been located with the help of different bibliographies and bibliographic databases. Among the most comprehensive sources is the list of fiction, poetry and drama translated from Latvian, which is included in the book *Latvieši, igauņi un lietuvīši: literārie un kultūras kontakti* (Latvians, Estonians and Lithuanians: Literary and Cultural Contacts), which was issued by the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia in Riga in 2008 [19, 226–283]. The list is arranged by authors and includes publications from

the second half of the 19th century till 2007. The publication includes also an article on literary contacts between Latvia and Estonia by Anneli Mihkeleva [19, 859–949]. This work, however, does not study non-fiction publications. Translations of non-fiction have been identified with the help of the Estonian national bibliography database ERB (<http://erb.nlib.ee/>) and online catalogue ESTER (<http://ester.nlib.ee/search/>), which is the union catalogue of the Consortium of Estonian Libraries Network. An overview of cultural contacts between Estonians and Latvians, including translations from Latvian issued in the Estonian language, has been presented in an article by Oskar Kuningas, published in the literary journal *Looming* in 1983 [18]. O. Kuningas was himself active in translating Latvian fiction during the Soviet period.

Major retrospective bibliographies covering the periods 1525–1850, 1851–1900, 1901–1917 and 1941–1944 have been used as sources for identifying translations from the Lithuanian language [9; 10; 11; 7]. In addition to printed bibliographies, the above-mentioned national bibliography database and online catalogue ESTER were used to obtain more specific data. Data on translations from Lithuanian, issued in periodicals during the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century (up to 1944), have been identified with the help of the general analytical retrospective bibliography of Estonian periodicals of the Estonian Literary Museum. The systematic file of the bibliography is preserved in the Bibliography

Department of the Archival Library of the museum.

Translations published in the independent Republic of Estonia in 1918–1940 are presented in the bibliography included in the exhibition catalogue of Latvian and Lithuanian literature in the Estonian language, published by the National Library of Estonia in 1990 [23].

Translations from Lithuanian, issued during the first decades of the Soviet period (in 1940–1975) have been listed in the diploma paper by Mare Lohk [22], defended in the Tallinn Pedagogical Institute in 1979. Data on later years of the Soviet period and the period after regaining independence in 1991 can be found in the bibliographies of translations enfolding the years 1976–1980, 1981–1985 and 1986–1990 [25; 26; 8] as well as in the national bibliography database ERB. Translations issued in periodicals have been identified from the current analytical bibliography *Artiklite ja Retsensioonide Kroonika* (The Chronicle of Articles and Reviews) of the Soviet period [3].

Translations of literature for children are assembled in the bibliography *Estonian children's literature in Latvian and Lithuanian; Latvian and Lithuanian children's literature in Estonian* compiled by Andres Jaaksoo and issued in 2008 [14]. It includes all translations published as separate books as well as translations issued in periodicals.

Statistical data on the translations of the Soviet period (title output, share of different literatures) have been elaborated on the basis of the statistical yearbooks of Estonian print

production including the years 1961–1990 [6].

The lists have been used to plot the distribution of translations over time and for establishing the activity of various agents in the translation process. Additional data have been obtained by analysis of articles from periodicals and collections of articles. The latter have contributed to the explanatory analysis of the statistical data.

THE BEGINNING OF LITERARY CONTACTS DURING THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES

Literary contacts between Estonia and Latvia date back to the beginnings of Estonian prose at the end of the 18th century. The book *Juttud ja tegud* (Stories and Tales) by the Baltic German author Friedrich Wilhelm von Willmann (1782) was largely based on the translation from Latvian of Gotthard Friedrich Stender's book *Jaukas Pasakkas un Stahsti* (Pleasant Tales and Stories) issued in 1766 [18, 1204]. It gained a wide popularity and was reprinted three times (1787, 1804, and 1838) with nearly a third of its stories becoming a part of folk tradition.

Although contacts between Estonian and Latvian intellectuals were relatively frequent since the second half of the 19th century when many Latvian intellectual leaders studied at the Tartu University, the number of book translations was quite modest. The first translation from Latvian in the 19th century represented the popular genre of sentimental novels. *Wagga neitsit Mai Roos* (The Pious Virgin Mai Roos), issued in 1865, enfolds a

tragic love story which took place in Livonia (contemporary Latvia). The plot is based on the events described in legal records of the court from the beginning of the 17th century [24]. It is noteworthy for enriching the books for common people with local topics, which fostered its success among readers. The original text of the novel was written by the Baltic-German author Philipp Adalbert Cammerer under the title *Jungfrau von Treiden*. The Estonian translation is based on the Latvian version of this story (*Turaidas jumprava*) adapted by Juris Dauge [11, 85]. Censorship prohibited the re-edition of this book in the 1860s, but the intense interest of readers led to a secret re-edition in the 1870s [24]. The great popularity of sentimental literature based on “true stories” extended till the turn of the century. The unhappy love story of Mai Roos was published in six re-editions by four different publishers in the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. For example, the text was issued twice in 1891, one of the publications being a retranslation.

Another example of the publications of the 19th century, the pamphlet *The Way to Happiness, or How to Get Rich* by an unknown author from 1866, could be called an early version of self-help. In the foreword, the translator Mats Grant, an Estonian peasant who had studied in Salacgriva in Latvia, explains to a pious reader, who trusts in God and questions the necessity of any “dishonest” measures, that all his advice is based on the fear of God. The reader is, for instance, encouraged to work hard, keep

one’s word, dress nicely, eat healthy food, avoid gambling and borrowing money, which all sound as universal and up-to-date recommendations. He also translated from the Latvian language a story by the German author Christoph von Schmid, issued in Tartu in 1868.

