



THE 6TH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
**EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES**

**The Functions of the Classical Images in the
Ukrainian Baroque Poetry**

Tetyana Shevchuk

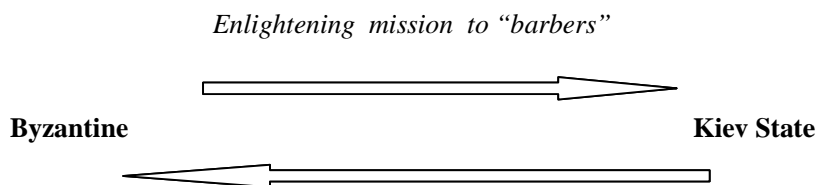
Izmail State University, Faculty of foreign Languages, shevchuktat@mail.ru

Abstract: The article deals with the characteristic of the ancient Greek and Rome discourse reception in the old Ukrainian literature. The paradigm of the antique images functioning in it is exposed with the focus on the Ukrainian poetry of the XVII-XVIII-th c. The aesthetic modus of the creative classical antiquity reproduction in the Ukrainian baroque period is represented by the didactic principle, stylistic search, syntheses of pagan and Christian categories. The specific features of the national variant of the ancient mythological structures artistic interpretation are exposed as well.

Keywords: antiquity; reception; interpretation; baroque; didactic; synthesis; travesty

The classical patterns of poetry and oratorical art formed an aesthetic base of the European and the old Ukrainian literature. With the division of the Rome Empire on the West (Latin) and East (Greek) in 395 y. A.D. and the fall of the Latin one under the barbarian invasion (476 y.), the cultural life of the early Middle Ages period was glimmering in the Byzantine literature. The Kievan Rus became its spiritual inheritor from the X-th c. The antiquity heritage was paradoxically perceived in the Byzantine culture “ascetic tradition” (Живов, 2002, p. 73-115), from which the Ukrainian literature was also dependent on. The ancient images were seen either as “barbarian” (because of the integral connection of it with the pagan mythology) or as a model of the highest culture, which ignoring was identical with degradation and properly “barbarization”.

The paradigm of ancient Greek and Rome discourse implications at the first period of the old Ukrainian literature is as following:



Relations Kiev State – Byzantine:

- *Reception of the “ascetic” literary tradition;*
- *Catechistic form of educational development;*
- *First Slavic translations of the Byzantine chronographs;*

- *Knowledge about the ancient culture basis;*
- *Efficient cultural contacts with the Byzantine and West Slave Commonwealth;*
- *Gradual transformations of the Ukrainian educational system during the XVII-XVIII-th c. from remained religious by structure into secular by contents due to the inclusion of the poetry patterns and oratorical theories' heritage of classical antiquity into the schooling programs;*
- *Artistic "transmission" of the modified ancient Greek and Rome discourse in the old Ukrainian literature, which defined the specific character of its reception.*

In the Ukrainian baroque poetry the ancient Greek and Rome mythological images and symbols became the "form" for the development of different plots with brightly presented **didactic function**, which were the "cover" for moral directions and even for sacred Christian concepts. The sources of such a phenomenon lie in the translated literature of Kievan Rus* which has its top in the Ukrainian poetry of the XVII-XVIII c., conditioned by the whole educational system. The professors of the Kievan Mohyla Academy were either clergymen or poets, playwrights, cultural figures. In their works the traditional mythological images were the patterns for definite ideas, theoretical and aesthetic base for the Bible subjects' artistic interpretation. In the didactic context the ancient Greek and Rome muses and the patron of arts Apollo were the most popular mythological images in the Ukrainian literature of the XVII-XVIII-th c., because of their functional connection with different types of sciences. The Ukrainian poetical Parnassus was proclaimed in the poems of Sebastian Klenovitch "Roksolania" (1584), Joann Dombrovski "Dnieper" camens" (the first half of the XVII c.), Sofroniy Pochasskiy "ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΗΡΟΙΝ" (1632). In every case the dominant position was given to the muse of history Clio in contrast to the old Greek tradition, where the muse of epic poetry Calliope had kept the first place. The accent on history reflected the aspiration of the intellectual elite for stability in view of the unsecured political position of Ukrainian territories, which was the borderland of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth part. The images of other muses symbolized the preferences to different sciences and the necessity of mastering them.

