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*Horace in the Kyiv  
Mohylian Poetics (17th –  
First Half of the 18th  
Centuries). Poetic Theory,  
Metrics, Lyric Poetry.*

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The book may be considered as a milestone in academic scholarship devoted to Early Modern Ukrainian culture and literature. Indeed, several monographs and articles have been written since the 1950s, but no scholar has succeeded in giving such a comprehensive and new description and interpretation of the crucial points of Mohylian poetics and of their reception in the literary tradition of the Baroque. As Siedina shows in the introduction, while being knowledgeable and having contributed to the elucidation of important aspects of the issue, previous scholarship focused mostly on topics such as 1) the intermediary role of Mohylian poetics between Poland and Russia, 2) the confutation of the scholastic character of the poetics and the search for “originality” or even patriotic hints, and 3) the way how Russia received the classical heritage elaborated by the Polish Renaissance and the Baroque tradition, which had been assimilated in Ukraine. Two recent monographs analyze important new materials and give partially fresh interpretations. However, Myroslav Trofymuk analyzes only a few poetics, focusing mainly on Prokopovych, and takes into consideration the classical tradition almost exclusively. Olha Tsyhanok wields a more flexible and modern methodology, indicating the path for future study in the need to investigate in-depth the relationship between theoretical principles and their application in the practical creation of new poetry.

What is certainly lacking in previous criticism is an investigation of the influence of individual Classical authors on the many poetics, and the way the heritage of such authors was elaborated by the teachers of the Mohylian School (KMA). Siedina begins this new path with an analysis of probably the most important classical poet and theoretician, namely Horace, and his *Ars Poetica*. The indication of Horace's importance for Ukrainian Poetics is not new, but no one has focused on Horace with such depth and with the consideration of such a large number of poetics as Siedina does in her monograph.

The author begins with the statement that “poetics were mainly didactic manuals rather than treatises of literary theory, greater emphasis was placed on their normative rather than on their cognitive-evaluative function” (p. 19), a principle whose validity may be acknowledged on the basis of traditional and recent scholarship.

Before analyzing the principal object of her interest, namely Horace’s reception in Kyivan treatises of poetics, Siedina offers a synthetic and clear presentation of the evolution of poetic and rhetoric theory in European and Polish Renaissance literary thought. Horace’s famous *Ars poetica* was the only treatise which was read and used since Antiquity, through the Middle Ages up to the Baroque period. This makes it the most influential theoretical work in poetry and rhetoric. The didactic purposes and syncretic nature of late Renaissance and Baroque theoretical treatises serve as the points of departure for the examination of no less than twelve Mohylian poetics ranging from *Hymettus extra Atticam...* (1699) by Josyp Turoboiskyi to *Praecepta de arte poetica* (1746) by Hryhorii (Heorhii, Yurii) Konyskyi. Six of these poetics were mostly written in the time of Mazepa’s Hetmancy and give evidence of the splendor of the period. However, the *longue durée* of the precepts is no less interesting, and in the work of Konyskyi reaches the apex of Renaissance and Baroque teaching, representing at the same time the beginning of the new era of Classicism. Most valuable is the concise and clear enunciation of the differences among the various texts: repetition is only apparent, and in actual fact the individual goal of each author the typology of the “public” (students) and the situation of communication made the poetics much more original than one may imagine. The main difference, Siedina maintains, is between a “classicistic,” Ciceronian model, represented by Feofan Prokopovych and followed by Konyskyi, and the tendency to *poesis curiosa* (or *artificiosa*), which stressed the importance of ingenuity and inspiration (*ingenium, conceptum, acumen*). Siedina convincingly shows the importance of the mediatory role of the Polish theoretician and noted poet Kazimierz Sarbiewski, who significantly, was ignored by Prokopovych and his followers.

