

On the Question of the Reception of French Parnassians by Kyiv Neoclassicists

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Članek obravnava fenomen sprejemanja del francoskih parnasovcev s strani kijevskih neoklasicistov. Študija je bila izvedena s primerjalno analizo. Glavni predmet analize so besedila ukrajinskih avtorjev, ki vsebujejo sklice na dela njihovih francoskih predhodnikov iz 19. stoletja. Članek opredeljuje skupne značilnosti teh literarnih trendov, kot so posvečanje pozornosti obliki, starodavnim podobam in zapletom ter odmik od romantike. Ugotovljene so bile značilnosti neoklasicizma, ki se zaradi drugačne kulturne in politične situacije ter časovne razdalje bistveno razlikuje od parnasizma. Analizira se tudi vloga francoskega parnasizma pri oblikovanju in razvoju kijevskega neoklasicizma.

The article describes the reception of the French Parnassians' works by Kyiv Neoclassicists. This study is carried out with the comparative method. The main object of the work is the texts of Ukrainian authors which contain allusions to the works of their French predecessors of the XIX century, as well as the translations of Parnassians' poetry made by Kyiv Neoclassicists. The article defines the common characteristics of these literary movements, such as attention to form, appeal to antique images and plots, and the shift away from Romanticism. The features of Neoclassicism have been identified, which distinguish it significantly from Parnassism due to the different cultural and political situation and time distance. The role is also analysed of French Parnassism in the formation and development of Kyiv Neoclassicism.

Ključne besede: kijevski neoklasicizem, francoske parnasovstvo, ukrajinska moderna, recepcija, medbesedilnost

Key words: Kyiv Neoclassicism, French Parnassism, Ukrainian literature of Modernism, reception, intertextuality

Introduction¹

The Neoclassicism of the 1920s was one of the most striking manifestations of Modernism in Ukrainian literature. Mykola Zerov, Maksym Rylsky, Pavlo

¹ The interim results of this study were presented in the Ukrainian Studies Online Colloquium (Chair of Entangled History of Ukraine, European University Viadrina,

Fylypovych, Mykhailo Drai-Khmara, and Oswald Burghardt (Yuriy Klen) were the leading representatives of Kyiv Neoclassicism. They initiated a powerful classicist trend in Ukrainian literature, enriching it with ancient poetics and world classics. Kyiv Neoclassicists sought to raise the aesthetic level of literature in Ukraine to the level of Parnassus as an abstract symbol of high art. Earlier, Lesya Ukrainka, the forerunner of Ukrainian Neoclassicism, in a letter to Mykhailo Drahomanov in 1893, noted that she was planning “to get further education and to found Parnassus in Kyiv with the help of the pleiad” (Lesya Ukrainka 2016: 219–220). For Kyiv poets, the landmark for this was the work of poetry Parnassus, the literary movement in France in the 1860s–1880s. This variation of French Classicism influenced the formation of Ukrainian Neoclassicism more than any other phenomenon of world literature.

A generalised study on the connection between the Kyiv Neoclassicism and French Parnassism was written by Igor Kachurovsky (2008). This topic was partly the subject of analysis by Volodymyr Derzhavyn (1948), Sviatoslav Hordynsky (2004), Yuriy Shevelyov (1998) and Dmytro Nalyvayko (1998). However, this comparative aspect of neoclassical creativity still needs more detailed analysis. The purpose of this article is to investigate the peculiarities of the reception of French Parnassus’ works by Kyiv Neoclassicists with comparative and intertextual analysis.

The neoclassical trend in Ukraine and France

Dmytro Nalyvayko states that “the aesthetic worldview of Zerov and his friends is focused mainly on the ancient Greek classics – both directly and through other eras” (Nalyvayko 1998: 4). The French Parnassus is one of the intermediate milestones that connects Antiquity with modernity and introduces Antiquity into modernity. The literary trends of the classical style, appearing regularly in European literature, correlate with the literary movements which were preceding them. Thus, Classicism is still always modernised and does not lose its relevance. The literary critic Volodymyr Derzhavyn, who has made one of the most comprehensive comparative analyses of Kyiv Neoclassicism and French Parnassism in Ukrainian Philology, calls the then-recent trend of French literature “a refined abolition of pan-European Neoclassicism” (Derzhavyn 1948: 20). Therefore, for the Kyiv Neoclassicists, Ukrainian “modern supporters of Classicism” (Derzhavyn 1948: 16), mastering the poetic heritage of Parnassian poets was a necessary step to form their version of Classicism, which was half a century distant in time and shifted from the cultural centre of Europe to its eastern part.

Frankfurt/Ode) and the Annual Literary Conference dedicated to the Days of Science (National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Kyiv).