Stylistic function. The next main feature of the Ukrainian baroque poetry is connected with the great emphasis on stylistic devices such as metaphors, hyperboles, antitheses. The old Greek and Rome mythological symbols became the material for the *metaphorical definitions* (students were treated as "Minerva's regiments" (from *Українська література XVIII ст.*, 1983, p. 62), the Ivan Mazepa's default correlated with the "Phaeton" end" (Ibid, p. 30-34); *comparisons* (Russian tsar Peter I as "Russian Mars" (Ibid, p. 33); Turkish sultan as "Jupiter's wrathful scourge"; Turkish troops as "chimera", "hydra", "furrier's begetting" (from *Українська література XVII ст.*, 1987, p. 304-311); *allegories* ("Christian Hercules" and others). Numerous mythological or historical parallels as the common place of the baroque poetry were actively used as illustrations, being the "method of proving" (Панченко, 1973, p. 185), which demonstrated the Beauty of the spiritual world in contrast to the Ugliness of the material one. The antiquity mythological structures, which functioned in the Ukrainian poetry of the XVII-XVIII-th c. did not have the authentic senses. They were presented in "dissected state" (Софронова, 2006, p. 173), but influenced the "development of the general baroque tendency – to render one notion through another, to see in common the distinctive features, to notice in everything numerous reflections" (Ibid.).

*The first information about the old Greek and Rome mythological imaged was presented in the old-Slavic translations of the Byzantine chronographs, written by Joann Malala (491-578), George Sinkella (IX sen.), George Amartol (IX sen.).

Synthesis function. In the exclusively religious works of the Ukrainian baroque poets (the reason of which lay in the absence of the secular education) there were whimsically mixed clerical and antiquity discourse with the focus on its Christian interpretation. D.Chizhevskiy wrote: “The synthesis of Christian and old Greek philosophy, has its long-standing tradition in the translated Kievan Rus’ literature, however the strengthening of the separate points of the antiquity world-view took place in the baroque period” (Чижевський, 2003, p. 337).

The Ukrainian baroque artists actively Christianized sacred ancient Greek and Rome mythopoetical concepts moreover they developed the idea of cyclic basis of life and creation. The last one reflected the notion about the unity and infinity of existence in context of the fight against profane time. One of the most important philosophical deductions of the ancient thinkers was the idea of the “eternal rotation of Chaos and Space” (Лосев, 1989, p. 16), as the well-known Russian researcher A. Losev marked. This conception has kept the key position in the poetry of the Ukrainian baroque artists. They reflected the idea of the circular motion of Chaos and Space by means of the interpretation of the Psalter quotation (psalm 29, verse 6): “*It will be the lamentation in the evening, but joy will come early, the world will forget sorrow*”. It created the aesthetic foundation for many works of the Ukrainian poetry of the XVII-XVIII-th c. Its variations were actively used as the mottoes, explanations and conclusions: in “Lament...for the death of... Leontij Karpotitch” (1620) the Psalter quotation was taken as an epigraph to the poem and produced the composition and structural peculiarities of it; as an explanation in Sofroniy Pochasskiy “ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΗΡΟΙΝ” (1632) (“*gladness constantly comes after the grief*”, “*it is time to make joy from lament*” (from *Українська література XVII ст.*, 1987, p. 250, 251); as a paradigm of life rotation in “Lament about the accident of Ostrog people” (1636) (“*Cheerful days, the days of happiness / has been turned out into misfortune and great distress*” (Ibid, p. 259).

