

# Cultural and Literary Relations between Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars

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*The encounter of Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians can be traced back till the early modern period. There are a variety of forms of interaction between Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians, in this contribution the focus is mainly on sociocultural (literature, art, cinematography) and political contact from the end of the 19th century to the present. These contacts show not only the interactions but also parallel historical and cultural constellations for Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians which until today continue to operate as a postcolonial situation. Against that background the author also elaborates on prospects for the future of Ukrainian-Crimean Tatar relations.*

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Communication and reciprocal integration are a historical necessity. The cultural successes and achievements of individual nations are a common achievement of global civilization. Just as rivers flowing into lakes, seas, and oceans replenish aquatic resources, universal culture and literature are born of separate national cultures and literature.

The historical truth noted above thoroughly applies to the spiritual wealth of the Crimean Tatar people. The Crimean Tatars, the autochthonous inhabitants of the Crimean peninsula, are the heirs to the cultures of the ancient peoples who settled this territory in various historical eras, from that of the primitive communal system to the creation of their own nation-state, the Crimean Khanate, to the present.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, a long series of tragedies set in motion by the tsarist autocracy and then the Soviet authorities descended upon the Crimean Tatars at the end of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and continued into the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The deportation of 1944 almost wiped the Tatars from the face of the earth.

The struggle of the Crimean Tatars to return to their native land, the fateful, historic events that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s opened the road to the Crimea and the continuation of their struggle for the full restoration of their political, economic, ethnical, and human rights that had been violated. Having returned, the Crimean Tatars faced not only the problems of political and economic development on the peninsula, they also had to revive their culture, their literature, to restore and strengthen cultural ties with other peoples, ties forfeited under coercion, above all the ties between Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians. Not only do the processes of integration now underway in the present-day

Crimean Tatar-Ukrainian comity demand this, so, too, does moral responsibility to their forefathers and to future generations.

### Historical parallel

The history of cultural and economic relations between the Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian peoples is rich and deep, going back centuries. To this day, however, this history has not been the subject of fundamental scientific research in Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian historiography and cultural studies. Individual efforts in this direction have not been systematic in character. Unfortunately, right up to the present day, almost every aspect of interaction, of cultural exchange, of coexistence between these two peoples – the Ukrainians and the Crimean Tatars – remains insufficiently studied. The rather solid basis of sources in scientific output urgently requires first and foremost research in linguistics and folklore, history, and the literature of the two peoples.<sup>2</sup>

The history of cultural and literary ties between the Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian peoples is multifaceted. This is natural for two neighboring peoples who have lived side by side for centuries and shared a whole range of interactions, economic and cultural exchange, and periods of coexistence.

The events of the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century – the rise of the Ukrainian people's national-liberation struggle under the leadership of Bohdan Khmelnytsky for Ukrainian independence from the Polish nobility – enjoy a special place in the literatures of both peoples. Responding to Khmelnytsky's request for assistance in the war of liberation against the Polish nobility, the Crimean Khan İslâm Geray III on several occasions dispatched an army made up of thousands of Crimeans under the leadership of the talented commander Toğay bey, who inflicted several defeats on their adversary.

Scenes from the common struggle of these two peoples received considerable attention in literature. Even at the time, hot on the heels of the historical events, the Crimean Tatar poet Džhanmokhamed, an eyewitness and participant, composed the poem *Toğaybey*. Another Crimean Tatar author of the same period, Edip Efendi, wrote about these events in the poem *Sefernama* (Poem of the campaign). Excerpts from both works have survived to this day. They were the first in the history of the literatures of our peoples to depict the heroics of those times, to create portrayals of the heroes of those events: Bohdan Khmelnytsky, İslâm Geray III, Toğay bey. Excerpts from the first of these works were published by Osman Akchokraklı<sup>3</sup> (Aqçoqraqlı) in the article *The Tatar poem of Džhanmokhamed about the campaign of İslam Geray III together with Bogdan Khmelnytsky against Poland in 1648-1649*.<sup>4</sup>

The events of those years have also been depicted in the novels of modern Ukrainian writers such as *Ia, Bohdan* (I am Bohdan) by Pavel Zahrebelny (1924-2009), *Malvy* by Roman Ivanychuk (1929-2016), and others.<sup>5</sup>