The period of existence of the Parnassus French literary school is relatively short: It covers the chronological period of the 1860s–1880s. This diverse poetic community includes authors who were published in *Le Parnasse Contemporain*. There were three issues of this magazine, in which, in 1866, 1871, and 1876, about a hundred authors were published. Two poets can be associated with the so-called narrow circle of Parnassians. In their works, Parnassian aesthetic principles were embodied most fully and consistently. They are Charles Leconte de Lisle and José-Maria de Heredia (Hudson 1919: 272). To these authors also should be added Theophile Gautier, to whom the Parnassian movement owes the “art for art’s sake” principle, which denies the utilitarian nature of art and asserts its self-worth. Theophile Gautier proclaimed this principle in the preface to the novel *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835). In this novel, the writer makes the separation of the efficient and beautiful with a provocative intonation:

There is nothing truly beautiful but that which can never be of any use whatsoever; everything useful is ugly, for it is the expression of some need, and man’s needs are ignoble and disgusting like his own poor and infirm nature. The most useful place in a house is the water-closet. (Gautier 1899: 31)

The stylistic features of the Parnassian trend were: Impersonality, avoidance of the image of personal feelings, interest in Antiquity, close attention to form, and the postulate of the self-worth of art as opposed to its utilitarian function.

The definition of the phenomenon of Kyiv Neoclassicism as “Ukrainian Parnassism” became entrenched in literary criticism after Igor Kachurovsky’s article “Ukrainian Parnassism” (1983). Its prerequisites should be sought in the artistic and critical texts of Neoclassicists and contemporary critics. Maksym Rylsky calls his poetry friends “Parnassus comrades” (Rylsky 1988: 137). “Five from Parnassus” was the headline of a critical article (1925) in the *Bilshovyk* magazine, the author of which accused the Neoclassicists of escaping from Soviet reality (Strikha 2020: 188). The names of French Parnassians Charles Leconte de Lisle and José-Maria de Heredia appeared repeatedly in the works of Kyiv poets. In Mykola Zerov’s sonnet *Pro Domo* (1921), these poets stepped into the aesthetic canon of Kyiv Neoclassicists:

Класична пластика, і контур строгий,
І логіки залізна течія –
Оце твоя, поезіє, дорога.

Леконт де Ліль, Жозе Ередія,
Парнаських зір незахідне сузір’я
Зведуть тебе на справжнє верховір’я.² (Zerov 1990: 66)

² [Classical plastic, and the strict contour, / And flawless logical reasoning – / This is the poetry way. // Leconte de Lisle, José Heredia, / Unfading light of the Parnassian stars / Will lead you to the true hilltop.]

A parody of these lines in several variations is placed in the humorous self-ironic *Neoclassical March* (“Неокласичний марш”) (1926), co-written by Mykola Zerov, Pavlo Fylypovych, Mykhailo Drai-Khmara, and Maksym Rylsky:

Над українськими ланами
дух неоклясики буя,
і раз у раз чаюють з нами
Леконт де Ліль, Ередія!³ (Zerov 1990: 108)

In comparing the phenomena of Kyiv Neoclassicism and French Parnassism, biographical parallels are worth mentioning. Both groups had their maitre, inspirer, aesthetic ideologist. The central figure of the Parnassian movement was Charles Leconte de Lisle, the author of the poetry collection *Ancient Poems* (“*Poèmes antiques*”) (1852), which gave rise to this poetic movement, and the editor of the second issue of *Le Parnasse Contemporain*. Every Saturday, followers of the pure art gathered in his salon on the Boulevard des Invalides in Paris, (Schaffer 1923: 415). For Kyiv Neoclassicists, it was Mykola Zerov. In 1919–1920 he was the editor of the *Knyhar* magazine. This publication brought together authors who saw their main task in overcoming the provinciality of Ukrainian culture and raising it to the European level. Ukrainian Futurists, led by Mykhailo Semenko, had the same goal, yet chose to break away with the tradition of Ukrainian literature as the mean to achieve it. The Neoclassicists had a different strategy: To feel rooted in tradition they chose literary parents from the writers of the past. Moreover, they sought literary predecessors among the European authors, and the Parnassians became one of them.

Both the Neoclassicists and the Parnassians existed as a fully-fledged aesthetic phenomena in their national literature; they had their vision of the purpose of literature. However, they did not consider themselves to be “schools.” These were artistic communities that were not created artificially but formed following the laws of art, and due to the core values of their representatives. Catulle Mendès describes the Parnassian trend as follows:

There was never, I repeat, neither in intension nor in fact, a Parnassian school; we had nothing in common, except for a youth hope, a hatred for poetic untidiness, and the chimera of the perfect beauty (Mendès 1903: 114).