Already in the first chapter, Siedina introduces a considerable number of examples taken directly from the many manuscripts of Latin-Ukrainian poetics she collected in Ukrainian repositories and from Horace’s *Ars poetica*. They testify to the profound knowledge of Horace by Mohylian theoreticians, and also to their capacity to choose the passages and ideas which best fit their intentions and ends.

Siedina shows how the Mohylian theoreticians deal with some of the main ideas and principles of Horace’s prescriptions for poetic creation. Thus, she investigates how Mohylian professors confronted themselves with the relationship between rhetorics and poetics, how they perceived the intermingling of the Platonic and Aristotelian heritages, how they focused on the different aspects of the relationship between nature and art, how they coped with the subtleties of poetry’s role in pleasing, instructing, moralizing and moving, how the (originally Platonic) ideas of *furor divinus* or *enthusiasmus* characterized some authors and not others, and how the concept of imitation, so important for the most beloved genre of panegyric poetry in Ukraine, was elaborated in different ways. All this leads Siedina to some “preliminary conclusions.”

Horace had the primary role in the general theoretical system of the Mohylanian School, but his principles were chosen and presented according to the needs of the environment and cultural *socium* where he “functioned”: poetry “had a profound civilizing function” for keeping “the memory of the glorious deeds of ancestors ... especially those who contributed to the welfare of the KMA and of the Ukrainian Church”; this implied a constant invitation for pupils to be aware of the moral and doctrinal end of poetry, to stress its “divine inspiration,” to adhere to appropriate style and *decorum* in order to move readers/listeners, giving suitable examples taken from the imitation of nature rather than fictional arguments.

Chapter 2 is devoted to Horace’s heritage in metrics. Against the background of the Medieval and Early Modern European tradition, Siedina analyzes the different forms and contexts where information about metrics was given to pupils. Very useful is the evaluation of the role of Christian parody and the main poet “who was highly congenial to the mindset of Mohylanian teachers,” Sarbiewski. She then gives evidence of the differences between the courses of poetics in describing the kinds of meters, the relationship between meters and genres, and the ways of exemplification. Thus, some authors quote just one verse focusing merely on the number/quality of syllables, others quote more verses or entire strophes, thus giving evidence to the content, which is mostly chosen on the ground of its moral or philosophical significance. How important Horace’s prestige was is indicated by the detail, that one manual quotes Horace instead of Virgil to exemplify heroic hexameter, and it is not by chance that the author quotes Horace’s best known verse “est modus in rebus...” (p. 95). However, many examples from other poetics give evidence of the strong elaboration of originally Horatian poems: a beginning stance of the Latin poet is followed by a strophe of Buchanan’s Psalms, in another case the author elaborates the theme of the (Stoic) good man, making of him an incarnation of the true Christian (pp. 97, 99). The idea of “aurea mediocritas” emerges in many different elaborations and contexts with religious or generally moralizing ends. Sarbiewski substitutes the Virgin Mary for the Muses, thus offering a precious example for Mohylanian poets and teachers, who were totally immersed in Western cultural patterns. It would take long to mention the many elaborations of Horace’s metrical models by Mohylanian theoreticians who knew other Classical (e. g. Virgil, Ovid, etc.) and New Latin European poets (even the Lutheran Melanchton), and some commentators of Horace (e. g. Pseudo-Acro, Porphyrius).

More specifically literary is the focus of the third chapter, in which Siedina discusses the interrelation between meters and genres, and offers an interesting choice of poems written by Mohylanian teachers and their pupils. There is no doubt that this chapter is the most captivating of the book, as it gives a lively insight into the variety of interpretations of poetry and poetic genres in the Ukrainian treatises, and many unpublished examples of the practical application of theoretical rules. The theory of imitation (imitation of virtue, in both human and religious spheres) and the ways to apply it in the various forms of epic poetry (the heroic poem, and genethliac, epithalamic, and encomiastic poems as well) seem to explain the well founded opinion that “epic poetry ranks first in virtually all Mohylanian poetics” and “it is ... the notion of

