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Ukrainian Authors in Tolstoy's Personal Library

The article studies Leo Tolstoy's personal library, comprising some 22,000 books and periodicals in 40 different languages. It demonstrates Tolstoy's deep interest in world literature, including the works of Ukrainian writers, who he greatly respected and cherished during his long life. Toward the end of his life, a dialogue developed between Tolstoy, the Ukrainian intelligentsia, and the Ukrainian people through personal contacts and correspondence, his works, and the works of Ukrainian writers.

Keywords: literature, dialogue, ethics.

Личная библиотека Толстого, насчитывающая более 22 000 книг и периодических изданий на 40 языках мира, демонстрирует глубочайшие читательские интересы писателя ко многим литературам мира, в том числе – украинским писателям, к которым Толстой испытывал глубочайшую симпатию на протяжении многих десятилетий своей жизни. К концу жизни писателя можно было говорить об определенном диалоге Толстого с украинской интеллигенцией, с украинским народом, который складывался непосредственно как в личном общении, так и в переписке, на страницах произведений яснополянского мудреца и украинских писателей.

Ключевые слова: литература, диалоги, этика.

Through the books and periodicals of his personal library, which number some 22,000 volumes in 40 languages, Leo Tolstoy demonstrated various interests and preferences in world literature, including Ukrainian writers. Profoundly interested in the philosophy of Grigory Skovoroda, Tolstoy wrote an essay about Skovoroda's life and work, and quoted Skovoroda in his *Thoughts of Wise Men*. Skovoroda's concept of the "inner person" appealed to Tolstoy and was in tune with his own understanding of this phenomenon. Skovoroda's book, published in Kharkiv, has been preserved in Tolstoy's library at Yasnaya Polyana. There were some definite similarities in Tolstoy's and Skovoroda's ethical and religious views. Even Skovoroda's isolation from the world was very inspiring and encouraging for Tolstoy, and his attempt to leave Yasnaya Polyana on October 28, 1910, in some ways echoed Skovoroda's departure from the world. As free philosophers, both Skovoroda and Tolstoy represent not only a Russian-Ukrainian but also a broader metanarrative about world culture.

Through Marko Vovchok's and Ivan Franko's works, Tolstoy learned of the way of life of the Ukrainian people, of their cultural and folk traditions. Tolstoy was

also interested in Marko Vovchok's pedagogical ideas. In 1862 Maria Markovich wrote to Tolstoy about the new issue of his pedagogical journal, *Yasnaya Polyana*. Tolstoy responded on May 19, 1862: "Your sincere, sympathetic voice pleases me very much, I thank you from all my soul for writing me" (Ваш искренний сочувственный голос очень мне приятен, от души благодарю вас за то, что написали мне).¹

In his early 1850s short story, "The Wood-Cutting," Tolstoy depicted Ukrainians, among other characters. We note this also in his story "Sevastopol in August 1855," written during the Crimean War.

On June 14–16, 1879, when he visited Kyiv, Tolstoy wrote that "Kyiv attracts me very much." That was the time of Tolstoy's spiritual quest, and it was very important for him to visit Kyiv and its famous monasteries and convents. A few years later, in one of his religious tracts, *Research on Dogmatic Theology* (Критика догматического богословия), he would share his impressions of visiting the Kyiv Pechersk Monastery (Lavra). In 1884 Tolstoy visited his friend, the famous Russian artist Nikolai Geh, on his estate in Chernigov. In his letters to Tsar Alexander III and

¹ Tolstoy L. N. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 90 t.* – Moskva; Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1928–1958. – Vol. 60. – P. 425.

in his essays, Tolstoy emotionally describes how the Ukrainian peasants in the Kharkiv and Poltava regions were being cruelly persecuted for their antigovernment meetings.

Tolstoy knew Shevchenko's poetry, and especially highly appreciated his poem *Naimichka*. He was impressed by the theme of a mother's selfless love.

Four years later, in 1883, Tolstoy was elected an honorary member of Kharkiv University. When the Ukrainian university students visited Tolstoy, he welcomed them with these words: "You are so lucky to belong to a people with such a rich soul who are able to enjoy their joys and to express their thoughts, feelings, and dreams so wonderfully. Those who own such a song need not worry about the future."

