



## ТЕОРИЯ И ПРАКТИКА ПЕРЕВОДА

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**THE MELODY OF DISTANT THINGS:**

**JOHAN FABRICIUS AS A CZECH WINDOW ON EXOTIC WORLDS\***

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From an international point of view, Dutch-written literature is a periphery literature for some 24 million native speakers. Nevertheless, a fair amount of Dutch-written works have been translated into foreign languages, especially since World War II. Johan Fabricius (1899–1981) was during his life one of the most widely read popular Dutch authors. His works, especially his ‘immortal’ novel *De scheepsjongens van Bontekoe* (1924) is still edited in Dutch as well as abroad (the last Czech edition dating from 2012), are ranked among the most popular at home as well as abroad. However, in Central Europe his works were translated mainly into German and into Czech. This is no coincidence as Czech is one of the languages into which a good number of Dutch-written works are translated. Czech translations offer a mix of popular authors and typical ‘canon’ writers. In this article, the Czech reception is divided into several periods: between the World Wars, during the German occupation, the democratic years 1945–1948, the Communist period, and after 1989. The article provides information about the translators, (Lída Faltová (1899–1944) and Olga Krijtová (1931–2013) being the most important ones), publishers, print runs, and the reasons why certain books were not published in Czech. This occurred

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primarily in the periods 1945–1948 and 1949–1989. For each period, a short description of the background is provided. In the appendix, a complete survey of all the translations of Fabricius' works is given in accordance with the most recent situation.

**Keywords:** Johan Fabricius, translation, Dutch, Czech, exotic worlds, novels.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A look in the database of the Dutch Literary Fund<sup>1</sup> indicates that some kind of 'foreign canon of Dutch-written literature' exists. This may seem logical as most translations after 1994 are published with the financial aid of Dutch and Flemish literary funds. The pre-war bibliography *Nederlandsche schrijvers in vertaling* by A. J. van Huffel [van Huffel, 1939] demonstrates that this was also the case in that period without subventions. The foreign choice of Dutch-written works to be translated aroused already astonishment before World War II, as shows a review by the renowned Dutch critic Menno ter Braak [ter Braak, 1939] about the 1939 exhibition *Nederlandsche schrijvers in vertaling* organized by Van Huffel in the Dutch Royal Library.

Variations in translation choices between different languages are due to the circumstances of the receiving literatures, like connections between translators, publishers or literary movements. In East Central Europe, the big number of literary translations from Dutch in the period 1845–1948 into Czech was caused by good connections between Czech publishers and literary agents with their German colleagues and the presence of translators specialized in Dutch. When after World War II chairs of Dutch language were founded in Poland and Hungary, these differences disappeared. One of them was the presence of the work of the novelist Johan Fabricius (1899–1981).

## 2. JOHAN FABRICIUS

Johan Fabricius<sup>2</sup> was one of the most read and translated Dutch authors during the twentieth century. Over the course of his long life, he

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: <https://letterenfonds.secure.force.com/vertalingendatabase/search> (accessed: 02.01.2020).

<sup>2</sup> Data from Fabricius' life according to Bulhuis (1959), additions from G. J. van Bork, 'Fabricius, Johan', in: G. J. van Bork & ..., *Schrijvers en dichters. Dbnl Biografieënproject I*, 2004 — Available at: [http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/bork001schr01\\_01/bork001schr01\\_01\\_0324.php](http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/bork001schr01_01/bork001schr01_01_0324.php) (accessed: 19.11.2019), and Fabricius' personal archive in the Literatuurmuseum in The Hague.



Fig. 1. Portrait of Johan Fabricius in the translation *Z dvoji krve* (Praha: Horizont, 1948). Copy of the author

produced 106 titles, partly written for children and youth. His books were translated into twenty languages<sup>3</sup>, foremost into German — 27 titles in 59 editions; Czech is third with 19 translated titles in 35 editions (see attachment)<sup>4</sup>. After the first German translation *Eiko, der Junge vom Reierhof* (1924) of Fabricius' first novel *Eiko van den Reigerhof* (1922), one German translation followed nearly every year at least up until 1934, often published within one year after the original. As Fabricius' own command of German was very good and his wife Ruth Fabricius-Freudenburg (1900–1968) was a native speaker of German, they were themselves often the translators of

his work.

Things changed, however, when Hitler came to power, especially after the public book burnings in May 1933 and the famous PEN-Congress in Dubrovnik in the same month. Fabricius, being present as a private member, was an eyewitness of the scene of 26 May, when the new PEN-president Herbert G. Wells (1866–1946) asked the German author Ernst Toller to give the opening speech and the official Dutch delegation supported in their behaviour the Nazi German delegation in their protest against this [Ross, 1999; Dorleijn, van Voorst, 2010].

After Dubrovnik, Fabricius' German publisher Zsolnay divided into a German and a Swiss division. While the Swiss part continued with its

<sup>3</sup> In German (29 titles), English (22 titles), Czech (19 titles), Swedish (12 titles), French and Norwegian (6 titles), Danish and Finnish (5 titles), Spanish (3 titles), Indonesian (2 titles) and (in these languages just 1 title) in Afrikaans, Croatian, Estonian, Frisian, Hebrew, Indonesian, Italian, Polish, Slovenian and Slovak.

<sup>4</sup> When counting the number of editions, Czech is even the second language, as 22 titles were translated in 31 editions into English. Data according to Bulthuis (1959, p. 86-94), the database of the Dutch Literary Fund (see note 2) and [www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org) (accessed: 01.01.2020).

former publishing policies, the German branches began to eliminate Jewish and 'degenerate' authors from their collections. Finally, Paul Zsolnay was forced to go into exile, his German and Austrian branches were 'arisiert', and Fabricius' works were placed on the Nazi list of forbidden books [Bulthuis, 1959, p. 45]. No German translations of his works appeared as of 1934, with the exception of one Swiss edition. When the Netherlands were occupied in May 1940, Fabricius managed to escape with his Jewish wife to England. During the War, he was engaged in *Radio Oranje*, the Free Netherlands broadcast aimed at occupied Netherlands.