Carl Robert Jakobson, one of the leaders of the Estonian national awakening, translated two pamphlets on shipping by Krišjanis Valdemārs, the leading figure among Young Latvians, who had studied at the Tartu University. The texts were written in German and Russian, and translations into Estonian were issued in 1868 and 1878.

The rise in literary contacts between Latvians and Estonians occurred during the 1890s when both Latvian and Estonian authors moved towards critical realism which reflected their joint social endeavours. Eduard Vilde, then a young promising author and later a classic of Estonian realistic literature, translated short stories by the Latvian author Rudolfs Blaumanis, using the German language. These texts were published as a separate book under the title *Õlest katuse all* (Under the Straw Roof) in 1892. This publication is noteworthy for being the first book by Blaumanis ever published. He, like Vilde, later acquired the status of the most distinguished national writer and playwright.

Altogether, six titles by Latvian authors were published in nine editions in the second half of the 19th century, representing quite different types of content.

Since the 1890s, Estonian periodicals also started issuing translations of Latvian poems and prose. The first translations from the Lithuanian language date back to the same years when two texts were issued in periodicals. The first translation was a folk song issued in 1887. The next translation followed after ten years. It was a story by the Lithuanian writer and lawyer Antanas Kriščiukaitis who published under the pen-name *Aišbė*. His stories were quite popular at that time, and he was considered an outstanding contemporary writer.

1901–1917 – DEVELOPMENT OF CONTACTS WITH LATVIAN LITERATURE

The contacts with Latvia intensified in the socially fertile atmosphere of the beginning of the 20th century. According to the words of the well-known Latvian writer Janis Rainis, the revolution of 1905 joined Latvian and Estonian fighters into a united front [18, 1206]. After its suppression, many Estonian and Latvian participants of the revolutionary events met in the West where they had fled to avoid repression. The publishing of translations of Latvian literature also increased.

Table 1. Book titles translated from Latvian in 1901–1917

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| Fiction | 10 (42%) |
| Drama | 11 (46%) |
| Non-fiction | 3 (12 %) |
| Total | 24 (100%) |
| Titles per annum | 1.41 |

Twenty-four book titles, including two re- editions, were issued in the beginning of the 20th century (Table 1).

Works by Andrievs Niedra (eight titles) and Rudolfs Blaumanis (six titles) dominated the selection. A. Niedra (written Andreevs Needra in the old Estonian spelling system) was the author of stories and plays as well as political pamphlets with an anti-revolutionary message, warding off riots in countryside, factories and attacks against the church. Two of these publications were issued by the author himself, and he asked the Committee of Estonian Nobility to help to distribute them [27].

Drama was the most favoured genre among the translations, and its share slightly outweighs the share of fiction. In the general book production, however, the share of drama was more modest. Fiction for adults formed 27% (285 titles) of all the publications of Estonian belles-lettres, whereas the share of drama for adults was 14% (144 titles). The same applies to the proportions of translated literature: the share of fiction was 68% (757 titles) and of drama 32% (361 titles). The notable share of drama in translations from Latvian is due to the popularity of plays by Latvian playwrights, above all, by Rudolfs Blaumanis, one of the founders of Latvian drama. He was among the favourite authors of the translator Mart Pukits who translated nearly all the books by Latvian writers published in Estonia at that time. It is noteworthy that in the beginning of the 20th century, texts by Latvian authors were translated directly from the Latvian lan-

guage, without using the German or Russian languages as intermediaries.

The demand in plays is connected with the abundance of amateur theatre groups which had been established by numerous societies. The movement of societies became especially active in the 1880s–1890s. The plays presented by amateurs formed an important part of public evening parties organised by societies in order to earn money for their activities. Nearly a hundred amateur groups were active in the countryside around 1905, and there were several drama societies in the cities, all needing repertoire [29, 574]. At the same time, the population of Estonia was only about 958,000 inhabitants [17, 245]. Part of plays for theatre groups were copied on a hectograph in small print run (less than a hundred copies), but this was not the case with translations of Latvian plays.

The share of translations of belles-lettres from Latvian in the general production of translations during this period was very small (2%), but it is equal to the translations of, for example, Scandinavian belles-lettres (translations from Danish 2%, Norwegian 2%, Swedish 1,5%). As a comparison, it could be pointed out that the largest share of translations was made from German literature, forming 35% of all translations (390 titles). This is due to the long-lasting dominance of German culture in this area. Translations from Russian followed with 15% (168 titles). Russian culture was the leading culture of the whole empire. The role of translations from Russian was intensified by the Russification reforms carried out at

the turn of the century. The share of translations from English and French (together with French-language Belgian) literature was 6% (both 68 titles). The literary movement *Noor Eesti* (Young Estonia), aiming at moulding Estonian culture upon European patterns and reducing the German and the Russian influence, organised the translation of English and French literature. The magazines of this movement also included articles on the rising cultures of the neighbouring countries, including Latvia. It was notable, though, that most of the writers who were discussed in the magazines had not yet been translated into Estonian.

Thus, publication of Latvian fiction became regular in 1901–1917 when it was published both in books and in periodicals, and the range of translated authors became broader. At the same time, there was no development in the publication of translations from Lithuanian neither book translations nor translated texts in periodicals were issued during this period.

