

“Polish Influences” in Vasyl Shchurat’s Study *Shevchenko and the Poles: The Basis of Mutual Relations* (the Contextual Aspect)

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Abstract: The article examines the concept of “Polish influences” in Vasyl Shchurat’s *Shevchenko and the Poles: the Basis of Mutual Relations* (1917). Generally, the author of the monograph discusses possible influences in two aspects: biographical (personal contacts and acquaintances) and contextual (borrowed ideas and influence on views). The article examines the contextual concept of what Shchurat calls “influences” in two respects. Firstly, in terms of the reliability of the facts presented, comparing them with modern research; and, secondly, the significance that the author of the research gave to the presented information in the first place. Not all of Shchurat’s conclusions were correct, partly due to the lack of documents and information known at the time. What is more, the article proves that the word “influence” in Shchurat’s understanding does not mean “borrowing”, but rather “inspiration” or “being familiar with”. Although the discussed monograph of Shchurat was rejected by Soviet literary studies for being too pro-Polish, analysing it from the point of view of the current state of Shevchenko studies seems important as it remains part of Ukrainian historical literary studies and belongs to those works that constitute the beginnings of comparative literary studies in Ukraine.

Keywords: Vasyl Shchurat, influences, Polish progressive circles in the 19th century, Taras Shevchenko

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„Wpływy polskie” w studiach szewczenkoznawczych Wasyla Szczurata *Szewczenko i Polacy. Podstawa wzajemnych relacji* (aspekt kontekstowy)

Streszczenie: W artykule podjęto problematykę koncepcji „wpływów polskich” na twórczość Tarasa Szewczenki w dziele Wasyla Szczurata *Szewczenko i Polacy. Podstawa wzajemnych relacji* (1917). Autor monografii mówi o możliwych wpływach w dwóch aspektach: biograficznym (kontakty osobiste i znajomości) i kontekstowym (zapożyczone idee i wpływ na poglądy). W artykule pojęcie „wpływów” rozpatrywane jest dwójako: z punktu widzenia wiarygodności przedstawionych faktów (w zestawieniu ze współczesnymi badaniami) i z punktu widzenia znaczenia, jakie nadał pojęciu autor monografii. Nie wszystkie wnioski Szczurata były słuszne, po części ze względu na nieznajomość niektórych dokumentów i informacji. Co więcej, artykuł dowodzi, że słowo „wpływ” w rozumieniu Szczurata nie oznacza zapożyczenia, ale raczej inspirację lub znajomość. Mimo że omawiana monografia Szurata została odrzucona przez radzieckie literaturoznawstwo jako zbyt propolska, analiza jej z punktu widzenia obecnego stanu badań nad Szewczenką wydaje się istotna, ponieważ pozostaje ona częścią ukraińskiego literaturoznawstwa historycznego i należy do tych dzieł, które stanowią początek komparatystycznych badań literackich na Ukrainie.

Słowa kluczowe: Wasyl Szczurat, wpływy, polskie środowiska postępowe w XIX wieku, Taras Szewczenko

Vasyl Shchurat and Taras Shevchenko

Vasyl Shchurat¹, a Galician researcher, poet and translator, left behind a great scholarly legacy which to a large extent remains poorly studied. Most of his works are devoted to literary studies, translation studies, history and ethnography. In academic circles, Shchurat is best known as an Ivan Franko scholar and a follower of the writer and poet. However, Shchurat was also deeply interested in the life and work of the prominent Ukrainian writer Taras Shevchenko. In this context, it is worth noting his many works devoted to Shevchenko: *Zamitky do poemu Tarasa Shevchenka „Chernets”* [Notes to the Poem by T. Shevchenko “The Monk”] (1894), *Shevchenko v svitli krytyky Skabychevskoho* [Shevchenko in the Light of Skabychevsky’s Criticism] (1895), *Pamiaty Tarasa Shevchenka* [In Memory of Taras Shevchenko] (1896), *Sviate pysmo v Shevchenkovii poezii* [Holy Scripture

¹ More about Vasyl Shchurat’s works in the field of the Polish-Ukrainian relations see: Sanżarewska-Chmiel 2021.

