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# Ancient Literature Breaking Down Stereotypes

TRANSLATED BY ELVIRA SHVETS



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The result of several years of work of Kyiv team of researchers, the edition «Ancient Literature» was published for the first time in 2012. It is about texts in Latin, which were created during the XV-XIX centuries and relevant to Ukraine: it could be the origin of the author, or the place of establishment, or the topics. The work was written in Ukrainian, as it was intended primarily for readers in Ukraine, because even national scientists still do not know so much about the Ukrainian Neo-Latin. As a next step, the authors meant to join the general European researches, and expanded the circle of readers of «Ancient Literature» by translating it in English. While the text was translating, unexpectedly the Ukrainian history issue has come into the world through the sound of Russian-Ukrainian War.

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## **Datur Facultas Cuilibet Opponendi**

With these words, the authors of the Latin scientific publications of XV–XIX centuries have encouraged readers for discussion. We also encourage to think about the main theses, which enounced in our book: first, the proposed works, despite their belonging to another language, we seen as an integral part of Ukrainian literature and so that the culture; second, as the Latin authors belonged to the highly educated stratum of society, intellectual elite, to whose philosophy earlier wasn't paid enough attention, we think it expedient, that studying this literary heritage is very useful for understanding the history of Ukrainian intellectual development.

Unbelievably, but the term «Latin Ukrainian literature» is still able to surprise even philologists Ukrainianists. Sometimes it seems, that studying at the University works of Teofan Propokovych, not everyone knows how many works have been written by him in Latin; bringing to mind the work of Bartolomey Zymorovych «New Russian Countrywomen» in Polish, the curriculum leaves out in the cold his «Triple Lviv» in Latin even today; and wonderfully translated by Volodymyr Lytvynov and Myroslav Trofymuk works of Stanislav Orikhovsky, probably, leave some people under impression, that the original they were written is Ukrainian. In fact, the names of the authors of the national Neo-Latin heritage familiar to anyone from the school, the eloquent evidence is Hrygory Skovoroda.

The oversight like this is a natural result of the widespread prejudice, that ancient literature is too distant from us in time, so that can't be truly interesting. But you can't love and understand things you don't know. In order to know the ancient literature with all Multilanguage, that inherent to it, in addition to the ancient Ukrainian, you should know at least Polish and Latin. We encourage everyone to learn Latin, as all humanists still do (despite the extremely cut down curriculum), we also encourage those, who have a growing desire to explore times in literature and history of Ukraine, which indicated by Latin. «Haec cogita», as Ukrainian stroller thinker liked to stress the importance in his letters.



## Part I. Why Should We Study Ukrainian Neo-Latin?

The one, who attempts the great task, as the one, who goes on a journey, should see his goal — at least in his imagination. What material or nonmaterial benefits it will bring? If the answer would not be determined in advance, the effort could be failed. In our case, the key question is: why should we study Latin Ukrainian literature? And why should we develop Neo-Latin in Ukraine, a young discipline that studies the philosophical and literary Latin texts dated to XV—XX centuries?

Depending on the area of interests and humanitarian level of involved people, the aim of this work seems to us triple. It makes possible to professional philologist to open the national Latin page and contradict the outdated concept of «incompleteness» in Ukrainian literature, and look at the matter from a different angle than Hrygory Hrabovych<sup>1</sup> and try to fill in some gaps of genres and styles:

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<sup>1</sup> «From any point of view such concept is wrong, and I controverted it once. The concept of «incomplete literature» assumes, that there is a model of «completeness», and this model, rather the typology of the genres, categorically, schematically they borrow in Western literature. But, of course, nothing obliges us to take some model with its range of genres and styles — either English or French, or even Russian literature as appropriate and as an example of the theoretical model. Literature reflects the dynamics and needs of its society, and setting some universal conditions would verge on with the schematic». Hrabovych Hrygory. *The History of Ukrainian Literature: Research, Essays, Polemics*. — Kyiv: Osnovy, 1997. — p. 16.



on the domestic level we can talk about «Latin Renaissance» or «Latin Enlightenment». For a non-professional it is an opportunity to get rid of the stereotype, that the ancient literature is too archaic and make sure, that it works can attract readers even today. In general, for all of us it is a chance to destroy one of the harmful myths about ourselves, to get rid of a lot of complexes such as «being dejected peasant people for centuries», because the intellectual elite of Ukrainian ethnic lands made a strong contribution to the development of nations, to which they belonged of that time – especially to Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and to Russian Empire.

