

## The Translation Peculiarities of the Ancient Ukrainian Monument «On the Campaign of Igor» by American Researchers Jack Haney and Eric Dahl

ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ПЕРЕКЛАДУ ДАВНЬОЇ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ПАМ'ЯТКИ "СЛОВО О ПОЛКУ ІГОРЕВІМ" АМЕРИКАНСЬКИМИ ДОСЛІДНИКАМИ ДЖЕКОМ ХЕЙНІ І ЕРІКОМ ДАЛЕМ

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### Abstract

The article analyzes some peculiar features in the English translation of the glorious Ukrainian literary monument «On the Campaign of Igor» («Slovo o polku Igoreve») by the famous American researchers Jack Haney and Eric Dahl. It also considers the various publications and translations of the work in English, taking into account the Ukrainian monument translation. It is stated that in America there are very few works published by the scholars on this issue. It is connected not with the lack of interest in «On the Campaign of Igor», but it is due to the work complexity with the poem, the problems of translation, and the presence of «confusing selections», as well as unawareness of the political, economic, and everyday situation of those times. It is obvious that the American textbook «On the Campaign of Igor» is a classical scientific English-language edition containing the poem text, explanations, and key aspects. It allows American students not only to study the text of the ancient Ukrainian monument in the original language, but also learn about the historical and literary situation of those times as the Americans imagine it.

### Анотація

У статті проаналізовано деякі особливості англійського перекладу славетної української літературної пам'ятки «Слово о полку Ігоревім» відомих американських дослідників Джека Хейні та Еріка Даля. Також розглядаються різні публікації та переклади твору англійською мовою з урахуванням українських перекладів пам'ятки. Зазначається, що в Америці є дуже мало академічних праць, надрукованих науковцями з цього питання. Це пов'язано не з відсутністю інтересу до «Слова о полку Ігоревім», а зі складністю роботи з поемою, проблемами перекладу та наявністю «темних місць», також з незнанням особливостей політичного, економічного, побутового становища тих часів. Підкреслено, що американський підручник зі «Слова о полку Ігоревім» – це класичне наукове англomовне видання, що містить текст поеми, текстові й ключові пояснення. Це дозволяє американським студентам не лише вивчати текст старовинної української пам'ятки мовою оригіналу, але й дізнатися про історичне та літературне становище тих часів, яким уявляють його американці.

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**Key Words:** Ukrainian literary monument; «On the Campaign of Igor»; translation; American textbook peculiar features.

**Ключові слова:** українська літературна пам'ятка; «Слово о полку Ігоревім»; переклад; особливості американського підручника.

## Introduction

The glorious Ukrainian literary monument «Slovo o polku Ihorevim» is usually translated as the «Lay of Igor's Warfare», «Lay of Igor's Host», «The Tale of Igor's Campaign», «The Song of Igor's Campaign», «The Igor Tale», «On the Campaign of Igor». In the paper we use the variant «On the Campaign of Igor». This lyric, epic, heroic poem has been attracting attention since 1185, when Ukrainian Prince Igor Svyatoslavich returned from his campaign against the Polovtsians tribe living in the southern part of the Don River region. This campaign ended in defeat and the capture of the Prince himself.

The main idea that penetrates the work is the appeal to the Kyivan Rus princes to unity in the fight against the enemies of the Kyivan Rus land; condemnation of princely feuds. This idea is expressed in Sviatoslav's «Golden Word». Although the monument is primarily about Prince Igor's campaign, the central image is the Kyivan Rus land, its living history. The unknown author does not follow the chronological sequence in the story presenting long highly artistic descriptions of nature, his reflections. Interrupting the description of Prince Igor's campaign, he recollects the past, mentally moves to other places as Kyiv, Putyvl or reflects on reasons and consequences of events, advises, disputes etc. The poem artistic trend is ornamentalism.

As it is rightly stated by the well-known Ukrainian literary critics Leonid Makhnovets and Oleksa Myshanych: «World literature knows a few works that would delight new generations, cross the borders of countries and continents, gaining wider and greater glory. And this is exactly the kind of literary monuments that the immortal «On the Campaign of Igor» belongs to. The tale is a heroic, full of passionate love for the Fatherland, for its people song-call which reached us from the old times of Kyivan Rus and proudly echoes in our hearts» (Makhnovets & Myshanych, 2003: 11).

