

REGISTRATION FORM

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Ukrainian translation of the edge of XIX – XX centuries: the problem of the reader (case of translation activity of Borys Hrinchenko’s family)

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In XIX cen. translation activity in Ukraine was extended. The majority of writers of that time were translators. Among them there were: P.Kulish, L.Borovykovskiy, I.Franko, L.Ukrainka, B.Hrinchenko, M.Zagirnya, P.Nishchynskiy, S.Rudanskyi, M.Starytskyi, P.Hrabovskiy, V.Samiylenko and other prominent figures of Ukrainian belle-lettres. Translations executed in XIX – XX cen. were fit into the cultural context of Ukraine, having enriched it with the creative work of leading figures of world literature. At the same time they contributed to the development of Ukrainian language and literature that were officially forbidden by the governmental decrees of 1863 and 1876. The appearance of expressive means and literary genres, that hadn’t existed in Ukrainian discourse before (such as sonnet, classic tragedy), was greatly stipulated by translations. As M.Strikha asserts in his monograph “Ukrainian Literary Translation: Between Literature and Nation-Making”, Ukrainian translators tried to fight the right to existence of Ukrainian language, to affirm the full status of Ukrainian language, place it on the same level with other European languages. They also sought to bring the educated strata of their societies *back* to their native language [Strikha M, *Ukrains’kyi khudozhnii pereklad: Mizh literaturoiu i natsiietvorenniam*. Kyiv: “Fact” (2006)].

Borys Hrinchenko and his family made a great contribution to the development of Ukrainian language and translation. Literary work of prosaist, poet, dramatist and publicist, his wife Maria Hrinchenko (signed her works with the pseudonym

Zagirnya) and their daughter Nastya Hrinchenko was subordinated to educational tasks. Therefore they are usually treated within the populist (“narodnytska”) paradigm, and the Ukrainian peasants were considered to be the main audience for their writings.

In spite of so-called “populism”, the list of translations executed by Borys, Maria and Nastya Hrinchenko shows the presence of works oriented on educated audience first of all. Borys Hrinchenko started his activity from retelling of “Robinson Crusoe” by Daniel Defoe (1891). Later in different years he published Alphonse Daudet’s prose, a number of his poetic translations of Johann Goethe (“The Alder King”), Friedrich Schiller (“The division of the Earth”), A.Pushkin, Heinrich Heine, Victor Hugo, O.Koltsov, A.Maykov, O.Pleshcheyev, Ya.Polonsky, “Maria Stuart” by F.Schiller. After the revolution of 1905 new possibilities for printing Ukrainian translations within the borders of Russian Empire appeared and a great number of Hrinchenko’s translations were published in separate books: “Wilhelm Tell” by F.Schiller, cycle of H.Heine’s poems “North Sea” (1906), comedy “Business is business” by Octave Mirbeau, dramas “Drayman Henschel” (Fuhrmann Henschel) and “Sonnen” by Gerhart Hauptmann, a story “Chernihivka” by N.Kostomarov, “Fairy Tales” and “Mischievous child” by Zachris Topelius, drama “Native land” by Victorien Sardou and drama “Night Games” by Arthur Schnitzler. Borys Hrinchenko together with his wife Maria translated some poems in prose by I.Turgenev (1891) and the book “Heart” by Edmondo de Amicis.

In this list we can notice that beside classical writers (Ukrainian translations of which had educational function) there are modernists G.Hauptmann and A. Schnitzler, whose dramas were calculated exclusively for educated audience.

As for Maria Hrinchenko, her translation activity isn’t less in quantity. She translated: L.Tolstoy’s tale “Why do people live?”, N.Leskov’s tale “About Fedor Christianin and his friend Avraam Zhudovin”, Alfred Tennyson’s tale “Kind soul”, “The adventures of Tom Sawyer” by Mark Twain, drama “Monna Vanna” by Maurice Maeterlinck, two fairy tales by M.Saltykov-Shchedrin “How one peasant had feed two generals” and “The wild landlord”, Henrik Ibsens’ play “An Enemy of the People”, “Ghosts”, “Pillars of Society”; Herman Suderman’s drama “The end of

Sodom”, “In native family”; “Nora and Rosmersholm”; tale of Karl Emil Franzos “Fight for rights”, “The forest tale” by D.Mamin-Sibiryak, E. de Amicis’ tale “Little clerk”, Talbot’s tale “Foremen in Vilbaiya school” and H.Beecher Stowe’s novel “Uncle Tom’s Cabin”. Moreover, her translations were republished several times and got the greatest popularity among readers of that time [Nezhyva L, Maria Hrinchenko. Literaturnyi portret. Lugansk: “Znannya” (2003)].

What is more, there isn’t only classical literature for children and youth among her translations but also works of “modernists” such as M.Maeterlinck and H.Ibsen. It shows identical goals of translation activity of Maria Zagirnya and Borys Hrinchenko. It’s important that Borys Hrinchenko appealed to educated public while working for the theatre (after the appearance of minimal censorial possibilities). Their aim was to modernize Ukrainian theatre with new dramas. Besides, Maria Zagirnya and Nastya Hrinchenko translated works of Mark Twain when the writer was still alive that shows their work on translating modern actual works.

Nastya Hrinchenko translated such works as: Oliv Schreiner’s tales, examples of E. de Amicis’s prose, “Dream life and real life” by O.Schreiner, “Adventures of Huckleberry Finn” by Mark Twain, “Flame of Ivan’s night” by H.Suderman; critical essay “Anatole France” by Georg Brandes, tale “Daughter Lilit” by A.France, dramas “Gedda Gabler” and “Woman from the sea” by H.Ibsen.

Borys Hrinchenko understood the needs of peasant-readers very well as he was the first who researched the peasants’ reception of the works of world literature. And if some texts, such as “Antigona” by Sophocles and “Wilhelm Tell” by F.Schiller, became clear after some explanations; others (for example “Demon” by Lermontov) were incomprehensible at all because they were overloaded with abstract notions [Hrinchenko B, 1906. Tvory svitovoyi literatury na seli. Nova hromada. 12: 86 – 95.].

So, Borys Hrinchenko, being a “populist” in many of his declarations, performed however a well-considered program of modernization Ukrainian literature. Maria Zagirnya and Nastya Hrinchenko realized the same strategy. As we can see they translated not only works of classics but also of modernists such as G.Hauptmann, A. Schnitzler, M.Maeterlinck and H.Ibsen, directed towards the Ukrainian “advanced readers” strata, which was in its turn forming at that time due to the translators

efforts. Therefore the analysis of Borys Hrinchenko's family translation activity demonstrates that the Hrinchenko's aimed to modernize Ukrainian literature and theatre, to place it on the same level as European and to show that Ukrainian language fits for use and for translation of the masterpieces of world literature.