in *Shevchenko's Poetry*] (1904), *Do istorii kultu Shevchenka v Halychyni* [*On the History of the Cult of Shevchenko in Galicia*] (1906), *Shevchenkiv „Ivan Pidkova”* [*Shevchenko's „Ivan Pidkova”*] (1909), *Shevchenkove poslaniie Hoholiu* [*Shevchenko's Message to Gogol*] (1909), *Shevchenko – Zheliovskiy – Chechot* [*Shevchenko – Żeligowski – Czechtot*] (1910), *Varshavskiy uchytel Shevchenka* [*Shevchenko's Warsaw Teacher*] (1911), *Shevchenkiv „Bukvar”* [*Shevchenko's „Primer”*] (1911), *Shevchenkiv naholos* [*Shevchenko's Emphasis*] (1911), *Persha otsinka Shevchenka v Halychyni* [*Shevchenko's First Assessment in Galicia*] (1912), *Pershi polski holosy pro Shevchenka (1842 – 1844 rr.)* [*The First Polish Voices about Shevchenko*] (1912), *Z kruha znaiomykh Shevchenka* [*From the Circle of Shevchenko's Acquaintances*] (1913), *Shevchenko v maliarskim anekdoti* [*Shevchenko in a Painting Anecdote*] (1913), *Halychyna i Shevchenko* [*Galicia and Shevchenko*] (1914), *Kobzar T. Shevchenka* [*T. Shevchenko's Kobzar*] (1914), *Kulturna ideia v poezii Shevchenka* [*Cultural Idea in the Poetry of Shevchenko*] (1914), *Shevchenko i Haidamaky* [*Shevchenko and the Haydamaks*] (1914), *Shevchenkova poema nadii* [*Shevchenko's Poem of Hope*] (1925), *Nash Shevchenko* [*Our Shevchenko*] (1926), *U Shevchenka v Kyievi 1846 r.* [*At Shevchenko's in Kyiv, 1846*] (1927)]; whereas his largest work is *Osnovy Shevchenkovykh zviyazkiv z poliakamy* [*Fundamentals of Shevchenko's Relations with the Poles*] (1917), which was published the same year in a separate print under the title *Shevchenko i poliak. Osnovy vzaimnykh zviyazkiv* [*Shevchenko and the Poles: The Basis of Mutual Relations*] (1917). However, Shchurat as a Shevchenko researcher was rejected by the Soviet scholars as being too pro-Western. It is worth noticing that the 2015 *Shevchenko Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 6 (2015) devotes two pages to him.

In many of his investigations on the works of Shevchenko, Ivan Franko and other Ukrainians, the author is careful to employ the word “influence” in order to convey his understanding of the term; in particular, his largest work *Shevchenko and the Poles* is devoted to the study of the influences of the Polish intelligentsia and culture on Shevchenko. In his work, the author speaks about possible influences from two particular perspectives: biographical and contextual. In terms of Shevchenko's biography, Shchurat is interested in the writer's contacts with the representatives of the Polish people and the consequences those contacts brought about during his lifetime (Sanzarewska-Chmiel 2022: 39–51). It has to be noted then, that in the field of the biographical aspect, the data provided by Schurat is only partially confirmed by modern Shevchenko scholars, in particular, Hryhoriy Klochek (1998), Leonid Pliushch (2001), Ivan Dziuba and Mykola Zhulynskiy (2001: 9–66), Yevhen Nakhlik (2003), Oksana Zabuzhko (1997), and Yurii Andrukhovych (2007: 141–158). This is mainly due to the fact that not all data determined in modern Shevchenko studies were known or available to Shchurat since a lot of facts and information had not been established yet, sometimes leading the researcher to base his conclusions on logic and assumptions. However, it is important to restate here that when the author discusses “influences” from a biographical perspective, he unequivocally means direct contacts and their possible consequences.

The contextual aspect within the work and vision of the great Ukrainian poet and writer will be analysed below. The centre of interest for us are the contextual “influences” of the revolutionary-democratic Polish thought on Shevchenko's ideas and poetic creativity, as presented by Shchurat. The research will be conducted through a comparative methodology combined with thematic criticism. To better comprehend Shchurat's concept of “influence” in this regards, more thorough analyses are required.

Shevchenko's First Acquaintance with Polish Progressive Circles

Vasyl Shchurat considers the Vilnius-Warsaw period in Taras Shevchenko's life to be the initial stage of his acquaintance with Polish national liberation and revolutionary-democratic ideas. He considers that the foundations of Shevchenko's later contacts with the representatives of the Polish intelligentsia in St. Petersburg and in exile were laid during the Vilnius period. The researcher locates the reason for Shevchenko's connection with the Poles in his compassion and sympathy for the ideas and aspirations of the Democrats (Shchurat 1917: 247), which is quite understandable because the poet constantly addressed in his work the struggle for justice and the right of his people to independence. Hryhoriy Verves, a researcher of Ukrainian-Polish literary and cultural relations, rightly wrote on this subject: "In Vilnius he [Shevchenko] had first thoughts about why there were serfs and slaves; later, in St. Petersburg, he started rebellious conversations" (Verves 1964: 13)².