In his free time, Fabricius wrote new novels, mainly with 'Dutch-Indies' themes, as exile awoke in him a longing for his birth land, occupied by the Japanese since 1942. Immediately after the liberation of Indonesia in August 1945, he visited the country as an allied war press journalist, thus being a witness to the *bersiap* atrocities of extremist groups resulting in thousands of victims among the European and Chinese inhabitants. The War and the exile situation caused alienation between him and his wife Ruth with whom he had three children. Divorce followed in 1963 and Fabricius began to live with his girlfriend Anneke Bleeker (1929–1999), who he married after the decease of his former wife in 1968. After the War, the Fabricius narration became somewhat old fashioned. His post-War novels were consequently less successful, with Czech translations once more being the exception.

### 3. FABRICIUS IN CZECH RECEPTION

Nineteen works in 35 editions in all of which 11 up until 1946 and 24 afterwards (including several reprints, often in very large print runs) provokes the question as to why Fabricius was so successful in Czech. The first translation of his works was of *Het meisje met den blauwen hoed* (1927), published in 1933 as *Dívka s modrým kloboukem* in a translation by Josef Mach (1883–1951). Presumably, the 1934 expensive black and white cinema production, produced under the direction of the Jewish-Austrian director Rudolf Meinert (1882–1943)<sup>5</sup>, would have played

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<sup>5</sup> Meinert fled in 1933 through Prague to the Netherlands. Because of the anti-refugee policy of the Dutch government, he went to France in 1937, where he was seized after the Nazi occupation, probably killed in 1943 in Majdanek.

a role. Mach probably used the German 1928 translation because he did not speak Dutch<sup>6</sup>.

A major role in the introduction of Fabricius' works into the Czech literary field was played by Lída Faltová (1899–1944), the first Czech translator focusing on Dutch-written literature. Between 1932 and 1944, she translated 38 Dutch-written titles, of which many were reprinted, mostly for the Social-democrat publishing houses Melantrich and Družštevni práce [Cooperative Labour, hereafter DP], the latter interested in good storytellers. She had a good nose for Dutch-language books that could be interesting and recommended Fabricius' work, being fully comparable with the wishes of DP's target audience. In the years 1933–1936, she translated the three parts of Fabricius' Italian trilogy<sup>7</sup>, being from an international perspective his most successful work alongside *De Scheepsjongens van Bontekoe* (1924, The Cabin Boys of Bontekoe). The first part, *Komedianten trokken voorbij* (1931, Players Passed By) was published in 1933 as *Jeli tudy komedianti*. One year later, the second volume, *Melodie der verten* (Melody of Distant Things), was released the same year as the original as *Melodie dálek*. The third part *De dans om de galg* (1934, Dance around the Gallows) came out in 1936 as *Tanec kolem šibenice*. The publisher began with a circulation of 7,000 copies for each volume. Apparently the sales went well, because the edition was increased to 7,300 copies for the last part, while at the same time both earlier parts were reprinted. During the war, the entire trilogy came out in a circulation of 7,700 pieces<sup>8</sup>. The trilogy was well received and received positive reviews<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> According to the colophon, the rights were in the possession of Zsolnay, the publisher of the German translation.

<sup>7</sup> This trilogy consisted of the novels *Komedianten trokken voorbij* (1931), *Melodie der verten* (1934) and *De dans om de galg* (1934) about the baby girl Marietta, left by a vagant troop of theatre players in an inn, in eighteenth century Italy. She falls in love with a Cardinal with whom she has a son, Benedetto. The boy was spoiled by his mother and came to no good. In the last part he is sentenced to the gallows.

<sup>8</sup> Figures according to the communication of DP to the Press Office of the Presidium of the Ministers' Council of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, 8 February 1941 and January 1942 (PNP 70/57, part 220/13 korespondence DP s ostatními úřady).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Panorama* 12 (1934), back page of no. 3 in the section *Kritika o našich knihách* [Critics about Our Books]. The trilogy was, along with other books by Fabricius in the period 1934–1938, always among the ranking list of the 40 best selling books that *Panorama* published regularly. Fabricius was usually among the first 15 books.

In 1934, Faltová also translated *Leeuwen hongeren in Napels* (1934, The Lions Starve in Naples) which as *Lvi hladovějí v Neapoli* was published by DP in a print run of 8,000 copies. This book was also published in German (1934), English (1935), Swedish and Spanish (1937). Reception was poor in Germany but positive in the Czech Republic, where a second print run of 3,000 copies in the same year was needed.

Internationally, Fabricius' most famous book is *De Scheepsjongens van Bontekoe* translated by Faltová in 1935 as *Plavčáci kapitána Bontekoea*. With over one hundred thousand copies in eight editions in all up until 2012, this is probably one of the most successful Dutch-written books in Czech translation. The book was explicitly promoted by the publishing house as youth literature<sup>10</sup>.

In summer 1934, Fabricius and his wife Ruth took a Central European trip, visiting also Prague, where they met Faltová. He described himself for recognition as “*Tall and thin, my wife is small and will have a handkerchief in her hand*”. He joked that he hoped not to suffer the fate of ‘his ancestor’ Philips Fabricius<sup>11</sup>. He also used his visit to prepare his book about the Jewish intellectual Siegfried van Praag [Kneidl, 2005, p. 328–329]. During the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, several works were reissued notwithstanding the fact that Fabricius was as an active fighter against the Nazi regime on the German black list.

#### 4. CZECH RECEPTION OF FABRICIUS IN THE FIRST FREE YEARS

In the short democratic period of the years 1945–1948, a reprint of the sold out *Plavčáci kapitána Bontekoea* was published, as well as four new translations by new translators as Faltová died in 1944. Of them, Josef Mach, already had experience with Fabricius. He translated *Hotel Vesuvius* (1947) on the basis of the English translation *Hotel Vesuvius: a Gay Novel of Grapes, Wine and Sunshine*, the Czech title copying the English one. As far as is known, Czech is the only language besides English and Dutch in which this novel exists. The print run of 5,500 copies

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. e. g. the back cover of the last issue of *Panorama* 15 (1937), ‘Reading for our boys and girls’, and of *Panorama* 16 (1938), 249, section ‘For children under the Christmas tree’.