THE TIGHTENING OF TIES DURING INDEPENDENCE (1918–1940)

In 1918, all the three countries became independent. The common struggle for freedom and similar tasks in building the state formed the basis for future cooperation. Due to the feeling of outside danger, the striving for political contacts was stronger at the beginning of the 1920s; later, the relations weakened. In the field of culture, however, the contacts gradually strengthened. Cooperation among intellectuals from

Table 2. Book titles translated from Latvian in 1918–1940

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Fiction | 14 (35%) |
| Drama | 16 (40%) |
| Children's literature | 7 (18%) |
| Non-fiction | 3 (7%) |
| Total | 40 (100%) |
| Titles per annum | 1.73 |

the three countries at non-governmental level was quite intensive. Joint congresses and conferences of teachers, physicians and representatives of other professions were organised frequently [5, 61].

Publishing of translations from Latvian became regular since the end of the 1920s. Forty book titles were published in all (Table 2). These books included works by 21 writers; most of them were represented by one or two titles. Rudolfs Blaumanis remained the most popular Latvian author with five publications of plays and the collection of stories *Surma varjus* (In the Shadow of Death; original title *Nāves ēnā*).

Plays continued to be the most favoured genre, issued mostly by Taavet Mutsu's Theatrical Publishing House (T. Mutsu Teatrikirjastus) and the Estonian Union of Education (Eesti Haridusliit) which specialised in plays for school drama circles. Other publishers, counting eleven publishing houses in all, issued mostly one or two titles. On the whole, the number of translated books was not big, which could be explained by a low interest of the publishing houses which

had doubts about the economic success of these translations [18, 1206].

There is no comprehensive statistics on the translations of this whole period, but data from 1934–1940 [34, 45–46] demonstrate that the English language dominated as the source language of belles-lettres translations. Translations from English comprised 43% of all translations of literary texts. This is in accordance with the general political and cultural orientation to Great Britain. At the same time, quite a large share of these translations represented light reading criticized fiercely in contemporary literary press which was protesting against the flood of pulp fiction. The popular ideas of Balto-Scandinavian cooperation are reflected in the growing number of translations of Scandinavian literature, forming 14% of all the translations of belles-lettres. Close ties and cultural cooperation with Finland led to an active translation of Finnish literature which formed 5% of all the translations. The share of translations from German was limited to 8%. Estonian intellectuals had drifted away from the German influence already since the beginning of the 20th century, but for political reasons the anti-German attitude increased, especially in the 1930s. The share of translations from French formed also 8% and from Russian 7%. Translations from Latvian comprised a much smaller share with 2% of all the translations. Still, their selection included some noteworthy publications. For example, Estonian readers had a chance to get acquainted with the works by Janis Rainis when his tragedy *Joosep ja tema*

vennad (Joseph and his Brothers; original title *Jāzepe un viņa braļi*) was published by the Estonian Literature Society in 1928. Rainis, the greatest Latvian poet, had been famous in Latvia as far back as at the end of the 19th century, but he remained practically unknown in Estonia. Karl Aben, the translator of this play, became the other leading translator from Latvian beside Mart Pukits. Mart Pukits translated the prose poem *Straumeni* by another great poet, Edvards Virza, in 1938. This remarkable work, published under the title *Taevedel* (Ladder to Heaven), was quite different from Estonian rural literature and represented a new way of seeing patriotism and traditions. The poem was labelled a tool of conservative propaganda in the hands of the Latvian authoritarian regime immediately after its publication by the Latvian author Lucija Upite [32]. So Virza's poem was naturally "ignored" during the Soviet period and rediscovered in the beginning of the 1990s when it was reprinted (in 1992). Fiction formed the majority of translated titles; translations of non-fiction were limited to a handbook for fire-fighters and a religious pamphlet.

Although no books were translated from Lithuanian, translations of Lithuanian literature and articles on Lithuanian literary events and writers found their place in Estonian periodicals. During the 1920s, the number of publications was still rather modest. In an attempt to avoid international isolation, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia signed the trilateral Treaty on Concord and Cooperation, referred to as the Baltic Entente in

1934. The treaty was successful in stimulating the cultural and economic cooperation. For example, the Estonian Year of the Book in 1935 was celebrated in the neighbouring Baltic countries. This event also marks the turning point in the presentation of Lithuanian literature in the Estonian press. The newspaper *Uus Eesti* (New Estonia) wrote in 1935 that when one talked about the warm response to the Year of the Book, then Lithuania had to be mentioned among the first. It was added that so far Estonians have been very vaguely known in Lithuania and only now Lithuanians discovered us, Estonians, as a small nation worth of interest [20].

The same could be said about Estonians and their feelings about Lithuanians. A new era in cultural history of both nations was proclaimed by the press. Many authors stressed the need to expand the cultural cooperation to enfold all the three Baltic nations. Mutual visits of writers and joint literary events were organised. One of the most enthusiastic agents in developing the contacts with Lithuania, Aleksis Rannit, even published his first collection of poetry in the Estonian language in the Lithuanian publishing house "Sakalas" in 1937. The collection included also translations of poems by Lithuanian poets. Literary circles thought about the establishment of a joint journal, which was considered especially important in the political situation, but this plan was not implemented. Thus, the cultural exchange and feeling of Baltic unity started to strengthen towards the end of the 1930s.

During the first Soviet year, one book translated from Latvian, the story *Emā* (Mother) by Indriķis Lemanis, was published in 1941. It had already been prepared in the Noor-Eesti publishing house during independence. During the German occupation in 1941–1944, translations from Latvian and Lithuanian were issued in periodicals.

