

uno straordinario peso specifico. Oltre a rivalutare l'esperienza storica della traduzione, la monografia invita dunque a prestare più attenzione a questa letterata di talento, la cui prosa di traduttrice – è questa la tesi più forte del libro – è invecchiata molto meno rispetto a quella di altri (e più famosi) traduttori dell'epoca. “Mi sento di scommettere, – scrive Marcucci – che le versioni della duchessa d'Andria risultino decisamente più vive e meno linguisticamente stagionate all'orecchio di un lettore d'oggi” (p. 155).

RAISSA RASKINA

Galina Babak, Aleksandr Dmitriev, *Atlantida sovětskogo nacmodernizma. Formal'nyj metod v Ukraine (1920-e – načalo 1930-ch)*. Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, Moskva 2021, 784 pp.

Babak and Dmitriev's book is an impressive attempt at providing a comprehensive reconstruction of the history of formalist practices in Ukrainian culture of the first half of the 20th century. However, as the sheer size of the book itself might suggest, its scope goes well beyond a discussion of what Ukrainian formalism was and how it interacted with its Russian model and interlocutor. As a matter of fact, we can read *Atlantida sovětskogo nacmodernizma* as both a book on formalism in Ukraine and a larger contribution to the history of literary theory and literary culture in Ukraine between the late imperial and the Soviet age. The double nature of the book, which in order to discuss a specific topic has to address its subject from a much broader departure point, is one more reminder of the dearth of scholarly literature on Ukrainian literature and culture.

The book is divided into five parts, each of which comprises a number of chapters, an introduction, a conclusion, and some additional materials. The first part, which focuses on the sources of Ukrainian formalism, provides readers with a presentation of the work of the most influential literary scholars of the early twentieth century active in the field of Ukrainian culture and/or on the territory of Ukraine, including Oleksandr/Aleksandr Potebnja, Vladimir/Volodymyr Perec, and Ivan Franko. While many a russianist might be surprised by seeing the name of Perec in this context, Babak and Dmitriev's discussion of his work in the field of Ukrainian literature and his engagement for both Ukrainian studies and the Ukrainian language is an important step towards a fuller recognition of his legacy. The fourth chapter of the first part presents Franko, generally viewed as the number two Ukrainian writer right after Taras Ševčenko, as a key figure in the development of Ukrainian literary studies. Thanks to his familiarity with several western and central European languages and contexts, which made

him “an agent of transfer” (98), Franko managed to significantly modernize the humanities in the Ukrainian cultural space, facilitating their departure from positivism. In the second part, Babak and Dmitriev offer a fascinating discussion of the accelerated growth of Ukrainian literary theory in the months and years following World War One and the revolutions, which show a strikingly diverse literary culture. Thanks to the establishment of several Ukrainian cultural institutions and the strengthening of the Ukrainian language, it took only few years for Ukrainian culture to see the publication of such refined and compelling works as the lyric theory essays of Borys Jakub’s’kyj and Majk Johansen. The third part is the one that most directly engages with the Ukrainian reception of formalism. It provides readers with compelling discussions on literary conversations in Ukrainian cultural journals of the 1920s and discusses the reception of Boris Ejchenbaum’s work in Ukraine and his visit to Charkiv in 1926. At the core of the fourth part is the mature literary and theoretical work of such leading names of Ukrainian culture of the 1920s as Mykola Zerov and Mykola Chvył’ovyj among others. As the authors rightly point out, Ukrainian literary conversations of the mid-1920s were centered around the creation of a national version of (proletarian) literature (359). Regardless of their views on, and their uses of, formalist sources, Ukrainian writers and literary scholars were guided by a strong commitment to fostering national culture in its rapid growth and diversification. In the last part, titled “Post mortem”, Babak and Dmitriev offer an overview of the tragic aftermath of the 1920s, with the demise of the discussions of the early Soviet years, and a glimpse into the development of literary theory in western Ukraine and in the diaspora.

Throughout the book, Babak and Dmitriev insist on the – relatively – autonomous character of formalist conversations in Ukraine, which were directed at strengthening the national cultural space in the first place. By making frequent references to cultural transfer theory and Michel Espagne’s contribution to the field, (cultural transfer happens “when a loan completely changes its signs and its content”, 404), the authors foreground the national *use* of some of the instruments offered by (Russian) formalism by Ukrainian intellectuals to further develop their national culture. At the same time, they rightly point out the eclectic nature of Ukrainian literary studies in the early Soviet era, in which formalist discourses were used and requalified alongside other theoretical approaches and methodologies.

In the conclusion, Babak and Dmitriev stress the complex nature of formalist conversations in Ukraine, torn between the national and the Soviet context. They argue that Ukrainian literary studies engaged with formalist methods without developing a formalist school, which, in the authors’ words, “does not diminish the significance of the ‘national version’ of formalism” (532). They also rightly insist on the ruthless ideological pressure put on

Ukrainian writers and scholars by the Soviet literary establishment, which in the 1930s led to a devastating deterioration of the Ukrainian humanities and their future potential. It was only during *perestrojka/perebudova* times that Ukrainian literary studies were able to thrive again. However, as the authors rightly claim, decades of repressions, physical eliminations, and russification have left profound traces in the Ukrainian academia, with many areas of the humanities still to make up for the many losses of the past.

A very interesting feature of Babak and Dmitriev's argument is their comparative approach to other early Soviet cultures, especially the Belarusian, which they see as typologically close to the Ukrainian. Such insights offer invaluable opportunities for further comparative research in areas that are significantly understudied. The book is completed by an appendix that offers a wide range of materials, including letters, reviews, articles, and memoirs. The concluding bibliography of literary theory in Ukraine between 1914 and 1931 is one more commendable feature of the book.

As an important contribution on Ukrainian culture written in Russian and published in the Russian Federation, Babak and Dmitriev's book, although recent, may already look like a witness of a bygone era. After the full-scale Russian invasion of 24 February 2022, such a book would be unthinkable, both in light of the factual cancellation of Ukrainian culture in the Russian Federation, and the loss of prestige of Russian as a working language for Ukrainian studies. Having read its several hundred pages, one might wish that a more condensed, and possibly English-language, version of the monograph was published, one able to reach a wider international audience and to convey the important information and interpretations it contains in a more accessible manner. To be sure, *Atlantida sovetskogo nacmodernizma* provides its readers with a bounty of facts, interpretations, and stimuli. Its length, its scope, and its occasional digressions from the main argument may nonetheless represent an obstacle for a part of its potential audience. This notwithstanding, the width of Babak and Dmitriev's work also acts as an invitation to undertake further work in several research directions, both in the field of east European literary theory and in that of Ukrainian-Russian cultural relationships, which in spite of the Russian aggression remains an important area of inquiry.

ALESSANDRO ACHILLI

Massimo Vassallo, *Storia dell'Ucraina. Dai tempi più antichi a oggi*. Mimesis, Milano-Udine 2020, 658 pp.

La stesura di una ben documentata "Storia dell'Ucraina" che consideri le diverse prospettive storiografiche interne ed esterne al Paese di cui si narrano e