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## POETRY AS MILK: A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY METAPHOR AND ITS PEDAGOGICAL CONTEXT<sup>1</sup>

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The title of the 1691 manuscript collection of *carmina curiosa* by Ioan Velychkovs'kyi, «Milk from the Sheep to the Shepherd Owed», alludes to the alimentary metaphor «a milk diet for beginners», which was frequently used in the Latin-oriented humanistic school system to both defend the use of literary exercises at the trivium level, while censuring literary activity in the quadrivium and, especially, among mature men, other than trivium preceptors. This article proposes that Velychkovs'kyi carefully selects quotations from the Psalms and the Greek Testament to reverse a pedagogical prejudice and to promote poetic games as an exemplary tool for teaching the Ukrainian vernacular, sharpening the wits of his readers and delighting his countrymen. Unfortunately, metropolitan Varlaam Iasyns'kyj, his former teacher of poetics to whom he dedicated the collection, did not deem it necessary to support financially its publication, thereby delaying – for more than a century – the official teaching of Ukrainian poetry and the enjoyment of its creation.

*Keywords:* alimentary metaphor, post-Renaissance pedagogical theory, trivium, quadrivium, Quintilian, courtly poetics, George Puttenham, formulaty rhetoric, Ioan Velychkovs'kyi, Samiilo Velychko, Hryhorii Skovoroda.

In 1691, one year after the elevation of Archimandrite Varlaam Iasyns'kyi to the metropolitan see of Kyiv, Halych and all Rus', the Poltava priest Ioan Velychkovs'kyi dedicated to him a collection of *carmina curiosa* written in the Ukrainian vernacular and titled *Mleko ot ovcy pastyru nalezhnoie* (Milk from the Sheep to the Shepherd Owed). Like many writings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this collection survived in a single copy and was discovered only much later. The carefully ornamented manuscript in which it was preserved, along with an earlier work by Velychkovs'kyi also honouring Iasyns'kyi as the newly appointed primate of the Ukrainian church, was exhibited in 1908 at the XIV<sup>th</sup> Archeological Conference held in Chernihiv. Its text was published for the first time in 1972<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ця стаття вперше появилась в канадському журналі *Journal of Ukrainian Studies*, nos. 1–2 (Summer-Winter 1992), с. 189–203. Передрукову статтю за дозволом редакції наслідника цього журналу – *East-West Journal of Ukrainian Studies* – з маленькими змінами в транслітерації, дотримуючися системи Конгресової бібліотеки, США. За порадою професорки Софії Сенік, я теж внесла зміни в обговоренні біблійних цитатій, якими користується Іоан Величковський.

Immediately after the discovery of the manuscript and, especially, after the publication of most of Velychkovs'kyi's known legacy, a number of scholars turned to this truly remarkable figure in early modern Ukrainian literature. They noted his elegant Polish-language panegyric honouring the prominent churchman and prolific writer, Lazar Baranovych. They also took note of his inventive poetry in the *lingua volgare* («pryrodnym iazykom», as Velychkovs'kyi called it). His works in the vernacular included masterful epigrams inspired by those of the well-known schoolmaster John Owen, an encomium honouring Het'man Ivan Samoilovych, a collection of meditational verses constructed around the conceit of a pectoral watch, and, finally, the *carmina curiosa* mentioned above. Mostly scholarly discussions have acknowledged Velychkovs'kyi's Baroque poetics, his unique talent, and the defence of the vernacular he made in the preface to *Mleko*<sup>1</sup>.

The purpose of my discussion is to focus on the alimentary metaphor underlying the title *Milk from the Sheep to the Shepherd Owed*, and to propose that – beyond honouring Varlaam Iasyns'kyi as his hierarch and former instructor of poetics – Velychkovs'kyi's collection sought to challenge a central tenet of the humanistic *paideia* as it was practiced at his alma mater, the Kyiv-Mohyla Collegium.

I will develop my argument in three stages. In the first, I will indicate the contrast between the apologetic tone of the poet's dedication to the metropolitan and his confident stance in the preface to *Mleko*. I will also present the epigraphs in which Velychkovs'kyi marshals one alimentary metaphor after another. In the second stage, I will describe the function of the poetics-rhetoric sequence within the humanistic trivium and argue against the commonly held belief that its primary role was to instill love and respect for the literary enterprise. In the third stage, I will reveal that the full implication of Velychkovs'kyi's offering to Iasyns'kyi can be appreciated only after we have a synoptic view of the century-old tradition he attempted to reshape in 1691.

## I

The extended title of the collection announces that Velychkovs'kyi's poems are constructed in honour of the Virgin Mary and offered as a dutiful token to the metropolitan<sup>2</sup>. The title clearly links the concept of «milk owed» with both «poetic labours» and «symbols of service». Then a four-line acrostic, which communicates the year in which the collection was presented, has Mary herself claiming that she raised her first-born babe on a diet of

<sup>1</sup> See Ivan Velychkovs'kyi, *Tvory*, V. P. Kolosova and V. I. Krekoten', eds. (Kyiv, 1972). This volume contains most of Velychkovs'kyi's known works, with the exception of several prose texts on religious and pedagogical topics. Here all quotations from *Mleko ot ovey pastyru nalezhnoie* are taken from this edition.

