

i
ю
ю
ээ
ензу
чу ть ещ
тум анито
альн аейтам
треп е т велич!
в ыше го род синь ю
ви раж кс олницу яр ны
ГОР иЗоНт ы растут све
ПОЛО сы пол ей БЕГУТ в ы ш е
вДруг легко земля ук атила
ВЕТЕР В ЗДРоГ НуЛикРы ЛЬЯ ЗН
конт акт есть З авелпро пеллерь
АЭРОДРОМ ТОЛПА МЕХАНИК СУЕТИТСЯ

ПОЛЕТ ВАС^н АМЕ^нС^нГО^н А^н ЭРОПЛАНЕ В^н А^нШ^нАВ^н

(ЧИТАТЬ СНИЗУ ВВЕРХ)

i
u
u
zz
ndzu
bi tm or
mis tand n
call ythere
shudd er splend
c ity ab ove blu e
tu rn sun wards br nee
HOR iZoN s broaden ligh
FURR owed fi elds RUSH a bove
runway glides sm oo th ly away
WIND WI NGBeG InSThrOb BING ZN
e n g i n e r e a d y S t a r t p r o p e l l e r
AERODROME CROWD MECHANIC SCRAMBLES

FLIGHT OF VASⁿ K AMEⁿ SKY IN A Nⁿ Aⁿ PROPLANE IN Wⁿ aⁿ RsaW

(READ BOTTOM UP)

ТАНГО с коровами

жизнь короче визга воробья

собака что ли плывет там на

льдине по весенней реке

с *оловянным* веселием смотрим мы

на *судьбу*

стянутые морским узлом

одиночества

МЫ — открыватели стран

закожурники герви

КОРОЛИ апельсиновых РОЩ И

СКОТОПРОМЫШЛЕННИКИ

Может быть чарку вина выпьем за

здоровье планет истекающих

или лучше заведем граммофон

ну вас **К ЧОРТУ**

TANGO with COWS

life is shorter than a sparrow squeal

a dog or what floating there on

an ice floe down the spring river

with *tinny* merriment we look

upon *fate*

are bound with the half-hitch

of loneliness

WE — discoverers of lands

burrowing worms

KINGS of orange GROVES AND

LIVESTOCKTRADERS

Shall we drink a cup o' wine to

the health of planets expiring

or better yet wind up the gramophone

you go **TO HELL**

ВЫЗОВ

КОКОФОНІЮ ДУШ фррфррфрр

МОТОРОВ СИМ-ФО-НИЮ

Я Я Я футурист ПЕСНЕВОЕЦ И

ПИЛОТ-АВИАТОР

ВАСИЛІЙ КАМЕНСКІЙ

эластичным ПРОПЕЛЛЕРОМ

ВВИНТИЛ ОБЛАКА

КИНУВ ТАМ ЗА ВИЗИТ

дряблой СМЕРТИ КОКОТКЕ

из ЖАЛОСТИ сшитое

ТАНГОВОЕ МАНТО

И чулки

с панталонами

DARE

cocophony of souls phrrphrrphrr

MOTOR sym-PHO-NY

III futurist SONGLINGER AND

AVIATOR-PILOT

VASILY KAMENSKY

with my elastic PROPELLER

SCREWED IN THE CLOUDS

throwing down for

death SAGGY COCOTTE

a sewn from PITY

tango manteau

AND stockings

with bloomers

КИНЕМАТОГРАФ

пальмы *сквозь пальцы*
СВЕТ ТЕПЛА
КОКОСОВЫЙ

орех
ВАЛЬС
на сопках
МАНЧЖУРИИ

дети
ветер
корзины

заклинатели змей
ТЕМНО
океан

бал на КОРАБЛЕ
ЗАСТОЛЬНАЯ
ПЕСНЯ
ТРАВИАТЫ

пожар
паника в кают компанії

радіо-телеграф
спасает

(*когда вечерній с ликером кофе*)
(*в вуалях аромат сигар ОНА*)