<sup>11</sup> This Fabricius was the secretary of the Catholic governors who had been thrown out of the castle during the so-called Prague defenestration in 1618 by representatives of the Czech Estates.


was a rather large number for that time, paper being in limited distribution.

At the end of 1946, the novel *Nacht over Java* was published in Czech as *Noc nad Jávou* after the English translation. In this work we find for the first time a typical phenomenon from the Communist period: an afterword by an 'expert' showing the reader the 'right interpretation'. In this case, it presented a short biography of Fabricius followed by a comparison between the Japanese occupation of Java and the German occupation of the Czech lands. The author of this afterword, Donát Šajner (pseudonym of Jaroslav Šajner, 1914–1990), had been the director of the publishing house Evropský literární klub (ELK) since 1943, where the translation was published. After 1948, he was one of the officials of Socialist Realism and from 1972 until his retirement in 1982 secretary of the writers' association Svaz českých spisovatelů during the so-called normalization period. The Czech language was also the only besides English into which this novel was translated. The print run was quite large with 10,000 copies.

In 1947, *Ostrov démonů*, the Czech translation of *Eiland der demonen*, was the second Indonesian novel by Fabricius published by a smaller Prague publishing house, Jaroslav Koliandr. It was the first book Ella Kazdová (1909–1982) translated from Dutch. Although the cover text explicitly states that the book was translated from Dutch, the colophon and the agreement refer to the title *Démons à Bali* of the 1945 French translation. Given the relatively high price of 75 Czechoslovakian crowns at the time (100 Kčs for the bound version), the circulation of 4,000 items was quite large. The cover text emphasizes the novel's exotic sides.

The fourth translation was *Z dvoji krve* of *Halbloed* by Milada Šimsová (1904–1992) who had begun to translate from Dutch during the war. In this edition, which came out in 1948 in 4,448 copies, there is an afterword as well, this time by Alois Humplík (1909–1966), again from someone who would later play a 'party-true' role. His afterword discusses Fabricius and his most important works, focusing primarily on the exotic atmosphere. Remarkably, the Czech translation was the first to be known in a foreign language. The book was also later translated into German (1954), French (1957) and Hebrew (1959).

The reason these novels were published by five different houses was the paper distribution. During 1945–1948, Czechoslovakia was governed by a coalition of the Communist Party KSĈ with several demo-



PRAHA II, BĚŽANSKÁ 41 - TELEFON 238-43  
 ÚSTŘEDNA PRO NIMOPRÁZĚNÉ KLIENTY  
 PRAHA XI, TÝTOVA ULICE - TELEFON 414-8

Mr.  
 Johan Fabricius,  
 93, Baron S Reef,  
 London W.14  
 -----

Prague 14th May 1947  
 St/Br

Dear Sir,

We are compelled to let you know that we had to restrict our presumed editorial programme because of lack of paper. For this reason we should not be able to publish your novel "Démons a Bali" as late as in two years. Therefore we suppose it would be much better for you to have it published before in another publishing-house. We have promised your novel to the well-known publishing-house Koliandr which is able to put it out as early as in this year. Mr. Koliandr will write you himself one of these days.

We would kindly know if you agree with our suggestion and thank you very much for your kindness.

Yours truly  
 M. Koliandr  
 PUBLISHERS AND  
 BOOKSELLERS  
 ELK PRAHA

Publishers  
**JAROSLAV KOLIANDR**  
 PRAHA XIV, DEKANA 806  
 Ústředna pro nimpřázné klienty  
 Telefon 238-43

Prague, the 28th May 1947.

Dear Sir,

We beg to inform you that we took over from publishers E. L. F. Prague, the publishers right to your book DEMONS OF BALI. We got the permission by the Ministry of Information for the book to be published. We shall publish it under the same conditions as they are stated in your agreement with E. L. F. and we trust that you will have no objections.

The advance of 40 L. we are forwarding you presently.

We beg you to acknowledge your agreement to this transfer as soon as possible. The publishing house E. L. F., according to information received, could publish your book at the earliest after one year's time, with us it will be published in August this year.

Expectant your news  
 We are, Sir,

Yours faithfully  
 MARIAN KOLÍANDEK, JAROSLAV KOLIANDR  
*M. Koliandr*

Fig. 2. Twice Eiland der Demonen (The Demons of Bali). Left (a) the letter (19 May 1947) in which ELK communicates that they cannot publish because of paper shortage and right (b) the letter of Koliandr (29 May 1947)



cratic parties. The KSCĚ occupied strategic ministries such as Information and Culture, ensuring paper distribution. In the case of *Ostrov demonů*, letters to Fabricius from ELK of 19 May 1947 and of Koliandr of 29 May 1947 show that the latter took over the publication because ELK did not receive the assigned paper. Another ELK planned edition of *Mario Ferraro's ijdele liefde*, for which an agreement is in Fabricius' records, was cancelled for the same reason.