<sup>2</sup> The most detailed discussion of Velychkovs'kyi's Baroque poetics is by D. Chyzhevskiyi, *Ukraïns'kyi literaturnyi barok: Narysy*, nos. 1–3, in *Praci Ukraïns'koho istorychno-filolohichnoho tovarystva v Prazi*, 3–5 (1941–44). See also the 1955 article by Serhii Maslov, «Malovidomyi ukraïns'kyi pys'mennyk kintsia XVII-pochatku XVIII st. Ivan Velychkovs'kyii (Do istorii styliu barokko v davnii ukraïnskii literaturi)», which serves as the introduction to Velychkovs'kyi, *Tvory* (pp. 5–15).

milk. Subsequently, three heraldic distichs reinforce the milk leitmotif by arguing that, in Iasyns'kyi's [Sas] coat-of-arms, the stars and the «horns» of the moon point to the Milky Way.

Velychkovs'kyi's manuscript did not survive these three centuries intact. Missing from *Mleko ot ovcy pastyru nalezhnoie* is a fragment containing the first part of the dedicatory. The extant text begins in the middle of a sentence in which Velychkovs'kyi informs the metropolitan that lately, no less than before, he has been engaged in the translation of religious writings. As he turns to the main subject of the dedicatory, the author first distances himself from the poetry being presented by calling it the effort of his early youth. Nonetheless, he submits the collection to Iasyns'kyi's judgement («rozsudku») and expresses the hope that it «not remain in the shadow of forgetfulness». Velychkovs'kyi implores the metropolitan not to reject the offering, if only because of the divine persons praised therein – that is, the Mother and the Son of God. Velychkovs'kyi states that, through the dignity of God's Mother, we again become pure and innocent infants and are allowed to suckle uncontaminated milk from the Virgin's breasts<sup>1</sup>. Alluding to Paul's 1 Cor. 9: 7, he concludes the dedicatory by reminding Iasyns'kyi that, as a shepherd, he deserves to consume the milk drawn from his flock. As he signs the dedicatory, Velychkovs'kyi addresses the metropolitan as his merciful lord, shepherd, and benefactor.

At this point Velychkovs'kyi introduces four epigraphs. The first, drawn from Psalm 118 (119): 70 – one of the most frequently recited psalms in the Orthodox office – states: «Their heart has hardened like milk into cheese»<sup>2</sup>. The second epigraph is an anonymous syllabic distich: «Far away, my heart stands, far away, from those/Whose heart has hardened like milk into cheese»<sup>3</sup>.

The third epigraph is also from a biblical source – 1 Peter II: 1, 2: «Lay aside all malice and deceit, and pretence, and envy, and all slander, and like newborn babes crave the MILK

<sup>1</sup> Velychkovs'kyi, *Tvory*, p. 69: «МЛЕКО ОТ ОВЦЫ ПАСТИРУ НАЛЕЖНОЕ, або труди поетицкіє во честь преблагословенной дѣвы Маріи составленные, або знаменіє служебничой поволности ясне в Богу преосвященному его милости господину отцу Варлааму Ясинскому, православному архієпископу, митополитѣ Кієвскому, Галицкому и всея Россіи, офѣрованіи».

<sup>2</sup> Velychkovs'kyi, *Tvory*, p. 70: «А то ли абы и тая прошлых лѣт моих праца в тѣни забвѣнія не зоставала, умыслилем оную до превысокого святѣіни вѣшея подати розсудку, тоєи будучи надѣи, иж от лѣски преосвященства вѣшего не будет отрыновѣнна, принѣмнѣи з тѣих мѣр, же во честь и славу славної владычици нашеи богородици и присно дѣвы Маріи составленная, которой слава ест и самаго царя славы слава. Славиться бо вѣм сын в [матерѣ] и мати в сынѣ.

Якнайнижеи тѣды недостойную главѣ мою под стопы ног преосвященства вѣшего святителских схилѣвши, покорне прошѣ, изволь, милостивый добродѣію, тую млѣчную младенческую працу мою ласкаве пріняти, не ради подлости моєи, але ради превысокой гѣдности матере ветхаго деньми, нас дѣля младенчествовати изволившаго и от сосец девѣческих сѣати МЛЕКО не возгнувшѣвагося» [Cursive mine – NP].

<sup>3</sup> Velychkovs'kyi, *Tvory*, p. 70: «[Усырї] ся, яко млѣко сердце их». Compare this with the King James version: «Their heart is as fat as grease». The Challoner-Rheims Catholic edition reads: «Their heart has become gross and fat».

of the word, rather than that of dishonesty, so that by it you may grow to salvation»<sup>1</sup>. The fourth and final epigraph is drawn from the *akathiston* in honour of the Theotokos (*ikos* 6): «Rejoice, o promised land/Rejoice, whence milk and honey flow»<sup>2</sup>.

