

Latvian Translation Scene at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Century

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Abstract. The paper looks at the Latvian translation scene at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. It is a continuation of the study of translation history in Latvia reflected in previous issues of *Vertimo studijos* (vol. 7, 8, 11). These decades are marked by a huge growth of translation, especially in periodicals. German was gradually losing its dominant position as a source and intermediate language, Russian was advancing, so was also the scope of other languages. In contrast to previous periods there was a particular interest in the quality of the originals and modernity.

This period also saw a change of generations among translators, and women became visible in translation scene. Translators among whom there were all the great Latvian writers gradually emerged as professionals. Frequently translations had prefaces and explanations by the translators. There were numerous parallel translations of the same works, some reaching up to ten versions. Translations included various genres and the traditional Latvian interest in plays was very obvious. So was the focus on specialised literature on agriculture. The translation method changed from localisation to a fidelity mode with a tendency to apply elements of foreignisation.

Keywords: censorship, literary translation, Latvian translators, fidelity, free translation, periodicals

Vertimo situacija Latvijoje XIX a. pabaigoje – XX a. pradžioje

Santrauka. Tęsiant „Vertimo studijose“ (Nr. 7, 8, 11) pradėtą Latvijos vertimo istorijos temą straipsnyje aptariama vertimo situacija Latvijoje XIX a. pradžioje – XX a. pabaigoje. Šis laikotarpis išsiskiria vertimų, ypač skelbiamų periodiniuose leidiniuose, gausa. Vokiečių kalba pamažu praranda vyraujančią padėtį kaip šaltinio ir tarpinė kalba, pirmą poziciją užleisdama rusų kalbai. Be to, verčiama ir iš kitų originalo kalbų, vertimų laukas plečiasi. Šiuo laikotarpiu pastebima ir dar viena tendencija – gerokai didesnis dėmesys verčiamų originalų kokybei ir jų šiuolaikiškumui.

Dar viena laikotarpio ypatybė – keičiasi vertėjų karta, atsiranda nemažai moterų vertėjų. Vertėjais dirba visi žymiausi latvių rašytojai, kurie ilgainiui virsta vertėjais profesionalais. Verstinėse knygos dažnai randame vertėjų parengtus įvadu arba paaiškinimus knygos gale. Atsiranda nemažai to paties kūrinio paralelinių vertimų, kai kurių knygų yra daugiau dešimties vertimo variantų. Verčiami įvairių žanrų tekstai, akivaizdus tradicinis latvių domėjimasis dramos kūriniais. Taip pat ir specializuota žemės ūkio literatūra. Vertimo strategijos kito: savinimo strategiją keitė ištikimybės originalui principas, ryškėjo tendencija taikyti svertinimo strategijos elementus.

Keywords: cenzūra, literatūros vertimas, Latvijos vertėjai, ištikimybė, laisvasis vertimas, periodiniai leidiniai

The socioeconomic and political situation of Latvia at the turn of the centuries

It is important to consider the conditions under which translations were produced and circulated as well as to discuss the context in which these translations appeared. The end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century saw fast economic development in the territory of Latvia as well as rapid social change. Latvians, hitherto country people, poured into Riga and other towns. The beginning of the 20th century was a period of remarkable industrial growth. The old system of social stratification was collapsing, the number of Latvians owning property growing fast. The general educational level compared to Russia's was high: literacy was around 90%, similar to Estonia and Finland and the highest in the Empire. Only in eastern Latvia was it around 50% (Bērziņš 2000: 287). This is important when considering reading habits. It should be also noted that many educated Latvians could read texts in German and Russian in addition to Latvian translations.

The last decades of the 19th century saw a severe Russification campaign in government institutions, the courts and education. There was a gradual top-down Russification of the education system with elementary education largely in Russian. But these developments could not stop the increasing use of Latvian and of publishing. This, together with the remarkable popularity of theatre, went some way towards compensating for the restricted use of Latvian in official communication. Latvians were metamorphosing from an agricultural and patriarchal society into a modern nation with its own particular culture.

The unresolved national, social and political issues made the 1905 revolution a potent one. It involved not only the landless peasants and workers but a broad swathe of society and of the Latvian intelligentsia which pushed national ideas. A certain liberalisation followed the revolution, leading to an explosion of new periodicals, while many Latvian literary figures and translators had emigrated, learning the culture and language of their new countries of residence. The cultural horizons of the nation broadened exponentially.