автомобиль увез Я знаю **НО**
ПОМНИ *ОДИН* **9**

cinematograph

palm *through fingers*
HEAT LIGHT
coconut

tree
WALTZ
on the hills of
MANCHURIA

child
wind
baskets

snake charmers
DARK
ocean

dancing on a SHIP
DRINKING
SONG
LA TRAVIATA

fire
panic in the first-class lounge

radio-telegraph
saves

(*when evening coffee with liqueur*)
(*cigar aroma in the veil SHE*)

automobile drove off I know **BUT**
REMEMBER *ONE* **9**

маска поэма ЧАЙКИ
 РОЯЛЬ ЦВЕТЫ
 Я ЛЬ
 МОНЕ
 фрукты
 ФУТУР
 ПАБЛО ПИКАС
 ИСПАНКА
 ОСТРОВА
 МАИОРКИ
 СКРИПКА
 ЧЕРЕП
 СО
 ФЛЕЙТА
 УТРОМ
 КУ Панье
 ОСТАЛСЯ
 ПОНЯТНЫМЪ
 СЕЗАНН
 ГОРА СВЯТ ЮАН
 ГОЛУБОЕ ПЛАТЬЕ
 ДАМЫ-МЫ
 ФРУКТЫ-ТЫ
 ВОЗДУХЪ СЛОВА
 ЦВЕТ КРАСКИ
 СВЕТ МУЗЫКА
 МИРА
 ЗАПАХ
 ПУТЬ
 ОДИН
 МАТИСС ПИКАС
 САДЪ ЛЮКСЕМБУРГА
 СИНЬ-КРАСЬ-ЖОЛ
 БЛАГОУХАНІЕ ДНЕЙ
 БУЛОНСКАГО ЛЕСА
 ТА НЕЦ НАСТУРЦІЙ
 АРАБСКОЕ КОФЕ
 МАРОККАНКУ
 ВАЗУ ЦВЕТОВ
 МОЛОДОСТЬ РЯДОМ
 ЛЮБЛЮ ВЕСНІЯНКУ
 НАЧАЛО
 ПИКАССОМНОЙ ПРИЛЕТА
 ВЕР
 Е
 кам
 не
 ВЕК
 вайраумати
 ТАИТИ
 ВАН ГОГ арена
 ПИССАРО
 фоконье
 ДЕНИ
 ДЕРЕВ
 МЕНЬЕ
 Ю

mask poem GULLS
 PIANO flowers
 I NO
 monet
 today's
 NO NO NO NO
 DRAPERY FRUITS
 TONE WINE
 WITH ME
 produce
 SPANISH
 WOMAN
 MALLORCAN
 violin
 CROAK
 SO
 FLUTE
 SWIM
 AT Morn
 ery
 cezanne
 MONT SAINT JEAN
 sky blue dress
 WOMEN-ME
 fruits-IT
 MANSION
 S J
 VAN GOGH arena
 AIRE WORDS
 COLOR PAINTS
 LIGHT MUSIC
 WORLD
 stairway
 SMELL
 ONE
 PATH
 MATISS PICAS
 LUXEMBOURG GARDEN
 BLUE-RED-YELL
 REDOLENCE OF DAYS
 IN BOIS DE BOULOGNE
 DA NCE NASTURTIIUMS
 ARABIAN COFFEE
 fauconnier
 DENIS
 DERRAIN
 MEUNIER
 O
 AND
 MAROCAINE
 vase of flowers
 YOUTH BY MY SIDE
 I LOVE THE SPRINGAINE
 ARRIVAL
 PICASSOMINE BY AIR
 CRED

СКЭТИНГ ○○○○
 ○○○ РИЖ
 ○○○○ ЛЬЮТСЯ
 ЛИКИ
 КЛИКИ
 ○○○○ РОЛИКИ ○○○○
 ○○○○○○ КРОЛИКИ
 КОРОЛИКИ
 ЖУРЧЕЙ
 ЖУРЧАНІЯ
 СТОЛИКИ
 СНЕГ
 ли
 і
 ДВИЖЕНІЯ
 ноги
 ноги
 КТО?
 дѣвочка
 А
 МЫ
 УМЫ
 ДУМЫ ○○○○
 ВАЛЬС т-та-та-
 КТО
 ОНА
 ?
 НОГИ
 ВЕТЕР
 боа
 ФЛАГИ
 ○○○○○○○○
 ПОДСКОКИ
 СКОКИ
 КОКИ
 КО
 КОТКА
 ХЛЯБЬ ЧЕЛЮСТЕЙ
 сутенер
 ПИРОСЫ
 ЛЬЮ
 АФЕРМ
 РАДЖА
 ОТТОМАН
 АНГЛІСКИЙ
 проборъ
 ИНСТРУКТОРАРА
 ТЕ № 6⁶6₆6⁶6