The archives also tell us about two other non-editions. At the turn of the year 1947, Fabricius' youth novel *Flipje* (1936) about the little rascal Flip Valckenier was reviewed by Mirko Pašek (1910–2002) and Pavel Eisner (1889–1958). Both were positive but felt that the novel was not 'literary enough' to be published. The fate of the *Java Revisited* (1947) is even more typical for that time. Fabricius depicted in the book his experiences as official War reporter in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) during the winter of 1945/6, including the cruelties of the *bersiap*. Eisner remarked at the end of his review of 7 April 1948:

*The book embarrasses us. Our public opinion is generally predominantly sympathetic to the camp of the Indonesian revolutionary movement. Not entirely logical: we ignore the reality that Sukarno was undoubtedly a collaborator with the Japanese and therefore indirect, but extensive, damaging and dangerous to our national interests. Fabricius' convincing account also shows that the Indonesian Revolutionary Guards were thugs who fatally resembled the well-known SS, namely, crafty murdering, pillaging sadists and cowards. Czech people cannot stand these kinds of people.*

*It is a convincingly truthful and at the same time very captivating book. It is by no means a book by a colonial imperialist. It is, however, the duty of the reviewer to point out that neither the tenor of the book nor its facts are in accordance with our semi-official verdict on the Indonesian revolutionary movement. The reviewer therefore recommends that this political point of view should be subject to closer scrutiny.*

## 5. VICTORIOUS FEBRUARY AND ITS AFTERMATH

Eisner's remarks foreshadowed the period to come. During the year 1947, tensions between the democratic parties and KSCĚ grew. When the Communist Minister of Interior purged the National Police Force from all non-Communist members in 1948, the majority of the government members voted for a withdrawal of these illegal decisions. When the Minister refused, twelve democratic ministers resigned, expecting that

the crisis would provoke early elections which the KSČ would have lost. Gottwald proposed, however, to President Edvard Beneš (1884–1948) a minority government that would rule until the elections planned in autumn 1948. Under the pressure of strikes and street terror, the President accepted on 25 February 1948. Afterwards, the Parliament accepted on 9 May 1948 a Communist constitution — many democratic MP's at that time had already fled because of the terror abroad or were arrested for semi-legal reasons. The date 25 February was later declared an official Communist State Holiday as 'Victorious February'.

Between February 1948 and March 1949, the Communist government exerted increased pressure on the publishing houses. Finally, on 4 March 1949, all the private houses were nationalised and in the years 1950–1951 new combined state publishing houses with names such as the State Publishing House for Beautiful Literature, Music and Art were set up, this being a process known as 'ressortisation' [Šimeček, Trávníček, 2014, p. 324–333]. The quality of the editions deteriorated to such an extent that the books looked worse than editions from the last 1945 war months. During 1948, the Communist Ministry of Information and Enlightenment took over all the public libraries and published strictly secret lists on the grounds of which they should be purified of all 'objectionable' literature. Some 27.5 million books were eliminated in all in an attempt to wipe the parliamentary democratic First Czechoslovak Republic from memory [Wögerbauer, 2015, p. 1130–1132; Engelbrecht, 2018].

On the first list from 1949–1950, counting 7,579 titles, Fabricius is represented with five novels [Šámal, 2009, p. 274, nos. 1483–1487]: *Dívka v modrém klobouku* (1933); *Hotel Vesuvio* (1948); *Noc nad Jávou* (1947); *Ostrov démonů* (1947); *Z dvojí krve* (1948), all classified as 'escapist literature'. The first concerned his novel about a soldier based on his experiences from his service time in the Dutch army, the second a cheerful novel about the Italian bum Renato Colleoni, living on the beautiful island of Capri in Hotel Vesuvio just before World War II and misusing his Fascist uniform to impress young ladies. The latter three novels give impressions from Indonesia in a way that was then, to speak with Eisner, no longer in accordance with the official judgment on Indonesia.

Interestingly, his most successful novels, *Plavčíci kapitána Bontekoea* (1935) and *Italská trilogie* (1933–1936) were not eliminated. Presum-

ably, Fabricius' narration of the heroic struggle of the poor cabin boys Padde Kelemeijn and Peter Hajo, and of the main protagonists of the *Italian Trilogy*, the poor girl Marietta and her son Benedetto, illustrating the harsh circumstances of simple people in eighteenth century Italy, was in accordance with the official literary ideology of Socialist Realism. Literature in this style should evoke the idea of reality, focusing on scenes from the everyday life of people — especially illustrating the struggle of lower class (proletarian) people. No new Fabricius edition was published, however, during the Stalinist years.

## 6. FABRICIUS DURING THE COMMUNIST REGIME

When Czechoslovak publishers began after Stalinist times to be once more interested in Fabricius' works, it was a good job for him. The first book to be edited was a reissue of his acclaimed *De scheepsjongens van Bontekoe* in Faltová's translation but now accompanied by a long afterword by the historian Vladimír Kadlec (1905–1969) focusing on the 'first bourgeois revolution' by the Dutch against the 'greedy Spanish tyrants'<sup>12</sup>. The agreement signed in 1958 with the State Publishing House for Children's Literature through the mediation of the state literary agency Dilia stated royalties of 10,000 Dutch guilders<sup>13</sup>, of which 20 % was paid in advance. Most Communist countries paid only in non-convertible currency, a fact that e. g. the in the Eastern Block popular Communist author Theun de Vries (1907–2005) often regretted [Perry, 2011, p. 50–51].

Even where Dilia deducted as usual a mediation fee of 10 % and a the 2 % fee for the Czechoslovak Literary Fund<sup>14</sup>, Fabricius' royalties remained some 31.5 to 78 cents per copy — his Dutch publishing houses paid normally 30 to 35 cent per copy. The following reissues of 1966 and 1977 had even larger print runs.

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<sup>12</sup> This afterword was present in the edition of 1966 but was left out as of the 1977 edition.

<sup>13</sup> This would be today some € 31,840.

<sup>14</sup> The deducted sums were explained by Dilia to the Amsterdam publishing house Querido in a letter of 16 November 1957 in connection with the first translation by Olga Krijtová (LM, 2 Que Correspondentie Drijvers, map 1). Till 1968, Dilia was obliged to withheld also an income tax, after that year their payment order contained a notice that income taxes should be paid by the author in his own country. Pre-War private literary agencies mostly withdrew a fee of 15 % for mediation.