Undoubtedly, this monument is the «convincing illustration», «the ancient Ukrainian literature masterpiece of the XII century», which embodies the main points of «the Ukrainian nature, the language peculiarities, the author's view and

manner, the ideological and special roots based on the cultural traditions created by the people». (Tymoshyk, 2009). The relevance of our research is connected with a growing interest in the translation of the well-known world literature works. It enables the readers to get to know the masterpieces of world literature, the phenomena of a spiritual life, the development of national culture and art.

## Analysis of Recent Researches and Publications

There are various academic researches (Kotliar, 2012; Franchuk, 1988; Skliarenko, 2003; Markin, 2012) of the famous monument in Ukraine. It can also be interesting for English readers, scholars, translators, who are trying to master «the spiritual culture high level of our distant ancestors from the times of Kyivan Rus Ukraine». (Lopata, 2012).

In our opinion, the American studies of the ancient Ukrainian literary monument «On the Campaign of Igor» have been attracting the scientists' attention over the last decades. (Kostikova, 2000; Kostikova, 2001) Considering the various publications and translations of the work in English, we must take into account the accuracy of the Ukrainian monument translation and the interpreter's background.

In America, there are very few works published by scholars on this issue. It is connected, from our standpoint, not with the lack of interest in the «On the Campaign of Igor», but it is due to the complexity of the poem, the problems of translation, the presence of «confusing selections», unawareness of the political, economic, and everyday situation of those times. The American journal «Biblical Repository» in 1834 first published the detailed description of the ancient literary monument written by Therese von Jakob, our compatriot, the daughter of the professor at Kharkiv University (she spent her childhood in Kharkiv). Having married the well-known Biblical scholar Edward Robinson, moved to America. Through her educational activity Therese von Jakob made a significant contribution to the enhancement of knowledge on Slavic sciences in the United States. She published her works in America under the pen

name Talvi. Later the American editions published only a few passages of «On the Campaign of Igor» in several translations.

The first complete translation of the «On the Campaign of Igor» with the introduction and the comments was published by Slavic researcher, the Professor at Harvard University, Leo Wiener in 1902. Then «On the Campaign of Igor» was reissued several times. After the Second World War the American Slavic studies due to the creation of the Free University in New York were supplemented with new articles and monographs. As the poem author is unknown, its authenticity was questioned and debated. Edward L. Keenan, a professor of History at Harvard University, in his book «Josef Dobrovský and the Origins of the Igor' Tale» (Keenan, 2003) concludes that there is no credible evidence of this ancient manuscript existence. He considers it to be a fake written by the Czech scholar Josef Dobrovský. George G. Grabovych, a professor at Harvard University, and editor in-chief of the journal «Krytyka» also holds the similar belief about the monument origin.

However, the majority of scholars support the authenticity of the text. The American researchers of the twentieth century Robert Mann (Mann, 1989; Mann, 2005; Mann, 2016), Omelian Pritsak, Olga Yokoiama show a significant interest in several aspects of «On the Campaign of Igor» study: «On the Campaign of Igor» in the context of world literature, research and problems of the poem vocabulary translation, rendering of rhythms and prosody etc. Undoubtedly, the translations and comments by V. Nabokov, D. Ward, R. Howes,

R. Mann, J. Fennell and A. Stokes, A. Bucker are interesting as well (Zorivchak, 1996).

### The Aim of the Research

Despite the numerous works by scientists, many aspects of the «On the Campaign of Igor' remain insufficiently illuminated including its translations into English. The aim of the research is to analyze the peculiar features of some «confusing and difficult selections» and their interpretation in the English translation «On the Campaign of Igor» by the famous American researchers Jack Haney and Eric Dahl, to take into account the general description of this academic paper.

### Methods

The authors of the article apply literary text analysis which reveals the poem plot, its genre and structure, the history of that period, the time of writing. The distinctive features of «confusing and difficult selections» in the translation are considered by using comparative analysis.

### Results and Discussion

We believe that the American authors' contribution to the researches about «On the Campaign of Igor» requires a more detailed and thorough study, so let us consider the most famous example of «On the Campaign of Igor» in the American edition, published in 1992. It is translated as «On the Campaign of Igor'. The authors of this edition gave us their book with a commemorative inscription (Figure 1).