THE SOVIET PERIOD 1944–1991: A BOOM OF TRANSLATIONS

The following common experience of the Soviet occupation greatly influenced the concept of the Baltic unity. In the opinion of the Estonian historian Külle Arjakas, closer ties between the three nations were established in the Soviet prison camps [2]. The feeling of sharing the same fate fostered contacts among people from the three Baltic

Table 3. Translations from Latvian and Lithuanian in 1944–1991 (book titles)*

| | From Latvian | From Lithuanian |
|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1944–1950 | 6 | 0 |
| 1951–1960 | 21 | 11 |
| 1961–1970 | 26 | 12 |
| 1971–1980 | 38 | 27 |
| 1981–1991 | 38 | 25 |
| Total | 129 | 75 |
| Titles per annum | 2.68 | 1.57 |

* The data do not include two collections of poetry translated from Latvian, which were published outside Soviet Estonia.

republics. In the field of book production, which was a monopoly of the state, these contacts were influenced by the communist party regulations.

The Soviet period brought along the transfer to compulsory translations – the choice of authors and works was determined by ideological considerations. Translations were divided into categories: Russian literature, literature of the so-called other Soviet nations, and foreign literature consisting of books from socialist countries and from capitalist countries. Publishing houses used this classification for planning their work and reporting its results. Dominant position was given to translations from the Russian language, which during the first post-war decade outnumbered even the publications of Estonian literature. For example, publications of belles-lettres included 567 titles of translations from Russian (42% of all the titles of belles-lettres) and 543 titles written by Estonian authors (40%) in 1945–1955. The share of translations of authors from other Soviet republics, including Latvia and Lithuania, started increasing since the second half of the 1950s when the number of translations from Russian decreased.

A notable leap, however, occurred in the 1970s. If the period of the so-called Khrushchev thaw during the end of the 1950s and the 1960s had “tolerated” the growing number of translations from the literature of capitalist countries, then the strengthening of ideological pressure since the beginning of the 1970s resulted in a decrease of these translations. The share of

translations of foreign literature comprised 52% of all belles-lettres translations in 1961–1970 and 42% in 1971–1980. The gap was filled with translations by authors of the other Soviet nations. The number of these translations nearly doubled during that time, their share increased from 13% of all literary translations in 1961–1970 to 20% in 1971–1980. The increase of translations from Latvian and Lithuanian reflects this change in the publishing policy.

On the other hand, the above-mentioned closeness of the Baltic nations during the Soviet period formed the basis for a sincere willingness to publish works by authors from the neighbouring countries. The 1970s were the time of strengthening cultural and economic ties among the Baltic republics also in a wider range (the movement of towns of friendship, mutual visits, student song festivals, etc).

Among Latvian authors, Vilis Lācis and Andrejs Upits, both with communist ties, were represented with the biggest

number of titles. For example, the novel *Kaluri poeg* (Son of the Fisherman; original title *Zvejnieka dēls*) by Lācis was published four times (1952, 1956, 1969, and 1987). However, in general, the publishing policy favoured diversity; thus, altogether 52 writers were represented in the book production, translated by 18 translators. The dominance of drama gave way to translations of novels and stories. Translations from Lithuanian numbered 75 and included works by 42 writers. The first translation from Lithuanian, a collection of poetry, was published as a separate book in 1954. Petras Cvirka and Justinas Marcinkevičius were represented by the biggest number of titles (5 and 4, respectively). Despite the special position of poetry in Lithuanian literature, mainly works of prose were translated into Estonian (62% of all translations). Although 12 translators participated in translating books from Lithuanian into Estonian, more than a half of fiction titles were translated by one professional translator Mihkel Loodus.

In her article on the popularization of Lithuanian literature in Latvia during the Soviet period, the Latvian researcher Eva Eglāja-Kristšone points out the surprising quantity of satire translated from Lithuanian into Latvian [12, 134]. She compares this trend to Estonia, arguing that translations of Lithuanian satire in Estonian books and periodicals were not as widespread. Actually, the genre was very popular in Estonia as well. Many of the sketches were published repeatedly in different periodicals. The most popular Lithuanian satirist in both

Table 4. Translations from Latvian and Lithuanian in 1944–1991 by genre

| | From Latvian | From Lithuanian |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Fiction | 80 (63%) | 46 (62%) |
| Poetry | 3 (2%) | 7 (9%) |
| Drama | 3 (2%) | 4 (5%) |
| Children's literature | 40 (31%) | 14 (19%) |
| Non-fiction | 3 (2%) | 4 (5%) |

Latvia and Estonia was Vytautė Žilinskaitė. Her humorous sketch *The Ideal Woman* was published in eight different Estonian newspapers in 1961–1971. The Latvian satirist Calis Melameds could be called her “competitor” with comparably numerous publications. Humour helped to overcome the abundant problems of Soviet everyday life and provided a moment of self-irony. The Baltic nations evidently shared a similar taste in it.

Among translations of belles-lettres of all the Soviet nations, translations of Latvian literature occupied the second place after translations of Russian literature, followed by translations from Lithuanian. But, for example, the number of translations from Russian was ten times bigger than that of translations from Latvian in 1961–1990 (1205 titles and 100 titles). Translations from Russian formed 39% of all translations of belles-lettres of these years, translations from English reaching 9.5%, from German 7%, from French 5%, from Finnish 4%, from Latvian 3% and from Lithuanian 2%. The range of languages of the Soviet nations from which books were translated was large, enfolding 47 languages, most of them represented by a small number of books. However, many of them represented compulsory translations which were published *pro forma* and never attracted the attention of readers. Foreign fiction, which largely consisted of older literature, was popular among book-buyers and helped to increase sales – even in the socialist economy the publishing sector, in general, was expected to make profit.