The first newly translated book was *Herinneringen van een oude pruik* (1968, *Memories of an Old Wig*) being published only three years after the original as *Vzpomínky staré paruky* in a translation by Olga Krijtová (1931–2013) who built up a similar cordial relationship with Fabricius as had Faltová before the war. As with most of his translations, the book was published by Odeon, the most important publisher of literature. This was seemingly the only translation of this historical novel about the innovator of the Italian comedy Carlo Goldoni (1707–1793). One year later, the romantic novella *Yoshi?* set in Japan was issued in a translation by Ella Kazdová as *Pamatuješ, Joši?* being also the only known translation. The back flap explicitly indicates that the combination of romance, clash of cultures and exoticism (Japan) is of interest for the reader.

In the same Far East, the novel *Wij, Tzè Thsi, Keizerin van China* (1968, *We, Tzè Thsi, Empress of China*) is situated, published in 1971 as *Tajný deník čínské císařovny: Císařovnin životní příběh jak jej sama sepsala a jak jej doslovem opatřil její vrchní eunuch Li Lien-jing. Fiktivní deník* [*The Secret Diary of the Chinese Empress: the Life Story of the Empress as She Wrote it Down and with an Afterword by her Supreme Eunuch Li Lien-jing. A Fictional Diary*]. The translator Krijtová discussed in a letter to Fabricius the transliteration of the Chinese names that was checked by Prague sinologists. This translation, with four Czech editions with more than a quarter of a million copies over forty years, was by far Fabricius' most successful Czech translation, being the only foreign edition. It seems that novels about exotic environments, once denounced as 'escapist literature', were now a good publication argument. The exotic environment of the Antilles certainly also played a role in the decision to publish *Het geheim van het oude landhuis* (1965, *The Secret of the Old Country House*) in a print run of 35,000 copies. The official translator Stanislava Hřebíčková (\*1935) was a colleague of Olga Krijtová who occasionally also translated from Dutch. She was presumably covering for the real translator, Krijtová herself, who received a publication ban in 1971 because of her protest against the brutal occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 that ended the Prague Spring.

The five last translations from Fabricius are situated in Europe. Two of them concern a murder case: the play in three acts *Hendrik Jacobus Jut, of De dubbele moord aan de Bogt van Guinea* (1974, *Hendrik Jacobus Jut, or The Double Murder on the 'Bogt of New Guinea'*), a Hague folk drama, was presented in the Czech translation *Otec neznámý* [*Father Unknown*]

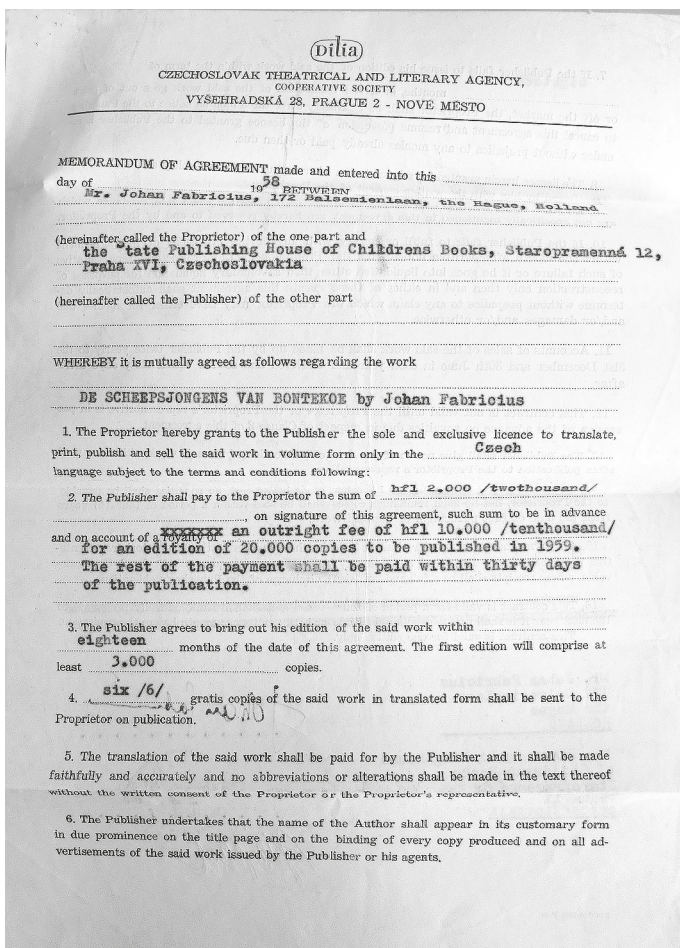


Fig. 3. Agreement of DILIA for Fabricius' De scheepsjongens van Bontekoe, 1958

by Ella Kazdová in Prague<sup>15</sup> — it is quite remarkable that this Czech production from May 1975 was on stage just within one year after the original play. The second murder case was *Jongensspel* (1963, A Boys' Play), a

<sup>15</sup> Typscript edition by DILIA in Prague as publication no. 10097. The title page gives as the original Dutch title *Vader onbekend*, a retranslation of the Czech title.

novel adaptation of a 1960 controversial murder case that came to court in 1963, being by Fabricius on behalf of the newspaper *De Telegraaf*. Olga Krijtová made the translation *Klukovská hra* from this novel, published in 1984 with 48,000 copies by the Prague publisher Mladá fronta [The Young Front]. It was accompanied by an afterword by Karel Čech (1944–2015), a member of Mladá fronta's editorial board, presenting criminality as a typical capitalist feature.

In 1978, the historical novel *De grote geus* (1949, The Big Beggar) was published. It had been translated by Krijtová three years earlier but was upheld due to her publication ban. Her former student Milena Perglerová (\*1935) functioned as cover translator. The novel was very successful with 72,000 copies and was published again in 2003, this time with the name of the right translator. The last work that appeared in book form was *Toontje Poland* about the Alkmaar grocery son Dorus Poland (1795–1857) who made a career in the army of Napoleon and later in the colony of the Dutch East Indies. The translation *Tonek z Napoleonovy armady* (1981), once more by Krijtová, was published in a circulation of 70,000 copies at the Prague publisher of youth literature Albatros. Finally, for an issue of the magazine *Světová literatura* [World Literature], two students of Krijtová translated two stories from the collection *De bruiden in bad en andere duistere daden* [The Brides in Bath and Other Dark Deeds] that was released in the year of Fabricius' death. The publication was accompanied by an *in memoriam* written by Krijtová.