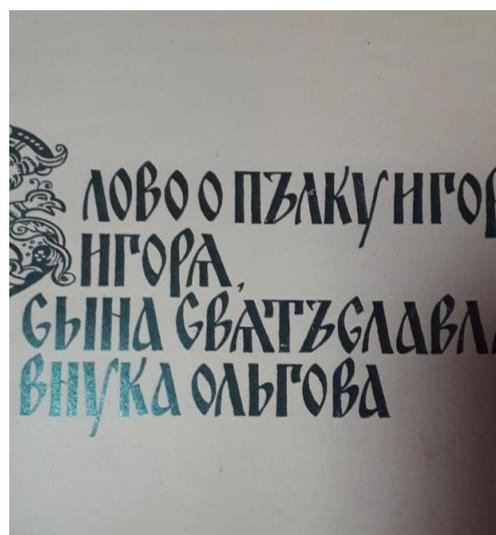
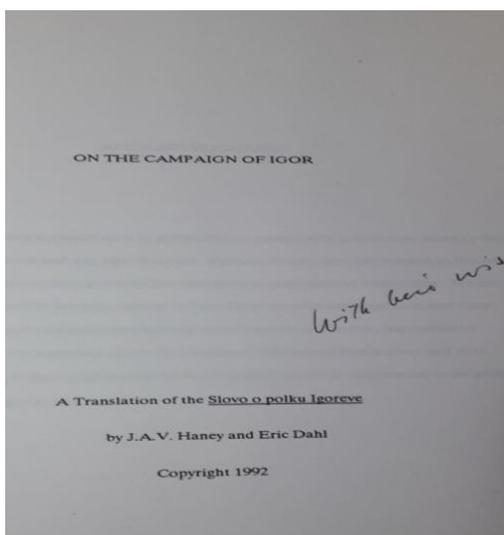


Figure 1. Printed Textbook “On the Campaign of Igor” by Jack Haney and Eric Dahl.

Hence, in 1992, Jack Haney and Eric Dahl issued the printed textbook for American students about Igor's Campaign for the philological faculties of universities that is called «Слово о пълку Игоревъ, Игоря, сына Святъславля, внука Ольгова. On the Campaign of Igor. A translation of the Slovo o polku Igoreve».

Now their work is available on the site <http://www.indiana.edu/~cahist/Readings/2011Spring/The%20Tale%20of%20Igor's%20Campaign.pdf> and it is called «The Tale of Igor's Campaign. The discourse on Igor's campaign, Igor son of Sviatoslav, grandson of Oleg» (Haney & Dahl, 2012). The work consists of seven parts: introduction, text and translation, comments, notes to the comments, maps, genealogical tree, bibliography.

The first chapter «Introduction» contains the authors' comments with the description of the poem plot, its structure, the history of that period, the time of writing, the comparison with the ancient literary monument «Zadonshchyna» (translated as «the region beyond the Don River»), the rhythmic system.

The second part of the introduction written by Eric Dahl refers to the original plan of this textbook publication, describes the process of work on the translation, the genre definition of the poem, other linguistic and literary aspects.

In the second chapter «Text and Translation» the poem is represented by the Slavic text and its English translation, which are divided into verses. The purpose of the authors is to make the translation as comprehensible as possible to the American reader.

The comments of the text are given with the author's explanation of the verses: I-II the prologue, III-IV Boian, V-IX the prelude to the battle, X-XIV the first battle and its significance, XV-XXII the battle with the Polovtsi, XXIII-XXV the consequences of Igor's defeat, XXVI Kyiv Prince Sviatoslav, XXVII-XXIX Sviatoslav's dream and its interpretation, XXX-XXXVI Sviatoslav's «Golden Word», XXXVI-XXXVII Vseslav and his descendants, XXXVIII Prince Volodymyr, XXXIX Yaroslavna's lament, XL-XLII Igor's escape and his return, XLIII Boian's farewell song.

The fourth chapter contains a number of links to the sources mentioned in the textbook. The map of the possible campaign place is presented, the family tree of the Princes, bibliography are given as well.

It is obvious that the American textbook on «On the Campaign of Igor» is a classical scientific English-language edition containing the text and the explanations of the poem key aspects. It allows American students not only to study the text of the ancient monument in the original language, but also learn about the historical and literary situation of those times as the Americans imagine it. Moreover, the authors' translation and comments presented in it are of some interest to «On the Campaign of Igor» researchers in Ukraine.

