

**Statement prepared by the supervisor of Riccardo Mini**

**relating to their studies and dissertation entitled**

**„The form of the “malen’kaja poëma” in the work of Elena Shvarts“**

**submitted in 2023 at Germanic and Slavic Studies**

Riccardo Mini’s thesis, devoted to the research of “malen’kaja poëma” in the work of Elena Shvarts, substantially follows the project presented for the admission test (autumn 2020). A crucial issue highlighted in the thesis is a relationship between tradition and elements of poetic innovation, in other words, as the Russian subtitle claims, Жанр маленькой поэмы в произведениях Елены Шварц. Связь с традицией и элементы поэтических инноваций.

Riccardo Mini chose to write the thesis in Russian, since most of the bibliography on Shvarts is available in this language. This, of course, somewhat slowed him down in the writing process, but in the end, the advisor and the co-advisor managed to review the chapters one by one and to suggest to the Ph.D. student some adjustments that have been accepted and consequently made.

The thesis has a very coherent and convincing structure. In the first chapter Riccardo Mini pointed out the key elements of the context where Shvarts must be included – namely the Leningrad Underground – and he also properly outlined her poetics.

The second chapter is devoted to the basic features of the aforementioned genre, which he carefully analyzed by linking Shvarts’ interpretation of this genre to the Russian poetic tradition and by establishing a comparison between her poems and some long poems written by outstanding poets of the so-called Silver Age of Russian poetry such as Marina Tsvetaeva, Mikhail Kuzmin, and Velimir Khlebnikov.

The third chapter is an interesting attempt to examine some of Shvarts' selected poems, which, because of their fragmentary and abstract content, hardly allow criticism to find support. Nevertheless, this attempt leads to quite convincing conclusions at the end of the chapter, underlining the main themes across the malen'kaya poems and highlighting recurring motifs in the selected poems. Although it can be argued that this chapter is somewhat wordy and not easy to read, it

concludes the thesis in a relevant way, while also setting the stage for further in-depth work on individual malen'kaya poems that Mini intends to undertake in the near future.

The thesis does nothing but confirm the good results achieved in the previous career stages by Riccardo Mini, namely the state exam in Prague (26<sup>th</sup> June) – when he discussed the first chapter of the dissertation. During the seminar, he was acting as a well-prepared and motivated student, able to convincingly clarify his point.

The candidate during his Ph.D. study also worked in the field of translation. At the moment he is getting in touch with at least two Italian publishers. Last but not least, the introductory lesson on Shvarts held by him at the University of Bologna shows his ability to present and handle the main themes of Shvarts' poetics in a way that is understandable even for non-specialists.

However, the argumentation has some weaknesses and gaps. For example, as already mentioned, the sections on analysis seem too descriptive and not very reader-friendly. The following questions are intended as a stimulus for the defense of the dissertation:

1. Are there some other links to works written by the representatives of Silver Age of Russian poetry – or, broadly, of modernism – which could or should be mentioned to make this issue more complete?
2. Are there, from your point of view, any specifics that make Schvarts's poetry extraordinary compared with other representatives of spiritual poetry of this period, e.g. Josif Brodsky?
3. Do you have any other plans in the field of examinations of Elena Schvarts's work?

I provisionally classify the submitted dissertation as passed.

6 January 2024, Prague

Prof. Hana Kosáková