## 7. FABRICIUS AFTER COMMUNISM — AN EPILOGUE

Only a few foreign authors could boast that their works were published in the Interwar period, during German occupation, in the first free post-War years, during Communism, and even after 1989. Apart from the new issue of his *Wij, Tzè Tshi, Keizerin van China* in 1994 and the above-mentioned new 2003 edition of *De grote geus*, two more editions of *De scheepsjongens* were issued, the last in 2012. Thus, Czech translations of Fabricius' works were issued over a time span of nearly 80 years.

A part of this success story is that Czech society, like Dutch, is a relatively egalitarian one. Well-told stories about ordinary people set in historical periods or connected with historical events do well in all periods and under all regimes. Fabricius was undeniably a born storyteller

as few writers were. Even the pre-War literary critic Menno ter Braak (1949), being mostly very negative about best-selling 'easy reading writers', acknowledged this fact in his reviews.

The close connection between the Czech book market with the German undoubtedly played a role as well. At least until 1938, Czech publishers issued mostly translations of books that did well in Germany. Finally, the translators played a relatively large role in transmitting works from smaller literatures. The choice of Lída Faltová clearly plays a role here, while the translations of often recent work by Fabricius after World War II were due to Olga Krijtová, especially when it comes to novels that were only published in Czech.

The large print runs during Communism were a consequence of the system. The protagonists in Fabricius' novels such as *Paddeltje in De scheepsjongens van Bontekoe* were ordinary people who with some goodwill could be counted as 'working class' types. Fabricius presented historical facts preferably through the eyes of common people which corresponded to the premises of Socialist Realism. Furthermore, the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands was officially seen as a 'precursor of Socialism'. The extensive afterword in *Velký Géz* by the historian Josef Polišenský (1915–2001), full of due references to Soviet historians and explicitly quoting the important Dutch historian Jan Romein as a 'Marxist historian', is a clear witness to this. Finally, the system was keen to have some international focus, which means that Fabricius also acted as a sort of 'show-foreigner'. All this means that Fabricius acquired a position among the Dutch-language writers translated into Czech for a major part of the twentieth century that is only comparable to that of Hendrik Conscience a century earlier.

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**МЕЛОДИЯ ДАЛЕЙ: ЙОХАН ФАБРИЦИУС —  
ОКНО ДЛЯ ЧЕХОВ В ЭКЗОТИЧЕСКИЕ МИРЫ**

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С точки зрения мирового литературного процесса литература на нидерландском языке, на котором говорит всего 24 миллиона человек, — это более или менее периферийное явление. Однако большое количество нидерландских книг переведено на иностранные языки, особенно после Второй мировой войны. Йохан Фабрициус (1899–1981) был при жизни одним из самых читаемых нидерландских писателей. Его произведения, в первую очередь бессмертная книга для юношества «Юнги на корабле Бонтеку» (1924), до сих пор переиздающаяся как в Нидерландах, так и за рубежом (последнее чешское издание увидело свет в 2012 г.), входит в число самых популярных литературных произведений как на родине писателя, так и за границей. Тем не менее, из европейских языков произведения Йохана Фабрициуса переведены преимущественно на немецкий и чешский. И это не случайно, так как именно на чешский язык переведено вообще исключительно много нидерландскоязычных книг. Среди них — как легкая, популярная литература, так и серьезные классические произведения. В данной статье история рецепции нидерландской литературы в Чехии разделена на ряд периодов: время между двумя мировыми войнами, время немецкой оккупации, демократическое время с 1945 по 1948 г., годы правления коммунистической партии и, наконец, время после 1989 г. В статье приводится информация о переводчиках (важнейшими из которых являются Лида Фальтова (1899–1944) и Ольга Крейтова (1931–2013)), издателях, тиражах, а также о причинах, по которым чешские переводы тех или иных книг в итоге не были опубликованы. Данное явление особенно характерно для периодов 1945–1948 (из-за нехватки бумаги) и 1949–1989 (из-за цензуры). В статье вкратце обрисована специфика каждого из выделенных периодов. В приложении приводится полный обзор всех переводов произведений Фабрициуса на сегодняшний день.

**Ключевые слова:** Йохан Фабрициус, перевод, нидерландский, чешский, экзотические миры, романы.

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## Survey of all translations of the works of Johan Fabricius

Original Dutch title	German translation	English translation	Czech translation	Other translations
<i>Eiko van den Reigerhof</i> (1922)	<i>Eiko, der Junge vom Reitherhof</i> (1924)			<i>Riddarfjelden</i> (1935, SW)
<i>Hansje Bluf, of Het zangersfeest van koning Hangeligp</i> (1923)	<i>Prahlhänschen oder das Sängersfest bei König Hängelippe: ein Märchen</i> (1924)			<i>Hans Storskyter og hans merkelige evenstyr hos Kong Hengelebe</i> (1924, NW), <i>Pralhans</i> (c1924, DA); <i>Jasiek Samochwał czyli uroczystość śpiewacza u króla wargali</i> (1924, PL)*
<i>De scheepsjongens van Bontekoe</i> (1924)	<i>Kapitän Bontekoes Schiffsjungen</i> (1926, 21926, 31926, 41929, 51929, 61937, 71938, 81949, 91953, 101964, 111970, 121981, 131991)	<i>Java ho! The adventures of four boys amid fire, storm and shipwreck</i> (1931, 21933)	<i>Plavčici kapitána Bontekoea</i> (1935, 21940, 31946, 41958, 51966, 61977, 72010) <i>Plavčici kapitána Bontekoea</i> (1996 — new translation)	<i>Peter Dekksgut. Kaptein Bontekoes Skibsgutter</i> (1934, NW); <i>Skibsguttene i Urskogen</i> (19352, NW); <i>Skeppskamraterna</i> (1934, SW); <i>Kapteeni Bontekoen laipva-pojat</i> (1945, FI); <i>Cap sur Java</i> (1948, FR); <i>Kapitani Bontekoe in njegovi mornarčki</i> (1975, SL); <i>Plavčici kapitána Bontekoea</i> (1975, SK); <i>Kipper Bontekoe laevapoisid</i> (1994, EST); <i>De skipsjongens fan Bontekoe</i> (2015, FRIS)