Like most English speaking scholars of «On the Campaign of Igor» the authors tend to believe that the plot and structure of the poem serve as a means of describing the moral and political decline of once great Kyivan principedom. J. Haney symbolically divides the entire poem into three parts, representing the triptych, in the center of which Kyivan Sviatoslav is depicted. The narration about him, according to the researcher, resembles the style of a story that suits his famous ancestor Sviatoslav Igorovych, whose exploits in the tenth century were known in Constantinople and the Balkans.

The dream of Kyivan Sviatoslav, like King Arthur's one in the French poem «La Mort le Roi Artu», should be understood as the protection of his own throne, but not just the person who takes it. The Prince, as a person and a literary character, is associated with the principedom, and the principedom with the state. Sviatoslav calls the lords, the boiars to unite, because disunity, in his opinion, is their own death.

Sviatoslav's «Golden Word» is interrupted by frequent excursions in the old, traditionally elevated style, to once again emphasize the contrast between the littleness of these princes' interests and their glorious heroic ancestors. The American author believes that Sviatoslav's «Golden Word» is a miserable excuse of his own helplessness to affect the course of the events. J. Haney calls the man who helped Igor to escape from captivity «the most cowardly Polovtsian traitor» rewarded by Igor with the lands of Kyivan Rus.

The American author comes to the conclusion that Igor Sviatoslavovych, the only prince of his little patrimony, is the only Kyivan Prince in history of Kyivan Rus who was captured by steppe nomads. This historical fact became a forerunner of the event that the Tatar princes began to capture for half a century the great Kyivan Rus princes, who could not unite to fight

against their numerous enemies. This is a brief comment from American authors.

We cannot agree with some statements of historical material interpretation and comments by the respected American researchers. However, it should be pointed out that, indeed, the campaign of Igor Sviatoslavovych became the basis of «On the Campaign of Igor» plot, and all who wanted to analyze the prince's campaign inevitably faced two problems.

We mean the form and the content of the ancient work, that is, the artistic representation of the real events and the use of the factual material itself. This description is made in an artistic, extremely complex form, which gives rise to discrepancies and contradictory interpretations of the text. This is due to the fact that the different, sometimes diametrically opposite understanding of particular words and expressions in the text caused the emergence of a large number of translation options, which often distorted the meaning and the content.

First of all, it relates to the main idea of the literary monument. Kyivan Rus in «On the Campaign of Igor» is integrally whole character in the historical excursuses, the author's interpretations, and the description of the princely feuds. Igor's defeat is treated as a national grief. The scholar and the researcher of «On the Campaign of Igor», the Ukrainian scientist Boris Yatsenko, basing on his lifetime work at the poem, came to the conclusion that Kyivan Rus for the author of «On the Campaign of Igor» is a single whole and all the misfortunes of Chernihiv land are painfully reacted to and perceived in Kyiv (Yatsenko, 2000).

Although in the battle with the Polovtsians Igor did not win, he nevertheless defeated the coalition and Sivershchyna and Pereiaslavshchyna were included in the defense system of Kyivan Rus. And in his address to the princes there was not weakness, but the state wisdom of the Grand Prince who united the forces of Kyivan Rus for defense against the aggression of Suzdal-Hinov and Polovtsians. In our opinion, attracting the attention of Ukrainian researchers and translators to the need for a deeper and more comprehensive study of «On the Campaign of Igor» vocabulary opens up new perspectives for the text interpretation.

For example, in the verses I-II of the textbook there is the translation of the words «старыми словеси труднихъ повѣстїи» / «the ancient words of vexing tales»; «былинамъ» / «the

events of our own time»; «по замышленію» / «as a fantasy» and others. The American authors explain them as «ancient words», «vexing tales», «fantasy» etc. Our attention was attracted by the verse XLIII about Boian's story «Рѣкъ Боянь и ходы на ...» / «Boian even told campaigns against...» in the poem.

As far as we are concerned, both the beginning of the poem, written in Boian's manner, and its ending are examples of wisdom. Perhaps, such explanation according to the authors to some extent is formal because many scholars refer the address to another poet Khodyna, not Boian. But the American textbook writers do not support this view.