Censorship

Censorship was at its most severe at the beginning of the century and it included translations. The Russian Empire had a system of pre-censorship: texts were scrutinised before printing and decisions often depended on the censor's individual personality and views (Veinberga 2018: 162). When workers' associations and strikes started, censorship grew in severity: "a mood close to panic prevailed in Latvian literary circles", as more was banned than allowed (Limane 2004: 36). However, there were various ways

of circumventing censorship, such as changing the names of forbidden authors, avoiding taboo terms like “socialism” or “the agrarian question”, or by publishing outside Latvia, for example in St. Petersburg.

Censors also took objection to fiction, for example, performances of both Jānis Vidiņš's and Rainis's translations of Schiller's *William Tell* were banned. They forbade performances of several plays by Gerhart Hauptmann. Translations of works by Frank Wedekind, Garlieb Merkel, Ibsen and Tolstoy were also banned – even though Tolstoy was allowed in Russian. The publishing of *War and Peace* was allowed only in 1903, in connection with the writer's 75th birthday. Once a person was considered unreliable by the censors his translations were also under suspicion, this was the reason why many of Rainis's translations were ascribed to Aspazija (Gudriķe 1989: 10). Censorship was not limited to banning publications. Repressive measures often followed. Thus the editor of the newspaper *Dienas Lapa*, Jānis Pliekšāns–Rainis, was arrested for publishing forbidden texts in 1895. Many literary figures, publishers and translators were imprisoned and exiled after the 1905 revolution. A major publisher, Jānis Ozols, and the poet and translator Jūlijs Dievkociņš were killed.

The revolution achieved a certain liberalisation: among the moderate concessions was the freedom of speech and the press. Post-censorship was now instituted instead of the pre-censorship used previously. The censor could stop sales of a work, but only after the ban had been confirmed by the courts. This meant the banned works could actually be spirited away and disseminated. Numerous periodicals could be established in this more liberal atmosphere and a wider range of issues debated. Statistics show that 96 Latvian books were banned in the period between 1906 and 1913 (Apīnis 2004: 42).

General shifts in translation scene

End of the 19th century saw the beginning of translations of serious classics and well-known contemporaries. The Neo-Latvians' idea that other nations' experiences and achievements should be employed in shaping Latvian culture and nation was bearing fruit. “The nineties were a “proud and messy time, when for the first time the cultural sources of Western Europe were thrown open to the Latvian nation” (Klaustiņš 1908: 124).

The last decades of the century were still dominated by sentimental and adventure stories, translated from German with the traditional long titles. Christoph von Schmid's *Genovefa* was still the bestseller (published also in 1900 and 1903). It had even turned its translator, Ansis Leitāns, into a literary celebrity (Apīnis 1991: 162). Numerous plays with a singing element were taken over from German to satisfy the widespread demand for musical theatre. Thorough localisation often makes it impos-

sible to determine what is a translation and what an original writing, for example, Ernests Dinsbergs and Leitāns took a totally free approach to the original (which could today be interpreted as a very advanced approach to the target audience within the *scopos* theory).

The dominance of German as a source language was gradually eroded by Russian, many younger translators worked from both. As a result, Latvian readers had access to numerous Russian translations, with works by Turgenev, Lermontov, Pushkin, Chekhov (around 20 titles including the collected works), Tolstoy, Gogol, Nekrasov (in periodicals) and, at the end of the century, Gorky and Dostoyevsky (two novels). At the end of the century Scandinavian translations became popular alongside the traditional German and growing Russian menu. The early Nordic translations were exclusively done via German. There were voluminous Swedish works such as Emilie Flygare-Carlén, although this author disappeared from the Latvian scene at the end of the century. Similarly Alfred Hedenstierna was popular in periodicals. Towards the end of the century the Latvian public had matured enough to appreciate Strindberg (six novelettes) and translations of Selma Lagerlöf. Norwegian literature was represented by Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's stories and poetry. Ibsen's *Nora* had been translated eleven times by 1902 (Latviešu 1902: 89). Andersen's Danish fairy tales had been accessible since the mid-19th century with huge variations in contents and titles, many had actually become part of Latvian folklore (Daukste-Silasproģe 2002: 48). They had numerous translators, among whom Apsīšu Jēkabs was most prominent. Translations were done via German.