The poet now turns to the reader. Avoiding the humility *topoi* he employed in the dedication to Iasyns'kyi, Velychkovs'kyi first remarks that many nations, especially those renowned for the arts, possess not only oratory but also wondrous and masterful poetry fashioned by high minds in their «natural tongue». Couching his arguments in pedagogical terms, he states that various nations «take delight» in such endeavours and use them to «sharpen the wit» of their descendants<sup>3</sup>. Because such works do not appear in print in his own *patria*, Velychkovs'kyi, driven by his love for it, sets out to express in Ruthenian, some of these delightful poetic forms<sup>4</sup>. He emphasizes that his collection does not consist of translations, and makes it clear that his express goal was to discover uniquely Ruthenian constructs through the imitation of compositional stratagems employed in other languages<sup>5</sup>. With these, he hopes to embellish

<sup>1</sup> Velychkovs'kyi, *Tvory*, p. 70: «Котóрых усырýсь сердце, яко млéко,/ Далéко сердце моé от тых ест, далéко». On the basis of the distich's formal features, especially the clever caesura, and the enjambment of the conceptual and rhythmic group *mleko-daleko*, I suspect that the distich belongs to Velychkovs'kyi himself.

<sup>2</sup> Velychkovs'kyi, *Tvory*, p. 70: «Отложше всýкую злобу́ и всýкую лесть, и лицемýрiе, и зáвисть, и всý клеветы́, аки новорождéннии млóденцы, словéснос, не лéстнос МЛÉКО возлюбýте, да о нём возрастетé, во спасенiе. » Compare this with the King James version: «Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings. As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby». And the revised Challoner-Rheims Catholic edition: «Lay aside therefore all malice, and all deceit and pretense, and envy, and all slander. Crave, as newborn babes, pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow to salvation».

<sup>3</sup> Velychkovs'kyi, *Tvory*, p. 70: «Рáдуйся, зéмле обфтовáнная,/ Рáдуйся, из не́я же течéт мéд и МЛÉ[КО]».

<sup>4</sup> To appreciate the pedagogical mindset of these arguments it is important to bear in mind that numerous West European treatises of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries recommended verse-making, especially of various short forms, as a technique for introducing levity to classroom activities. They considered it a pleasant method for attuning the pupil to the differences between the grammatical and rhetorical order. For example, in his treatise *Ludus Literarius* of 1612, the Englishman John Brinsley underscored that verse-making served as a «great sharpener of the wit, and a stirrer up of Invention».

<sup>5</sup> Velychkovs'kyi, *Tvory*, pp. 70–71: «ПРЕДМÓВА ДО ЧИТÉЛНИКА. Уважáючи я, иж мно́гии náродове, звлáща в нау́ках обфитуючи́с, мно́го ма́ють не тýлько ораторских, але и поетицких, чýдне а мистéрне, природным их язýком, от высóких рáзумов составленных трудолóбий, котóрыми и сáми ся тýшат, и потóмков своих до́вцýпы острят, я, яко истинный сын Малоросси́йскои отчизны нашеи, болбýючи на то сердцем, иж в Мáлой нашой Рóссii до сiх чás таковых н́ь от кóго тýпом выданных не оглядáю трýдов, з горлiвости моéи ку милой отчiзн́ь, призвáвши бога и божiю мáтку и [святых], умбiслилем, иле зможность подлого [довцý]пу моéго позволя́ла, н́ьзкотóрые значн́йшы́е штýки поетицкiе рýским язýком вы́разити [...]» [Cursive mine – NP].

the *patria* and please those among her sons who love wisdom and are eager to read<sup>1</sup>. In the latter part of the preface, Velychkovs'kyi warns his readers that none of the poems was easy to compose and that, to understand and fall in love with every hidden device, they need to study each verse carefully<sup>2</sup>.

## II

After a first reading of the material I have just summarized, it is not difficult to conclude that Velychkovs'kyi was courting an audience innocent at heart, but not necessarily young in age. This becomes especially evident when we review the verse that precedes his epigraph (i.e. Psalm 118[119]: 69): «The iniquity of the arrogant swells against me; I observe your precepts with all my heart». The poet's self-assured stance in the epigraphs and preface to the reader stands in sharp contrast to the humble tone of his dedicatory letter. The full intent behind this tension can be understood only when we realize that Velychkovs'kyi is both alluding to and simultaneously rejecting a pedagogical commonplace of this period, namely, that poetry is merely a learning tool and a childish pursuit.

Let me elaborate this point. Contrary to what has been posited by numerous scholars, the grammar-poetics-rhetoric sequence at the Kyiv-Mohyla *Collegium* was never dedicated to the study of literature per se<sup>3</sup>. As in most humanistic schools – the Kyiv-Mohyla *Collegium* being one of them – the primary function of this sequence was to teach pupils to read, write, and think in Latin, the language of universal culture and, specifically, the language of their future studies. Latin, it must be stressed, was not a mother tongue for anyone. Knowledge of it was not a skill that could be passed on, so to speak, with mother's milk.

Literature – within the trivium – served mostly «as a concrete manifestation, and vast territory for illustration of grammatical rules»<sup>4</sup>. No humanistic school, be it Protestant,

<sup>1</sup> Velychkovs'kyi, *Tvory*, p. 71: «[...] не з якого языка на рускій оныє переводячи, але власною працею моєю ново на подобенство інородных составляючи, а нѣкоторыє и цѣле русскіє спѣсобы вынайдуючи, котѣрыє и инымъ языкомъ анѣ ся могутъ выразити. [...]» [Cursive mine – NP].