The «confusing selections» have long been regarded by the Ukrainian scientists as clear, but read by every translator in his own way caused the discrepancies – not only in the American textbooks, but also in the native ones. For instance, in the American textbook in the verse XXXVI we read in two languages in Slavic and English:

*«Трубы трубятъ городеньскыѣ, яро славли  
все внукы Всеславли!  
Оуже понизите стягы своѣ, воньзите своѣ  
мечъ верезены»*

*«The trumpets of Gorodets blare, fiercely  
praising all the grandsons of Vseslav!*

*Lower your banners; sheathe your dull, damaged  
swords».*

Most Ukrainian researchers such as Leonid Makhnovets combine the word combination «яро славли» into one word «Ярославе» (Makhnovets, 1955). So, in Ukrainian the name *Ярослав (Yaroslav)*, thus, becomes a possessive adjective and applies to all the grandsons both Yaroslav, and Vseslav. In the American translation we read «*fiercely praising*». Thus, the American interpretation contains fewer corrections to Slavic text. The interpretation accepted by the American authors has an obvious advantage that does not distort the content: a simple rest of the verse about Vseslav and his descendants, who have nothing to do with the heroic offsprings of Yaroslav the Wise. So, this «confusing selection» is interpreted in Ukrainian and English in different ways. Thus, we see that the difficulties which arose in the translation of the cited text are related only to the first line, whereas in other translations the second line is contradictory.

Modern Ukrainian translations are full of many interpretations of the second line in this passage. The noun «*стяги*» («*banners*») is used in the meaning of «battle standards». It did not cause any difficulties for the American translators.

A different case is with the verb «*понижитє*» («*to lower*»). In the late eighteenth century the phrase «*понижитє*» was unusual to the first publishers of the «On the Campaign of Igor», who were forced to substitute the verb «*понижитє*» with other different verbs. A large number of synonyms for this verb allowed to create the numerous variants of translations. «Уже понизитє стяги свої, вклядїть свої мечї пощербленї...» (Makhnovets, 1955). Thus, the opinion among «On the Campaign of Igor» Ukrainian translators has become widespread, according to which the verb «*понижитє*» is combined with the noun «*стяги*» has only one meaning – defeat recognition.

With regard to the translation of the participle «*damaged / версєжєны*», in old times the verb «*to damage*» was used in the literal meaning («*to harm / to hurt / to injure*»). But in most Ukrainian translations the word «*версєжєны*» has a sharply negative meaning. In American variant there is a neutral meaning. To our mind, in «On the Campaign of Igor» the verse is just referred to damaged swords, jagged and chipped ones as a result of blows against the enemies' swords. And if the sword was damaged in the battle, regardless of the battle nature, then in a friendly company it enjoyed respect. It can be compared only to a brave warrior who was injured in a furious battle. «The dignity of a warrior is his weapon» stated in «*Izbornik / Изборник*» in 1076. And the author of «On the Campaign of Igor» certainly took it into account.

It is common knowledge that in «On the Campaign of Igor» all the shades of addresses, their hierarchy were strictly taken into consideration in the relationships among the princes. Grand Prince of Kyiv Svyatoslav addressed the princes according to the hierarchy. In the prosperity age of the prince honor cult, the author of «On the Campaign of Igor» could not talk about swords disrespectfully or in a frankly bad manner, as it is written in a number of translations.

In our view, in the given context, the author of «On the Campaign of Igor» provided the epithet «*damaged / версєжєны*» with not a negative but a clearly expressed positive connotation which reflects the respectful attitude of the warriors to the sword as a symbol of prince honor.

So, we have considered some difficulties and problems that arose in the translation of the certain «confusing and difficult selections» in «On the Campaign of Igor». To overcome them, more detailed study of «On the Campaign of Igor» vocabulary, a more serious approach to the historical comprehension of the monument and a better awareness of modern vocabulary in the specific areas, which are associated with both the analyzed passage and others in the text, are needed.

## Conclusions

Thus, a careful peculiar feature analysis of some «confusing and difficult selections» and their interpretation in the English translation «On the Campaign of Igor» by the famous American researches Jack Haney and Eric Dahl has been performed. The general description of this academic paper has also been taken into account. It is of indisputable scientific interest and enables the American students and readers to conceive the ancient Ukrainian literary monument and the contemporary views on it.

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