English literature was represented by Kipling, Dickens, Scott (translated very freely via German). A staple title was *Robinson Crusoe*; not however the novel by Defoe but Campe's didactic adaptation (first edition as early as 1824) (Veisbergs 2017: 62). In the last decade of the century several quality translations of Shakespeare appeared: *Julius Caesar* (1897) and *Macbeth* (1898) both translated by Fricis Adamovičs, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1899) translated by Jānis Esenbergis. Dickens was well known to the Latvian readers, too. *Dienas lapa* published Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* in 1895 without naming the translator. Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (*Judass neievērojama*) was published in instalments in 1898, translated by Fricis Roziņš. The book version appeared in 1903. Stories by Mark Twain and Kipling, and poems by Robert Burns were also available. The above mentioned *Julius Caesar* is notable also for its translator's preface, an introduction and extended paratexts providing information on Shakespeare, Ancient Rome and its leaders. There were also footnotes with various explanations, occasionally referring to Russian and French sources. Footnotes were also provided in the text of the play. Thus, it can be considered an academic translation.

French literature was represented by translations of Maupassant, Zola, Daudet and Mérimée, and four novels by Verne, adapted and simplified.

There were many translations of Polish authors such as Henryk Sienkiewicz and Adam Mickiewicz.

Āronu Matīss's index of translated fiction works, including periodicals (Latviešu 1902) provides a certain snapshot of the translation scene before 1902: 1467 foreign writers of whom 759 are Germans, 241 Russians, 97 French, 58 English, 34 Polish, 9 Estonians, 3 Lithuanians. This shows the trend of the end of the 19th century.

The end of the century saw particular attention paid to Goethe, who was seen as a benchmark of the Europeanness that Latvians should strive for (Vecgrāvis 2002). The Latvian writer and poet Jānis Poruks proclaimed Goethe the cultural canon of the Renaissance of European literature (Poruks 1897: 4). There was an abundance of translations both good and bad, mainly of shorter works, fragments, poems and song lyrics done by both well-known writers and prolific translators. Their approaches and quality differed greatly. For example, a professor at Dorpat University, researcher and translator Jēkabs Lautenbahs-Jūsmiņš produced a collection which apart from his own poems included poems by Schiller and Heine, Catalan and Portuguese folk romances and Goethe's *Roman Elegies* plus also the *Mignon* songs, in which he converted Italy into a province of Latvia (Līga 1880). The translator demonstrated a great feeling of style, "that only intelligent and educated people could feel and value" (Eglītis 1922: 438).

There were also several attempts to translate *Faust* (Zālītis 1999). Jēkabs Māsēns un Kārlis Jannaus translated *Faust* before Rainis but their translations remained unpublished. Rainis's translation of the *Prologue* appeared in the periodical *Mājas Viesa Mēnešraksts* in 1896, the rest followed in subsequent editions in 1897. The book was published in 1898 (Fausts 1898) and the translation was immediately recognised as an innovative landmark and a brilliant accomplishment. Rainis was deemed to be a "congenial translator" (A.V. 1923: 317).

Various books on science and reference works were appearing, mostly translations produced by the *Useful Book Department of Riga Latvian Society (RLB DGN)*. Translation involved serious terminology work, which was the main focus. Jēkabs Dravnieks started publishing an Encyclopaedia (*Konversācijas vārdnīca*) in instalments (1891-1895), but the enterprise went bankrupt. Bilingual dictionaries and dictionaries of foreign words multiplied, testifying to the huge influx of loans in Latvian.

Thus the 1890s saw a diversification of translations. There were anthologies, collected works, selections, encyclopaedias and almanacs. Although German works retained their dominance, there was also an increase in translations from other languages. This was to a large extent a conscious process, since Jēkabs Velme, editor of *Austrums*, had pointed out that Latvians had grown so accustomed to German literature as to be unable to understand products from other nations (Zanders 2015: 204). The situation had to change.

Translations abounded in the extremely popular and varied calendars that had high print runs, thus while six calendars were published in 1867, in 1885 their number reached 18 with runs of 25, 30 and even 56 thousand (Apinis 1977: 259).

Translations became more frequent in periodicals: the magazine *Austrums* (1885-1906), offered a good selection of Goethe, Pushkin and Lermontov as well as various novels in instalments. *Mājas Viesa Mēnešraksts* (1895-1905) published extensive translations, modern and classical, and numerous translated plays. Newspaper publishers started their own book series, for example *Dienas lapa* published a series *The Small Library* (*Mazā bibliotēka*) in 1895 and 1896 (Peile 1970: 51).

It was normal not to pay the translator for periodical publications in the late 19th century, the translator just received a free copy of the newspaper or magazine. This meant that many potential translators with a good knowledge of languages and feel for style found other occupations, while translation work came into the hands of amateurs who did not care for quality: “The fee, half a kopeck for a 40-character line, came into being only around 1900” (Melnalksnis 1944: 2).