## Writers and literature

Ukrainian-Crimean-Tatar cultural and literary ties in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were of a rather stable and diverse character. This is first and foremost noticeable in the work of Ukraine's great poet, artist, and thinker Taras Shevchenko:

*I love her so, oh, so dearly,  
my impoverished Ukraina,  
That I will blaspheme our sacred God,  
I will forfeit my soul for her.*<sup>6</sup>

*Men faqir Ukrainamrı  
Sevem. Oña can qurban.  
onıñ içün qargarım  
Atta yuce Allahnı.*<sup>7</sup>

This can be seen in his works such as *The Haidamaks*, *Kateryna*, *Oh, I sent my husband on a trip*, etc., although with an ambiguous and idiosyncratic shade of meaning. The tonality to which Shevchenko adheres with respect to the Crimean Tatars is explained by the fact that this genius of Ukrainian poetry has “notions about the Crimean Khanate, about the campaigns of the Zaporizhians for Perekop, Kezlev (now a part of Yevpatoriya) and Kafe (now a part of Feodosiya), as well as about the Crimeans’ campaigns against Ukraine, formed when he was studying at St. Petersburg Academy of Arts”, notes Hryhory Rudnytsky.<sup>8</sup>

Developing this idea, one can note that under the influence of official administrative and pseudoscientific anti-Tatar policy, it was natural that the young Shevchenko could form an idiosyncratic view with regard to the neighboring people in Crimea. Crimean themes can also be seen in Shevchenko's artwork. As Rudnytsky notes,

*A well-founded knowledge of manuscripts and printed sources helped him successfully cope with an order that he received in 1842 to produce illustrations for a biography of Alexander Suvorov, the general who brought the Black Sea coast under Russian control by N.A. Polevoi entitled Istorıya knyazyta Italiiskogo, grafa Suvorova-Rymnikskogo, generalıssımusa rossiyskikh voysk (The history of prince of Italy, count Suvorov-Rymniksky, generalissimo of the Russian armed forces).*<sup>9</sup>

Among the drawings realized were several works dedicated to the Crimean theme: *Suvorov at the court of Crimean Khan Shagin Girei*, *Suvorov on the holiday in honor of the agreement with the Tatars*, *Suvorov at Musa-Bey's*, and *Bogdan Khmel-nitskii before the Crimean Khan* (1857).<sup>10</sup> Thus, it can be argued, Shevchenko was the first in the Ukrainian fine arts to create scenes depicting the Crimean khans İslâm Geray III and Şahin Geray, as well as Musa Bey, a leader of the Nogai Horde in

the 16<sup>th</sup> century operating in northeastern region of the Black Sea.

At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Crimean Tatar theme in Ukrainian literature struck a completely different chord. First and foremost, it referenced the works of the great novelist Mykhailo Kotsyubyns'kyy, a classic author in Ukrainian literature. During two rather long sojourns to the Crimea, Kotsyubyns'kyy spent time in Yalta, Alupka, the villages of Quru Özen and Küçük Özen, the cities of Bakhchisarai and Sevastopol, and passed through other settlements.

While visiting the villages of the southern coast and Bakhchisarai, Kotsyubyns'kyy by way of necessity visited Crimean Tatar families in order to better acquaint himself with their daily life, world view, customs, and traditions from as up close as possible. All of these observations and impressions found artistic expression in his stories from the Crimean cycle *In the Devil's Chains* (1899), *On the Rock* (1902), *Beneath the Minarets* (1904). In them, the writer pondered the challenges facing the indigenous inhabitants of this land, which had been forcibly attached to the Russian Empire. The new way of life introduced by the Russian administration, the new culture, the new customs for the population of this Muslim peninsula turned the lives of local residents into an existence "in the Devil's chains", and destroyed a way of life formed over centuries as well as the people's traditions.<sup>11</sup>

The research of the Ukrainian cultural activist Serhiy D. Kotsyubyns'kyy into Crimean Tatar folklore and its popularization among Ukrainians echoes M. Kotsyubyns'kyy's creative work related to Crimea. Serhiy Kotsyubyns'kyy was the author of a scientific work containing in-depth analysis of Crimean Tatar oral folklore, which came to serve as the introductory article for the first collection of folklore *Skazki i legendy Tatar Krimea* (Crimean Tatar tales and legends), prepared and published by the Alupka State Museum in 1936. Summing up his research, the author noted at the outset of the article,

*The great historical changes that have taken place over the course of three thousand years, changes that have shaken this patch of earth, that have left deep and indelible traces, were reflected in Crimean folk verse: in fairy tales and legends, songs, proverbs, sayings, and riddles.*<sup>12</sup>

Serhiy Kotsyubyns'kyy's work was a solid scientific contribution to the study of Crimean Tatar folklore. Even today, his work has not lost any of its significance and relevance.