The St. Petersburg period marks a key stage of Shevchenko's formation as an artist and poet, the development of his worldview, aesthetic views, artistic thinking, socio-political and life position. It is considered that the most important and defining events in his life were: studies with Vasily Shiryayev in 1832 and later with Karl Bryullov at the Academy of Arts, as well as his redemption from serfdom in 1838. It was during his studies that Shevchenko first learned about Polish progressive circles, emigration literature, and in particular, the works of Adam Mickiewicz and Joachim Lelewel. The St. Petersburg period is also considered the beginning of his acquaintance with the best examples of world literature. It was there, that he studied Ukrainian literature; he became interested in the history not only of Ukraine but also of the neighbouring Slavic countries.

Analysing the works of Taras Shevchenko, Vasyl Shchurat firstly points out the poetic, ideological and personal ties of the Ukrainian poet with the Poles, but he also tries to build the chronology of the formation of Taras Shevchenko under the influence of Polish democratic thought. The main criterion of this chronology is his search for possible acquaintances of Taras Shevchenko in relation to the publications *Pólnoc*, *Polska Chrystusowa* and other manifestos of the Democratic Society, as well as his relations with the representatives of the Polish elite.

Vasyl Shchurat considers the student Leonard Dębski, who taught the Ukrainian poet French, to be the first person to acquaint Shevchenko with Polish revolutionary-democratic propaganda and, most of all, with the works of Joachim Lelewel (Shchurat 1917: 326–327). This opinion is shared by Jerzy Jędrzejewicz, who directly states that Dębski:

[...] initiated Shevchenko into all major issues of Polish emigration. He told him about the Democratic Society, the Union of Polish Emigration, about the Young Poland and the Polish People's Groups. He spoke of Worcell, Świętosławski and Krępowiecki. [...] Owing to Dębski, Shevchenko began to frequent with Polish literature (Jędrzejewicz 1966: 161, 163).

² Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own (N.S.-Ch).

Jerzy Jędrzejewicz is also convinced that Dębski familiarised Shevchenko with Szymon Konarski's magazine *Północ* and with the ideas of Panslavism (Shafarik, Genk and Kollar)³ (Jędrzejewicz 1966: 171). However, most Shevchenko scholars do not agree with them. Hryhorii Verves openly declares that there is no factual confirmation of such a close acquaintance between Taras Shevchenko and progressive revolutionary emigration literature (Verves 1964: 7). Also, Vladimir D'yakonov does not believe that Shevchenko could have been familiar with the ideas of the right-wing National Democrats (D'yakonov 1964: 25). Furthermore, Volodymyr Hnatyuk supposes that Shchurat developed his theory about the influence of Polish emigration upon Shevchenko on the basis of an episode from *Khudozhnyk* [*The Artist*], in which Shevchenko gives scanty information about Dębski. According to Volodymyr Hnatiuk, this

[...] does not allow to make broad generalizations; on the contrary, it [Shevchenko's text – N. S-Ch.] deters us from this. As Dębski devoted all his leisure time to the preparation of his dissertation on history, he obviously withdrew from Polish affairs because of that. In the library of the deceased Shevchenko there were 50 volumes, mostly of historical and legal content in Greek, Latin, German and French, and among them there were only 2 Polish books: by Lelewel and Mickiewicz (Hnatiuk 1930: 153).

Thus, one may conclude Shchurat's assumption that Dębski acquainted Shevchenko with the Polish democratic literature remains only an assumption.

Books of the Polish Nation and Polish Pilgrimage

In his monograph Shchurat expresses the opinion that the formation of the statutory ideas and programs of the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood was influenced by the revolutionary-democratic ideas of Adam Mickiewicz, manifested in the work *Books of the Polish Nation and Polish Pilgrimage*. It should be noted that a Polish researcher, Maria Janion, believes that the historiosophical essence and basis of Mickiewicz's *Books* lie in understanding the development of mankind as a continuous process of declines and rises:

On the one hand, falls are the result of the criminal actions of despots – “emperors” and “kings”. On the other hand, the ascensions of mankind, brought about by God, are revolutions. “Antimonarchical revolutions”, as Stanisław Pigoń rightly called them. After all, republicanism remains at the service of the “metaphysics of revolution”. It is the foundation of Mickiewicz's system, understood as “a mystical fact, a direct work of Providence [...], a regenerative factor of humanity, a supernatural event, an evidence of God's grace, a manifestation of Providence in history” (Pigoń's definitions) ... (Janion [&] Żmigrodzka 2001: 172–173).