<sup>2</sup> Velychkovs'kyi, *Tvory*, p. 71: «[...] ложилемъ трудъ не ку якому, не дай боже, тщеславію, але щегульне ку славъ Бога славы и славнои владычици нашеи богородици и присно дѣвы Маріи а на оздобу отчизни нашеи и утѣху малороссійскимъ синомъ ей, звлаща до читаня охочымъ и любомудрымъ».

<sup>3</sup> Velychkovs'kyi, *Tvory*, p. 71: «Упевняю теж ласкавого [читат]еля, иж если сій вѣршы моѣ скоро [про]йдетъ, не уважаячи, що ся в кождомъ за штучка замыкаєт, мало, або жадного не отнесєт пожитку. Леч если над кождымъ вѣршикомъ такъ ся много забавит, аж поки зрозумѣет, що ся в немъ за штучка замыкаєт, велце ся в нихъ закохаєт. Гды ж тутъ жадныхъ простыхъ (котѣрыхъ и простакы складати могутъ) не машъ вѣршов, тылько штучки поетицкіє, котѣрыє любо сѣуть корѣткіє, маленкіє, але великую компонуючимъ ихъ задаютъ трудность и долгого, поки ся злѣжат, потребууютъ часу».

<sup>4</sup> See, for example: Hryhorii M. Syvokin', *Davni ukraïns'ki poetyky* (Kharkiv, 1960), p. 5; Vitalii P. Masliuk, *Latynomovni poetyky i rytoryky XVII-pershoï polovyny XVIII st. ta ikh roi u rozvytku teorii literatury na Ukrainiï* (Kyiv, 1983), p. 5; and Dmytro S. Nalyvaiko,

Catholic, or, for that matter, Orthodox, held the study of literature in high esteem. As the cultural historian R. R. Bolgar has argued: «Literature came second and was often despised. It could hardly have been otherwise; for a great number of the pupils at these schools were destined for the Roman Catholic priesthood or for the Protestant ministry. They were bound to be absorbed in their vocation and to regard as distracting studies that had not a specifically religious content»<sup>1</sup>.

In the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, literary study beyond the trivium level, if pursued at all, occurred only on the individual's own initiative or in special circumstances. In the quadrivium, the teaching of logic, natural philosophy, metaphysics and, ultimately, theology was not subject to methods that relied upon the presentation of literary excerpts as models for imitation. After all, the humanist struggle for the primacy of philological studies had not resulted in the creation of an upper-level literary program capable of competing with the prestige of courses designed for future theologians, lawyers, doctors, and civil servants. As a matter of fact, in the quadrivium of all humanistic schools, scholastic methods reigned supreme<sup>2</sup>.

For this reason, the trivial sequence of grammar, poetics, and rhetoric functioned – at best – as a foundation for further training. Devoted as it was to the development of basic communication skills, it could not consider literary texts as something other than auxiliary vehicles in the process of language acquisition<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, with the stabilization of the new learning within carefully supervised establishments, a boy graduating from the final class in rhetoric was, more often than not, still in his early teens. Thus, most humanistic pedagogical treatises dealing with the literary profile of the trivium (and the attendant expurgated texts used at this level) allude to the classical alimentary metaphor «a milk diet for beginners», employed by Quintilian in the *Institutio oratoria* (11,4,5) and by Paul in his epistles to the Corinthians (1:32) and Hebrews (5:12)<sup>4</sup>.

The metaphor was frequently marshalled by pedagogues to defend sound curricular principles (e. g., simple material before complex; verbal arts before moral philosophy; carnal nourishment before spiritual instruction). But it was also invoked by moralists who felt uncomfortable with the

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«Kyïvski poetyky XVII-pochatku XVIII st. u konteksti ievropeiskoho literaurnoho protsesu», in *Literatuma spadshchyna Kyïvskoi Rusi i ukraïns'ka literatura XVI-XVIII st.*, O. V. Myshanych, ed. (Kyiv, 1981), pp. 166 and 188–95.

<sup>1</sup> See Foster Watson, *The English Grammar Schools to 1600: Their Curriculum and Practice* (London, 1968), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> See Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries: From the Carolingian Age to the End of the Renaissance* (New York, 1964), p. 367.

<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this problem, see my «The Humanistic School and Ukrainian Literature of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century» (Ph.D. diss. Harvard University, 1989), especially the chapter «From Humanism to the Humanistic School» (pp. 61–122).

<sup>4</sup> Even today, pedagogical thought recommends that analysis and synthesis of literary works of the highest order, and a sophistication in cultural awareness, be pursued only at a fairly advanced level of linguistic competence. See, for example, Nelson Brooks, «Teaching Culture in the Foreign- Language Classroom», *Foreign Language Annals*, vol. 1 (1968), p. 211.

texts employed in the trivium. By a rhetorical twist they pressed into service the Pauline parallels between (a) milk and carnal man, and (b) solid food and spiritual man, thus emphasizing that literary exercises constituted merely an initiation ritual in the educational process.