Around the turn of the 20th century Latvian literary scene had reached the level of the contemporary European literature, it now followed Western trends and was part of them. Individual authors aligned with various imported literary trends. Translations were naturally the source of these ideas and leanings, and a way of honing their skills.

The first decade of the 20th century was a period of huge advances and expansion in the Latvian translation scene. There were countless parallel translations even reaching double digits. Translations included various genres and the traditional Latvian interest in plays was obvious. This period also saw a change of generations among translators, and with the new generation women became visible in translation scene. Practically all Latvian writers were also active translators. The translation method changed from localisation to a fidelity mode with a tendency towards foreignisation. Frequently translations now had prefaces and explanations by the translators. Translated literature now ranged from serious classical works to modern ones and from pulp literature to high quality creations.

The choice of translations shifted from the entertainment genre to information and insight into literary processes, the works translated were more and more recent, thus introducing Latvian readers (and authors) to contemporary European trends and processes. Convergence with European standards fostered variety and democratisation in literature (Klekere 2017).

The beginning of the 20th century saw a change in the literary polysystem: the rapid growth of Nordic and Estonian translations, more Russian translations and a lower proportion from German, as well as interest in other literatures. German, though, remained the dominant source and intermediary language.

Translations in periodicals

The most prominent feature of the first decade of the 20th century was the abundance of translations in periodicals. It is sometimes characterised as an inundation, never seen before or since. While previously this sphere had been dominated by a few relatively thick magazines covering a broad range of topics, the new periodicals tended to target their readers with a clear ideological or literary position. Many though were short-lived, others were stopped after the revolution. The instability was, of course, to some extent also determined by the limited readership, which made the enterprise unprofitable. There were several well-established Latvian newspapers at the turn of the century, and new newspapers sprang up after liberalisation. They all carried novels in instalments. In total there were 59 periodicals in Latvia on the eve of the First World War, most of them magazines.

Periodicals published numerous translations, a lot of poetry (rarely in book form), stories, essays, plays and novels. Thus, an average of two German novels were published in book form annually, but 3-4 in periodicals (Daukste-Silasprōge 2005: 584-5). Occasionally translations in periodicals were republished in book form later. Translations in periodicals were frequently abridged and cut, passages were deleted to meet layout and space requirements, translations were more superficial, they often omitted the translators' names or used undecipherable pseudonyms (Latviešu 1902: Vii) and the titles frequently had been changed beyond recognition.

Books

The book industry expanded fast. There were 79 printing shops in 1910, 45 of them in Riga, and most of them belonged to Latvians which was new development compared to the 19th century (Karulis 1967: 116).

Gradually Latvians could read more contemporary works, as well as scientific literature. However, the Latvian writer and translator Kārlis Skalbe commented in 1908 that Latvians still remained the "calendar-reading nation" and calculated that the number of "people of culture" was around one thousand (Skalbe 2002: 363-365). Calendar circulation indeed was in the tens of thousands, while book impressions usually hovered around 1000-2000.

The new century started with an ambitious work, indirectly pointing towards the trend of translations: an extensive anthology of world literature (Pasaules 1899), edited by Teodors Lejas-Krūmiņš and offering sample translations and information on foreign writers.

There was more translation than original writing and the quality was varied. This was recognised by the *Riga Latvian Society*: "The list of translations shows that they

outnumber originals. Next to the works of genius there are third-rate productions and the world of eternal ideas is invaded by coarse jokes and vulgarity” (Rīgas 1910: 750). The experts reported that banal plays were still localised by the elderly actors, but there was a demand for these plays. They listed authors and works that should be translated and it was stressed that translations should be from the original languages.

During the last decade of the 19th century the number of titles fluctuated between 100 and 200. Statistical data in previous studies has been unreliable, offering higher figures. Our figures are based on Latvian National Library bibliography database and are generally lower. But the general drift was growth from 99 in 1884 to 177 in 1894, 237 in 1900, 295 in 1907, 416 in 1910 and a decline after that.

About half the books were fiction and the majority were translations. Some translations had been published by newspapers earlier. Thus, when permission was finally given to translate Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* in 1903, the newspaper *Baltijas vēstnesis* gave it to Dievkociņš, but when he fell behind the deadlines it was given also to Jānis Rucelis. At the end of the year the novel appeared in book form with the translators’ initials and a note that the first two chapters were translated by Dravnieks and the rest by pastor Rucelis (Karsch 1903).

