

# LITUANUS

LITHUANIAN QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Volume 42 11, No.2 - Summer 1965

Editor of this issue: Thomas Remeikis

ISSN 0024-5089

Copyright © 1965 LITUANUS Foundation, Inc.



## Book Review: A NEW TRANSLATION OF KRĖVĖ'S SHORT STORIES

**Vincas Krėvė. THE HERDSMAN AND THE LINDEN TREE. Translated from the Lithuanian by Albinas Baranauskas. Pranas Pronckus, and Raphael Sealy. (New York: Manyland Books. Inc. 1964). 128 pp.**

This translatory endeavour evokes commendation for the translators and the individuals connected with its publication. It is quite obvious, as Mr. Charles Angoff already indicates in the Introduction, that the modern Lithuanian literature, embodying unforgettable treasures of an ancient Balto-Lithuanian culture, needs to be exposed to the English reading public in a more extensive manner than was the case in the past. The selection of Vincas Krėvė as the representative of Lithuanian literature for the English translation is certainly justifiable and acceptable. The choice of the author's prose narratives, even if suggesting a more intensive contemplation in the process of their selection, does not provoke any serious objections by the reader. One would be inclined to agree, however, that the narrative "The Herdsman and the Linden Tree" unnecessarily overshadows its thematic companions. This narrative displays almost all the aspects of the writer's literary-creative character. His romantic disposition, stimulating an interpretation based upon Novalis' literary theory of "qualitative involution," is readily reflected in the narration's eternal movement of time and space. Solely, the rationalistic attitudes, in instances decorated with pantheistic consciousness flowing through this story, provide the sequence of narratives with a homogeneous unity and poetic harmony. Another characteristic which protrudes from the mosaic of these prose portraits is the writer's extraordinary and penetrating power of observation. A minute, naturalistic portrayal of his literary characters, based upon exceptional understanding of psychological composition of Lithuanian personages, furthers the fame of Vincas Krėvė's literary ability and substantiates his selection as being an outstanding representative of the modern Lithuanian prose.

The English translation itself exhibits a laborous task admirably done. It is understandable, however, that any translatory attempt of this nature projects unescapable inadequancies in transplanting the original thought into another tongue of a different Indo-European language group. Consequently, the diminutive forms, which are one of the signal characteristics of the Lithuanian language, do not ornament the English translation, particularly that of "Antanukas' Morning," although they flow abundantly and pleasingly to the reader's eyes in the original. The transfer of the Lithuanian idiomatic expressions into English is executed with good literary taste and creates an adequate effect in the reflection of rustic Lithuanian speech patterns. The introduction of some segments of the Lithuanian national culture, such as mythological names, seems to demand a supplement of explanatory notes for the English speaking reader. It is unfortunate that the reader, not well acquainted with the Balto-Lithuanian pattern of life, must be deprived of this unique knowledge in not satisfying his intellectual curiosity at the moment of reading — without exposing himself to the search of reference works. Despite these certainly minor critical comments one must agree that this translation achieves what it was meant to achieve, which is the complete capture of an English reader in the magic world of a nordic land known under the epithet — Lithuania, a land deserving a much greater literary recognition; now, thanks to the translators this admirable but burdensome step has been taken ...

*Anatole C. Matulis  
Purdue University*