As a result of even superficial review of the Latin authors of XV–XIX centuries and imagery of their works, we could learn much more about the place and role of bourgeois and Polish noblemen in Ukrainian society of that time, to look with new eyes at the Cossacks, clergy, peasants, reach to not only previously unknown information, but what is valuable to the philologist, to its refined wording. There is the Cossacks' characteristic made by Lviv burgomaster Bartolomey Zymorovych<sup>2</sup>:

*«Cosaci vero fiducia animorum, non modo jugum, sed ne frenum quidem accipere volunt – Indeed, the Cossacks are very confident and they do not want to wear both the yoke and the bridle»<sup>3</sup>.*

His colleague Erasmus Sixtus apologizes to the owner of the house, where he outwaits the outbreak with these words:

*«Vero Illustrissime Princeps velim existimes me dedignatum fuisse tuae conversationis splendorem & suavitatem, sed quia Musae secessum amant, Philosophiaque atque eius soror Medicina, non est popolare artificium, ideo haec cogitans, semotus ab agendo, in hunc locum secesseram, qui mihi Tusculani Ciceronis Speciem referet – August Sir, I don't want you to think, that brilliance and the pleasure of communication with you were disregarded by me, but the Muses love loneliness and Philosophy and her sister*

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<sup>2</sup> Bartolomey Zymorovych. Lviv, a Prominent City, Besieged by Enemies. – Krakow, 1693. (Leopolis Russiae Metropolis (...) Anno MDCLXXII hostiliter obsessa. Cracoviae, 1693).

<sup>3</sup> Unless indicated otherwise, hereafter the translation from Latin made by Lyudmyla Shevchenko-Savchynska.

*Medicine aren't some business, which fits great crowd – so that, I was wondering, distanced from the need to act, and holed up myself in this place, and got the appearance similar to Cicero the Tusculan»<sup>4</sup>.*

A Latin epistolary of Hrygory Skovoroda grows variegated with aphoristic expressions: «Cave has dieculas nugis insumas! (...) Tempore coelum, imo ipse deus emitur – Do not waste these days to no purpose! For time, you can buy the sky, even the God», «O vitae via dulcis, ubi bene conscia mens est! – Oh, the way of life is sweet, when the conscience is good!»<sup>5</sup> And so on.

Among the authors, publishers or literary heroes of Latin-Ukrainian literature there were nobles and prominent scientists and heads of the churches as well – the intellectual and political elite, self-sufficient people, who know what they want, and appreciate what they achieved. As the evidence we could use the words said by Kostyantyn Vyshnevetsky at the Seim of Lublin in 1569: «We are people so polite, so that we won't come short to no other nation in the world»<sup>6</sup> and the call of the outstanding Ukrainian thinker of XVI century Stanislav Orikhovsky, who was the priest, philosopher and Ukrainian nobleman, to the King of the Commonwealth. The first quote does not require additional interpretation, as for the second, it is difficult to imagine a representative of the truly dejected people in the country, who would dare to teach the King:

*«Quid enim per Deos immortales ab eo expectes, qui sine ullis honestis praeceptis, ex puellarum coetu emersus, a cantu, a tibia, a luxu, a mascara, a vino, a somno, a stupro, ad summum imperium accesserit? (...) Non capit haec, mihi credite angusta, ac nulla bona institutione erecta mens, sed vacillat ac titubat in omni Regio officio ac munere. Qui enim Rex haec puer non didicit, is vitam miseram, desertam, contemptam, infamem, ac obtrectationibus expositam agat necesse est – What by the will of the immortal Gods could be expected from the man, who would come to the highest*

<sup>4</sup> Erasmus Sixtus. Medical Commentary to the Works of Lucius Annaeus Seneca. Lviv, 1627. (Commentarius medicus in L. Anneae Senecae opera. Leopoli, 1627).