SKATING ○○○○
 ○○○ RJN
 ○○○○ POUR
 BLURRS
 TRILLS
 ○○○○○○ ROLLER ○○○○
 WHEELS
 THRILLS
 ROYAL
 RILL
 TABLES
 SNOW
 no
 w
 MOTIONS
 legs
 legs
 who?
 A GIRL
 WIND
 боа
 FLAGS
 ○○○○○○○○
 BOUNCES
 BOUNDS
 BANGS
 CO
 COTTE
 MANDIBLE DRIBBLE
 pimp
 ELECTR
 GARETTES
 NLY
 FERME
 WE
 ARE
 RARE ○○○○
 WALTZ t-ta-ta-
 WHO
 IS SHE
 ?
 LEGS
 carnation
 NARCISSUS
 ROSE
 RAJAH
 OTTOMAN
 ENGLISH
 part on the
 INSTRUCTOROR
 TEL № 6⁶6₆6⁶6

касса	ДУШ	вода
20 К	ДУШ блеск КККК	Ж ПЯТКИ
КРАН МУЖ	и ПЛЕСК	а ПЛИТКИ
ГОРЯЧ КРАН	слОНА	ХЭМ М ЗАПАХ
ХОЛОД ЖЕН	уш	УЩАТ М ВЕНИК ЖС
БАНИ	Ш у тряпка	КАПАЮТ СЛЕЗЫ ПоТоЛкА
белье	ХХА скользит КОЛЕНА	О Э
ВАННЫ ПАР	ЖАЛЬ СТАРИКА	
ЖИВОТЫ АРРР	кряк	
ВИСЯТ	ТЕЧЬ плеч	
	ГОЛЬ	НОС
	ПАРЬ	близко
	ВЕХОТКА	сон
СПИНЕ	4 пу 9 фу	иЩУ
УНЫЛО	ТЕ	ЕЩЕ
НЫЛО	ЛО	ХРУСТЯЩИЙ
МЫЛО	ПРОСТЫНЯ Ю	хрящ
ЛО	поросенок	
ММ БАНЩИК	ЗЕРКАЛО	30 К
ЧАН ПАРНАЯ	ИЗВОЗЧИК	
МЫСЛЬ		

tickets	SHO water
20 К	WER flash JJJJ
	E SPLASH W HEELS
	LEPHA ЖЕМ a TILES
HOT MEN	sho TUBS M WHIFF
WAT COLD WOM	W washrag TWIGS W
BATHS	slides KNEES CEILING TEARS RuN DoWn
TUBS STEAM	FFA POOR OLD MAN O E
BELLIES	FLOW toe
HANG	EAMM grm
	COO
SOAP	STEAM
CAKE	SPONGE
SLAKE	SJJPPRYYY
BACK	SJJMYYY
ACHE	JPPRYYY
	MM ATTENDANT
	VAT STEAMY THOUGHT
	9 st 4 lb
	BO
	DY
	BEDSHEET 10
	suckling pig
	MIRRoR CAB DRIVER 30 k
	NOSE near DOZE

and *automob* below, and echoes the ‘6’s in the number to the left. But what is a car doing here? We must be exiting the Cabaret. The words “Cabaret Zon” at the top thus gesture at the signage on the theater’s façade as seen from the street, although the real façade did not say “Cabaret.” The poem’s space is that of Futurist simultaneity, conjoining external and internal phenomena without regard for borders, categories, and distances.

To the right of the word “TANGO” is a stand selling roasted almonds, “ЖАРЕННЫЙ / МИНДАЛЬ”, *zhàrenyi / mindàl'*; note the chiasitic *ny : in* and shared stressed *à*. The Russian-doll rhyme *mindàl' / dal'*, the latter meaning distance, or a distant location, leads to “африки”, *Afriki* (of Africa). A sound-based association in the mind of the eater of almonds congeals further with the final “ЖАР”, *zhar* (heat) as a property that roasted (*zharenyie*) almonds share with Africa. The phrase *zhàrenyi mindàl'* fragments and echoes at the end of the column, with *enyi min*, the unstressed middle of the phrase, cut out, leaving only *zhar* and *dal'*. Once again, words are treated as sequences of letter blocks that one may permute, remove, substitute, or add.