<i>Hans de klokkeluiders</i> (1925)	<i>Hans, der Glöckner: ein Wintermärchen in 5 Bildern</i> (1925)			
<i>Nachtegaal</i> (1925)	<i>Nachtegaal: die Liebe eines Malergesellen</i> (1927)			
<i>De wonderere avonturen van Arretje Nof</i> (1926–1927); 1. <i>Barrebar, de wildeman uit de bergen</i> (1926); 2. <i>Het rooverseiland in de Perzische zee</i> (1927); 3. <i>De draak en de Chinese prinses</i> (1927); 4. <i>Brekkek-kwak-kwak en de zeven</i> (1927); 5. <i>De vroolijke bruiloft van Arretje en Annetje</i> (1927)	<i>Barrabart, der Wildemann aus den Bergen: ein Märchen-Bilderbuch</i> (1927); <i>Die Räuberinsel im Arabischen Meer: ein Märchen-Bilderbuch</i> (1928); <i>Die Prinzessin von China und der Drache: ein Märchen-Bilderbuch</i> (1929)			

\* This Polish translation is missing in the survey by Bulthuis (1959, p. 86–94). According to the title description, it was translated from Danish, which causes some doubts about its accuracy. The translator Paweł Hulka-Laskowski (1881–1946) translated mostly from German, English and Czech.

Original Dutch title	German translation	English translation	Czech translation	Other translations
<i>Het meisje met den blauwen hoed</i> (1927)	<i>Das Mädchen mit dem blauen Hut</i> (1928, 21931)	<i>The girl in the blue hat</i> (1932, 21933)	<i>Dívka s modrým kloboučkem</i> (1933)	<i>Djevojka s modrím šestřm</i> (1930, CR)
<i>Charlotte's groote reis</i> (1928)	<i>Charlottens große Reise</i> (1929, 21929)			<i>Charlottes resa</i> (1943, SW)
<i>Mario Ferraro's ijdele liefde</i> (1929)	<i>Mario Ferraros eitle Liebe</i> (1930, 21932)	<i>Vain love</i> (1931); <i>The love of Mario Ferraro</i> (1937)	(Agreement signed with Sfinx in 1947, not published)	<i>Mario Ferraros obyčlická kárlék</i> (1936, SW)
<i>Venetiaansch avontuur</i> (1931)	<i>Abenteuer in Venedig</i> (1932)			<i>Venetsian seikkailija</i> (1934, 21960, FI)
<i>Komedianten trokken voorbij</i> (1931)	<i>Marietta</i> (1933, 21954)		<i>Jeli tudy komedianty</i> (1933, 21941)	<i>Komedianterne drog forbi</i> (1934, DA); <i>Komediantier drogo förbi</i> (1934, SW); <i>Marietta, Komediantier drog forbi</i> (1936, 21945, NW); <i>Marietta</i> (1936, FI); <i>Mariette fille du hasard</i> (1961, FR)
<i>Leeuwen honger in Napels</i> (1934)	<i>Löwen hungern in Neapel. Roman</i> (1934)	<i>The Lions starve in Naples</i> (1934, two editions, 21935)	<i>Lvi hladověji v Neapoli</i> (1934)	<i>Lejon hungra i Neapel</i> (1937, SW); <i>Leones hambrientos en Nápoles</i> (c1937, SP)
<i>Melodie der verten</i> (1934)			<i>Melodie dálek</i> (1934, 19412)	<i>Marietta's Søn</i> (1935, DA), <i>Melodie ur fjärran</i> (1935, SW); <i>Mariettan poika</i> (1936, 21959, FI); <i>Mariettas Sömm</i> (1937, NW)

<i>De dans om de galg</i> (1934)			<i>Tanec kolem šibenice</i> (1936, 19412)	<i>Dansen kring galgen</i> (1935, SW); <i>Dansen om galgen</i> (1936, DA); <i>Dansen om galgen</i> (1936, NW)
<i>Dansen om galgen</i> (Omnibus of Komediante trokken voorbij, <i>De dans om de galg, Melodie der verten</i> ) (1936)		<i>The son of Marietta: Marietta, Mother and son, Benedetto</i> (1936, UK); <i>The Son of Marietta: Players passed by, Melody of Distant Things, The dance around the gallows</i> (1936, USA)	<i>Italská trilogie: Jeli tudy komedianty, Melodie dálek, Tanec kolem šibenice</i> (1934, 21973; audio 1981)	
<i>Flipje</i> (1936)	<i>Flipje, Roman eines Dreikäsehochs</i> (1950, 21954)	<i>Flip wonders why: a novel</i> (1947); <i>The world at six</i> (1950)	(not published; review reports in archive DP, 1947 and 1948)	
<i>Kasteel in Karinthië</i> (1938)		<i>A Castle in Carinthia</i> (1940, 2 editions)	(ms. <i>Zámek v Korutanech</i> , undated in archive DP)	<i>Slottet in Kärnten</i> (1940, SW), <i>Un castillo en Carintia</i> (1961, SP)
<i>Eiland der demonen</i> (1941)	<i>Insel der Dämonen: ein Roman über Bali</i> (1951)	<i>No return from Bali</i> (1941)	<i>Ostrov démonů. Román</i> (1947)	<i>Démons à Bali</i> (1945, FR), <i>Demonernas ö: en roman från Bali</i> (1941, NW); <i>Demonernas ö: en roman från Bali</i> (1944, SW); <i>Demonien Saari</i> (1945, FI); <i>Demonernes O</i> (1947, DA); <i>Demonios en Bali</i> (1953, SP)