<sup>5</sup> Hryhory Skovoroda. Letters to Myhaylo Kovalynsky. – In 2 vols. – V. 2. – Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1973.

<sup>6</sup> Yakovenko N. Ukrainian Nobles Since the End of XIV to the Middle of XVII Century. (Volyn and Central Ukraine). – Kyiv : Naukova Dumka, 1993. – P. 270.

*authorities without fair teachers, who would appear from the group of girls, where he was only singing, practicing with pipe, living in grand style, dancing Tretyak, drinking wine, sleeping, leching? (...) The soul, which wasn't fortified with any good science, staggers and stumbles making the performance of any public duty or service. If the King doesn't study in the childhood, he will become like this. He has to leave his grey, lonely, miserable, impious life, where everyone is laughing at him»<sup>7</sup>.*

During his lifetime full of the various vicissitudes<sup>8</sup>, S. Orikhovsky continued to worry about the problems of the national scale. In his letters, which were at the very beginning destined for publishing, and today would be called an open letters, he addressed to the King of Poland, the Pope of Rome and nobles, in other words he wished to be engaged in dialogue with the public, and because he did not expect a quick answer, he filled their texts with rhetorical and hypothetical questions from his imaginary interlocutor and opponents, so that he offered primarily his own answers, leaving, however, the space for readers to think.

Such rhetorical devices we could find on the pages of the Latin works of another Ukrainian master of virtual dialogue, Hryhory Skovoroda. In the correspondence between H. Skovoroda and his disciple Myhaylo Kovalynsky there are also occur very real questions and answers made by the addressee («When we were leaving house yesterday, you asked me why I smiled (...)»)<sup>9</sup>, which the author often uses as a starting point of philosophical reflection. So, with the quot-

<sup>7</sup> Stanislav Orikhovsky. The Speech at the Funeral of the Polish King Sigismund Yahelon. Krakow, 1548. (Funerbris Oratio: (...) in funere Sigismundi Iagellonis Poloniae regis. Cracoviae, 1548). Translated by V. Lytvynov. Ukrainian Humanists of the Renaissance. – In 2 parts. – Part 1. – Kyiv: Osnovy, 1995. – P. 187.

<sup>8</sup> Stanislav Orikhovsky-Roksolan was born in 1513 in the village called Orikhovka in Peremyshl district at province of Rus. Primary education he got in Peremyshl. He studied at the universities in Krakow (since 1526), in Vienna (in 1527), in Wittenberg (in 1529), in Padua (in 1532), in Bologna (in 1540), and also he improved his knowledge in Venice, Rome and Leipzig. In 1543, after seventeen years abroad, he returned home, where he focused on active humanistic activities. He died in 1566. His most famous works in Latin are – two speech «About the Turkish Threat», «On Celibacy» (1547), «The Abjuration of Rome», «Parting Words to the Polish King Sigismund II Augustus», «The Chronicles», which are describing the five years of Polish history, «The Speech at the Tunal of Sigismund I» (1548).

<sup>9</sup> Hryhory Skovoroda. Letters to Myhaylo Kovalynsky. – In 2 vols. – V. 2. – Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1973. – P. 233.

ed phrase the thinker starts thinking about the laugh as the sing of healthy soul. S. Orikhovsky had differ views on fun: in case of laugh he closer to Lucius Annaeus Seneca (whose philosophy is perhaps the most popular in the Ukrainian Neo-Latin for centuries) – humanist encourages the King to be serious and argues, that justice, fairness and peace «do not come to the place where only laughter and jokes, they are standing elsewhere». Thus, S. Orikhovsky teaches the King, that luxury in which he swims is vanity, and H. Skovoroda says to M. Kovalynsky, that common and simple are an inexhaustible source of joy.