The new child psychology that led to the entrenchment of humanistic methods in the trivium recommended close control of all adolescent activity. This factor strongly influenced the pedagogical uses of literature. It led many educators to regard literature as the ideal tool for assisting the weak mind to overcome its weaknesses. For example, in *Syntagma tragoediae Latinae* (Antwerp, 1593), the Jesuit author Martin Antonio Del Rio argued that literature toughens young minds. At the same time, however, he censured literary activity as unworthy of mature men, emphasizing that poetry, drama, history, oratory, and literature in general should be studied only by the young, not by adults, whose sole concern with these things should be to edit texts for schoolboys<sup>1</sup>.

Ukrainian preceptors in L'viv, Luts'k, and Kyiv did not write pedagogical treatises. Consequently, the attitudes they instilled in their charges have to be gleaned from contemporary school documents, polemical tracts, and the statements made by various authors. In my research I have encountered numerous traces of the contradictory attitude toward literature so typical among humanistic pedagogues. For example, the ninth article of the 1586 *Poriadok shkolnyi* (School Schedule) of the L'viv Confraternity School justified its new methods by quoting St. Paul: «[While I am a youngster I reason and think like a youngster; when I reach the age of a mature man I need no milk]»<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, the anonymous *Prosfonema. A Greeting...*, recited by pupils of this school in honour of Archbishop Mykhailo Rohoza on 17 January 1591, exhorted Ukrainian children to «crave the milk of word study», in terms drawn directly from I Peter (2:1–2).

The new learning that was being adopted by Orthodox subjects of the Crown led to many discussions. Thus, in the 1603 polemical tract *Questions and Answers [Exchanged] between an Orthodox and a Papist*, the exponent of Catholic schooling defends the literary framework of the trivium while simultaneously designating it as «milk», «the soft arts, simple and intermingled with fables»<sup>3</sup>. Significantly, his Orthodox opponent accepts the argument but emphasizes that, in the pupil's education, biblical texts should quickly replace the literary diet. It is evident that for him the initiation ritual should be as brief as possible.

Consider also the claim made in 1720 by the chronicler Samiilo Velychko in his *Discourse on the Cossack War against the Poles*: «Panegyric and poetic extravagances are appropriate only for young children acquiring knowledge»<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of alimentary metaphors, see Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, William R. Trask, trans. (New York, 1953), pp. 134–36.

<sup>2</sup> See the discussion by Walter J. Ong, S.J., *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology: Studies in the Interaction of Expression and Culture (Ithaca, N.Y., 1971)*, pp. 129–34.

<sup>3</sup> Cited according to E. N. Medynskii, *Bratskie shkoly Ukrainy i Belorussii v XVI- XVII vv. i ikh rol' v vossoedinenii Ukrainy s Rossiei* (Moscow, 1954), p. 129. The 1624 schedule of the Luts'k Confraternity School makes the same argument; cf. pp. 142–43.

<sup>4</sup> See «Voprosy i otvity pravoslavnomu z papezhnykom» in *Pamiatniki polemicheskoi literatury v Zapadnoi Rusi*, bk. 1, *Russkaia istoricheskaiia biblioteka*, vol. 6 (St. Petersburg, 1876), cols. 105–106.

Finally, highly indicative of this mindset's enduring legacy is the testimony of none other than Hryhorii Skovoroda, a prominent Ukrainian writer of the eighteenth century. In his 1781 work *The Two [Principles], a Colloquy on the Topic «It is Easy to be Blessed»*, the character Danyil reiterates a recurrent motif in Skovoroda's treatises by exhorting the uninitiated Farra to dismiss faulty explications of Holy Writ: «[...] Discard the shadow; hasten to the truth. Leave behind physical tales for toothless infants. [Leave behind] all that is woman-like, a fable, empty, which does not lead you to harbour»<sup>1</sup>.

Statements such as these, while few and far between, are significant because they point to a single source: the Kyiv-Mohyla *Collegium* of which both men were alumni. Velychko, a coeval of Velychkovs'kyi's sons and a member of the Cossack elite (*starshyna*), represents the stratum of the Ukrainian intelligentsia that rebelled against the writings of Kyiv's academic ecclesiastics. The above-quoted passage is drawn from the preface to his monumental chronicle, the most significant vernacular work of its kind written in the early eighteenth century. Skovoroda, on the other hand, was the son of an indigent Cossack and held sessional positions as a teacher of syntax, poetics, and ethics. His pedagogical activity gave initial stimulus to *The Garden of Divine Songs*, the most remarkable collection of poetry written in the eighteenth century. After failing to secure a permanent position, Skovoroda became an itinerant philosopher and, characteristically, gave up writing poetry, turning instead to the composition of prose tracts and colloquies in Slavonic.

The specific contexts in which Velychko's and Skovoroda's comments appear must be acknowledged. The chronicler's attack on the poetry of praise (and poetry in general) buttresses his critique of versified historical narrative, more specifically the *Wojna Domowa* of the Polish author Samuel Twardowski. Skovoroda's entire oeuvre, on the other hand, seeks to contrast the mendacity of poetic verisimilitude with the spiritual and ineffable meaning hidden beneath Holy Writ's figurative discourse<sup>2</sup>.

The goals pursued by these authors are very different, but the terms of their arguments are drawn from one source – the moralist's detraction of poetry.

At the core of the differences separating early modern Ukrainian literature from its West European counterparts (which, incidentally, were also informed by the humanistic *paideia*) is the fact that the poetics taught in Ukrainian educational establishments were never challenged by a courtly theory of art.

