

The Ancient Fables in Old Ukrainian Literature

Fable is often considered to belong to the “eternal” traditional genres of literature that has been successfully cultivated by Ukrainian writers for a long time. At the beginning of the XIX century under conditions of general interest towards all types of folk art in the national literature a flourishing fables’ period was observed that was associated with the works of famous writers such as G. Scovoroda, P. Beletsky-Nosenko, P. Gulak-Artemovskiy, S. Pisarevsky, O. Rudykovsky, L. Borovkovsky, O. Bodyansky, E. Hrebinka, P. Korenytsky, P. Pisarevsky, etc.

The aim of the article is to study the traditions of classic fables in the heritage of ancient literature. The relevance of the research is caused by the need of in-depth analysis of the reception way of Aesop’s plots and aesthetic interpretations in fables of ancient poetics and rhetoric, preaching legacy of that time and fables by H. Skovoroda. Outlined aspect is a part of almost unstudied problem of the character of its existence and the nature and sources of the fable genre in ancient Ukrainian literature.

The task of the article involves finding out the issue of Ukrainian authors’ inheritance of the classical canon and the establishment of specific distinctive features in the interpretation of their traditional fabulist stories. Scientific novelty consists in profound comparative analysis of primary sources and their artistic interpretations. It should be noted that existing research of scientists is limited to the statement of fact of existence of ancient heritage by Aesop and comparative works on this issue have not been published yet.

In ancient Ukrainian literature fable was almost not regarded as a separate genre, but it was a part of poetics, rhetoric. Later the fable began to be realized as a separate literary genre and took its rightful place in poetics and rhetoric, the authors of which were trying to methodize details about it.

The attempts have been launched in the article to compare the interpretation of Ukrainian fables with similar moral fables. We follow the methodological guidelines

of literary comparative linguistics (M. Zhirmunsky, M. Bakhtin, D. Dyuryshyn, etc.) that inheritance of certain themes does not mean mechanical copying and it obtains both creative expressive features and distinctive characteristics provided by the recipient's creativity.

Used resources for the research are the texts of fables from ancient poetics and original works of Metrophan Dovahlevsky (1696), Hilarion Yaroshevytsky (1702), Theophan Prokopovych (1705), poetics (1709) from the book of Serapion Koptsevych, Tikhon Alexandrovich (1743-1744), George Konys'ky (1746-1747), Timothy Kolisnychenko (1758-1759) and rhetoric (1718), (1744), Veniamin Bagatsky (1720-1721), Narkys Harmashenko (1719) in comparison with Aesop's Fables (translated into Ukrainian by Y. Mushak).

Most of the fables of ancient Ukrainian literature have a direct genetic link to Aesopian fables, such as *The Lion and the Fox*, *Rural and City Mouse*, *Fishermen and Stone*, *Lion and the Frog*, *Cat and Mice*, *About the Farmer and His Sons*, *Travellers and the Bear*, *Reed and Olive*, *Donkey and the Wolf*, *Braggart* and others.

Aesopian fable *Cat and Mice* by Narkys Harmashenko shows a direct coherence of inheritance of Aesop's' tradition that dates back to the plot of *Cat and Mice* that has the same storyline.

The research revealed genetic coherence of fables' inheritance of Ukrainian literature in XVII – XVIII centuries with the classical traditions of the genre. This literary exploration was confirmation of the rule of priestly plots in Ukrainian fable at the time. The ancient fables are the most literary heritage that had existed in Ukraine for two centuries. At this time the pedagogical value of fable was realized, as a rhetorical example and as a literary genre it was represented by its creators to the Ukrainian democratic audience, the common people, ignorant or uneducated mass. The nature of artistic reception of Aesop's fables by Ukrainian fabulists shows originality and creativity of authors to comprehend the ancient stories. Ukrainian authors translated Aesopian fables of the used sources, sometimes they retold with minor authors' changes, some writers made thorough changes of the original stories, providing them with original features and creating a new page in the history of

Ukrainian fable, giving a new life to the ancient fables. Each has made a significant contribution to the fable as an independent genre in the pages of Ukrainian literature. They revealed the social and national-domestic issues, exposed iniquity, and injustice, adding the national character to it. Main features of fables of the researched period are thoroughness, details of the narrative, dialogizing, motivating of the characters' actions.