³ Jerzy Jędrzejewicz mentions that it was during Shevchenko's work on his poem “The Haidamaks” in Petersburg, 1839 or 1840, because the abovementioned poem was published at the beginning of 1841.

Shchurat assumes that the Brothers adopted Mickiewicz's ideas from various sources, namely: Mykola Kostomarov formed his socio-political views in Rivne under the influence of the revolutionary ideas of Mickiewicz and Lelewel; Semen Gulak, while studying at the University of Dorpat, had to hear about the imprisoned students and the Konarszczyzna Movement; Mykola Savych was certainly familiar with the leading French ideas studying in Paris, where the most powerful centre of Polish emigration was located, and supposedly, he was fascinated by the French communism of Charles Fourier (Shchurat 1917: 303). However, the researcher does not mention that similar positions and views were characteristic for the Decembrists who could also influence the formation of the statutory goals of the Brotherhood. The scholar Alexander Bagriy supports this position and recognizes the ideological influences of Polish emigration on the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood; he also compares them with the beliefs of the Gordon circle of the Konarszczyzna Movement (Bahriy 1930: 20).

Vasyl Shchurat also refers to the history of writing the *Knyha Buttia Ukrainskoho Narodu* [*Book of the Genesis of the Ukrainian People*], which is reminiscent of the *Books of the Polish Nation and Polish Pilgrimage* by Mickiewicz. Some researchers attributed the authorship of the *Book of the Genesis* as a national-political document to Kostomarov. However, Shchurat points out that Kostomarov did not confirm his authorship, stating that he himself received the first part of the *Book of the Genesis*. Jerzy Jędrzejewicz, in his research on this case, mentions that the members of the Brotherhood worked at the edition of the *Book of the Genesis* together with Shevchenko, who provided the editors with his version that was considered too radical, containing harsh statements and uncompromising proposals on the role, functions and position of Ukraine among all Slavic peoples (Jędrzejewicz 1966: 363–368). Mykola Zerov, on the contrary, believed that the influence of the *Books of the Polish Nation* by Mickiewicz on the *Book of the Genesis* was only formal:

We will not dwell on the minor differences between Ukrainian and Polish works; we will only note that they both contain evangelical democracy, i.e. the tendency to derive the social ideal from Christian religious texts, and the idealization of the notion of antiquity. [...] Finally, both works are characterized by some kind of national messianism (Zerov 1990: 141).

Rostyslav Chopyk, in his turn, calls the manifesto *The Law of God* (the *Book of the Genesis of the Ukrainian People*) the first declaration of the Ukrainians, “conscious of their own geopolitical mission: As one knows, this is the mission of the people chosen by God to teach other peoples to live in a brotherly way, in a Cossack way, in a divine way” (Chopyk 2010: 36). On the other hand, George Grabovych⁴ analyses the Ukrainian-Polish dialogue based on the study of the *Book of the Genesis of the Ukrainian People* as a reworking of Mickiewicz's *Books of the Polish Nation*. Among other things, he points out the indirect intellectual influence of this manifesto on Taras Shevchenko. Under this “influence”, the researcher understands “the spiritual and emotional climate, which manifested the search for his [Shevchenko's] own poetic word”. By this he means the world, “... which was formed

⁴ Hryhoriy Hrabovych [Григорій Грабович] in Ukrainian publications and George Grabovych in English ones.

under the influence of a common mythological code defined by archetypes, universal symbols and absolutized emotions, and not the projects of reforms, constitutional order or confederation” (Hrabovych 1991: 150; emphasis mine – N.S.-Ch.). At the same time, Grabovych points out that Shevchenko’s poetry “does not focus on political, socialist or nationalist programs, but on folk ethics and culture, on the painful uniqueness of all Ukrainians, on the ‘sacred meaning’ of the past” (Klochek 1998: 161).

Vasyl Shchurat is concerned with attempts to work out when Shevchenko first read the *Book of the Genesis* or its previous edition, *Podnistryanka*, whose author, according to Hryhoriy Klochek, was Yakov de Balmen (Klochek 1998: 161). In support of his assumption about the influence of this work on the poems *Ivan Hus*, *Kavkaz* [*The Caucasus*] and *Poslaniie* (“I mertvym, i zhyvym, i nenarozhdennym...”) [*The Epistle*], written before his acquaintance with Kostomarov and before joining the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood, Shchurat suggests that Shevchenko could have first received it from de Balmen, with whom he had been well acquainted since 1843, when the latter illustrated Shevchenko’s *Kobzar*. In support of his hypothesis, the researcher cites the reasoning of the Poles after the arrest of the poet in 1847 that Shevchenko defended the hetmanate Ukraine and “if he had to become a hetman, then, probably, Poland would have been resurrected” (Shchurat 1917: 305–306). This results from Shchurat being persuaded that those debates were held during the discussion of the *Book of the Genesis*.