The theory of style, as codified in the neo-Latin manuals of the Kyiv-Mohyla *Collegium*, remained in essence a subset of humanist poetics. What this meant, in practical terms, is that the symbiosis between humanistic and courtly theories of art that ultimately stimulated the creativity of English, Spanish, French and even Polish authors never developed in Ukraine. In the absence of such a symbiosis, not a single author – either before or after Velychkovs'kyi – sought to assist the Ukrainian reader with a compendium devoted to the poetic potential of the vernacular tongue.

<sup>1</sup> Samiilo Velychko, «Skazanie o voini kozatskoi z Poliakami», in *Pamiatky ukrains'koho pys'mentstva*, vol. 1 (Kyiv; 1926), p. 4: «[...] НЕПОТРЕБСТВА ПАНАГИРИЧНІЄ И ПОЕТИЦКІЄ, УЧАЩІЄСЯ ТІЛКО ОТРОКОМЪ К ВИДѢННЮ НАЛЕЖА[Т]».

<sup>2</sup> See «Besida, narechennaia Dvoe, o tom, chto Blazhennym byt lehko», in Hryhorii Skovoroda, *Povne zibrannia tvoriv*, vol. 1 (Kyiv, 1973), p. 270.



The Kyiv-Mohyla *Collegium* did not have as its goal the training of businessmen or courtiers wishing to develop the language skills needed in the service of a native or foreign monarch. Its poetics-rhetoric sequence served, first of all, as the framework for the study of two foreign tongues – Latin, the classical language of Roman antiquity, and Slavonic, the sacral medium of all East Slavs. In true humanistic fashion, this trivial sequence assigned immense civilizing power to skilled expression and, consequently, always assumed the pedagogical ethos implied in Cicero's notion of ethical persuasion. The courtly idea that poetry's primary aim is to delight and provide entertainment was alien to Ukrainian preceptors. While they accepted that poetry succeeds as a pedagogical tool because it imparts pleasure, they remained steadfastly committed to its moral function. They never accepted the possibility that delighting could take precedence over teaching and persuading. This can be easily ascertained from the fact that Ukrainian preceptors rarely speak of receptive criteria when classifying figures of speech. Their approach, as a rule, stresses semantic and formal, in other words, grammatical criteria.

Inasmuch as their manuals address young boys – an audience uninitiated to the full spectrum of humanist training – Ukrainian preceptors focus on the microscopic issues of style: etymology, length of syllables, morphology, and elementary syntax. The macroscopic issues of style remain outside the scope of their textbooks. By the same token, their manuals never aspire to develop literary theory per se. This could not have been otherwise, for the very humanist tracts from which Ukrainian preceptors culled their basic information had never entertained such a goal in the first place. Given the linguistic goals of the Kyiv-Mohyla *Collegium*, it is understandable that the illustrative material of the poetics-rhetoric sequence should have focused on classical models and neglected, for most part, topical material<sup>1</sup>.

Had the *Collegium's* alumni pursued additional training in something akin to Queen Elizabeth's court, or one of the commercial schools in Lisbon and Genoa, they would have acquired fluency in other vernacular languages beside Polish and Ruthenian, the ancillary tools of Latin and Slavonic learning, respectively<sup>2</sup>. This, in turn, would have given them access to the truly innovative theories of art, which – in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – were being published not in Latin, but in modern vernaculars. Long before they were incorporated into the curriculum of the humanistic educational establishment, vernacular tongues were the tools of the cultures promoted by courts and commercial aristocracies<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See my «The Primary Door: At the Threshold of Skovoroda's Theology and Poetics», in *Adelphotes*, a special issue of *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 14 (1990), pp. 551–583.

<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see the fifth chapter of my dissertation, «Kyiv Poetics and Renaissance Theories of Art», pp. 241–301.

<sup>3</sup> It is important to bear in mind that, inasmuch as the study of Slavonic served more limited goals than the study of Latin, classroom use of its ancillary tool, the *prostaiia mova*, was less frequent than that of Polish. Thus, for example, Mytrofan Dovhalevs'ky's 1735 syntax course focused on Polish, Latin and Slavonic: *Sistema Syntaxeos ad expeditiorem utentium Commoditatem Polono, latino et Sclavonio idiomate [...]*. And, as the descending order of this title suggests, the manual's Slavonic material was the least abundant. For a description of the manual, see J.S. Hrons'ky's «Leksii z syntaksysu Mytrofana Dovhalevs'koho», *Radianske literaturosnavstvo*, 7 (1982), pp. 64–68.

Of greater importance for the present discussion is the fact that, unlike humanist scholars, Ukrainian preceptors never explicitly aligned their courses with the goal of reinstating the magisterium of Roman culture. Moreover, there is no evidence that they sought to expand the cultural preeminence of their own «classical» language, Slavonic, beyond the religious sphere. And, unlike English and West European court poets, Ukrainian authors of poetics never sought to generate the ascendancy of poetry in their «natural tongue». Consider the following, for example: in his 1705 defence of poetry, Teofan Prokopovych, among the standard commonplaces, declares that poetry preserves for posterity the heroic virtues of distinguished individuals. He also underscores poetry's usefulness – its capacity to depict models worthy of imitation. He does not, however, identify heroes and posterity with any specific cultural group. He does so only in the rhetoric course, when describing the benefits that eloquence would bring to his own war-torn but unnamed country.