AFTER REGAINING INDEPENDENCE: IN THE CONDITIONS OF THE MARKET (1991–2008)

After becoming independent again in August 1991, the three Baltic states turned to democracy and market economy. In these new conditions, the general structure of translations by languages changed considerably, and the number of book titles translated from Latvian and Lithuanian decreased: in 1992–2008, 27 translations from Latvian were published in Estonia, and translations from Lithuanian numbered 16.

Translations from Latvian have been published annually. The publication of books translated from Lithuanian proceeded with intervals. A statistical analysis of the publications demonstrates changes in the typological structure of the translated literature compared to the previous period. The share of fiction and especially of children’s literature has decreased. Neither Latvian nor Lithuanian dramas have been published in

Table 5. Translations from Latvian and Lithuanian in 1992–2008

| | From Latvian | From Lithuanian |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Fiction | 10 (37%) | 7 (44%) |
| Poetry | 5 (19%) | 2 (12%) |
| Children’s literature | 3 (11%) | 1 (6%) |
| Non-fiction | 9 (33%) | 6 (38%) |
| Total | 27 (100%) | 16 (100%) |
| Titles per annum | 1.58 | 0.94 |

1992–2008. More collections of Latvian poetry have been issued in 1992–+2008, whereas the translation of Lithuanian poetry has, on the contrary, decreased from seven titles during the Soviet period to two titles. Poetry has been issued by the publishing houses that are oriented to high-quality literary works from various literatures of the world. Among these publishing houses, for example, is Tuum which has issued a collection of poetry by the Latvian writer Uldis Bērziņš in 1997 and the long poem *Carmina minora* by the Lithuanian poet Justinas Marcinkevičius in 2003.

But the most notable change has occurred in publishing non-fiction. If publications of non-fiction were rare and marginal during the earlier periods, now they are issued more regularly and include various topics. Among translations from Latvian there are many notable books on Latvian history and culture, for example, *The Path of Life of Latvian People* by Uldis Germanis and *The War of Independence in Latvia* by Peteris Radziņš, both translated by Dzintars Sprivulis. The same topics are treated in the two books by Anna Žigūre who has translated Estonian books into Latvian and acted as an ambassador of the Republic of Latvia in Estonia and Finland. However, non-fiction which has been translated from Latvian is not limited to books on history and culture; it includes also, for example, a book on the salutary effect of sauna, advice on public speaking, etc. Translations from Lithuanian are represented by three atlases for schools, which have all been reprinted.

On the whole, the number of translations from Latvian and Lithuanian is small, whereas the number of translations from Latvian outweighs translations from Lithuanian. The long-lasting traditions in translating Latvian literature and stronger historical ties have preserved its slightly more notable position in Estonian book-market. Quite like in the pre-war Republic of Estonia, publishers are rather unwilling to publish Latvian or Lithuanian literature, fearing low sales. Translators have repeatedly pointed out the difficulty of finding a publisher for translations of Latvian fiction in Estonia [13; 30]. Another similarity with the years 1918–1940 lies in the dominance of translations from the English language. Their share reached 65% of translations in 2003, while the share of translations from Russian decreased to 4%. Translations from the German language comprised 10% and from French 6% of all translations in 2003 [33, 783].

There are also relatively few translators from the Latvian and Lithuanian languages in Estonia. The most productive translator from Latvian during the 1990s was Ita Saks (1921–2003), one of the leading translators during the Soviet period. Translations of fiction from Lithuanian, published since 1991, have been translated by Mihkel Loodus (1937). The lack of demand has hindered the forming of a new generation of translators. This development has been further intensified by scarce possibilities to learn the Latvian and Lithuanian languages.

The problems of publishing the Baltic literature are further illustrated by the fact

that there are hardships even with the translating of the works that have won the literary prize of the Baltic Assembly, although the statute of the prize provides the publication of the winning works in all the three Baltic states. At the same time, the literary magazines publish overviews on Latvian and Lithuanian literature, introducing authors and works that have not been translated into Estonian, and express their dissatisfaction with this situation. Here we can observe a contradiction of cultural aspirations and commercial calculations, well known of the market economy. The typical alleviation to the problem lies in grants and financial support by the state and various institutions. In Estonia, translators and publishers can apply for support to the Fund for Fostering Culture. For example, the collection of poems by the Latvian poet Juris Kronbergs, issued in 2007, received support from this source. A special Latvian–Estonian and Estonian–Latvian translation prize was established in 2009 in order to emphasize the importance of cultural exchange among these nations and foster the professional development of both Latvian and Estonian translators [4].

CONCLUSIONS

The first contacts with Latvian literature date back to the 18th century, but no translations followed during the first half of the 19th century. Since the middle of the century, the title production of books in Estonian increased considerably – from 40 titles in 1850 to 444 in 1901 [21,88]. The number of books translated from Latvian, however, was

small and limited to six titles. Their publication is concentrated in the 1860s and 1890s. The content of translations issued during the 1860s varied – a sentimental novel, a handbook on getting rich, a brochure on shipping by one of the leaders of Latvian national awakening K. Valdemārs, etc. Otherwise, the intellectual impact of Young Latvians who studied at the Tartu University was not reflected in book production. The 1890s brought re-editions of a popular sentimental novel, but also the first book by the future Latvian classical author R. Blaumanis. He was also the most favoured Latvian writer during the next period, 1901–1917, when especially his plays enjoyed wide popularity. The increase of translations from Latvian during this period is partly due to the activities of translator Mart Pukits who specialized in translating Latvian literature. Pukits contributed notably to the regular publication of translations from Latvian during this and later periods.