The question of the authorship of the *Book of the Genesis of the Ukrainian People* has not been clarified to this day: most scholars are inclined to believe that its author was Mykola Kostomarov. Among others, Konstantin Arabazhin believes that Shevchenko contributed to its writing; also, Mikhail Markovsky calls Kostomarov the author of the *Book of the Genesis* but adds that it was written under the influence of Shevchenko; Shevchenko scholars Yevhen Kyryliuk and Yevhen Shabliovsky claim that the *Book of the Genesis* was a common product of all the members of the Brotherhood, but note that the greatest role in its writing belongs to Kostomarov and Shevchenko (Serhiienko 1983: 84–85). Thus, Shchurat’s assumption that the book was written by the members of the Polish secret movement in Ukraine as a form of popularization of their revolutionary-democratic views is not supported by any other Shevchenko scholar.

Analysing the appearance of the *Book* in the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood, Vasyl Shchurat is inclined to think that this is a kind of a d a p t a t i o n of the Polish national program to the Ukrainian realities. This interpretation seems a bit superficial because even if it were written on the model of *Books* by Mickiewicz, the *Book of the Genesis* was the first manifesto of the new Ukrainian national consciousness. As Grabovych notes, it served as a model, an example not so much for its ideas (although for them, too), but for “its form, norms and conventions” (Hrabovych 2003: 144, 156). We can see that for Shchurat, “influence” in the case of alike ideas is, to some extent, synonymic to the word “adaptation” or at least is a part of it.

Taras Shevchenko and the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood

It is known that the appearance of Shevchenko in the Brotherhood was received very positively; in particular, Panteleimon Kulish said that Shevchenko was a celestial luminary and an inspiration, a messenger from heaven. For the poet himself, his membership in the Brotherhood resulted from his inner need to be among like-minded people. According to Shchurat, the members of the Brotherhood noted that Shevchenko on joining the Brotherhood was already “a true revolutionary and, moreover, a revolutionary [...] who wanted to remain a Ukrainian and never a Russian” (Shchurat 1917: 304).

The divergence of the views between Shevchenko and Kostomarov concerned the fundamental issues of the Brotherhood’s activities, the most striking of which was the inclusion of the Poles into the society. Kostomarov was the founder of the populist trend in Ukrainian historiography; he was at the origins of the phenomenal combination of national ideas and the scheme modelling of the Ukrainian historical process. As the main representative and ideological creator of the Brotherhood, he proclaimed the freedom of the Slavic peoples; advocated for the abolition of serfdom, titles and privileges of the nobility and defended the freedom of religion, thought and speech. He was convinced that all the Slavs should join Russia to create a federation with 18 states; Kyiv would serve as the central entity in which the supreme power, the Sejm, would sit (Serhiienko 1983: 73–74).

When during one of the Brotherhood meetings Shevchenko proposed the candidacy of his friend, Julian Belina-Kędrzycki, Kostomarov did not support this proposal. Instead, he began to deliver an ideological speech to which the poet reportedly replied: “You want to build a new world using Slavic hands, but you are afraid to talk about it” (Belina-Kendzhycky 1982: 155). It was from that conversation that the second fundamental point in the disagreement of the two thinkers on the role of religion in building an all-Slavic federation followed. Kostomarov believed that the future federation should be united by “one Orthodox king and one Orthodox faith.” Shevchenko replied: “You, Mykola, want to direct all the Slavs to the priest’s house. [...] With that federation it will be a difficult case” (Belina-Kendzhycky 1982: 156–157). Despite the fundamental ideological differences, Kostomarov mentioned Shevchenko in his memoirs with warmth: “Regarding him as a person, I can say that I know him as an impeccably honest man who deeply loves his people and their language, but without fanatical hostility to everything alien” (Kostomarov 1982: 147). Furthermore, Kostomarov highly valued the talent of the Kobzar:

Shevchenko as a poet means the people who continued his poetic work. Shevchenko’s song was a folk song in itself, but a new one, a song that could be sung by the whole nation, the one which had to flow from the people’s soul [...] From this point of view, Shevchenko was the people’s choice in the literal sense of the word; it seems as if the people chose him to sing instead of them. [...] Shevchenko speaks the way that the people have not spoken yet, but as they are ready to speak and have only waited for a creator to appear among them who would master their language and their tone. Following such a creator, all the people will say unanimously: “This [song] is mine”, and will keep singing it for a very long time (Kostomarov 1982: 134–135).