Ukrainian writers spoke of Kyiv Neoclassicism in the same way. Victor Petrov emphasised that the Neoclassicists were not a literary group but a society of friends: “There was no “school”, there were inner amicability and personal friendship” (Petrov 2015: 532). Maksym Rylsky stressed that “the aesthetic platform that united them was the love of the word, of the strict form, of the great heritage of world literature” (Rylsky 2015: 225). However, the phenomenon of

³ [Above the Ukrainian fields / the neoclassical spirit is flying, / and from time to time / Leconte de Lisle and Heredia drink tea with us!]

Kyiv Neoclassicism possessed the key features of a literary school such as a close stylistic, genre, and thematic preferences of its representatives and the common aesthetic programme. Therefore, Volodymyr Derzhavyn claims that, in the early 1920s, the open proclamation as a literary school and the declaration of aesthetic principles for Neoclassicists would cause even more serious confrontation with the authorities (Derzhavyn 1948: 15–16), and this became the main obstacle for them to declare themselves as literary schools.

Paradoxically, the poetry of a slender and perfect form, laconic expression and verified word – the poetry of a Classical orientation – is connected with the revolution. It applies equally to Ukrainian and French poets. Victor Petrov draws attention to this fact:

It was the Neoclassicists who acted as representatives of Classical tendencies in Ukrainian poetry during the revolution. Meanwhile, as usual, the most consonant with the revolution was considered to be a disjointed, disorganized, and chaotic “impressionist” style. (Petrov 2015: 517)

The Parnassian group appeared after disappointment with the consequences of the Revolution of 1848. The French, who received universal suffrage, elected Napoleon III Bonaparte as the president of the newly created Republic, but he returned the country to absolutism. It is the reason for the Parnassians’ disenchantment with politics and social order. Especially, it concerns Leconte de Lisle, who was an active participant in the Revolution. For the Parnassians, the consequences of disappointment with the Revolution were political apathy, escapism, and, to some extent, pessimism. The years of the formation of the neoclassical group in Ukraine fell on the turbulent years of the revolution, the emergency of new Ukrainian statehood, and its loss. Having examples of world revolutions (including the above-mentioned revolution in France), Ukrainian writers had no illusions about the possibility of changing the social order by force. However, for a short while, some members of the Ukrainian group also came under the influence of the revolutionary sentiment. In particular, Oswald Burghardt, in 1924, wrote the poem *At the Turning Point* (“*На переломі*”):

Хай розмаяний племінь червоно вирус.
В дні повстання горітиме вічно ця барва...
Хай той юний живе, що руйнує, будує:
Синьоокий, розхристаний варвар!⁴ (Klen 1992: 157)

The members of both literary groups drew inspiration from the literature of Antiquity. Yet, Kyiv Neoclassicists led by Mykola Zerov were more interested in the literature of ancient Rome, the first “Classicism.” Instead, the Parnassians appreciated “classics,” the literature of ancient Greece. Among the ancient texts fundamental to European literature, Leconte de Lisle translated the *Iliad*

⁴ [Let the red raging flame eddy. / In the days of the uprising, this color will burn forever... / Let the young man live that destroys and builds: / Blue-eyed, wild barbarian!]

and the *Odyssey*, and Mykola Zerov, whose main translation interest lay in the Latin literature of Antiquity, worked on a translation of the *Aeneid*. Unfortunately, only a few passages from his translation have survived. Parnassians considered literature written after Greek Antiquity as epigone. Leconte de Lisle in the preface to the first edition of *Ancient Poems* (“*Poèmes antiques*”), which became a kind of manifesto of the entire literary movement, describes the literature after ancient Greece as follows:

Since Homer, Aeschylus, and Sophocles, representing poetry in its vitality, fullness and harmonic unity, decadence and barbarism have invaded the human mind. In terms of original art, the Roman world is at the level of the Dacians and Sarmatians; the entire Christian cycle is barbaric. (Leconte de Lisle 1899: 218–219)

The Parnassians paid far less attention to translation than the Neoclassicists. Each Kyiv Neoclassicist was a translator, and translation was part of their cultural work to bridge the gap between Ukrainian and European literary discourse. Leconte de Lisle was nearly the only Parnassian translator. His translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were not the first translations of these works in French literature. He was concerned with the purely literary quality of translation, rather than filling numerous gaps in the literary process, which was considerable for Mykola Zerov. Leconte de Lisle translated eschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, but he also translated Horace’s odes and satires. It suggests that the rejection of Roman literature in the *Ancient Poems* (“*Poèmes antiques*”) was still an artistic pose rather than a sincere levelling of the achievements of Roman Classicism. Leconte de Lisle’s poems are an example of genuine and undoubted devotion to Greek Antiquity. He not only introduces images from mythology into his poetic texts, but also names them in the Greek manner (Zeus, not Jupiter; Heracles, not Hercules). It goes against the already established tradition of calling mythological characters Latin variants of names (Hudson 1919: 272).