Almost simultaneous publication of different translations of the same work was a frequent phenomenon both in periodicals and book form. In some cases it seems the translators and publishers simply did not know what the other was doing. In other cases it was deliberate, to demonstrate the translator’s ability and mastery. Thus Vilis Plūdons’s translations of Lermontov’s poems were followed by Dievkociņš’s, who thought he could do better (Kuzāne 1980: 156).

Parallel to the quality works, easy reading continued to be published in free translations and with the traditional long titles. Broader knowledge of other languages than German meant that more works were now translated from the original languages. However, German still was the main conduit for foreign works. Thus, while Adamovičs was translating Shakespeare from English, Rainis was translating *King Lear* (Viljama 1900) from a German text at least at first, as the English original could not be obtained.

At the end of the 19th century English and French translations constituted around 4-5 per cent, Russian about 8-9 percent and German around 70 per cent (Apīnis 1977: 314). The number of Russian translations grew partly because of Russification and an improving command of Russian among educated Latvians, partly because so many great Russian writers were active during this period. It should be noted that the Russian originals translated were generally of higher quality than the German ones (Novērojumi 1905: 232) although pulp literature did also exist in Russian it was rarely translated.

The tradition of translating plays continued on a large scale. Ibsen tops the list with 13 plays, he is the most popular foreign playwright of the period of 1900-14. Every

year four to eight German plays were translated. Hauptmann was the most popular with eight plays published, and several more staged (Daukste-Silasproģe, 2005: 611). Some translators specialised in drama and a special series *The Small Theatre* (1901-23) vol. 1-9, was translated and edited by Lejas-Krūmiņš. Translations and performances of foreign plays attracted extensive criticism and analysis.

Various almanacs, anthologies and collections were published. Thus, Ermanis Pīpiņš-Vizulis met the new century with a collection *The Harvest of Other Nations* 1899-1901 in two volumes (Zittautu 1899), where Ozols involved the best translators. Plūdons translated a collection of 55 contemporary German poets (Modernā 1913).

Specific foreign authors were extensively translated at some times. Towards the beginning of the century there are numerous Hungarian translations: Móric Jókay and Kálmán Mikszáth, the novels are translated both in book form and in periodicals. Some Mikszáth's stories were translated several times over with different titles, there are often elements of localisation.

There was a gradual growth of translator's or editor's paratexts, thus when a translation of Arthur Bernede's book about Paris life was published it was introduced by an editor's preface stating that the book had had 25 impressions in Paris and should be perceived as a warning about the depravity of French modern civilization, that one "should fear and flee" (Baudu 1910).

Translators and publishers reacted to the political issues of the time, thus there are numerous translations from German dealing with the Boer Wars (1880-1881, 1899-1902) around the turn of the century.

Translations from German were as yet dominant, especially in the domains of poetry, romantic stories and plays, and pulp literature. Periodicals dwelled at length on what was happening on the German literary scene, even though the works discussed had not usually been translated. There was a great deal of interest in naturalism. German ideas, German culture and German views on what should be translated from other languages were strongly dominant. With the beginning of war in 1914 German translations virtually stopped.

Translation from Russian was growing fast, led by Tolstoy: 55 titles in the period, and again there were parallel translations even in one year and numerous repeated editions despite censorship objections to several of his works.

Translations from Lithuanian were rare at the end of the 19th century, for several reasons. First, printing in Lithuanian was forbidden in tsarist Russia. Although the ban was lifted in 1904, inertia continued up to the First World War. Second, Lithuanian literature had a very strong religious slant which seemed anachronistic to Latvians.

Estonian was a different story: the similar historical development in the Lutheran German-dominated space and the role of the Dorpat University in the formation and

education of Latvian intellectuals was of importance. Short stories and poetry translations were frequent in periodicals.

Interest in Nordic literature first arose at the end of the 19th century, no doubt stimulated by the similarity of mentality and living conditions. As interest grew it came to dominate the Latvian literary polysystem in the 1920s-30s. Scandinavian sources on agricultural topics were also translated, usually with some adaptation. The beginning of the century saw a serious interest in Finnish literature, resulting in five books and around 130 other publications (Jundze 2002: 212), mostly short stories. This was the most productive period of translations from Finnish into Latvian.

The Danish link continued with Andersen's fairy tales.

Swedish literature was very popular: around 40 stories by Strindberg (Kalnačs 2002) as well as his plays, and these were direct translations from Swedish. While in the 19th century Strindberg had been present in periodicals, several books were published before the war. Lagerlöf had around 100 translations in periodicals and 8 books. Hedenstierna, who had been most popular, was gradually losing his position: 70 publications and one book of stories.

