INTRODUCTION FROM THE EDITOR

The creative works of the eminent Estonian writer Jaan Kross (1920–2007) have long attracted the members of the Department of Russian Literature at the University of Tartu with their rich opportunities to delve into the intersection of Russian and Estonian cultures and into the poetics of this acknowledged master's historical novels. This focus became a priority within the research project "The Reception of Russian Literature in Estonia in the 20th Century: from Interpretation to Translation", which began in 2009. This research project has resulted in the collective monograph offered here to readers. The works contained herein are the fruit of collective effort in the direct sense of the word — not only because they are all devoted to one author (the prose, dramaturgy, and poetry translations of Jaan Kross), but also because the contributing scholars strive for common goals and follow the similar methodological principles[1].

This monograph is composed of three parts. The first contains concentrated research into the *historical and literary sources* for those of Kross's historical works that are directly or indirectly connected with Russian culture. In studying any single layer of the fictional text, it inevitably becomes necessary for the scholar to describe the text as a whole. Consequently, this part of the monograph attempts to analyze several general characteristics of the *poetics of Jaan Kross's historical prose*. While in no way claiming to provide comprehensive coverage of the structural features of Kross's works, the articles' authors, nonetheless, strive to identify the key, *dominant* features of the analyzed texts. The second part of the monograph analyzes several constants in the *poetics of Kross's poetry translations* from Russian. In the third part, the supplement, the autobiographical story of the prototype of one of Kross's protagonists, the artist Johann Köler, is published for the first time.

According to Kross himself, his acquaintance with Russian literature in its original language occurred rather late. In 1938 he finished the Jakob Westholm grammar school in Tallinn, and in the same year entered the Law Department of the University of Tartu, where he became a lecturer after completing his studies in 1944. In 1946 Kross was arrested and given a sentence by the NKVD, under which he spent the next several years in a labor camp in the Komi ASSR, and at the end in Krasnoyarsk region, from which he was freed only in 1954.

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[1] To the present, this is the third collective effort focused on the creative work of Jaan Kross. See also: Metamorfiline Kross. Tallinn, 2003; Jaan Kross: bilan et découvertes. Paris, 2011.

On the basis of Kross's recollections[2], one can conclude that his mastery of the Russian language in every stylistic register happened specifically during this period (people from various social levels were serving sentences in the camps; their intellectual and educational levels were also varying).

In Kross's memoirs and other semi-autobiographical works, evidence of his acquaintance with and attitude toward Russian literature is quite terse[3]. On the basis of these meager inclusions it may be concluded that his interest in classical Russian literature began even before his time in the labor camps.

Kross's recollections hint that before his second arrest on January 6, 1946[4] and subsequent detainment in the Tallinn NKVD prison, he was acquainted with the Russian language only through works of classical Russian literature: "…at first I had no idea what the Russian word *shum* [noise] meant. Because I had encountered this word only in Lermontov's poem "The Prophet"[5], where it is used in the phrase *dubovyi shum* [oaken rustling]; that is, the sound of oak groves, and I didn't guess that *that* was the same *shum* that King Kong [the nickname of one of the prison guards] accused us of making"[6].

Here also, Kross relates how in the camp (in Aban) he began to translate the poetry of Alexander Blok[7]. Bear in mind that the choice of this poet was connected, apparently, not only (and, possibly, not so much) due to Kross's literary sympathies with the "political criminal," but because by the 1930s Blok was already canonized in the Soviet literary scholarship as a poet who welcomed the October Revolution. Nonetheless, Kross was unsuccessful at getting these translations published, although he tried[8].

A more serious mastery of Russian literature and culture by the writer began later in his well-known historical novels, written in the 1970s and early 1980s.

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2 See: *Kross, J.* Kallid kaasteelised. Tallinn, 2003. Kd I.

3 Thus, for example, in the novel "The Wikman Boys" ("Wikmani poisid", 1988), the autobiographical hero Jaak Sirkel's mother's range of reading includes Dostoevsky's "The Brothers Karamazov": "'You're going out again? What for?' asked mother, sitting in the corner of the couch and looking up from her reading of the second tome of 'The Brothers Karamazov', which she had brought from the bedroom" (*Kross, J.* Wikmani poisid. Tallinn, 1988. Lk 60).

4 Kross was arrested the first time during the German occupation, on April 21, 1944; on September 19 of the same year he was released.