Overcoming Romanticism was one of the principal tasks of both Parnassus and the Neoclassicists. Strict and demanding of the poetic text, Parnassism was a “reaction against the liberation of the poetic discipline” (Hordynsky 2004: 428) of Romanticism. Parnassism and Romanticism on the one hand are connected closely, and on the other hand opposed to each other (Whidden 2007: 18). The Parnassians aimed to overcome Romanticism because of its hypertrophied subjectivism, but they repulsed it and borrowed many of its aesthetic discoveries. Théophile Gautier entered the Parnassian community with a poetry collection *Enamels and Cameos* (“*Émaux et Camées*”) in the same year with Leconte de Lisle. At that time, Théophile Gautier was a prominent romantic writer, an author of two novels and nine plays. Particularly romantic is the exoticism of Leconte de Lisle’s poems, which abound with oriental motifs (*Sûryâ, Bhagavat*) and exoticisms concerning the fauna (*Les Éléphants, Le Colibri*) and landscapes (*Le Désert*) (Hudson 1919: 273). Similar exoticisms, yet depicted jokingly or nostalgically, occur in Maxym Rylsky’s poems, for example, in the poem

The Childhood (“Дитинство”) (“На стільці я їду по Сахарі, / Пелікана з палички стріляю”⁵ (Rylsky 1983: 142)) or *The Parrot* (“Пануга”).

Like the Parnassians, Kyiv Neoclassicists sought to overcome Romanticism in Ukrainian literature. But the reason for this was not only the rejection of its aesthetics, but also its protracted domination. “Tearful sentimentality, an epidemic phenomenon in Ukrainian literature, came triumphantly into its own,” (Zerov 1990: 377). This is how Mykola Zerov evaluated Mykola Voronyi’s early modern poetry, emphasising its inseparable connection with the Romantic tradition of Ukrainian literature. The Neoclassicists fought against this and took the Parnassian literature as an example. In an article in 1963, Maxym Rylsky writes:

In this “orientation” of modern poetry on the French “Parnassians,” whose names should now be judged from calm historical positions, there was not a call to imitation but a protest against the “old fashion” and “sentimental gruel” of the older epigone generations on the one hand, and, on the other hand – the reaction to all sorts of “left” “isms.” (Rylsky 2015: 227)

Moreover, this vivid sample of attention to form, the harmonious interweaving of ancient motifs, work with the word, and the desire for an emotionless depiction of the human’s external and internal world as the poetry of Parnassus, allowed Ukrainian Neoclassicism to set up decades faster than it would have set up without it (Derzhavyn 1948: 21).

“Ukrainian Parnassians”

Opponents and critics of the Parnassians called the representatives of this movement *Les Impassibles* (Whidden 2007: 22). Parnassians’ contemplation of the inner processes of the soul with the scientific emotionlessness was a protest against the sentimentalist and romantic remorse in the literature of their predecessors. Victor Petrov thinks about Parnassian impartiality – *impassibilité* – in the context of the work of Kyiv poets. In a report in 1924 on Maxym Rylsky’s work, a friend of the Neoclassicists argues that the impersonality of the French Parnassians is most characteristic of Maxym Rylsky. According to Victor Petrov, the idyllic works by Maxym Rylsky have the features of Parnassian poetics: “In the warm joys of the Earth in Rylsky’ poetry, there is much of the pessimistic, bitter-sweet and cold Parnassian *impassibilité*, which said about the sweet helplessness of autumn and the white snow bed” (Petrov 2013: 121). The genre of idyll is a sign of the bookish and urban Alexandrian culture, already contemplating nature and the village in the distance. The idyll of the early Maxym Rylsky contains Parnassian serenity, because the world exuberance has a print of Baudelaire’s poetics with its twilight tones. “Do not believe, to be a skeptic [–] is to be calm: *impassible*,” (Petrov 2013: 123) Victor Petrov

⁵ [On a chair I ride across the Sahara, / I shoot a pelican with a stick.]

puts forward this thesis about Maxym Rylsky, but here the researcher depicts his worldview rather than characterises the work of a colleague. Regarding Maxym Rylsky's commitment to Parnassism, Viktor Petrov claims that, for the neoclassical poet, Parnassism is a pose, one of the roles he tries on, as he once tried on the role of a dandy. This statement is worth believing, because Maksym Rylsky's creative path is a long formation of his style and search for his voice, that goes beyond the strict Neoclassical framework.