Norwegian literature had been known since the end of the 19th century, mostly from stories and poems in newspapers and magazines and an occasional book. But the real focus in the 20th century was on Ibsen and Hamsun. The earlier translations were via German, but originals were used after the 1905 revolutions, when several Latvian writers had escaped to Norway and learned the language. Moreover, these translations remain perfectly readable today (Burima 2007: 462).

As regards English literature, translation of Shakespeare continued: six titles, some of which are earlier translations. The beginning of the 20th saw four more novels by Walter Scott, but then he disappeared. But the Latvian reader gained access to contemporary English writers as well: three novels by H.G. Wells (in one of which he was called an American writer) (Pasauļu 1912), and works by Galsworthy, Jerome K. Jerome. Also two titles by Thomas Hardy appeared. However, the greatest interest was in Oscar Wilde: six books and numerous publications in magazines. Novels by Jack London and some translations of Mark Twain stories introduced Latvians to contemporary American literature.

French was represented by four Jules Verne titles in free translation, Anatole France's stories in books and magazines, some novels and a play by Victor Hugo, Gustave Flaubert's stories, two novels by Emile Zola and one by Prosper Mérimée.

Polish literature was dominated by four books by Stanislaw Przybyszewski, four translations of Henryk Sienkiewicz's works, the most outstanding being *Quo vadis?* translated by Aspazija, and two by a leading Polish writer Bolesław Prus.

Italian literature was represented by five titles, Hungarian by five, Spanish by four, Romanian by three, Bulgarian by two, as well as works from Japanese, Arabic and Chinese. Thus, we can see that the range of works translated in the pre-war decade significantly expanded the cultural horizons.

Religious books

A large number of religious books were published: translations, adaptations, books for congregations, explanations of the Bible, introductions to other non-Christian religions and several catechisms. The Bible and the New Testament were published regularly. Many books were written and translated by Baptist activist and publisher Pēteris Lauberts. Charles Sheldon's book, for example, was published twice (Wiņa 1909). Even greater was the activity of another Baptist publisher, Jānis Freijs, who himself translated most of the numerous books he published, though it is not stated in the translations. His wife Ludmilla also translated, and is usually named. The precise number of books published is uncertain as many were reprinted, but we can be sure of around 300 and more (Baptist historian Tervits mentions 850 (Tervits 1999: 81)). There were several collections of Bible stories for children.

Latvia learnt of more exotic trends and religions when Buddhist teachings (Buda 1908) appeared in Riga at the beginning of the century (Ķuzāne 1980: 202). Magazines published articles about Oriental religions. In 1908 Olcott's *Buddhist Catechism* (*Budistu katķisms*) was published in Latvian, translated by the Latvian writer Augusts Degļavs (Budistu 1908), who was not particularly interested in religions: either the book seemed interesting to him or he was in dire need of money (he was writing his voluminous book *Riga* at the time). With censorship easing, other denominations such as the Seventh Day Adventists were also publishing more. The religious newspapers *Avots* (1905–15) and *Kristīgs Vēstnesis* (1906–14) started operating, publishing many translated texts.

Marxist literature in translation

Marxist literature was published in Latvia and abroad. After the revolution, censorship relaxed and several Marxist texts were published in Riga. It is noteworthy that the social-democratic trend dominated in translated literature. Not a single work of Lenin was published, Marx and Engels have only three titles between them, but Kautsky around 20 (published in Brussels, Berne, England and St Petersburg, but most often in Riga). The French Marxist Paul Lafargue scored around 10 translations, including parallel ones. These were usually translated from German adaptations.

Science, popular science and reference translations

There are many translations on practical economics and agriculture, as well as adapted translations, often based on Scandinavian texts. The ever broadening fields of information and language demanded reference literature and terminology development. This led first of all to encyclopaedias, which were naturally based on translating information from other encyclopaedias and texts. Thus, Encyclopedia *Konversācijas vārdnīca* was started in 1903/4. Ninety instalments were published, but the war interfered with the final ones and it was finished by *RLB DGN* when the 99th instalment was published in 1921. Scientific literature mostly focused either on general issues or academic literature. Many were adapted or derived works. Among the most important were Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (Sugu 1913) and books on chemistry, philosophy, law, politics, geography and art. Many of these were published by *RLB DGN*, which was acutely aware of the need to cultivate science in order to educate and to apply Latvian to a wider range of domains.