5 In Lermontov's "The Prophet" there is no such phrase. Apparently, Kross meant a different poem by Lermontov, "I go out on the road alone…" (Compare: "Would that above me ever green / Dark *oaks* bowed and *rustled*").

6 *Kross, J.* Kallid kaasteelised. Lk 196.

7 Apparently, Kross was referring to his translation of Blok's "The Scythians" (1918). The year after his return to Estonia, Kross had already published his first translation in "Looming" magazine (*Blok, A.* Sküüdid // Looming. 1955. Nr 11. Lk 1327–1328).

8 *Kross, J.* Kallid kaasteelised. Lk 405.

It is in this period that Kross appealed to those historical materials that were of greatest interest to him. In his novels "The Czar's Madman", "Professor Martens' Departure", the mini-novel "The Third Range of Hills", the novella "Michelson's Matriculation", and the play "A Hard Night for Dr. Karell" the action takes place in the 19th or 20th centuries within the Russian empire, which at the time included Estonia (then called Estland and, in part, the Livonian province). In each of the works listed, the author's attention is focused on a protagonist of Estonian origin. They are: the peasant Jakob Mättik, who attained a high level of education in a short period of time; the native of the lower classes Friedrich Frommhold Martens, who became a world-renowned attorney; the peasant Ivan Michelson, who was promoted to the rank of general and suppressed the Pugachev rebellion; and the "farmhand's son" Johann Köler, who became the founder of Estonian national painting and professor in the Imperial Academy of Arts.

The first-person narration in the novels and the character structure of the dramatic work allow Kross to occupy an "objective" position in the text (it is the characters that "speak", not the "author") without inserting direct judgments. This narrative structure always presents difficulties for the researcher: there is a danger of ascribing the protagonist's opinion to the author. The choice of such a narrative strategy is due, at least from our perspective, to two circumstances.

First, this structure is found in the compositions of world-renowned fiction writers, whose tradition Kross took into account in his creative work. For example, in Thomas Mann's novel "Doctor Faust", the story of Adrian Leverkühn is told by another character, Serenus Zeitblom, while in Dostoevsky's "The Adolescent" the novel is "written" by the already-grown protagonist, Arkady Dolgoruky. In both cases, the author's position must be reconstructed and does not coincide with the protagonist's point of view.

Second, the distancing of the author from his characters, undoubtedly, is the result of the spirit of the time in which the above-listed works were composed. The "brave" thoughts and actions of Kross's characters that expose the inhumanity and hypocrisy of imperial power, of course, were secretly directed at modern powers. But the chosen form of *Icherzhälung* did not give Soviet censors the direct opportunity to accuse the author of the seditious pronouncements made by his heroes.

Kross depicts active Estonian protagonists, whose actions are capable of influencing the development of events and even the course of history: the artist Köler, who collected donations for Estonian peasants; Doctor Philipp Karell, who facilitated Emperor Nicholas I's exit from life; General Michelson, who pacified Emelyan Pugachev's uprising; and the attorney Martens, whose efforts

laid the foundation for modern international law and, as a result, civilized, peaceful relations between nations. His choice of heroes and their development in each text witness to the fact that Kross was consciously oriented on the mythologization of his main characters.

Kross's subtlety and thoroughness as a historical novelist lies in the fact that he studies every historical source available to him at the time of writing and understands well how they reflect historical reality. But for his novels he either selects from the memoirs, biographies, and epistolaries individual *passages* or entire lines of narration which affirm his intentions (regarding Kross's use of S. Y. Witte's memoirs in the novel "Professor Martens' Departure" in just this way, see, for example, the article herein by Timur Guzairov), or deliberately changes the source to suit the ideological concept of the novel. And so, Ljubov Kisseljova's article about "The Czar's Madman" discusses how Kross, contrary to historical reality, strips the character Bock of his Russophilia, or love for Russian culture, and makes the protagonist Jakob Mättik write his diary in Estonian, again a fully deliberate anachronism; see also the same author's article about Kross's "The Third Range of Hills", where the artist Köler views his rise on the career ladder and professional successes as a betrayal of his nation. As Kisseljova demonstrates, this interpretation of the character is not historically accurate, but is completely convincing from the perspective of the work as a creative whole. Kisseljova's "Biography of Professor Köler" presents an image of the historical artist Johann Köler which only partially corresponds to his portrayal in the novel. The biography was written down by a stenographer from his own words in the presence of Mikhail Semevsky, editor of "Russkaya Starina" magazine. Köler is proud of his democratic origins and of belonging to the Estonian nation, but the artist's story contains no traces of the "guilt" before his compatriots described in such detail in "The Third Range of Hills".