In fact, Kostomarov states directly that Shevchenko was chosen to fulfil his calling: to bring his people to the realization of their national identity, primarily, through the establishment of the Ukrainian language.

Vasyl Shchurat, analysing the influence of Kostomarov on Shevchenko, claims that the latter had his own views on socio-political issues and a concept of Slavophilism before meeting the former. Furthermore, the researcher sees the source of Shevchenko's views in the poet's general experience obtained during his stay in St. Petersburg. Oleksandr Konyskyi believes that Shevchenko drew the ideas of "All-Slavic brotherly love" from the works of Slavophiles Bronisław Zaleski and Michał Grabowski; at the same time, he had his own understanding of Slavophilism "as brotherly love, as a union of the Slavs organized on the ground of full and real equality and autonomy for every nation" (Konyskyi 1991: 202).

It is believed that Shevchenko was critical of the ideas of Christian utopianism, Slavophilism, Ukrainian patriotism, and constitutional reformism. For example, Panteleimon Kulish wrote of "Kostomarov's going wild in Kyiv under the influence of the genius savage Shevchenko" (Serhiienko 1983: 82). Kulish did not quite like Shevchenko for his cynicism and tolerated his temper for the sake of his talent. Shevchenko, in turn, did not like Kulish's aristocracy. The reasons for the differences in the positions of Kulish and Shevchenko were aptly described and characterized by Kulish himself:

It can be said that it was a meeting of a Kurin Sich rifleman with a city Cossack-Karmazinnik. [...] Shevchenko represented the right-bank Cossacks, who were left without foremen after the Andrusiv Treaty, [...] fled to Sich, and from Sich returned to the lord's estates as Haydamaks... Kulish comes from the Cossacks who rejoiced with the tsarist boyars, built the *Malorosiiska kolehiia* [Little Russian Collegium] for Tsar Peter, and helped Tsarina Catherine to write *Nakaz* [The Order] and to start vocational schools in Ukraine instead of old bursas (Kulish 1982: 119).

The difference in their social status was the cause of differences in their views on the subject of peasants, landlords and serfdom. Kulish believed that the problem of serfdom could be solved by raising the level of education of lords and landowners who would start then advocating the abolition of slavery.

Grabovych highly appreciates Kulish, calling him one of the central figures:

[...] both in the general context of modern Ukrainian literature, where he is one of its founders, and in the broad context of Polish-Ukrainian relations, where he (before the appearance of Franko) stood out for his creative contacts with Polish writers, interesting and noble initiatives (though not always successful) aimed at understanding and cooperation (Hrabovych 2003: 174).

The researcher singled out the rationality of Kulish in understanding the past and seeing the common fraternal Ukrainian-Polish future in Christ. Kulish also gave an important role to the Poles, as a stronger side, in creating this future. On this topic, Vasyl Shchurat rightly noted that both the Poles and the Ukrainians considered this initiative of Kulish as utopian (Hrabovych 2003: 178).

It can be observed that Shchurat's reference to the notion of "influence" in the case of Kulish and Shevchenko's acquaintance is used as an allusion to the notion of "the exchange of ideas and views"; it also implies "persuasion" and "impression". Analysing the influence

of the Brothers on Taras Shevchenko, Shchurat expresses the opinion that the formation of the poet's revolutionary position was significantly influenced by Mykola Hulak. He explains their closeness by the similarity of their views on certain socio-political and philosophical issues. The researcher also emphasizes that it was Hulak who initiated conversations on the topic of David Strauss and neoclassicism alongside philosophical and religious disputes in the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood. He notes that since Hulak studied in Dorpat, knew German scientific literature, was interested in philosophy and lived at the heart of the Konarszczyzna Movement, he could share all his experience and knowledge with Shevchenko. Hulak's views on achieving the independence of the Ukrainian people by means of a peasant revolution were similar to Shevchenko's, but one cannot ignore the fact that it was primarily Shevchenko's stay in St. Petersburg that became the decisive stage in the formation of his main socio-political position and his attitude to social, state and universal values. As a result, the similarity of the views of both thinkers brought them even closer. In this context, Shchurat writes:

Hulak's influence on Shevchenko would have been much more probable and significant if it had been proved that they both knew each other earlier, before his coming to Kyiv. [...] Hulak's influence on Shevchenko could undoubtedly be greater than Kostomarov's. Yet, it is difficult to attribute to him Shevchenko's first acquaintance with new ideas in general, just as it would have been difficult to attribute Shevchenko's first acquaintance with Slavophilism to Kostomarov's influence (Shchurat 1917: 315; emphases mine – N.S.-Ch.)⁵.