Unlike many other sages, H. Skovoroda does not oppose the soul and the body, knowing that the man is a harmonious unity, he often compares their features: «daily and without fail put in the soul, as in the stomach, a word or phrase». S. Orikhovsky compares the human body and the public body and teaches the King to be a good doctor to this body – it is another case of using the philosophy of Seneca as a pretext. This ancient metaphor has gained considerable popularity among intellectuals of XVI–XVII centuries – as we shall see in the example of another Latin-Ukrainian author, Erasmus Sixtus (1570–1635 yrs.)<sup>10</sup>.

Despite the lack in Neo-Latin of literary genre in its modern sense, reading translated in Ukrainian<sup>11</sup> historiography, epistolary, etiquette works is capable of giving somebody a trill and bringing purely aesthetic pleasure not less than their modern counterparts. Perhaps, it's happened because the works, which performed practical functions from three to five centuries ago, eventually turned into a monument of literature and acquired features of historical fiction. In addition, the representatives from a variety of professional interests, political views and regions made their contribution to Latin

<sup>10</sup> Erasmus Sixtus (Mryholod) (1570-1635) – MD, originally hail from the city of Lviv, he studied in Krakow, earned his Ph.D. in Italy. In 1614-1629 he worked as the doctor at Lviv's hospital, later as a Professor of Medicine at Zamoyska Academy. He was the burgomaster of Lviv. He is the author of numerous scientific papers, the most famous among them are Latin comments to treatise about Kovtun by Hercules of Saxon (1600), to the works of L. Seneca (Lviv, 1627) and Publius Syrah (Krakow, 1590, 1600) and to treatise about the thermal waters in the village Shklo near Lviv (Zamosc, 1617).

<sup>11</sup> This is an important advantage of the Latin texts, translated into modern Ukrainian, they became the most accessible to the reader (in contrast to most Cyrillic monuments of this period), and thanks to translation the language and partly stylistic barriers could be eliminated.

works in different genres during more than five hundred years – that's why, now the reader can afford to choose works for every taste: from social and political works and medical researches to fine poems. This diversity of genres and styles is a consequence of the role of Latin as the universal language of European intellectuals, so that when we get acquainted with the legacy of Latin literature, we can see de facto full reflection of the intellectual life of the highly educated stratum of society of that time.

The works of leopolitan Erasmus Sixtus could serve as a model of scientific style of XVII century: if we analyze the refers, we will be amazed by not only deep knowledge of the author in the field of health achievements of the ancient world, but also by his awareness of the scientific works of the Middle Ages, Renaissance and contemporary authors' works. Medical commentary by E. Sixtus to the works of Seneca, which was published in 1627 in Lviv, attracts considerable interest. This is a clear example of syncretism of academic, journalistic and literary styles in a single work, where serious scientific facts, examples from his own medical practice exist side by side with quotations not only of ancient physicians (Hippocrates, Galen), but also writers, poets (often quoted Horace) and even poetic lines, often cum grano salis<sup>12</sup>:

*«Three Faces a doctor has, when they call for him it is one face –  
It looks like an Angel, when he just helped he looks like God Himself,  
Then when he cured disease and demands his reward  
It is awful and terrible, and looks like Satan»<sup>13</sup>*

Despite the title, Erasmus Sixtus quoted and commented not only works of Seneca: he refers to the ancient writers, who at least briefly touched the health care area (Plutarch, the Roman naturalists and rural areas researchers in general Cato the Elder, Varro, Columella) and perfectly oriented in the writings of the ancient Greek physician Palladio, mathematician Diophantus, Roman general, who primarily recognized as naturalist and geographer Gaius Pliny

<sup>12</sup> With a pinch of salt, ironically (Latin)

<sup>13</sup> In original language: Tres medicus facies habet; una, quando rogatur // Angelicam; mox est, cum iuvat ipse Deus. // Post ubi curato poscit sua praemia morbo, // Horridus apparet, terribisque sathan. (Valerius Cordus)

COMMENTARIVS  
MEDICVS

IN

L. ANNÆI SENE-  
CÆ OPERA,

PER

D. ERASMVVM SIX-  
TVM PHYSICVM MEDICVM

Leopoliensem conscriptus.