Newspapers and magazines abounded in popular science translations on various topics, but there were plenty of books as well. Numerous works were dedicated to women's position in society, emancipation, marriage and sex lives. Pāvils Strautzelis, a doctor, published many books on medicine, some were translations from German and Russian, others adaptations of German texts.

With the beginning of the First World War (1914) there came a sharp drop in publishing: 282 titles in 1914 and only 62 in 1915. As the front approached Riga, printing shops closed or were evacuated, and after the Germans captured Riga publishing virtually stopped. In the early months of the war it was mainly aggressive propaganda booklets with expressive titles that were printed. Occasionally it was not stated that the booklet was a translation or the translator's name was omitted.

Translators

The second half of the 19th century saw the end of the long period when translations into Latvian were done by non-Latvians, mostly German pastors. Now the translators were native Latvians, some were gifted, others were poor amateurs. There was a change of generations around the turn of the century, with many productive translators dying around this time. Many late-19th-century translators were not active in translation in the 20th century, for various reasons, but many remained active also after the turn of the century: Lapas Mārtiņš, Paegļu Mārtiņš, Lejas-Krūmiņš, Treimanis-Zvārgulis, a.o. And a new generation of translators, among them first-rate Latvian writers entered the scene: Rūdolfs Blaumanis, Deglavs, Apsīšu Jēkabs, Anna Brigadere, Jēkabs Janševskis,

Ernests Birznieks-Upītis, Fricis Bārda, Plūdons, Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš, Andrievs Niedra, Jānis Akuraters, Kārlis Skalbe, Rainis, Aspazija, Zeltmatis, Jānis Ezeriņš a.o. Translation enabled them to earn their daily bread while honing their skills and often establishing their genre and style. Rainis frequently referred to translations he did as a means to earn some money. Jaunsudrabiņš also stated: “I must note that I have more often than not earned my daily bread by translations. By and large I chose what to translate, but occasionally some were commissioned. I consider it a more honourable way of earning money than going churning out pot-boilers. Every work has to mature to some extent and, if it is pulled into daylight too early, it has shortcomings and redundancies” (Jaunsudrabiņš 1957: 96).

Frequently the publishers were also translators, thus the lexicographer and publisher Dravnieks translated German, Russian, Italian, English and Norwegian writings (Labrence 1984), Andrejs Jesens translated numerous works, usually not mentioning the translator, at other times using the pseudonyms of Rutks, Rūķis and Birzgalietis.

Among the very productive translators who are not known as great Latvian writers we should mention Mārcis Zīraks (with a feminine pseudonym Ziemciešu Marija (Gudriķe 2004)) who produced more than 100 translations, mostly in periodicals, but only 3 in book form. His translations were well done, and he was also considered a most careful editor and outstanding proof-reader. Diženajo Bernhards was very productive, among his translations there were voluminous amounts of pulp literature, but also works by Ibsen, Conan Doyle, Emerson and Heine, and literature of Ancient Greece and Rome. Jānis Straume was extremely productive at various kinds of translation, as was Eduards Rudzītis.

A new development was the influx of women into translation, something that had not occurred before. Most of the women translators were wives or partners of Latvian writers and usually the two started translating together.

The question of quality

The quality of translations varied greatly. Some translations of this period (although containing an occasional odd, strange or old-fashioned word) can be read today as samples of good Latvian (Akuraters, Rainis, Jaunsudrabiņš, Kārlis Skalbe, Plūdons), while others are heavy, and full of German and Russian barbarisms and constructions.

Being the editor of *Universālā bibliotēka* series, Rainis paid great attention to the issue of translation quality, he was often critical and frequently refused to publish bad translations. Rainis wrote to Gulbis: “You have many translators who do not know anything, neither Latvian nor any other skill” (Zanders 2015: 237). He regularly advised younger translators even on individual words and terms.

The quality in periodicals was much lower, and works were frequently cut and abridged to fit the format, or with the idea that some parts were not important. Newspaper editors were so overloaded with work that “they had no time to read through the manuscripts and edit them. Editors of fiction were happy enough to read the title of the work and the names of the author and the translator. And if the translator was known to them, the translation was passed on to the printers. The proofreader was as lax towards the text and the language as the editor, in order not to create extra work for the type-setters” (Melnalksnis 1944: 2). Although translators did not work for free in the new century, Rainis noted that “translation does not pay” (Literārais 1957: 297).