Thus, in sharp contrast to both humanist and court authors of poetics, Ukrainian preceptors do not conceive of poetry as a discrete manifestation of a cultural continuum that can be claimed as their own. Moreover, they do not define it as a phenomenon that can be developed and perpetuated. Rather, they view poetry as a tool serving intramural concerns that oscillate between communication skills, moral upbringing, and mental development.

The harnessing of Polish material by Ukrainian preceptors is not an insignificant phenomenon. I propose, however, that assessing it strictly in terms of the influence of Polish culture, as some scholars have done, is ahistorical. This language had, from the very beginning, played an ancillary role in the Kyiv-Mohyla *Collegium*. Given the political realities at the time of its establishment, such an approach was both a necessity and a hard-won privilege of the Crown's Ukrainian subjects. The phenomenon needs to be appreciated, first of all, within the context of changes taking place throughout Europe, including Crown Poland, in the 1650s. At that time, the upper-track educational establishment (i.e., the humanistic school) began the gradual incorporation of vernacular material into the Latin trivium<sup>1</sup>. This was a logical result of the ascendancy of the vernaculars, a process that had been unleashed by institutions competing with the humanistic school. It was on the heels of this development that Kyiv preceptors began introducing examples of Polish poetry.

The Kyiv-Mohyla *Collegium* was the construct of a society that had integrated vertically in its defence of the Rus' religion. It was the sole institution in Ukraine meeting the educational needs of Orthodox Christians, be they noblemen, Cossacks, craftsmen, merchants or clergymen. In the absence of a court and merchant schools promoting the Ukrainian *lingua volgare* (and other modern languages), alternative cultural models were not nurtured. Consequently, when the reading of selected vernacular texts became an accepted practice in the trivium, Ukrainian preceptors turned to an accessible source, the most readily available part of the Polish repertoire<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See Charles Sears Baldwin, *Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice: Classicism in the Rhetoric and Poetic of Italy, France, and England, 1400–1600 (Gloucester, Mass., 1959), pp. 4–16.*

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of developments in England, see Watson, *The English Grammar Schools to 1600*, pp. 480–482. For a discussion of poetics manuals in Poland and the gradual incorporation of Polish vernacular material, see Elżbieta Sarnowska-Temierusz, *Druga na Parnas: Problemy*

Numerous as they are in Ukrainian school manuals, Polish illustrative fragments do not represent the full spectrum of contemporary Polish feters. Instead, they are selections drawn from published sources and represent either translations or periphrases, or analogues of classical models.

### III

Such, in essence, was the Ukrainian redaction of the humanistic *paideia*. Seen from this perspective, Velychkovs'kyi's collection *Mleko ot ovcy pastyru nalezhnoie* acquires dimensions that thus far have remained unnoticed.

Firstly, it is highly significant that, even though he does not acknowledge any poetic activity in his mature age, Velychkovs'kyi opts for Peter's version of the alimentary metaphor (1,2:1–2) rather than Paul's (I Cor 3:2 and 13:11; Hebrews 5:12). Thus, instead of aligning poetry with the carnal nourishment necessary at the initial and transitory trivium, he identifies it with a spiritual diet. In fact, none of the alimentary allusions in *Mleko* suggests that poetry is fit only for the young or spiritually uninitiated. On the contrary, the verse from Psalm 118 (119) employs a milk solid – literally, milk hardened [curdled] into cheese – as a metaphor for spiritual corruption. Velychkovs'kyi's second epigraph, perhaps his own syllabic distich, emphatically distances the poet's heart from those who, through pride and mendacity, have lost their child-like innocence.

I propose, therefore, that Velychkovs'kyi's deliberate intention was to vindicate poetry's innocent pleasures and to dissociate the literary enterprise from its reputation as a childish, immature pursuit. By turning to the very games that in the humanistic trivium commanded a considerable segment of the poetics course, and that fourteen years later Prokopovych would dismiss as *pueriles consonantiae*, Velychkovs'kyi sought to initiate the reader into the vernacular literary game (*ludus literarius*).

Secondly, the *ikos* from the *akathiston* service identifies flowing milk with natural bounty. And, most importantly, the first acrostic of *Mleko* – beside signalling that the collection consists of *carmina curiosa* – subtly aligns the author's love for his *patria* with the primal filiation between Mary and her Son. In this context, Velychkovs'kyi's reference to Ruthenian as the «natural tongue», rather than the more frequently used expression of the time, *prostaia mova*, appears to have been weighed carefully.

Velychkovs'kyi's desires that his *patria* be embellished with wondrous and masterful poetry composed by high intellects in the natural tongue reveals a mindset that is closer to that of George Puttenham than that of countless humanistic preceptors. To appreciate this, consider the following fragment from *The Arte of English Poesie*, in which the Elizabethan court poet argues that «Poesie» in the «vulgar» tongue can become an «Art» if its rules and precepts are formulated by studious persons:

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*staropolskiej wiedzy o poezji* (Wrocław, 1974), pp. 55–73. Eugenija Ulčinaite's monograph dedicated to the study of rhetoric in early modern Poland and Lithuania demonstrates that Polish illustrative material began to be introduced in school manuals in 1649; see her *Teoria retoryczna w Polsce i na Litwie w XVII wieku: Próba rekonstrukcji schematu retorycznego* (Wrocław, 1984), pp. 177–99.