LEOPOLI,

In Officina Ioannis Szeligæ ARCHIEPISCO-  
PALIS Typographi, Anno Domini,

1627.

Fig. 1. Title page of the work «*Commentarius medicus in L. Annaei Senecae opera* – Medical Commentary To The Works Of Seneca» by E. Sixtus (1627)



the Elder, the Roman writer, architect and engineer Vitruvius. However, the semantic core of the work is still the works of Seneca: the author provides medical justification (sometimes even correction) of philosopher's abstracts, choosing quotes from many of his books, the most (34 quotes) were selected by Sixtus for commenting from «Epistles» and the book «On Anger» (20) and «Natural Question» (19). As an example of physician's reflections in the philosophical work may serve the comment to a fragment of the book «On Anger» (Book 1, Chapter 6), in which Seneca compares the teacher and the doctor and argues, that to both of them fits a certain severity. Citing verbatim quote commentator develops the idea in the different direction:

*«(...) cum melius est integram sanitatem tueri, quam labefactata remedium quaerere. Nihilominus idem sapiens Soticus subnectit quidnam agere debeat medicus si sanitas de statu suo lapsa fuerit. Itaque paulo altius repetam stricte tamen & dilucide, ut quisque hunc locum intelligat. Sciendum est bonam valetudinem, eiusque conservationem in statu optimo, consistere in sex rebus non naturalibus in aëre, in labore & quiete, in cibo, & potu, in somno & vigilia, in excretis & retentis, & in animi affectibus. Quis enim non videt ab his omnibus innumeras alterationes corpora hominum subire? (...) Seneca igitur dicit quod sanitas conservatur hisce rebus sex, duas tantum in exemplum ponit cibos & potiones, atque exercitationes. Non solum vero conservatur sanitas his sex rebus, sed necessarium est ut haec in omnibus observentur, quantitas, qualitas, ordo, modus, tempus – (...) It is better to spin out health, than to look for a cure when the damage is done. And yet, the very wise Sotic<sup>14</sup>[?] added what the doctor should do if the health become deteriorated. So, next I will repeat it brief and to the point, so that everyone understands this part. Be advised, that having good health and keeping it up in the best condition is consisting from six non-natural things: from the air, from working and resting, eating and drinking, sleeping and waking, from body wastes, and states of mind. Is there anyone who doesn't see, that without all these things the human bodies will have numerous damages? (...)*

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<sup>14</sup> Perhaps the author meant «Stoic».

*So, Seneca said, that health keeps up with these six things: and he provided an example using the food and drinks, and exercises. But it is not only these six things stored health — you also need to hold on to the quantity, quality, procedure, method and time in all of them».*

In general, Seneca's citation index, if it could be determined at the time of existence of Latin literature, would be almost the highest among the ancient authors — at least in the secular genres. It is obvious, that the members of the clergy were concerned about his philosophy as well. So, as an example of both interesting and useful lecture could be «The Chronicle of the Events in the South Rus' in 1624–1700 yrs.»<sup>15</sup>, which was written by Yan Yuzefovych, the canon of Lviv's capitul of the Roman Catholic church, it also contains a number of more or less verbatim quotations from the writings of the Roman stoic. The reason of the main event in «The Chronicle», the Liberation War under the leadership of Bohdan Khmelnytsky, was defined with Seneca's words as that, «No one could stand the iron hand for long, but the moderate hand would last long, as Seneca wrote<sup>16</sup>». Despite the fact, that the author was not sympathetic to Cossacks, «The Chronicle» is full of admiration about the grandeur of the events that unfolded in Ukraine of that time. According to *audiatur et altera pars*<sup>17</sup> to read «The Chronicle» is particularly interesting, especially to compare different vision of the fateful event for Ukraine, to notice intentional inaccuracy like this one: in one of the battles, where the Poles had lost, the author specified the number of Cossack's army, which was three thousand more than in all