58 Advertisement for a tango and Turkish-themed show at Maxim in *Theater in Caricatures*, January 19, 1914, p. 20.



Finally, we get to Maxim, owned by Frederick Bruce “Fiodor Fiodorovich” Thomas, who had recently shown the door to a group of Futurists with painted faces. In winter of 1914, apart from its main variety and musical acts, Maxim also offered a “Salon Tango,”⁹⁷ where professional dancers demonstrated and taught different tango styles in a crowd of revelers, like in Zon. But it took place after hours, and people arrived with a few drinks already in them, which is why the sign *Maxim* is at an angle, and separate from the section it labels. Maxim also featured a late-night “Turkish” show with dancing odalisques. That was the “*турецкое кафэ*”, *turètskoiie kafè* (Turkish Café) whose name looms large in the lower right of

the poem. Figure 58 shows a magazine advertisement for Maxim, complete with Salon Tango and Turkish Café.

The program for the Turkish Café in January 1914 featured:

A famous Indian orchestra. Songs and dances of the Orient under the direction of the famous singer and musician the Sufi master Inayat Khan with the participation of the princess-dancer Chikha Mukha, [and the] famous odalisque troupe of Ben-Bey.⁹⁸



59 Chikha Mukha and Inayat Khan’s orchestra in November 1913, when they first started at Maxim, from *Footlights and Life*, November 3, 1913, p. 13.

An Indian classical musician and Sufi master, Inayat Khan visited Russia from October 1913 to May 1914, introducing Sufism by lecturing in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and discussing it with cultural figures like Viacheslav Ivanov and Scriabin. His “Sufi Message on Spiritual Liberty” came out in Russian translation shortly after his move to London in 1914.⁹⁹ But he spent his very early morning hours at Maxim, providing musical support for the “odalisques,” who—judging by the wink-wink of other ads—were not spinning in the classical Sufi manner. Not all other “Orientals” in this Turkish-themed show at a Russian nightclub founded and owned by an African-American were quite as authentic as Inayat Khan. The name of the princess-dancer Chikha Mukha combines the Russian noun for “fly”—reader, the insect!—with a neologism apparently derived from *chikhàt'*, to sneeze (fig. 59). As for the director of the odalisque troupe, Ben-Bey, the Turkish meaning is the improbable “Mr. Me.” An unpleasant incident which took place in December showed that many of the performers were, in fact, French.*

The evening and the poem proceed from Zon to Maxim, which is why the word fragment “ТА/НЦ”, *ta/nts* (a cut on *tantsevàt'*, to dance, or else on *tàntsy*, the dances) has been split into *ta* and *nts*, with the former still in Zon, above, and the latter below in Maxim. Next to it is the permutation of syllables *my* and *chal* in “МЫ / ЧАЛМЫ / МЫЧАЛ”, *mý / chalmý / mychàl*. *My* is “we.” *Chalmý* is “turbans.” *Mychal* is “he was mooing” or rather “responding inarticulately and monosyllabically.” The fragmentary scene evoked is of soused Russians callously engaging in cultural appropriation. Below the sign for the Turkish Café is the word “ОРКЕСТР”, *orkèstr* (orchestra) over the word “ЖИЛ”, *zhil*, most likely meaning “of sinews,” and having to do with the sounds expressed onomatopoeically as “ви-и-ли-и-ю-iiiiiiiiiiiiiiii”, *vi-i-li-i-iu-iiiiiiiiiiiiiiii*. I don’t think that Kamensky