Original Dutch title	German translation	English translation	Czech translation	Other translations
<i>Nacht over Java</i> (1944)		<i>Night over Java</i> (1944, 21946)	<i>Noc nad Jávou</i> (1947 = 1946)	
<i>Hoe ik Indië terugvond</i> (1947)		<i>Java revisited</i> (1947)	(not published; review report in archive DP, 1948)	
<i>Hotel Vesuvius</i> (1947)		<i>Hotel Vesuvius: a gay novel of grapes, wine and sunshine</i> (1945, UK, 1947, USA)	<i>Hotel Vesuvio: Veselý román o hroznech, víně a sluneční záři</i> (1948)	
<i>Halvbloed</i> (1946) = Dutch adaptation	<i>Ma Sarinah und die Kinder ihres Blutes</i> (1944); <i>Halbblut</i> (1954)	<i>A Malayan tragedy</i> (1942) = original	<i>Z dvojí krve. Román z Indonésie</i> (1948)	<i>Halvblod</i> (1947, SW), <i>Bouing le métis</i> (1957, FR); <i>Ben táarovet</i> (1959, HEB)
<i>Brandende aarde</i> (1949)		<i>East Indies Episode</i> (1949)		
<i>De grote geus</i> (1949)	<i>Das Festival der Bettler</i> (1951, 21952)	<i>The beggars' banquet</i> (1951)	<i>Velký géz</i> (1978, 22003)	
<i>De grote beproeving</i> (1950)	<i>Die große Heimsuchung</i> (1951)	<i>The great ordeal</i> (1951)		
<i>Mijn huis staat achter de kim</i> (1951)		<i>A Dutchman at large: memoirs</i> (1952)		<i>Mitt hem är bortom synranden</i> (1957, SW)

<i>Langs de Leie: twee variaties op een thema</i> (1952)		<i>The pike Beelzebub: two variations on a theme, one in major and one in minor</i> (1953)		
<i>De nertsmantel</i> (1953)	<i>Der Nerzmantel: Novelle</i> (1954)			
<i>Gordel van smaragd</i> (1953)		<i>Girdle of Emerald</i> (1955)		
<i>Toernooi met de dood. Roman uit het jaar van de grote pest te Florence</i> (1954)		<i>Mortal pageant: a romance of the year of the Great Plague in Florence</i> (1956)		
<i>Nacht zonder zegen</i> (1955)				<i>Nuit maudite</i> (1959, FR)
<i>Setoewo, de tijger</i> (1956)	<i>Setuwo, der Tiger</i> (1958)	<i>Setuwo the tiger</i> (1957)		<i>Setoewo de tyger</i> (1957, AFR), <i>Setuwo la tigre</i> (1958, IT); <i>Setouwo, le tigre</i> (1959, FR)
<i>Het roversiland in de Perzische zee</i> (1958)	<i>Die Räuberinsel im Arabischen Meer: ein Märchen-Bilderbuch</i> (1958)			
<i>De heilige paarden</i> (1959)	<i>Die heiligen Pferde</i> (1960, 21970)			



Original Dutch title	German translation	English translation	Czech translation	Other translations
<i>Mijn Rosalia</i> (1961)	<i>Rosalie</i> (1964)			
<i>Herinneringen van een oude pruiik</i> (1963)			<i>Vzpomínky staré paruky</i> (1966)	
<i>Jongenspel</i> (1963)			<i>Klukovská hra</i> (1984)	
<i>Dag, Leidseplein</i> (1965)	<i>Jungweibersommer: meine Hochzeitsreise mit Kleopatra</i> (1976, 21978)			
<i>Het geheim van het oude landhuis</i> (1965)	<i>Die Schmuggler der San Antonio Bucht</i> (1967)		<i>Tajemství starého venkovského sídla</i> (1972)	
<i>De avonturen van Janije en zijn vrienden Koko en Sebastiaan</i> (1966)	<i>Jan, Koko und der Hund Sebastian</i> (1969)			
<i>Weet je nog, Yoshit?</i> (1966)			<i>Pamatuješ, Joši?</i> (1969)	
<i>Heintje heeft kabouters op zolder</i> (1967)	<i>Heintjes ganz besonderer Winter</i> (1969, 21973)			
<i>Wij T'ze Hsi, Keizerin van China</i> (1968)			<i>Tajný deník čínské císařovny</i> (1971, 21987, 31994, 42012)	

<i>Een reis door het nieuwe Indonesië</i> (1973)		<i>A sentimental journey</i> (1971)		
<i>De duivel in de toren</i> (1971)		<i>The devil in the tower. Seven diabolical tales</i> (1973)		
<i>Hendrik Jacobus Jut, of De dubbele moord aan de bogt van Guinea</i> (1974)			<i>Otec neznámý.</i> (adaptation for the stage) (1975)	
<i>Toontje Poland</i> (1977)			<i>Tonek z Napoléonovy armády</i> (1981)	
<i>De schreeuw van de witte kakatoe</i> (1978)				<i>Teriakkan kakatua putih</i> (1984, IND)
<i>De zwaluwen van Klappanoengal</i> (1979)				<i>Burung-burung walet Klapanunggal</i> (1986, IND), <i>Mayor Jantje, cerita Tuan Tanah Batavia abad Ke-19</i> (theatre adaptation, 2008)
<i>De bruiden in bad en andere duistere daden</i> (1981)			<i>Čest mladé dámy</i> (1982), <i>Nevěsty ve vaně</i> (1982)	

AFR — Afrikaans, CR — Croatian, DA — Danish, EST — Estonian, FI — Finnish, FR — French, FRIS — Frisian, HEB — Hebrew, IND — Indonesian, IT — Italian, NW — Norwegian, PL — Polish, SP — Spanish, SW — Swedish.

Source: Data according to Bultuis (1959, p. 86–94), the database of the Dutch Literary Fund (see note 2) and [www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org).