<sup>15</sup> Hereafter, we will call the passages of historiographical work (the original name — *Annalium urbis Leopoliensis tomus extravagans (...)*), of Yan Thoma Yuzefovych, which was written at the beginning of XVIII century through the request of the Archbishop of Lviv Kostyantyn Zelinsky. The work remained in manuscript until the middle of XIX century, when it was partially translated (transferred) in Polish and published by Martin Pivotsky, and later — reduced and published in Latin by Ukrainian scientist Volodymyr Antonovych at the end of XIX century. Next activation of the studies of this work were held in our time: currently «Antonovich's sample «translated into Ukrainian, and the Lviv branch of the Institute of Archeology and Source Studies of NAS of Ukraine carried out the digitization of the full version of the manuscript, which will be translated later. Translated excerpts can be found at: [http://www.medievist.org.ua/2013/01/blog-post\\_8638.html](http://www.medievist.org.ua/2013/01/blog-post_8638.html)

<sup>16</sup> Yan Yuzefovych. The Chronicle of the Events in the South Rus'. <http://litopys.org.ua/sborlet/sborlet06.htm> — P. 122.

<sup>17</sup> It is heard also the other party (Latin)



sources we reviewed, or the little-known details, such as prudently spoiled by Khmelnytsky the road from Korsun to Boguslav with the purpose to delay the attack of the Polish army. A special pleasure is to read all the historical toponymy of Central and Western Ukraine in Latin: Czehrinia, Czernihovia, Kiiovia, Leopoli, Luceoria.

The characteristic of the leader of the Liberation War, which came out from the mouth of Yan Yuzefovych was harsh enough, but not lacking in psychologism:

*«Eliscebat tamen ignis suppositus cineri doloso, donec jus sceleris datum ac fomes incendiarum impiae rebellionis primus author motorque Bohdanus Chmielniczenko sive Chmielnicki accesserit. Is patre Michaele (quem alii Mazovia oriundum, alii Lyszanka, municipio Ucrainensi retulere) natus, puer in gymnasio Kiioviensi seu in Jaroslaviensi collegio apud patres societatis Jesu studia puerilia didicisse putabatur. Maturior annis sensum abdere, ex usu praesentia metiri, spem in futura promittere, comitatem ferociamque prout conduceret ostendere, minas saepe simulare, nunquam ultionem ammittere pro natura habebat. Militari praessa sermone facundia animus obtegens sui vultus renidens erat – Indeed, the fire went to earth and was hidden in deceptive ashes until the low, which mastered the crimes, was despised by Bohdan Khmelnychenko or Khmelnytsky – the main instigator and incendiary of the fires of that impious rebellion. This one, from his father Myhaylo (who was originally, as some said, from Mazovia, the others said from Lyszanka, Ukrainian town) was born, there is a belief that the boy got his primary education at Kyiv Gymnasia or at Yaroslavl College, which belonged to the holy fathers from the partnership of Christ. As an adult it was in his manner to hide his senses, to come from the current good, to inspire hope for the future, to show kindness and determination to get on the right side of somebody, often to hide bad intentions, and he never refuses to take revenge. His intellection was brilliant, covered by his military and concise language»<sup>18</sup>.*

The procedure of scientific introduction of the work very often could last for decades and transform itself into the subject of his-

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<sup>18</sup> Yan Yuzefovych. The Chronicle of the Events in the South Rus'. <http://litopys.org.ua/sborlet/sborlet06.htm> – P. 122.

What do you know about Ukraine?

The sad reason — Russian aggression — forced the world to talk about this great Eastern European country, its history over the past several centuries was undeservedly in the shadow of the neighbor-invader. But do you know at least something about Ukrainian literature? We offer to get acquaintance with it not from the very beginning, but from the Renaissance.

The reason for that is very simple — a significant part of the authors from Ukraine of that time used Latin to express their thoughts and feelings as well as the rest of Europe. This tradition has not completely collapsed even today, to prove that: if you conscientiously have studied and still remember this classic language, you can enjoy the quotes in the original. At the Renaissance era the intellectuals have considered themselves as a separate community, higher than political boundaries. So, the literature they have created is a common heritage.

So, here in front of you - still unknown page of European literature, written in Ukraine. Meet it, taste it, share it!