In addition to the historical sources of the works analyzed herein, the authors of this monograph were interested in Kross's literary sources. It must be emphasized that the writer's intertextual field of prose works is extremely broad, reflecting his multifaceted literary erudition. At the same time, Kross's references to direct or hidden quotes from authors of other nationalities (in particular, classical authors) are targeted at the inclusion not only of his own work, but of all Estonian literature on the stage of world literature.

The quotation of works of Russian literature in Kross's compositions "Michelson's Matriculation", "The Czar's Madman", "The Third Range of Hills", and "Professor Martens' Departure" also has a special (internal) function: it forms the reader's impression of the depicted epoch and culture, seeming to stylize them.

This feature clearly manifests in "Professor Martens's Departure" (see the article by Lea Pild). In this piece, Kross refers to the works of Leo Tolstoy as a great contemporary of the main character, the renowned attorney F. F. Martens. Several images of Tolstoy's prose and journalism become key themes in Kross's novel, while Tolstoyan psychology (the correlation of the character's actions with several internal motives that arise in his consciousness almost simultaneously) is one of the foundational methods used by Kross to build the protagonist's inner monologues, his penitential confession. In this case it is appropriate to speak not so much of literary "influence", but of Kross's deliberate inclusion of the reader in the atmosphere of the era depicted: in Russian culture at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, Tolstoy was the greatest moral authority, which is precisely why Martens's moral judgment of himself occurs from a Tolstoyan position.

Quotes from Russian writers play a similar role in "The Czar's Madman", where the action takes place primarily in the first third of the 19th century. Quotes and reminiscences from the poetry of Pushkin and Zhukovsky-Schiller (and other authors, not only Russians; see, for example, the quote from "The Book of Songs" by Heine) construct the literary context that would have been relevant for educated people of that time.

Finally, Kross's references to many texts of world literature allow him to use some of them as myths (regarding the neomythological elements of Kross's novels, see L. Pild's article "The Poetics of the Leitmotifs in Jaan Kross's 'The Czar's Madman'").

As noted above, the second part of this monograph is devoted to Jaan Kross's translations from Russian literature. This book covers only a small number of them: his poetry translations of Russian poet David Samoilov, who lived in Estonia in 1975–1990 and was, for a time, friends with Kross and his wife Ellen Niit; and his translation of Alexander Griboedov's comedy "The Misfortune of Being Clever"[9]. His translation of *Misfortune* was published in 1964, and he translated Samoilov's poetry from the 1960s through the 1980s. As Tatiana Stepanischeva's detailed analyses of Kross's poetry translations and their publication alongside the original texts reveal, to a large degree Kross focuses more on the form of the translated text (that is, on the reproduction

[9] Regarding the characteristics of several of Kross's translations (including those from Russian), see: *Talviste, K.* A Dispersed Monument: Jaan Kross's Translations of Poetry on the Landscape of Estonian Literature // Interlitteraria. 2009. 14(2). P. 369–382. Kross translated not only Russian poetry (A. Pushkin, M. Lermontov, A. Blok, A. Akhmatova, S. Yesenin, V. Mayakovsky, D. Samoilov, B. Slutsky, B. Akhmadulina, Y. Yevtuschenko, A. Voznesensky, K. Chukovsky, S. Marshak and many others), but also prose (I. Goncharov) and drama (A. Griboedov).

of its metrics, rhyme structure, and phonics) than on its content (historical, daily-life, cultural, and literary realities). Another distinctive feature of Kross's translations is his orientation toward the Estonian reader — his translations are characterized by a marked allusiveness to the modern historical situation. This same characteristic is found in Kross's translation of Griboedov's comedy in poetry, "The Misfortune of Being Clever", as demonstrated by Dmitry Ivanov and Maria Tamm.

The authors of this monograph view the research presented herein as a part of the greater body of research on Kross conducted over the last several years by literary scholars in Estonia and Western Europe, and as an indispensable dialogue with those scholars who have analyzed other or similar aspects of the works of Jaan Kross.

Lea Pild