

Andrii Danylenko. *From the Bible to Shakespeare: Pantelejmon Kuliš (1819-1897) and the Formation of Literary Ukrainian.* Academic Studies Press, 2016. Ukrainian Studies, edited by Vitaly Chernetsky. xxiv, 450 pp. Bibliography. Indexes. \$89.00, cloth.

The monograph *From the Bible to Shakespeare: Pantelejmon Kuliš (1819-1897) and the Formation of Literary Ukrainian* focuses on the linguistic legacy of Panteleimon Kulish, one of the most colourful and controversial cultural figures in nineteenth-century Ukraine, and offers a detailed investigation of Kulish's translation projects and practices. Andrii Danylenko makes clear from the outset that these translation projects should not be regarded as exclusively philological undertakings; rather, they were a vital part of Kulish's broader agenda, namely, his attempt to create "a new type of literary Ukrainian that, in his plans, was likely to strengthen an affirmation of national identity and . . . to ensure acculturation of the Ukrainian people" (xix). While the established scholarly tradition credits Taras Shevchenko, the Ukrainian national bard, with almost single-handedly laying the foundation for literary Ukrainian, Danylenko's work, based on meticulous research and detailed textual analyses, revises this assumption and demonstrates Kulish's key role in the process of the formation and codification of what would become the Ukrainian literary language.

The book is divided into two somewhat uneven parts: the lengthy first part is devoted to Kulish's translations of the Bible, while the shorter (but very informative) second section explores his renditions of William Shakespeare's dramatic works. This uneven structure reflects historical and biographic fact: Kulish's ambitious project of translating the Bible into a vernacular version of literary Ukrainian that would be accessible to the common reader and yet preserve the stylistic elevation appropriate to its subject, without being based primarily on Church Slavonic, spanned over forty years and was, clearly, his central endeavour as a translator. His work on this project had its share of drama—which Danylenko masterfully reconstructs—with burned (or were they?) manuscripts, posthumous editorial interventions, changing loyalties, and strained literary relations. Kulish's translations of Shakespeare, as the book shows, complement his Bible project in that they represent his work on developing a *secular* variety of high style in literary Ukrainian. This section of the book, and particularly chapter 5, paints a fascinating picture of Kulish's mythologization of Shakespeare as a universal genius and beacon of civilization who would be crucial in bringing unruly Ukrainians, the heirs of "barbarous" and violent Cossacks, to a harmonious and peaceful European culture. It is only logical, as Danylenko shows, that translations from Shakespeare, in Kulish's view, would be critical in this process of acculturation. Moreover, the ongoing

debate about the very rationale of translating Shakespeare into Ukrainian in Russian-ruled Ukraine put Kulish's translations at the centre of the discussion about the Ukrainian national language and its relationship to "Great Russian" culture.

In both sections of the book, Kulish's translation projects are inscribed in a larger context of the writer's life; his linguistic and aesthetic views; the ideological battles of the time (for example, Ivan Franko's rather negative reception of Kulish's translations primarily on ideological grounds); and, importantly, the historical situation of Ukraine, divided between the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires, with its different linguistic and cultural influences, at times conflicting national programs and movements, and distinct dialectal features. Moreover, Danylenko offers a comparative analysis of Kulish's translations and similar projects by other Ukrainian authors on both banks of the Dnipro River. He concludes that Kulish's contributions stand out owing to his synthetic and inclusive approach: unlike many of his contemporaries in both Galicia and Russian-ruled Ukraine, Kulish drew on various linguistic practices of the past and strove to integrate diverse regional linguistic elements, foreign borrowings, and stylistic registers. In a sense, as Danylenko seems to imply, Kulish's synthetic approach to literary language mirrored his vision of a unified nation that preserves its uniqueness and internal diversity while joining the family of enlightened European nations.

In sum, this monograph is a very erudite and informative work; scholars of different disciplines, however, will probably be attracted to selected portions of the book. The book's cultural and biographic sections will, certainly, be of interest to literary scholars and cultural historians. But the bulk of the study is comprised of detailed textual analyses and comparisons of various translations, authors' stylistic choices, methods of archaization, means of vernacularization, and other linguistic strategies; these sections, given their level of detail, are clearly more relevant to specialists in Ukrainian linguistics—which is understandable, as linguistics is Danylenko's primary field of expertise. However, I, as a literary scholar, would have liked to see more of a pan-European cultural contextualization of certain linguistic innovations or literary choices (such as the metric system for poetic translations, to name but one item), since literary language was an important part of Romantic nationalist programs in many countries across Europe. The history of translation is an important and fast-developing field, in which translations from the Bible and from Shakespeare in specific national literatures have been studied at length. Even though Danylenko does stipulate in his introduction that his project is primarily concerned with "the internal history of new literary Ukrainian" (xviii-xix), he could have conceptualized his analysis more richly and anchored it more broadly had he

adopted a somewhat wider perspective, without necessarily delving into all of the details of specific translations in other cultures.

These minor points of criticism notwithstanding, Danylenko should be commended for producing a very solid, well-written, and painstakingly researched study that brings to light a previously unexplored aspect of Kulish's contribution to Ukrainian culture. While Kulish in the post-Soviet period reemerged as one of the central figures of the Ukrainian national awakening and of Ukrainian literature, he is still relatively unknown in the West, where only a few studies of his legacy exist. Danylenko's book helps an English-speaking audience explore the linguistic and cultural program of this fascinating writer while, at the same time, making a significant contribution to the broader field of the history of literary Ukrainian.

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