Then as there was no art in the world till by experience found out: so if Poesie be now an Art, and of all antiquitie hath beene among the Greeks and Latines, and yet were none, vntill by studious persons fashioned and reduced to a method of rules and precepts, then no doubt may there be the like with us. And if th'art of Poesie be but a skill appertaining to utterance, why may not the same be with us as wel as with them, our language being no less copious pithi and significance then theirs, our conceipts the same, and our wits no lesse apt to deuise and imitate than theirs were? If again Art be but a certain order of rules prescribed by reason, and gathered by experience, why should not Poesie be a vulgar Art with us as well as with the Greeks and Latins, our language admitting no fewer rtils and nice diuersities then theirs?[...] Poesie therefore may be an Art in our vulgar, and that verie methodicall and commendable<sup>1</sup>.

Velychkovs'kyi consciously assumes the role of both inventor and preceptor. For, besides implying that the invention of constructs, which could not be expressed in any other tongue, would bring «delight» and «sharpen the wits» of descendants, Velychkovs'kyi directly recommends that his audience engage in collective exercises of reading and analysis. His consciously assumed role as teacher is best appreciated when we note that the organizational principle of *Mleko ot ovcy pastyru nalezhnoie* openly imitates the style of formulary compositions drawn by instructors to illustrate rhetorical or poetical principles, and presented as models for students to imitate<sup>2</sup>.

Velychkovs'kyi's dedicatory to Iasyns'kyi deserves to be read together with the preface to the reader. Its defensive arguments, on the one hand, and the poet's express hope that the collection be not forgotten, on the other, suggest that – over and above paying tribute to his former mentor—the author wished to obtain support for the publication of *Mleko ot ovcy pastyru nalezhnoie*. How else would our inventor have succeeded in promoting his «uniquely Ruthenian» constructs and sharpening the wit of future generations?

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Despite its inventiveness, religious subject matter, and pedagogical goal. *Mleko ot ovcy pastyru nalezhnoie* never reached its intended audience. Thus the question arises: why did Iasyns'kyi, the very preceptor who had taught Velychkovs'kyi baroque techniques and who by this time was a very powerful man, not assist him with this enterprise?

We may never know the full answer to this question. The matter should not be treated reductively, however. As this paper has attempted to show, Velychkovs'kyi's failure to secure support toward the publication of *Mleko* intimates a complex of problems that goes beyond one individual author and his potential benefactor.

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the kinds of writings available in print during the period in question, see Władysław Korotaj, «Dynamika rozwoju piśmiennictwa polskiego od połowy XVI do końca XVII wieku», in *Wiek XVII-Kontrreformacja-Barok: Prace z historii kultury*, Janusz Pelc, ed. (Wrocław, 1970), pp. 274–290.

<sup>2</sup> George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker, eds. (Cambridge, 1936), p. 5.

Scholars unanimously agree that Velychkovs'kyi represents an intellectual *novum* in the seventeenth-century landscape of the Ukrainian Baroque. It is ironic, however, that as this term becomes more and more ingrained in criticism dealing with early modern Ukrainian literature, there seems to be an unwillingness to explore the educational philosophy that at once nurtured Velychkovs'kyi and prevented him from developing his full potential as a poet. My present discussion grew out of the vital urge to demonstrate that no literary phenomenon can be explained away with a single term.

## ПОЕЗІЯ ЯК МОЛОКО: ПЕДАГОГІЧНИЙ КОНТЕКСТ ОДНІЄЇ МЕТАФОРИ XVII СТОЛІТТЯ

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Назва рукописної збірки «поетичних штучок» Іоана Величковського – «МЛЕК[О], ОТ ОВЦЫ ПÁСТЫР[У] НАЛÉЖНОЄ» (1691) натякає на аліментарну метафору «молочна дієта для початківців», якою часто користувалися в гуманістичних школах, щоб виправдовувати присутність літературних вправ на рівні нео-латинського тривіюма і, водночас, засуджувати літературні заняття як недостойні для дорослих чоловіків, крім викладачів тривіюма. У цій статті пропоную, що Величковський уважно добирає цитації з Псалмів та Грецького завіту, щоб відсунути педагогічне упередження своєї доби та промотувати поетичні ігри як ідеальний інструмент для викладання природньої української мови, для тренування дотепу та задоволення своїх співвітчизників. На жаль, митрополит Ясинський, колишній його вчитель поетики, якому він присвятив збірку, не вважав за потрібним фінансово підтримати її публікацію. Через рішення недавно висвяченого митрополита Київського, Галицького і всієї Русі, офіційне викладання української поезії, як і насолода від україномовної творчості відклалися на довше, ніж ціле століття.

*Ключові слова:* аліментарна метафора, пост-Ренасансна педагогічна теорія, тривіюм, квадривіюм, Марко Фабій Квінтіліан, двірська поетика, формулярна риторика, Джордж Патенгем, Іоан Величковський, Самійло Величко, Григорій Сковорода.