Apart from a couple of translations issued in Estonian newspapers in the end of the 19th century, no translations from Lithuanian had been published in books or periodicals until 1917. Thus, up to the beginning of the 20th century the cultural contacts enfolded only the historical Baltic provinces, including Livonia, Courland and Estonia, but not Lithuania. Estonians, Latvians and some other nations were native inhabitants of this historical Baltic cultural space, but the ruling class consisted of the Baltic Germans who had conquered this area in the 13th century. Although Estonia and Livonia became part of the Russian Empire

as far back as in 1710, the Baltic German nobility maintained its privileges and dominated the local cultural life for centuries. It was only in the last decades of the 19th century when the Russification reforms brought along the more extensive use of the Russian language in administration and education. Lithuania in its turn belonged to the Polish–Central European cultural space.

The following period of nation/state building, a new and similar experience to Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, brought them closer together and fostered cultural cooperation. The already established literary contacts with Latvia led to a continuous increase in the number of translations, although, for commercial considerations of publishers, their share in the general output of translations was modest. Translations from the Lithuanian language appeared in periodicals, but were not published as separate books. Lithuania still remained culturally distant, and publishers were obviously even less willing to take a risk of publishing Lithuanian authors unknown to Estonian readers. Towards the end of the 1930s, the situation started to change. Both official policy and non-governmental initiative paid more attention to this country, and the publication of Lithuanian texts in periodicals increased considerably. In conclusion, the years 1918–1940 demonstrate the formation of the Baltic identity in its contemporary meaning. Beside other manifestations, this development can be found in the growing number of translations from Lithuanian, which were published in periodicals.

During the Soviet period when the Baltic unity was based on the hostile policy of a great power, the literary ties became more intensive. The Estonian reader could get to know both classical and contemporary writers of the other Baltic republics, omitting, naturally, the banned works and authors. It is characteristic of the era that ideological considerations and genuine interest in the other Baltic nations intertwine – the official requirements to translate the authors of the other Soviet nations served the promotion of cultural exchange with the Baltic neighbours.

After regaining independence in 1991, the number of translations from Latvian and Lithuanian started decreasing. A comparison of the study periods by the output of translated books per annum demonstrates that in 1992–2008 even less books were translated from Latvian per annum than in 1918–1940. Similarly to publishers of pre-war years, the contemporary publishing houses have doubts as to publishing Latvian and Lithuanian literature, fearing the indifference of book buyers. These arguments could be justified by the attitude of the public towards the neighbouring nations. According to the Bachelor's thesis by Irma Kaljulaid on mutual stereotypes of Estonians and Lithuanians, the ordinary citizens of both countries recognize the existence of a rather wide mental distance between the two countries. The expert interviews revealed the indifference of Estonians towards Lithuania and things connected with this country [16, 57, 61]. The results of this study are

similar to the findings of the Master's thesis by Katri Aivare on mutual stereotypes in Estonia and Latvia, who concluded that young Latvians and Estonians associate less and less with each other in the mutual Baltic identity [1, 95]. The feeling of closeness is mainly based on the common historical experience, emotional events of the past, and the Baltic identity is widely considered an identification used by the rest of the world [1, 96]. The changes in political regimes and economic conditions, access to the cultural heritage of the world and global media as well as increased opportunities to travel have led to cultural re-orientation. The search for identity has become wider, embracing the Nordic countries, the states around the Baltic Sea or the whole European Union. Research on the change of spatial relations in the Baltic region demonstrates the dominance of Germany, the USA, Russia, France, Finland and Sweden in the cultural space of Estonia [33, 783, 793].

At the same time, the established ties with the small cultures of similar historical, economic and political features, sharing the common Baltic memory, should be worth preservation. Promotion of book contacts with Latvian and Lithuanian culture, as well as with other smaller cultures, is a prerequisite for sustaining the cultural diversity and enriching the mental horizon of Estonians. Grounded on the ideas by Czesław Miłosz, the Lithuanian researcher Aušra Jurgutienė draws attention to the purposes of the regional conception of cultures – to resist cultural globalization and cross the line of classical nationalism [15, 31].

Some recent developments present encouraging examples of the growing valuation of the cultural contacts among the Baltic countries, including, for instance, the above-mentioned Estonian–Latvian translation prize and the fact that since 2009 it is possible to study both the Latvian and Lithuanian languages at the Tallinn University.

REFERENCES

1. AIVARE, Katre. *Mutual stereotypes in Latvia and Estonia*: [unpublished master thesis]. Tartu: University of Tartu, 2009. 195 p.
2. ARJAKAS, Küllö. Balti koostöö: minevik, olevik, tulevik. *Diplomaatia*, 2007, veebr., nr. 42. [accessed 23 September 2009]. Access through Internet: [http://www.diplomaatia.ee/index.php?id=242&no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=339&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=343&cHash=7fa20850b4](http://www.diplomaatia.ee/index.php?id=242&no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=339&tx_ttnews[backPid]=343&cHash=7fa20850b4)
3. *Artiklite ja Retsensioonide Kroonika : Eesti riiklik bibliograafianimestik*. Tallinn : Eesti Rahvusraamatukogu, 1955-1995. ISSN 0135-2474 0571-2068
4. *Asutati Eesti-Läti ja Läti-Eesti tõlkeahind* [interactive]. Välisministeeriumi pressiteade 18.02.2009. [accessed 15 January 2010]. Access through Internet: <http://www.vm.ee/?q=et/node/6298>
5. *Baltic Region: conflicts and co-operation : road from the past to the future*. Tallinn: Ilo : Euroõlikool, 2004. 468 p. ISBN 9985575407.
6. *Eesti trükitoodangu statistika 1961–1990*. Tallinn: Eesti Rahvusraamatukogu, 1963–1993.

