

СЕКЦІЯ IV. ТЕОРЕТИЧНІ ТА ПРИКЛАДНІ ПИТАННЯ КИТАЙСЬКОГО МОВОЗНАВСТВА ТА ЛІТЕРАТУРОЗНАВСТВА

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TRANSLATING THE ‘OTHER’: EUROPEAN MEDIATIONS OF DU FU’S POETRY IN OSTAP LUTSKY’S UKRAINIAN MODERNISM

Key words: Du Fu, Tang Dynasty, poetry, Ostap Lutsky, Ukrainian translation.

The poetry of Du Fu (杜甫, 712–770), one of the most prominent poets of the Tang Dynasty, played a crucial role in shaping the canon of classical Chinese literature and had a significant impact on the European reception of the East. Since the 19th century, his poetry has attracted the attention of European sinologists and modernist poets who sought to discover the “Other”, Eastern way of thinking and poetic expression.

In the Ukrainian cultural context, Du Fu’s oeuvre became known only indirectly – through translations into European languages. The first Ukrainian translations of his poetry appeared in the early 20th century, when interest in the East was combined with modernist experiments in new artistic forms. In 1918, the Lviv student journal “Shlyakhy” (“Paths”) [4] published three poems under the common title “Viina” (“War”) in translations by Ostap Lutsky (1883–1941) – a poet, translator, and military officer. This publication is the first known Ukrainian translation of Du Fu’s poetry.

The aim of this study is to trace the interlingual and intercultural pathways through which Du Fu’s poetry reached Ukrainian readers. The research examines how Lutsky’s translations were shaped through French and German intermediary versions and adapted to the Ukrainian cultural context.

Lutsky did not translate directly from Chinese. In the notes to the translation [4, p.70], he refers to two European anthologies: the French collection “Poésies de L’époque des Thang” (1862) [2] by Marquis d’Hervey de Saint-Denys, and the German anthology “Dumpfe Trommel und berauschtes Gong” (1915) [1] by Alfred Henschke (1890–1928), who wrote under the pseudonym Klabund. My research shows that Lutsky based his translation primarily on Klabund’s German texts. However, Klabund himself acknowledged that he relied on French and partly German collections published in the second half of the 19th century. Thus, the Ukrainian translation is a secondary one – that is, it was not made from the original Chinese, but through intermediary European versions.

A comparison of texts reveals that only one of the three poems in Lutsky’s translation – “Viisko Yde” (“The Army is Marching”) – derives from Du Fu’s poem “Song of the Military Carts” (“兵車行”). This poem was first translated into French by d’Hervey de Saint-Denys in 1862. The other two – “Pobidnyk z Chornym Praporom i Psom” (“The Victor with a Black Flag and a Dog”) and “Nich v Nameti” (“Night in a Tent”) – do not belong to Du Fu’s corpus. They are artistic reinterpretations by Judith Gautier (1845–1917), writing under the pseudonym Judith Walter. They were first presented in her poetry collection “Le Livre de Jade” (1867) [3]. Klabund later included these poems in his anthology as supposed translations of Chinese originals. This fact illustrates the multilayered nature of translation reception, where artistic interpretation blends with cultural mystification.

Table 1

Correspondence between French, German, and Ukrainian translations of Du Fu’s poems and their originals

Original	Marquis d’Hervey de Saint-Denys (1862)	Judith Walter (1867)	Klabund (1915)	Ostap Lutsky (1918)
“兵車行”	“Le Départ des Soldats et des Chars de Guerre” [2, pp.88–90]	–	“Ausmarsch” [1, pp.12–13]	«Viisko Yde» [4, p.71]
–	–	“Le chien du vainqueur” [3, p.137]	“Sieger mit Hund und schwarzer Fahne” [1, p.20]	«Pobidnyk z Chornym Praporom i Psom» [4, p.70]
–	–	“Le départ du grand chef” [3, pp.129–130]	“Nachts im Zelt” [1, p.17]	«Nich v Nameti» [4, pp.70–71]

The analysis of Lutsky's translation demonstrates the complexity of interlingual and intercultural transfer. The secondary reception through French and German versions altered not only the vocabulary and stylistics, but also the imagery of Du Fu's poetry, thus creating a unique hybrid text. This process illustrates how translation functions not just as technical transfer, but as a creative act of mediation generating new meanings and aesthetic directions, shaped by both the source and target cultural contexts.

An important feature of Lutsky's translation is its interpretive orientation: the translator not only conveys the meaning, but also adapts it to his own historical reality. In the afterword, he notes: "Perepoviv na boievshchi, v liutim 1918 r. Stakh Lutskyi" ("Retold on the battlefield, in February 1918, Stakh Lutsky") referring to his personal wartime experience as a soldier of the 95th Infantry Regiment under General Eduard von Böhm-Ermolli. Thus, the motifs of war and human suffering in Du Fu's poetry acquire a new, contemporary resonance in Lutsky's version.

This case is emblematic of the early stage of Ukrainian translation studies, when Chinese poetry entered Ukrainian culture through multiple linguistic and cultural filters, but at the same time contributed to the expansion of its poetic horizons. Even while working with mediated texts, Lutsky managed to convey the humanistic spirit of the Chinese poet and integrate it into the Ukrainian context of the 1918 wartime period, amid the backdrop of World War I.

The analysis allows us to consider Lutsky's translations not only as a literary event but also as a phenomenon of intercultural mediation. The Ukrainian version, having traversed French and German poetic traditions, reflects European interpretive models of perceiving Chinese classics in early 20th century. Lutsky's experience demonstrates the early integration of Ukrainian literature into the broader processes of cultural dialogue and the formation of the image of the "Other" in Ukrainian modernism.

Future research perspectives include broadening the corpus of identified translations and investigating their intertextual connections, which would help reconstruct a more comprehensive picture of the reception of Chinese poetry in Ukrainian culture during the first half of the 20th century.

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