

A multilingual city in a web of languages: The local and the European in Meelis Friedenthal's novel *The Willow King* and its translations

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In 2013, the Estonian author Meelis Friedenthal received the European Union Prize for Literature for his novel *Mesilased* (2012; translation into English with the title *The Willow King* appeared in 2017). The aim of the prize is to bring into the limelight upcoming new writing talent in Europe and increase the recipients' international visibility, which also means the promotion of translating the works awarded.

Friedenthal's novel is set in the late 17th century and traces a short period in the life of a student from Leiden in the Netherlands upon his arrival in what at the time is a remote province of Sweden to continue his studies at the University of Tartu. The novel is set shortly before the Great Northern War that would soon substantially re-map North-Eastern Europe and devastate the historical city of Tartu; thus, the political spaces constituting the broader spatial framework for the novel as well as the immediate urban setting significantly diverge from the contemporary scene. It is tacitly presumed that some of the novel's Estonian-language text is delivered in Swedish, German and Latin, occasionally indicated by indirect cues only. The presentation seeks to observe the conceptualisation of the European (cultural) space in the novel and in a selection of translations, with toponymics and the multilingual and -national situation and the concepts of centre and periphery as the main points of departure.

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