The Parnassian worldview is embodied in Maxym Rylsky's poem *The frost! You are the soul of a Parnassian singer* ("Морозе! Ту душа парнаського співця"). Strong emotions and deep feelings ("подих вод", "трав завмерлих жалі", "глибокий спів розливів весняних", "літні грози", "одчай осінній"⁶) framed in strict form and apt words, might be perceived even as cold by a reader. Such a superficial reception of Neoclassical poetry disturbed Maksym Rylsky, because, in his essay on Yevhen Pluzhnyk and Mykhailo Drai-Khmara, he responded emotionally to the accusations of the coldness of his colleagues' poetry by analogy with José-Maria de Heredia:

Heredia is cold, but the blood of dark-skinned conquistadors flowed and raged in his veins, and you are as cold as ice if you do not feel in his stern, turned *Les Trophées* the beating of this mad, restless, conquistador heart! (...) The poet must possess his material, even if that material is really "the blood of a wounded heart." (Rylsky 2015: 220)

Mykola Zerov notes that the Neoclassicism in Maxym Rylsky's poetry is only revealed fully in the fifth book, *Through the Storm and Snow* ("Крізь бурю й сніг") (1925). Regarding the compliance of his earlier works with strict Parnassian requirements, Mykola Zerov states:

The poet does not succeed at once in Parnassism; it only makes him thirsty and envious (*Завидую тобі, морозний суокою*). But slowly, with the maturation of a talent (...), a classic style is formed with its tranquility and clearness, picturesque epithets, strong logical construction and a strict flow of thought. (Zerov 2015: 158).

In this commentary, Mykola Zerov stresses the universal criteria of classical art, to which he and his colleagues aspired, and the embodiment of which for him was the poetry of French predecessors.

Mykola Zerov considered José-Maria de Heredia to be the closest Parnassian author to him. Heredia was a committed follower of Leconte de Lisle. For several decades he developed a single poetic form – the sonnet. Heredia became a literature teacher for Mykola Zerov. These poets had a lot in common. Both of them left behind little poetic heritage: For thirty years, Heredia was writing poems which comprised only one collection – *Les Trophées* (1893); while Mykola Zerov's poems made up two poetry collections – *Kamena* (1924) and

⁶ ["the breath of water," "a pity of frozen herbs," "deep singing of spring floods," "summer thunderstorms," "autumn despair"]

⁷ [I envy you, frosty calm]

Sonnetarium (1948), that Zerov's brother Mykhailo Orest published after Zerov's death. Thanks to the Parnassians, especially José-Maria de Heredia, the Neoclassicists have borrowed an understanding of the art form from ancient literature. It lies in the fact that the form is a structure "which is not an external "fetter," yet immanent in the work and the method of expression, so it never tethers or deforms anything, does not contradict or interfere with any meaning, but only interferes with confusion and negligence" (Derzhavyn 1948: 9). Mykola Zerov confirms this: Answering Vasyl Chaplenko's question whether a sonnet is a stanza or a genre, the neoclassicist answers unequivocally that "Heredia's sonnet is undoubtedly a genre – a lyrical-epic miniature of a separate scheme, a special pattern" (Cherevatenko 2001: 14). Volodymyr Derzhavyn, analysing the formal similarity of the sonnets of Mykola Zerov and José-Maria de Heredia, notes that the French poet cultivates the final point, while Zerov does this very rarely, although, where he does it, he is undoubtedly under the stylistic influence of Heredia (Derzhavyn 1948: 23). As an example of Zerov's sonnet with the final point, Derzhavyn cites the poem *Svyatoslav on the rapids* ("Святослав на порогах"):

І з черепа п'яного Святослава
П'є вже вино тверезий печеніг⁸. (Zerov 1990: 35)

Yurii Shevelyov also notes the closeness of Mykola Zerov's poems to the poetic texts of the Parnassians, but also states the difference between them in the selection of lexical material: The Ukrainian Neoclassicist has a rich abstract lexicon, but in his works, "the world of things" it is less represented than in Parnassian poetry (Sherekh 1998: 97).

Reception through translations

The work by the French Parnassians has often been underestimated and perceived negatively, both during their lifetime and in later critical papers. Even at the end of the last century, in Western researches, the phenomenon of Parnassism was considered only as a "chronological crack between Romanticism and Symbolism" (Porter 1990: 4). In contrast, in the 1920s, Kyiv poets valued the work of their French predecessors highly, and made efforts to acquaint the Ukrainian reader with it.