The synthesis of ancient Greek and Rome and Christian images in the Ukrainian baroque poetry was interdependent: either the Christianization of antiquity or the “antiquization” of Christian aesthetic core existed there. The last tendency was expressed by means of the symbolic representation of the other world, the sensation of the Individual and Absolute unity, which was far from the traditional Christian doctrine. The opposition of two worlds is the integral part of the ancient philosophy, which has been naturally perceived by the Ukrainian baroque artists through Neo-Platonism. The Ukrainian poets of the XVII-XVIII-th c. understood the other world in context of the ancient conception of sensual-material space, connected with the idea of eternal return (from chaos to universal formation).

Another aesthetic modus of the artistic reception of the antiquity heritage in the old Ukrainian literature was the Christian travesty of the ancient mythological structures, which developed the traditions of *parodia Christiana* of the west-European literatures of the XVI-XVII-th c. It is actual for the travesty as for the inferior imitation method to make crude fun of sacred images. The travesty’s distinctive feature is the expulsion of style characteristics, which are natural for the original, as well as the reference to the “form” in the context of joyful imitation. In the Ukrainian baroque literature the travesties traditionally kept the serious, not humorous sense. They were mostly presented in the interludes for the school dramas. The usage of mythological and divine symbols in the Ukrainian baroque poetry and in school drama was realized by means of making equal the images of ancient and Christian culture (Maria / Diana; Christ / Mercury-Jupiter-Cupid-Epicure; cross / trident); through the semantic parallels, which produced curious interpretations now and then.

So, **the character of the artistic antiquity interpretation** in the Ukrainian literature of the XVII-XVIII-th c. was defined by following aesthetic modus:

- *Didactic function;*
- *Metaphoric characteristics;*
- *Synthesis of Christian and pagan discourse.*

The synthesis had different variations, such as:

- *Christianization of the mythological ancient Greek and Rome conceptions;*
- *“Antiquization” of the Christian philosophical and aesthetic discourse;*
- *Christian travesty of the classical antiquity mythological structures.*

The paradigm of the reception of the ancient Greek and Rome aesthetic heritage in the old Ukrainian literature reflects the historical process of gradual mastering the classical humanitarian knowledge resulted in the “artistic burst” in the literature of the XVII-XVIII-th c. The specific features of the national variant of the antique symbols interpretation is presented by the absence of the secular aesthetic center; by the exclusion of the definitions between the images of the ancient Greek or ancient Rome origin; by the fulfillment of the archetype meanings’ typologies with the sacred senses and the partial “antiquization” of the Christian discourse; and finally by the creative reflection in the context of realizing the antiquity symbols as a segment of national culture.

References

- Живов В. М. (2002). *Разыскания в области истории и предыстории русской культуры/Russian Culture History and Prehistory Studies*. Москва: Гнозис.
- Лосев А. Ф. (1989). *История античной философии в конспективном изложении/History of Ancient Philosophy in Concise Exposition*. Москва: Мысль.
- Панченко А. Н. (1973). *Русская стихотворная культура XVII века / Russian Verse Culture of the XVII cen.* Ленинград: Наука.
- Софронова Л. А. (2006). *Культура сквозь призму поэтики/Culture through the Prism of Poetics*. Москва: Языки славянских культур (Studia philologica).
- Українська література XVII ст.: Синкретична писемність. Поезія. Драматургія. Белетристика / *Ukrainian literature of XVII cen.: Written Syncretism heritage. Poetry. Dramaturgy. Fiction* (1987). Відповідальний редактор О. В. Мишанич. Київ: Наукова думка (Бібліотека української літератури).
- Українська література XVIII ст. Поетичні твори. Драматичні твори. Прозові твори / *Ukrainian Literature of XVIII cen.: Poetry. Dramaturgy. Prose* (1983). Відповідальний редактор В. І. Крекотень. Київ: Наукова думка (Бібліотека української літератури).
- Чижевський Дмитро (2003). *Українське літературне бароко/Ukrainian Literary Baroque*. Київ: Обереги (Київська бібліотека давнього українського письменства. Студії, Т. IV).