Continuing his thought, the researcher emphasizes: "Shevchenko became acquainted with both Slavophilism and revolutionary ideas before the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood, before his close encounter with its prominent members, back in St. Petersburg" (Shchurat 1917: 315). Hence, another shade of meaning can be observed: acquaintances with new ideas. It also assumes similarity of views and sharing common values.

Vasyl Shchurat presents his own understanding of the activities of the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood in the context of the ideology of the Polish liberation movement basing on the work of Vasyl Semevsky and memoirs of Kostomarov and Kulish. The researcher believed that the main way to achieve independence and abolish serfdom was the implementation of Christian (evangelical) commandments and the spread of education among the serfs. Defending the idea of the influence of revolutionary-democratic Polish propaganda on the beliefs and activities of the brothers, Shchurat notes foremost, as mentioned above, the affinity of the *Book of the Genesis of the Ukrainian People* with the work of Adam Mickiewicz *Books of the Polish Nation and Polish Pilgrimage*. However, in his research he only focuses on the Christian ideology of the Brotherhood, bypassing the issue of the revolutionary uprising which was supported by Shevchenko and Hulak in the Brotherhood.

However, it must be noted that the influence of the main ideologues of the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood on Taras Shevchenko was insignificant: in modern Shevchenko studies it is rather spoken about Shevchenko's influences on the Brotherhood, which

⁵ Mykola Zerov holds the same opinion (Zerov 1990: 145).

is explained primarily by Shevchenko's individual position concerning the Slavic and Ukrainian issues. The influence of Shevchenko's poetry and language on the youth of Kyiv and on Kulish and Kostomarov is described in detail by Oleksandr Konytskyi (1991: 194).

The Views of Ludwik Królikowski and *Polska Chrystusowa*

Simultaneously, in his work *Shevchenko and the Poles*, Vasyl Shchurat analyses the views of Ludwik Królikowski, which he laid out in the journal *Polska Chrystusowa*. He clearly states that the latter had a great influence on Shevchenko's views during his exile. However, not every aspect discussed by Shchurat can be attributed to Królikowski's influence. For instance, the scholar does not mention the fact that at the time Shevchenko was in contact with another representative of the Poles, Stanisław Królikiewicz, who participated with him in the Aral expedition in 1848–1849 (Vasiunets 2019/2025: 129), which can easily be explained by the lack of known data on this issue at Schurat's time. Later, Volodymyr Dyakov, writing about their meeting after studying the documents on the relocations of Shevchenko and Królikiewicz during the exile, claims that it was Królikiewicz who told Shevchenko about the uprising in Galicia. This, indeed, influenced the writing of the *Sich* fable, where Shevchenko described that historic event and expressed his attitude to the 1846 peasant uprising in Galicia under the leadership of Jakub Szela. The merit of Vasyl Shchurat is that, analysing this fable, he was the first who found in it an allegory of the Galician uprising (and in this case "influence" is synonymous to "being under impression"):

One can only admire the accuracy of the comparison: the conspirators who secretly enter the village and a raid of night owls on the peasant's field; people and small birds; the ruler and the eagle; the counter-revolution and the setting of the peasants' snares; the epilogue of the "Masuria massacre", i.e. the extradition of defeated revolutionaries to the Austrian authorities and the giving out of tamed owls to crows as toys (Shchurat 1917: 335).

An important element in the context of Taras Shevchenko's relations with the Poles is the poem *U Vilni, horodi preslawnim* [*In Vilnius, the Glorious City*], which Shchurat does not mention. D'yakonov points out Sylwester Kilkiewicz, who studied at the Medical and Surgical Academy in Vilnius and maintained friendly relations with the chairman of the Democratic Society of Students, Franciszek Sawicz. According to the researcher, Kilkiewicz was the person who must have told Shevchenko about Polish secret organizations in Vilnius, their activities, programs and structure, as well as about Konarski, Sawicz and others. He also suggests that those conversations may have reminded the poet of Vilnius, and were later reflected in his poem (D'yakonov 1964: 52–55).

Researcher Hryhorii Verves traces certain changes in the formation of Taras Shevchenko's position and attitude towards Ukrainian-Polish relations and the Slavic issue in general. They transformed from passive contemplation to active response to the events:

indignation, call to action, glorification of the past (*Ivan Pidkova, Tarasova nich* [Taras's Night], *The Haydamaks*) (Verves 1964: 31–33).