The translation was one of the ways to assimilate the poetic heritage of their French predecessors. Many Parnassians' works were translated for the anthology of French poetry edited by Stefan Savchenko and Mykola Zerov, on which Neoclassicists and writers close to them worked in 1928 and in the 1930s, and which was never published. As Yuri Klen notes, "Kyiv publishers

⁸ [And from the skull of a drunken Svyatoslav / A sober Pecheneg is drinking wine.]

must have been frightened of their courage, because this anthology never came out and died somewhere in the editorial archives” (Klen 2003: 38–39). For this anthology, Mykola Zerov translated José-Maria de Heredia and Leconte de Lisle. Oswald Burghardt prepared translations from Leconte de Lisle and Théophile Gautier, which came out much later: The translations from Leconte de Lisle were published only in 1934 in two issues of the Lviv magazine *Vistnyk* (“Вісник”), and the translation of Gautier’s poem was published as early as 1943 in Prague, in the Ukrainian magazine *Proboiem* (“Пробоем”).

The Kyiv Neoclassicists translated approximately thirty Parnassians’ poems. Nine of Heredia’s poems were translated by Mykola Zerov. Two of Heredia’s poems were translated by Maksym Rylsky. *Centaur Escape* (“*Fuite de centaurs*”) was published posthumously, and the manuscript of the sonnet *Anthony and Cleopatra* (“*Antoine et Cleopatre*”) has not yet been found. Some of Leconte de Lisle’s poems were also translated by Mykhailo Drai-Khmara. Gautier’s poems came out in Ukrainian thanks to Maksym Rylsky and Drai-Khmara. In addition to these three central Parnassians, the Neoclassicists translated Théodore de Banville, Léon Dierx (translations of these poets were issued to Drai-Khmara’s pen), as well as Sully Prudhomme (which Mykhailo Drai-Khmara and Pavlo Fylypovych were working on), and Auguste Barbier, whose poem was translated by Fylypovych. On the one hand, the Parnassian movement sets the framework for the creativity of its representatives. On the other hand, it gives enough space for the manifestation of individual style to each poet. Therefore, in choosing the Parnassians’ poetry for translation, the Neoclassicists focused on its thematic and imaginative proximity to their individual styles.

Mykola Zerov made great efforts to open José-Maria de Heredia to the Ukrainian readers through translations. Although Pavlo Grabovsky, Vasyl Shchurat, and Olena Pchilka translated some of Heredia’s poems before, Zerov did not know about them (Strikha 2020: 204). Heredia’s poem *On Othrys* (“*Sur l’Othrys*”) opens Zerov’s collection *Kamena*, which emphasised the important role that Heredia’s work played in Mykola Zerov’s creative development. The structure of *Kamena* clarifies that his texts and translations from poetical teachers are equivalent to Mykola Zerov. José-Maria de Heredia and Roman poets are as important to Zerov as his poetical works. Heredia’s poem *On Othrys* (“*Sur l’Othrys*”) in Zerov’s translation is a kind of introduction to the *Kamena*, and its main motives, numerous topos and mythological images are repeated in other poems of the Neoclassicist’s collection, and serve for combining the texts of the collection into a single whole (Yakubchak 2010: 81).

The leader of the Neoclassicists also translated three poems by Leconte de Lisle, of which a poem from the cycle “*Médailles antiques*” is worth noting. The entire cycle of the French author is an anthem of beauty and art, embodied by the goddess Aphrodite, also known as Cypris. Among the five poems of the cycle, Mykola Zerov chose the one in which appears not only Cypris, but also the god of blacksmithing, Hephaestus. At first glance, the image of Hephaestus and Cypris are opposed to each other, as opposed to each other

are craft and art. In three stanzas, Hephaestus makes weapons, and in the fourth, Cypris appears:

А Кіпріда з його твору
Кпить, не зводить довгих вій:
Справжня міць належить їй,
Тільки їй нема опору.⁹ (Zerov 1990: 454)

The opposition of Hephaestus and Aphrodite gives way to their union, as if to say that these mythological characters were husband and wife. After all, for Neoclassicism, handicrafts and high creativity are not opposed, because perfect mastery of the creative craft serves the Beauty.

An example of an intertextual reference to translated poetry in the original works of the Neoclassicists is the epigraph to the collection of Yurii Klen, *The Caravels* (“*Каравели*”), which the author borrowed from Zerov’s translation of the Heredia’s sonnet *The Conquerors* (“*Les Conquérants*”):

Із білих каравел дивилися вони,
Як з невідомих вод незнані сходять зорі¹⁰. (Klen 1992: 52)

The entire collection of Yurii Klen is imbued with a thirst for knowledge of the world in various occurrences of its cultures, which makes it related to Parnassians, in particular, to Leconte de Lisle.