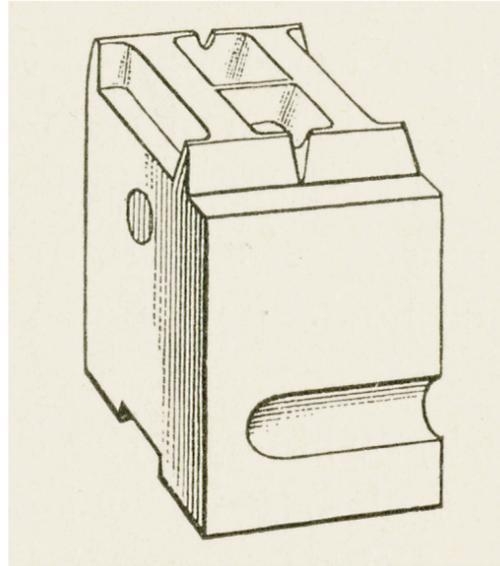
* “Recently at four in the morning at the café-chantant Maxim on Bol’shaia Dmitrovka, the impresario of the ‘Turkish troupe,’ one Bertrand, a citizen of France, having fallen out with the performer of his group De Gautinier, also a citizen of France, hit her over the head with a pitcher with such force, that she had to be sent for treatment to the New Catherine clinic.” From *Artists’ World (Artisticheskii mir)*, December 1913, p. 2.¹⁰⁰

TYPOGRAPHY AND MATERIALITY IN *TANGO WITH COWS*

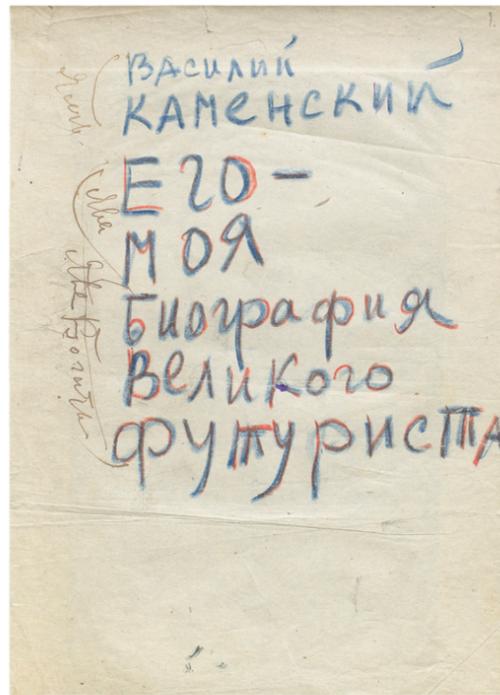
The typography of *Tango with Cows* can only be understood in the context of the materiality of letterpress printing. Every letter in *Tango with Cows* was printed from type: a rectangular prism of metal or wood with a letterform above in relief and reverse (fig. 122). These, together with spacing, leading, and rule,* were assembled by a typesetter into a solid rectangle, called a form, which was locked into a metal frame and placed into a printing press. The design of the book was therefore constrained by rectilinearity of type, the typefaces available in the print shop, and by the fact that the typesetter worked from Kamensky's hand-drawn sketches. Although these have not survived, it is hard to imagine any other practicable procedure for the book's production. Kamensky certainly could not have set the type himself; typesetting is a skilled craft and no print shop would tolerate an amateur introducing disorder, getting in the way, and taking valuable work away from its employees. He could not have produced a detailed layout that specified particular typefaces and sizes; this could only have been done by someone with deep craft knowledge as well as detailed information about every font of type in the shop, down to the width of every letter. In fact, specification by a designer near this level of detail for even straightforward prose would only begin to happen a decade later and become common only after the World War II.¹²⁹ Kamensky could not have worked collaboratively alongside the printer; he was on tour much of the time between January 14 to March 29, and even if he had been in Moscow, such an arrangement would have taken an inordinate amount of time and would have been far too aggravating for the typesetter. Besides these logistical constraints, internal evidence from the poems, discussed below, shows that the typesetter worked from sketches without any detailed typographic indications.

Two hand-drawn sketches that Kamensky created to be interpreted by a typesetter survive and are held by the Russian State Archive of Literature and Arts (figs. 123, 125). One is for a poster for an performance at the Moscow Polytechnic Museum in 1917, and the other is for the cover of his book *His-My Biography of a Great Futurist* from 1918 (fig. 124). The former sketch specifies the text, its general arrangement, and that certain words should be larger and in all caps, with "Kamensky" being singled out by slightly more decorative block letters. The latter sketch only specifies line-breaks,