Another researcher, Yevhen Nakhlik, analysing the work of Taras Shevchenko, similarly to Verves, also gives his own vision of the evolution of the Ukrainian poet:

Shevchenko began his poetic path with folk ballads [...], stylized as epic “Duma” folk songs and similar historical poems, [...] ethnographic-psychological, social-everyday lyric-eposes [...], from civic [...] and political poetry. Almost until his arrest, there were practically no examples of personal-psychological, confessional lyrics among his works (with a few exceptions: *Dumy moi, dumy moi* [My Thoughts, My Thoughts], *Choho meni tiazhko, choho meni nudno* [Why Is It So Heavy, Why Am I Bored], *Zavorozhy meni, volkhve* [Enchant Me, the Wise Man], *Try lita* [Three Years]). Unexpectedly, in prison cells and in exile, he became the creator of existential and lyrical pearls, the expression of the deepest intimate feelings, experiences and emotionally charged, deeply psychologized philosophical reflections. Internal alienation and solitude from the spiritual environment of his surrounding contributed to the emergence of reflective lyrics [...]. These exile lyric poems, actually, became a new peak of his poetic genius, an invaluable asset of his works (Nakhlik 2003: 492).

In relation to all that has been said, it is worth noting that Taras Shevchenko highly valued Polish culture. He maintained ties with the literary and artistic circle of Romuald Podbereski in St. Petersburg, in particular, with its members Jan Barszczewski, Tadeusz Łada-Zabłocki, Zenon Fisch, while in exile with Bronisław Zaleski, Edward Żeligowski and others. Volodymyr Hnatyuk mentions an interesting fact about Shevchenko's relationship with Stefan Przewłocki who, when leaving Uralsk, left him Karol Libelt's book *Estetyka czyli Umnictwo Piękne* [Aesthetics, or the Fine Arts] (Hnatiuk 1930: 154). After returning from exile, Taras Shevchenko continued to maintain friendly relations with his Polish friends.

Conclusions

To sum up, the question of the influence of the ideas of Polish revolutionary-democratic propaganda on Taras Shevchenko is rather ambiguous: some researchers openly deny any borrowings, emphasizing the independence of Shevchenko's motives from outside influences (Ivan Dziuba, Mykola Zhulynskyi); others are inclined to accept the opinion expressed by Ivan Franko: “I sought and had to seek the influence of foreign poets, in the first place, in the development of political, national and social ideas of Shevchenko because it is certain that such ideas do not fall from the sky to any genius and that Shevchenko could not have received them from the mouths of the Ukrainian people” (Franko 1976: 310; emphases mine – N.S.-Ch.).

When it comes to Vasyl Shchurat, one may assume that by the “influences” Shchurat means not only a particular impact, but also impressions, inspirations and contacts. What is more, he uses the word when referring to simple coincidences when Shevchenko's way of thinking resembled other European ideas, usually because of shared social problems.

As for the very study of the evolution of Shevchenko's artistic and political views, it attracted the attention of many scholars including Mykola Zerov (1990) and Mykhailo Drahomanov (1970: 7–133). It is acknowledged that the first thorough scientific study of the works of the Ukrainian genius, in particular the interpretation and genesis of his poetic texts, was carried out by a prominent Shevchenko scholar Yurii Ivakin (1986).

Intense discussions surrounding the figure of Taras Shevchenko in Ukrainian literary criticism in recent decades are mainly theoretical in nature. The problems of Shevchenko's myth (G. Grabovych, O. Zabuzhko, and V. Shevchuk) or the question of Kobzar's place in the "populist-modernist" paradigm had no direct relation to Shevchenko's texts, the history of writing certain texts or biographical information about Shevchenko's meetings with famous cultural figures, writers and philosophers. Halina Korbicz rightly notes on the subject: "On the basis of intertextuality and polemics, a kind of force field was created around Shevchenko's name, as well as a systematic differentiated approach to poetic discourse which gives the right to talk about the 'internal history' of Shevchenko's reception in Ukraine" (Korbicz 2014: 381). Vasyl Shchurat's *Shevchenko and the Poles* is of direct importance for the history of Shevchenko's reception in Ukrainian culture mentioned here. It is focused exclusively on historical and textological problems and does not directly address theoretical issues. In this context, one should conclude that Shchurat's Shevchenko works are quite far from today's theoretical debates, but at the same time they are necessary for a scientific understanding of the figure of Taras Shevchenko and his role in the life and culture of the Ukrainians.

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