Théophile Gautier’s poems were translated mostly by Maksym Rylsky. The themes and images of Gautier’s poems chosen for the translation into Ukrainian are close to Rylsky’s poems. At the heart of Gautier’s poem *What the Swallows Say* (“*Ce que disent les hirondelles*”), translated by Rylsky in 1924, is the idea of intellectual escape to distant lands and times, accessible to the writer in his creativity. This motif also occurs in Mykola Zerov’s poetry and the prose by V. Domontovych (“intellectual vagabondism”). Maksym Rylsky’s sonnet *The Epoch where the Soul Would Rest* (“*Епохи, де б душею відпочить*”) (1927) contains the same thought. The image of swallows talking to each other about travel, in Gautier’s poem serves as a direct allegory of the creative imagination and the unattainability of dream: “Але даремно рветься мрія, – / Втекти з неволі не дано”¹¹ (Rylsky 1985: 296). Maksym Rylsky also often introduces the image of a swallow into his poetry. He does not give it an allegorical meaning, but uses it to create artistic or life reality (*Swallows Fly Because They Can* (“*Ластівки літають, бо літається*”), *Swallows Have Not Yet Flown* (“*Ще ластівки не прилетіли*”), *Two Swallows Flew in Spring* (“*Дві ластівки весною залетіли*”). The translation mastery of the Ukrainian Neoclassicist

⁹ [And Cypridis from his work / Teases and does not raise long eyelashes: / The real power belongs to her, / Only she has no resistance.]

¹⁰ [From the white caravels they watched, / As from unknown waters, unknown stars rise.]

¹¹ [But I strive for a dream in vain – / It is impossible to escape from the reality]

appears in this poem. The last stanza of the French text has the lines “Des ailes! des ailes! des ailes! / Comme dans le chant de Ruckert,” (Gautier 1872: 165) which M. Rylsky translated as “О, дайте крила, дайте крила! / Як ті, що Рюкерт оспівав!”¹² (Rylsky 1985: 296). Having brought these lines as close as possible to the original at the vocabulary and form, Maksym Rylsky preserved an allusion to the poem of the German romantic poet Friedrich Rueckert, that begins with the lines “Flügel! Flügel! um zu fliegen” (Rückert 1872: 156).

Another translation of Gautier’s poem made by Maksym Rylsky, the poem *La Tulipe*, is considerable for Neoclassical poetics. In describing the flower, a natural phenomenon, the author used metaphors of hand-made phenomena, the result of craft and labour: “пишнобарвний стрій” “сіяє пурпуром,” “фарба золота цілує фарбу срібну,”¹³ etc. In this poem, the culture is primary, and the nature is minor. The tulip is not a very frequent image in the Neoclassicists’ works. It appears only in Rylsky’s poem about Zerov “Як тюльпан, що в Гаарлемі / Подорожньому киває”¹⁴. In this poem, the remarkable point is the cultivation of the flower (“довго пещений тюльпан”¹⁵ (Rylsky 1985: 298)), which is a metaphor for the painstaking work on the text, the cultivation of the artistic word.

The Kyiv Neoclassicists did not write any manifestos and did not create a poetry manifesto on the model of the ancient or classicist ones, because political pressure made it impossible. However, some poems, which embodied the basic poetic principles of a group of poets, acquired the character of manifestos and became a flagship. An example of such poetry is *Pro Domo* by Mykola Zerov. Voicing one’s position through the translation of another’s text also provided an opportunity to speak about one’s vision of literature and the principles on which it should be constructed. In 1930, Mykhailo Drai-Khmara translated Gautier’s poem *The Art* (“*L’art*”), which was significant for the Parnassian trend. In this translation, the Ukrainian poet expressed the Neoclassicists’ admiration for the perfection of the form carved by a skillful pen:

Так, утвір тим красніший,
чим взятий матеріял
трудніший:
вірш, мармур чи метал.
(...)
До чого ритм легкий, догодний,
той довгий черевик,
хоч модний,
що кожен мірять звик?
(...)

¹² [Oh, give me wings, give me wings! / Like the ones that Rueckert sang about!]

¹³ [“magnificent attire” “shines purple,” “the gold paint kisses the silver paint”]

¹⁴ [Like a tulip in Haarlem / That nods to the traveler]

¹⁵ [long well-groomed tulip]

Різьби, карбуї гордливо
і втісній крихкість мрій
на диво
у груді кременній!¹⁶ (Drai-Khmara 1964: 246, 248)

In these lines, Théophile Gautier embodies the principle of the elitism of art, which is close to the Neoclassical one: Real art cannot be simplified, barbaric and please the primitive tastes of the masses.

Conclusion

The origins of Ukrainian Neoclassicism of the 1920s and 1930s lie mainly in the reception of the French Parnassians by the Kyiv poets. The Parnassians continued the classicist line in literature, in which Classicism had already had a long history of development. The Ukrainian Neoclassicists had to develop the classicist trend on the almost unprepared cultural ground. Both the Parnassians and Neoclassicists struggled with the romantic tendencies of literature, but French poets were much more connected with Romanticism than Ukrainian ones, because of the much smaller time gap with this style. Particularly romantic are the Parnassians' exoticism, and the demonstrative rejection of the present with its scientific achievements of Leconte de Lisle.

