

***Ukrainian Dumy*. Trans. by George Tarnawsky and Patricia Kilina. Introduction by Natalie K. Moyle (Toronto/Cambridge: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies and Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1979. Pp 219. \$5.95 paper, \$9.95 cloth. Distributed by University of Toronto Press)**

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Ukrainian Duma

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This publication is a bilingual edition of thirty-three *duma* variants selected and translated into English by George Tarnawsky and Patricia Kilina (Patricia Nell Warren). The edition also contains a translators' foreword and a very brief introduction to the *duma* genre by Natalie K. Moyle. The vast majority of the *duma* texts in this edition was taken from Kateryna Hrushevs'ka's two-volume edition, *Ukrains'ki narodni dumy* (1927, 1931); however, two texts, the "Duma about the Death of a Cossack Bandurist" and the "Duma about Ivan Bohun" have been taken from *Dumy* (Kyjiv, 1959). The orthography of the Ukrainian texts has been standardized.

For the uninitiated the introduction by Moyle is of great value. It provides the reader with some historical background regarding the *duma* performances, an examination of the content of some of these texts, and a setting for this typically Ukrainian genre among other epic traditions. Moyle also describes the performers, the *kobzari*, their schooling, and the circumstances in which they performed. A separate section of the introduction is devoted to some very brief remarks about the prosody of the *duma* texts. These comments could have been even more informative had they been illustrated by examples from the texts. The musical instrument, the *bandura*, used to accompany the rendition of these epic songs, is also mentioned. The introduction ends with a well foot-noted historical account of *duma* scholarship.

Since the major effort that went into this publication lies in its translation, some remarks are due regarding this aspect of

the edition. According to their foreword (pp. 5-7), the translators approached their goal in a variety of ways. They tried to avoid "rendering the prosodic characteristics of the originals" yet "included a few exceptions to this rule". They "chose beauty above fidelity" yet "in many cases . . . took the liberty of being quite literal". They were not literal insofar as they used "one tense only in the narrative of the *duma* — usually the past tense". They tried to be modern and colloquial in the "selection of . . . vocabulary", and they substituted some of the titles.

The translation of poetry is always a thankless task especially if the languages involved are not closely related. Since the translators involved here are both poets in their own right one can sympathize with their multifold approach, their vacillating between beauty and fidelity, liberal translation and an effort to recreate prosodic features, even with the selection and adaptation of some of the titles for the variants. There can be no doubt that the general impression and content of the Ukrainian texts have been rendered into English and this translation can now facilitate comparative studies of folklore and literature by readers who are not familiar with the Ukrainian language.

Notwithstanding this translation breakthrough from the Ukrainian, one could perhaps argue with the degree of liberty desirable in translations of this kind. For example in the "Duma about a Poor Widow and Her Three Sons":

Vona ž ručkamy — pučkamy
Xlib — sil' odroblyjala,
Da vse syniv hoduvala, (p. 204)

which is translated as:

With the tips of her fingers she would
Take bread and salt
And feed her sons with it, (p. 205)

should really be rendered as:

She would work with (her) hands,
(her) fingertips
For bread and salt
And always fed her sons,

Or in the "Duma about a Brother and a Sister":

Ty ž i sam brate, dobre znaješ,
 Jak u našoho otcja libo u materi,
 Bulo žčo pyty al'bo z"jisty —
 I todi ni svit ni t'ma
 V xatu vstupaly,
 Kumamy, svatamy,
 Ridnymy bratamy nazyvaly. (p. 216)

which is translated as:

You yourself, my brother, know well
 That at our father's and mother's home
 There was plenty to eat and drink.
 Then neither light nor darkness
 Entered the house,
 They did not call us their friends,
 Their brothers and sisters. (p. 217)

again should really be rendered as:

You yourself, my brother, know well
 How at our father's and mother's home
 There was plenty to drink or to eat —
 And then (in) neither (day) light nor
 darkness (i.e., in twilight)
 They would enter the house
 (And) call themselves godfathers and
 godmothers
 (And) real (own) brothers.

Despite these instances of poetic license the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies and the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute are to be congratulated for publishing the first collection of Ukrainian *duma* texts in English. The Ukrainians have long been known for their rich folklore. It is, therefore, hoped that this edition will be the first of a number of Ukrainian folklore publications issued by the above research institutions.

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