Translation methods

This period spelled the end of the old-style localisation strategy with elements of adaptation. Translations became more precise, more faithful to the original; fidelity was now considered important, translators were not afraid of foreignisation strategy. Localisation and adaptation occasionally remained in translations of light and trivial plays, and elements of localisation could be observed in science texts, but this was more a question of adapting the content to the reader’s supposed level of competence. Some works were still translated as abridged and free summaries but this was usually stated (Zelņojums 1901).

On the other hand free translation obtained a new artistically creative meaning. Now that there were national writers on their own account (also practicing translation) they were freer in their translations, using Latvian better and respecting the source text less. Another reason why many outstanding native writers turned to translation (which seems to be a general tendency at the period (Albrecht 1998: 279)) was the relatively high proportion of poetry texts on the Latvian translation menu.

This change of method was a gradual and natural one, without theoretical substantiation. It was also often determined by the goal of translation (even when not stated). Thus light entertainment literature was often translated in a free manner and abridged, with sophisticated or cultural terms omitted. By contrast, if the goal was to enrich the reader’s knowledge and extend the expressive boundaries of Latvian, the issue of language use received more attention. Rainis had an even broader view of the purpose of translation: he was only 22 when musing on the state of Latvian literature, he recognised that only translated literature “can bring new nourishment, new ideas, and aspirations to avoid uniformity, to make our original literature fresh and spiritually alert” (Literārais 1957: 42). In 1912 he wrote: “I have to keep translating, not for the sake of money, but to exercise the language. Originals never exercise the skilful use of language as well as translations do” (Rainis 1986: 436). He also called for a collection of Baltic

and Estonian theoretical papers on translation issues, as a source of knowledge transfer similar to the way Latvian farmers were copying the Danish farming experience.

Translation criticism

Literary criticism was extensive and broad and could be found in most newspapers and magazines. It offered comprehensive and frequently highly detailed information about the literary processes abroad and their potential importance for Latvian culture. Rainis, put this into words in 1909: “Something new and great can grow only from the absorption of the cultural universe. By devoting half of my life to translating the whole library of classics, I wanted to give the Latvian nation the foundation and opportunity to create something new and great of its own” (Literārais, 1961: 249). This is a clear formulation of the defective stance: the need to absorb missing elements from others (Robyns 1994).

As regards the translations themselves critics tended to focus on two aspects: first, there were regular complaints that pulp literature should not be published at all, and second, there were frequent complaints about the quality of Latvian in translations. For most translators, except the literary masters, language quality did not matter much: they strove to get the message across and to do it fast.

In contrast Rainis already wanted to create a new language by 1912, one that would be able to express everything: “we have to organise and recreate Latvian in such a way as to be able to express lofty thoughts. Otherwise culture is hampered by insufficiency of language” (Rainis 1986: 430). Andrievs Niedra, a Latvian writer of the old school, while appreciating many of Rainis’s achievements, was somewhat critical of his language. He stated that Rainis departed from the traditional “peasant’s language”, being aware that the new age called for a “faster” language. He also stated that Rainis developed his new language through translations, and to some extent deplored this, as it was allegedly based on German and Russian models (Niedra 1930).

Conclusions

The turn of the century period was an epoch of huge advances and expansion in the Latvian translation scene. New, contemporary authors’ works became available to Latvian readers. The Latvian readership was consciously being integrated into general European literary trends. Publishing in Latvia “went through all stages of development in a very short period and at the beginning of the 20th century approached the level of the cultured nations of the world” (Labrence 1984: 112).

It was also a heyday of periodicals. Translations included various genres and the traditional Latvian interest in plays was very obvious. So was the focus on agricultural

literature. The translation method changed from localisation to a fidelity mode with a tendency to foreignisation. German was gradually losing its dominant positions as a source and intermediate language, Russian was advancing, so was also the scope of other languages. This period also saw a change of generations among translators, and with the new generation women became visible in translation scene. Frequently translations now had prefaces and explanations by the translators.

Translated literature now ranged from serious classical works to modern ones and from pulp literature to high quality creations. Naturally the quality of translations was also very varied. The expansion of translation and the cultivation of new domains went hand in hand with a preoccupation with the development of the Latvian language itself. The outbreak of the First World War halted this unprecedented growth, but so much had been achieved that a columnist and future Prime Minister Mārgers Skujenieks could state in 1913: “now that articles on most varied scientific fields are being composed in Latvian, now that the classics of the great nations have been translated and an encyclopaedia published, now objections against the language are unfounded and only attest to the objectors’ own ignorance of Latvian” (Skujenieks 1913: 81-82).

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