The Kyiv Neoclassicists partly contrasted the eastern exoticism in the poetry of the Parnassians with a return in time to Kyivan Rus and the Ukrainian Baroque. The Neoclassicists tried to grasp the thread of the Ukrainian literary tradition and prolong its longevity, in particular, through working on the literary canon. In return, the Parnassians did not attend to the national issues, because their national art was not under the threat of destruction. The language they wrote was under the auspices of the French Academy, founded by Cardinal Richelieu during the heyday of the first wave of classicism in French literature. Moreover, Leconte de Lisle and Heredia were "immortal," i.e. they were part of the French Academy.

The analysis of individual Parnassians' poems translated by the Kyiv Neoclassicists proves both the Neoclassicists' accuracy in selecting the poems for translation, and the significant influences of these original texts on their work. It manifested itself in intertextuality, in the proximity of imagery, and using these translations to express the creative principles important to the Neoclassicists.

The words Parnassus and Parnassian are used very commonly in both Soviet and modern critical works about the Kyiv Neoclassicists. However, the meaning of these words has already lost its direct semantic connection with the

¹⁶ Yes, the more beautiful the work is, / the more difficult / the material is: / poetry, marble, or metal. / () / Why is the rhythm as simple, pleasing, / as a long shoe, / which is fashionable, / but everyone is used to measuring it? / () / Proudly carve, emboss, / and miraculously squeeze / the fragility of dreams / in a huge stone!

phenomenon of French literature of the 1860s–1880s and its specific representatives, not mentioning the magazine that gave the name to the literary movement. At the lexical level, the perception of these words “jumped” through the thirty years of French literature and returned to its origins – the mythological mountain, inhabited by beautiful nymphs and patron of art (especially classical and neoclassical art) Apollo. In the context of Ukrainian literary criticism, “Parnassian” means the aesthetic perfection of the text, as well as “rejection of political urgency,” “obligatory philosophism, intellectualism of poetry,” “sovereignty of art,” “elitism, the purpose of art for a select circle of connoisseurs, not the crowd,” and “an appeal to the classical past with its dubious progress” (Pavlychko 1999: 196).

Parnassus in Ukraine in the 1920s became a school for polishing the poetic word and poetic form, and embodying in them a slender and temperate thought, which allowed poetry to overcome a striking gap with the world literary process in one decade.

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VPRAŠANJE RECEPCIJE FRANCOSKIH PARNASOVCEV PRI KIJEVSKIH NEOKLASICISTIH

Predstavniki kijevskega neoklasicizma so v dvajsetih letih prejšnjega stoletja v ukrajinsko literaturo prvi uvedli klasicistični trend. Fenomen francoskega parnasovstva v 19. stoletju je na oblikovanje neoklasicizma v Ukrajini vplival v večji meri kot kateri koli drug pojav v svetovni literaturi. Preučevanje recepcije del francoske struje Parnas s strani kijevskega neoklasicistov tako pomembno prispeva k razumevanju izvora ukrajinske klasicistične struje v začetku 20. stoletja.

Parnasovska poezija je eden najnovjših klasicističnih trendov v francoski literaturi, zato za kijevske umetnike postaja tako pomembna. Posvečanje pozornosti obliki in antiki, neosebna predstavitev, pomanjkanje čustev, elitizem in tudi želja po premagovanju romantičnih težnj v literaturi – vse to združuje francoske in ukrajinske pesnike. Ukrajinski neoklasicizem se od parnasovstva razlikuje po tem, da njegovi avtorji več pozornosti posvečajo nacionalnim vprašanjem in zgodovinski preteklosti, kažejo več zanimanja za literaturo starega Rima in Grčije ter brez romantičnega šarma obravnavajo zanje sodobno revolucijo.

Neoklasicisti dela parnasovcev v veliki meri sprejemajo s prevodi. Vsak neoklasicist si za prevod izbere besedila francoskih avtorjev, ki so najbolj skladna z njegovim ustvarjalnim slogom. Mikola Zerov je bil pri pisanju svojih sonetov očaran zlasti s Herdijevimi soneti in je v svoji prvi zbirki prevode tega avtorja uvrstil na enak nivo kot prevode rimskih pesnikov. Poleg tega nekateri prevodi iz parnasike postanejo manifest za neoklasiciste, način za razglasitev njihovih ustvarjalnih načel.

Kljub razlikam, povezanim s kulturnimi in političnimi razmerami ter časovno razdaljo, je parnasovstvo umetniško blizu smeri kijevskega neoklasicizma. Poleg tega je bilo vzor ukrajinskim avtorjem in je neoklasicizmu pomagalo postati eden najvplivnejših tokov v ukrajinski literaturi 20. stoletja.