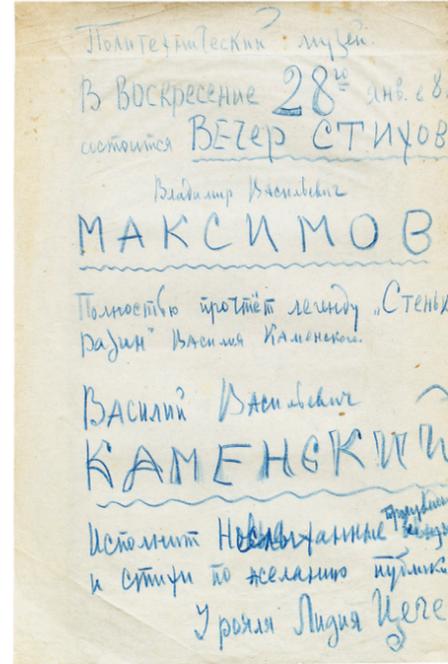
* Spacing is type without a printing surface and is cast to standard sizes. Leading is strips of metal shorter than type-high. Both do not print and are used to fill the empty space in a form. Rule is type-high strips used to print lines or other decorative linear elements.



122 Illustration of a piece of type, from *The Practice of Typography: Plain Printing Types* (1902) by Theodore Low De Vinne, p. 29 (the call-outs have been erased).



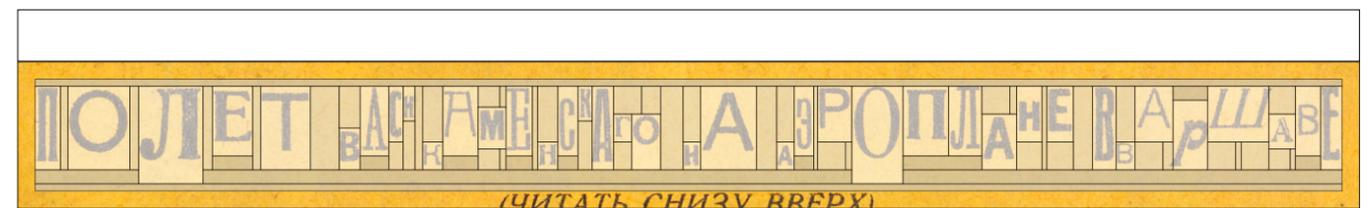
123 Sketch for the cover of *His-My Biography of a Great Futurist* by Vasily Kamensky.



125 Sketch for a poster for a performance at the Moscow Polytechnic Museum in 1917.



126 Detail from "Telephone" at 150 percent scale, superimposed with the outline of each piece of type.



127 Detail from "Flight of Vasya Kamensky," at 125 percent scale, with type, spacing, and leading overlay.

capitalization, and general typeface style. The design sketches for *Tango with Cows* were probably somewhat more explicit, given the complexity and unconventional nature of the poems. In the discussion of the individual poems, I recover some of their structure by means of a careful analysis of the physical arrangement of type, leading, and rule combined with a principle of least action: design decisions simplifying the work of the typesetter were made by him but any remaining complexity was specified by Kamensky.

This principle will be developed more fully below, but the basic idea can be seen by examining sections from the poems "Telephone" and "Flight of Vasya Kamensky." In the former, the visual size of the letters in the two words "О ПОНИМАЮ" (O CLEARLY)* varies substantially, but the size of all seven fonts used is sixteen points (fig. 126). The irregular visual appearance is due to the varying proportions of the letterforms: the 'И' is set in Herold Condensed which has tall capital letters and very short descenders, while the 'а' is set in Kalligraphia which has small capitals and long descenders. The remaining letters are set in Steinschrift and various styles of Lateinisch and Akzidenz Grotesk, both having capitals about the same size, between the extremes of the first two. Typesetting this line presented no geometric difficulties, only logistical ones in setting and distributing type from seven different three-foot-wide type cases. Here it seems safe to conclude that the typesetter realized a general specification by Kamensky of visual disorder by the simplest means possible.

The thirty-eight characters in the title line of "Flight of Vasya Kamensky" were set from nineteen fonts of type in seven sizes ranging from eight to twenty-eight points (fig. 127).

It must have taken five to ten times longer to set than if it had been composed from a single font. This use of multiple sizes of type in the same line required the typesetter to carefully fill in the space above and below the letters with spacing or leading, as shown by the recon-

* Literally: "Oh, I understand." This essay uses the translations as printed in the stand-alone volume; the capitalization and italicization are preserved to allow the reader to follow the analysis in the translation.