praise that epic and lyric poetry share with each other” (p. 131). Though integrated with the general trends of Horatian quotations and Western European theoretical manuals, Mohylian poetics consider lyric poetry apt to express all kinds of topics. However, only one treatise (*Officina artis poeticae*) only once mentions love and symposia as possible topics of the lyre: subjects meriting to be chanted remain “laudes, suasiones et doctrinae ad mores spectantes” (p. 133). In the description of some forms of lyric poetry Siedina dwells especially on the ode, on which Horace’s teaching is transmitted mainly by Sarbiewski.

The last part of the book offers a large exemplification of the manifold use of Horace’s legacy in compositions made by Mohylian poets. The first two examples are poems addressed by teachers to pupils to illustrate the usefulness of the subject they will learn, to encourage the youngsters to learn with enthusiasm. Remarkably enough, Siedina notes, beginning invocations are directed only to the Virgin, John the Baptist, or even God, never to contemporary dignitaries, be they religious or secular: this differentiates Kyivan poetics from Western models (one should not forget that the KMA was an ecclesiastic institution and the teachers were monks!). In the first poem, verses of Horace are combined with verses inspired by Ovid and a New-Latin poet (the protestant Moltzer); in others, the author of the treatise substitutes a (by the way, probably spurious) passage taken from Ennius, with a passage devoted to the destruction of Troy from Virgil, a fact certainly better known by the Ukrainian audience. It is not by chance that *Officina* omits from the Neo-Latin model the line about the capacity of poetry to obtain the favour of a girl. Several poems are quoted by Siedina from the manuscripts. They bear evidence first of the importance of Horace’s thought and forms as models for teaching on becoming a poet: the combination of *natura* and *ars* highlights the balance between natural inclination and thorough learning; the ideal of *aurea mediocritas* and the defence of poetry against the Platonic negation of its “authentic” value belong to the ideal patrimony of the KMA; the availability of well known examples of the christianization of Classical gods and heroes makes Horace the ideal theoretician and model for Ukrainian poetry. Siedina chooses examples of poems that give evidence of several methods of imitation and assimilation of the Horatian heritage: in one poem the author invites readers to strictly follow the verses of Horace, in other poems the author approaches the model he imitates in a creative way (e. g. by inserting realia of Russian history, such as Anna Ioannovna and her wars), in other cases choosing different kinds of “parody,” where the word has to be understood as an elaboration of the model which mostly does not aim at making satire. To the contrary, parody often underlines the religious character of the new poem or the difference of significance the images taken from Horace acquire in the Ukrainian Latin elaboration: a most eloquent example is the meditation about winter, where Horace concludes with an invitation to enjoy merry life, while a KMA pupil (who probably wrote this poem) concludes with thoughts about death. What makes this last part of the book particularly interesting is the exactitude and refinement of the analysis of the poems written by Ukrainian teachers in comparison with the original texts of Horace. Siedina also distinguishes the intermingling of quotations and elaborations from other

Classical (mainly Ovid) or neo-Latin poets (Hoppius, Muret and others), focusing on the changes the new compositions undergo in the creations of Ukrainian authors.

To conclude, this is an excellent book, combining the erudition of Classic-inspired European philology, a painstaking search for manuscripts, the time consuming work of reading Latin verses and theoretical interpretations, a deep knowledge of the Classical, European and Ukrainian traditions, and a clear exposition of Anglo-Saxon scholarship. It is rare to have such a multiple interdisciplinary combination. We can only hope that Siedina herself or other scholars may continue this kind of research, which sheds new light on the entire culture of Ukrainian literature of the 17th and 18th centuries. It will be important, in future, to have a deeper diachronic insight concerning the possible evolution from the 17th to the 18th century: the question remains open whether texts of the 1690s–1710s follow similar templates in the 1720s–1740s, or introduce new ideas, images, poetic rules and political orientations.