7. *Eesti raamat 1941–1944 : 1941. a. september – 1944. a. september. Estonica 1941–1944 = Estnisches Buch : 1941 September – 1944 September. Estonica 1941–1944 = Estonian book : September 1941 – September 1944. Estonica 1941–1944 = Эстонская книга : 1941 сентябрь – 1944 сентябрь. Estonica 1941–1944.* Tallinn : Eesti Rahvusraamatukogu, 1997. 231 lk. ISBN 998580368X.
8. *Eesti tõlkekirjandus 1986–1990 : bibliograafia.* Tallinn : Eesti Raamatukoguhoidjate Ühing, 1994. 127 lk. ISBN 9985601017.
9. *Eestikeelne raamat 1525–1850 = Estnisches Buch 1525–1850 = Estonian book 1525_01850.* Tallinn: Teaduste Akadeemia Kirjastus, 2000. 703 lk. ISBN 9985502728
10. *Eestikeelne raamat 1851–1900. = Estnisches Buch 1851–1900 = Estonian book 1851–1900 = Эстонская книга 1851–1900.* 1-2 kd. Tallinn: Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia Raamatukogu, 1995. 1077 lk. ISBN 1. vol. 9985500695; 2. vol. 9985501160
11. *Eestikeelne raamat 1901–1917 = Estnisches Buch 1901–1917 = Estonian book 1901–1917 = Эстонская книга 1901–1917.* 1.-2 kd. Tallinn: Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia Raamatukogu, 1993. 1287 lk. ISBN 9985500105
12. EGLÄJA-KRISTSONE, Eva. *The Popularization of Lithuanian Literature in Latvia During the Soviet Period.* In *We have something in common: the Baltic memory.* Tallinn: Under and Tuglas Literature Centre of the Estonian Academy of Sciences; Riga: Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of University of Latvia, 2007, p. 133-141.
13. GODINŠ, Guntars. Lätis ilmus raamatutäis eesti kirjandust. *Eesti Ekspress*, 2005, 7. juuli, lk. B6.
14. JAAKSOO, Andres. *Eesti laste-ja noorsookirjandus läti ja leedu keeles = Estonian children's literature in Latvian and Lithuanian; Läti ja leedu laste-ja noorsookirjandus eesti keeles = Latvian and Lithuanian children's literature in Estonian.* Tallinn: Steamark, 2008. 27, [2] lk.
15. JURGUTIENE, Aušra. Reception and History: Baltic memory. In *We have something in common: the Baltic memory.* Tallinn: Under and Tuglas Literature Centre of the Estonian Academy of Sciences; Riga: Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of University of Latvia, 2007, p. 19–34.
16. KALJULAIID, Irma. Eestlaste ja leedulaste stereotüüpsed ettekujutused iseendast ja üksteisest: Bakalaureusetöö. Tartu: Tartu Ülikool, 2003.
17. KUDDO, Arvo; LAAS, Kaljo. Rahvas- tik. In *Eesti Entsüklopeedia*, 11. Tallinn: Eesti Entsüklopeediakirjastus, 2002, p. 244–257. ISBN 9985-70-115-1.
18. KUNINGAS, Oskar. Eesti–Läti kirjandussuhete arengust läbi aegade. *Looming*, 1983, 9, p. 1204–1208.
19. *Latvieši, igauni un lietuviši: literārie un kultūras kontakti.* Riga: LU Literatūras, folkloras un mākslas institūts 2008. 1106 p. ISBN 9789934803215.
20. Leedus märgata suurt huvitõusu Eesti vastu. *Uus Eesti*, 1935, 24. okt.
21. LIIVAKU, Uno. *Eesti raamatu lugu.* Monokkel, 1995. 310 p. ISBN 9985-54-015-8.
22. LOHK, Mare. *Leedu kirjandus eesti keeles aastatel 1940–1975.* [unpublished diploma work]. Tallinn: Tallinna Pedagoogiline Instituut, 1979.
23. *Läti ja leedu kirjandust eesti keeles 1918–1940: näituse kataloog.* Tallinn: Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia, 1990. 29 lk.
24. *Mineviku menuraamat: Väga ilusad, hirmsad ja armsad lood: Haleduslood.* E-exhibition of the National Library of Estonia [accessed 5 January 2010]. Access through Internet <http://www.nlib.ee/html/expo/menurmt/hale.html>

25. *Nõukogude Eesti tõlkekirjandus 1976–1980: bibliograafianimestik*. Переводная литература, изданная в Эстонской ССР в 1976–1980 гг. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1983. 96 lk.

26. *Nõukogude Eesti tõlkekirjandus 1981–1985: bibliograafia*. Переводная литература, изданная в Эстонской ССР в 1981–1985 гг. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1988. 119, [1] lk. ISBN 5450002866.

27. OSTRA-OINAS, Alma. A. Needra Eesti revolutsiooni sumbutamas. *Nool*, 1930, 2. aug., nr. 36, lk. 10–11.

28. PYM, Anthony. *Method in translation history*. Manchester: St. Jerome, 1998. xiv, 220 p. ISBN 1900650126 (pbk).

29. TALVE, Ilmar. *Eesti kultuurilugu: keskaja algusest Eesti iseseisvuseni*. Tartu: Ilmamaa, 2004. 686 lk. ISBN 9985770307.