There are many Ukrainian editions, both in Russian and Ukrainian, among the books in Tolstoy's personal library at Yasnaya Polyana. There are Tolstoy's numerous penciled notes in Michael Dragomanov's book, *Малорусскія народныя преданія и рассказы*. Київ, 1876 (South Russian Folk Legends and Tales, Kyiv, 1876).¹ Maybe he was planning to publish it through his publishing house, *Posrednik*. One more suggestion is that some of Dragomanov's legends («Святой и черт», *Light and Dark*) became the source for his folk story, "An Old Man in the Church" («Старый в церкви»), and Tolstoy's marginalia certainly testify to it. Tolstoy and Dragomanov is a completely unresearched topic, at least in Russian and North American Tolstoy studies.

In the Tolstoy library there are four editions of the books by the well-known playwright Ivan Karpenko-Karyi (Tobilevich), with the author's inscription, as they were presented to Tolstoy by Karpenko-Karyi on November 11, 1901. The inscription reads: «Любому сердцеві моєму Льву Николаевичу Толстому – видь автора. Москва Ив. Тобилевичъ (Карпенко-Карый)» (To my heart's beloved Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy – the guise of an author. Moscow [Karpenko-Karyi]).²

Also preserved in Tolstoy's library are books by Pavlo Borodaevsky and other Ukrainian writers, which indicates Tolstoy's definite interest in Ukrainian literature and culture. Pavlo Borodaevsky inscribed his book «Як розвести на піску сосновий бір» (СПб, 1908) (How to build a pine forest on sand [Saint Petersburg, 1908]): «Високошановному прихильнику народа Льву Николаевичу відь автора. 7 січня 1909 року. г. Славянськ. Харьков» (To Lev Nikolaevich, most honorable and benevolent of the nation,).³ Tolstoy's library also includes a book by the

famous Ukrainian historian and lexicologist Nikolai Vasilevich Zakrevsky, one of his most outstanding works, *Избранныя малороссійскія и галицкія пѣсни и думы* (М., 1860, в 2-х кн.) (Selected South Russian and Galician Songs and Ballads [Moscow, 1860, in two vols.]),⁴ and a book by the Russian-Ukrainian historian Nikolai Kostomarov: *Збірникъ творівъ Іереміи Галки* [псевд.]. Одесса, 1875 (Collected Works of Jeremy Galka, Odessa, 1875).⁵

P. T. Ryaboshapka sent Tolstoy his book (*Разбыта бандура, Київ, 1893* [The Broken Bandura, Kyiv, 1893]) with the following inscription: «Достоуважаемому Графу Льву Николаевичу Толстому отъ автора П. Т. Рябошапки» (To the esteemable Count Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy from the author, P. T. Ryaboshapka).⁶

In the nineteenth century Tolstoy's works were being translated into Ukrainian. Ivan Franko's activities were very fruitful in publishing Tolstoy's works translated into Ukrainian in western Ukraine. In Tolstoy's library there is one edition of Tolstoy's novel *Resurrection* translated into Ukrainian under the title *Відродженє: Роман у трьох частях / Перевів Василь Сімовичю Львів* (3 ч., Несброшур. тетр.). Some of Tolstoy's folk tales, parables, and essays were also translated into Ukrainian by M. Pavlik, as well as by some other translators, who signed with the initials V. S. or M. L., and were published in Lviv and Kyiv in the early 1900s. Tolstoy's works were published by such Lviv publishing houses as _____ (Кость Паньковскій), the Shevchenko Science Society (Науково товариство імени Шевченка), and M. Iatskov (М. Яцков).

Many Ukrainian authors, such as Lesya Ukrainka, V. Stephanik, and O. Kobilyanskaya, were very active in introducing Tolstoy to the Ukrainian people. This tradition of translating Tolstoy's works into Ukrainian continued in the twentieth century. Of course, Ivan Franko's input into Tolstoy's studies in Ukraine was very impressive. He wrote several essays on Tolstoy, underlining Tolstoy's search for truth, simplicity, and harmony not only in his works but, more significantly, in his life!

So Tolstoy's ideas of self-perfection, Christian love, peace, harmony, and nonviolence were shared by Ukrainian writers, by the Ukrainian people. There was a certain dialogue between Tolstoy and his Ukrainian friends and followers not only in person (when they met at Yasnaya Polyana or elsewhere) but also in Tolstoy's and Ukrainian writers' correspondence, and in their works. Looking at this dialogue and communication today is even more inspiring and encouraging than ever.

¹ Библиотека Л. Н. Толстого в Ясной Полиане – Т. 3: Книги на иностранных языках. Тула: Издателский Дом "Ясная Polyana". – 1999. – Part 2. – PP. 643–644.

² Ibid., p. 649.

³ Ibid., p. 642.

⁴ Ibid., p. 646.

⁵ Ibid., p. 650.

⁶ Ibid., p. 653.