30. TATRIK, E. Ita Saks tõlgib sahtlisse. *Postimees*, 1997, 21. sept., lk 11.

31. UNDUSK, Jaan. The problem of Baltic unity: opening address. In *We have something in common: the Baltic memory*. Tallinn: Under and Tuglas Literature Centre of the Estonian Academy of Sciences; Riga: Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of University of Latvia, 2007, p. 11–18.

32. UPITE, Lucija. *Lāti kirjandus aja veskis*. Looming, 1939, 5, lk. 536–540.

33. VIHALEM, Peeter. Changing spatial relations in the Baltic Region and the role of the Media. *European Societies*, 2007, vol. 9 (5), p. 777–796.

34. ЛОТТ, Марс. Об изданий художественной литературы в Эстонии в 1918–1940 г. In *Uurimusi eesti raamatu arenguloost*. Tallinn: Eesti NSV Kõrg- ja Keskerihariduse Ministerium, 1980, lk. 4–59.

BALTIJOS ŠALIŲ KNYGOS RYŠIAI: LATVIŲ IR LIETUVIŲ LITERATŪROS VERTIMAI ESTIJOS KNYGŲ LEIDYBOS PRODUKCIJOJE

AILE MÖLDRE

Santrauka

Estija, Latvija ir Lietuva dažnai apibūdinamos vienu geopolitiniu bendravardikliu kaip Baltijos valstybės. Ši sąvoka siejama su Baltijos vienybės ir Baltijos tapatybės sąvokomis. Pastaroji grindžiama bendrais geografinės, istorinės, politinės ir kultūrinės patirties elementais. Šiuo metu po nepriklausomybės atgavimo Baltijos tapatybės sąvoka kartais kvestionuojama ir apibūdinama kaip sovietmečio šmėkla, fikcija, egzistuojanti tiktai Vakarų politikų protuose.

Atsižvelgiant į tokius prieštarigus argumentus straipsnyje siekiama nustatyti pagrindines šių šalių kultūros mainų plėtros tendencijas, atspindėtas knygų, verstų iš latvių ir lietuvių kal-

bų į estų kalbą, leidyboje. Į vertimo istoriją ir struktūrą žvelgiama per verstinių knygų pavadinimų skaičių, žanrus ir populiariausius autorius. Vertimų katalogai, sudaryti įvairių bibliografijų ir bibliografinių duomenų bazių pagrindu, tapo statistinės analizės pagrindu.

Nors pirmasis vertimas iš latvių kalbos siekia XVIII a. pabaigą, pirmoje XIX a. pusėje nepasirodė nė vieno vertimo. Vertimo veikla gerokai pagyvėjo antroje amžiaus pusėje, ypač didelio populiarumo sulaukė sentimentalus romanas *Pamaldė mergelė Mai Roos*, verstas iš J. Dauge *Turaidas jumprava*. Pirmieji vertimai iš lietuvių kalbos buvo keli apsakymai, išspausdinti

XIX a. pabaigoje Estijos periodiniuose leidiniuose. 1901–1917 m. ryšiai tarp Latvijos ir Estijos intelektualų tapo aktyvesni, o drama, ypač R. Blaumano pjesės, buvo mėgstamas žanras, nes daugybė saviveiklinio teatro trupių ieškojo naujo repertuaro. Tačiau tuo laiku nepasirodė vertimų iš lietuvių kalbos nei atskiromis knygomis, nei periodiniuose leidiniuose. Kultūriniai mainai su kaimyninėmis tautomis apsiribojo istorinėmis Baltijos provincijomis.

Kai 1918 m. visos trys Baltijos šalys tapo nepriklausomos, jos atsidūrė panašioje valstybės kūrimo situacijoje, kuri skatino bendradarbiauti. Kultūriniai ryšiai suintensyvėjo, ypač ketvirtojo dešimtmečio antroje pusėje. Latviškos knygos buvo bemaž nuolat verčiamos, bet pavadinimų skaičius buvo gana kuklus (40 pavad.). Leidėjai nepasitikėjo šių vertimų ekonomine sėkme. Vertimai iš lietuvių kalbos buvo skelbiami periodiniuose leidiniuose. Susidomėjimas lietuvių kultūra paplito ketvirtojo dešimtmečio pabaigoje.

Bendra sovietinės okupacijos patirtis smarkiai paveikė Baltijos vienybės sąvoką. Tos pačios lemties pojūtis sustiprino ryšius tarp visų trijų Baltijos respublikų žmonių. Kultūros mainai, įskaitant vertimus iš regiono kalbų, suintensyvėjo dėl nuoširdaus domėjimosi vienas kito kultūra ir ideologinių sovietinės literatūros skatinimo sumetimų. Pirmoji knyga iš lietuvių kalbos buvo išversta 1954 metais.

Atgavus nepriklausomybę, Baltijos tapatybės jausmas susilpnėjo dėl politinės santvarkos, ekonominių sąlygų pokyčių, priegios prie pasaulio kultūros, galimybių keliauti. Visa tai pakeitė Baltijos tautų kultūrinės orientacijas. Vertimai iš latvių ir lietuvių kalbų pasirodo retai, o vertimų iš lietuvių kalbos skaičius ypač sumažėjo (16 pavadinimų per 1992–2008 m.). Tačiau reikėtų išlaikyti nusistovėjusius ryšius su Baltijos šalimis, kad būtų išsaugota įvairovė, plėtotųsi regioninė kultūrinė tapatybė ir būtų apribota globalizacija.

Įteikta 2010 m. vasario mėn.