At the end of 19<sup>th</sup> and the first quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century, Ukrainian-Crimean Tatar cultural and literary ties were especially clearly manifested in the creative work of Lesya Ukrayinka, one of the most famous classic figures of Ukrainian literature. Drawing on her impressions and recollections of the Crimea, she wrote quite a number of poetic works about this magical corner of the earth and its indigenous inhabitants, which were included in the cycles *Kryms'ki spohady* (Crimean memoirs) and *Kryms'ki vidhuky* (Crimean echoes). These cycles, together with other

poems, were included in the collection *Na krylakh pisen'* (On the wings of songs), published in 1893.

Ukrainka did not represent Crimea without the Crimean Tatars. Absorbing the singular beauty of Crimea, connecting it with its marvelous nature and climate, she did not forget the Crimean Tatars, the territory's indigenous inhabitants.

Together with her mother Olena Pchilka, Lesya Ukrayinka came to Crimea for the first time for medical treatment. From Yevpatoriia, they went to Bakhchisarai and visited the khan's palace. The wonderful poems *Bakhchisaray*, *Bakhchisaray Palace*, *Bakhchisaray Mausoleum* were written drawings from the impressions made here. The bleak, pitiful condition of the khan's palace, the extremely modest, unkempt property, the indifference of tsarist officials to this monument provoked outrage in both the poet and her mother. "In this territory, injustice continues to this day," noted Ukrayinka. She saw this injustice with regard to the Crimean Tatars. While in Crimea, the poet studied Crimean Tatar embroidery, ornaments, oral folklore with great interest. Based on her studies, she prepared a book about Crimean Tatar embroidery and ornaments for publication and wrote a series of poems about Crimean Tatar legends.

Ukrayinka's life was cut short by illness. She passed away when she was 42 years old. She did not manage to realize all of her creative plans. In a letter to her mother from Yalta on February 16, 1908, she wrote about one of them:

*I want to... write a little story... historical as it were, about Tatar-Ukrainian times, the friendship of a little Ukrainian boy - the son of a female captive - and a peasant Tatar girl, without regard for the traditional antagonisms of the older generation, then the fate of this couple, nonetheless separated by life.*<sup>13</sup>

Friendship – that is what Lesya Ukrayinka dreamt of seeing in relations between the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar peoples, all the more so given that we were not nonetheless separated by fate.<sup>14</sup>

In 1996, on the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ukrayinka's birth, the Yalta State United Historical-Literary Museum opened an exhibition called "Ornaments in the Region of Eternal Light" at the museum dedicated to the poet in her home village, Kolodiazhne, Volhynia. The exhibition consisted of Crimean Tatar ornaments and embroidery, as well as household items, dishes, and clothes from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The exhibition generated a great deal of interest among local residents and visitors to the Volhynian region. Together with the exhibition's artifacts, the organizers brought a sampling of the thermophilic black poplar from the Crimea to snowy Volhynia. Nobody was really convinced that the Crimean beauty would sprout in this harsh, faraway land, but people were convinced that warm and caring hands would take care of it as for a child. In the spirit of one of her more famous poems *Contra spem spero!*, Lesya Ukrayinka had planted a "branch of black poplar" from Crimea in Ukrainian literature.<sup>15</sup>

*And when you return, I'll show you  
That cypress of mine in the garden...  
Qaytıp kelseñ saña onı kosterecem  
Gulbagçamda oser qara selbiçigim.*

In 2001, on the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ukrayinka's birth, a collection of her selected works, *Bakiylik Avuchyndaki Chechek* (A flower in the palm of eternity), was published in the Crimea. The collection included poems by the author from the cycles *Kryms'ki Spohady* (Qırım hatıraları) and *Kryms'ki Vidhuky* (Qırım aks sadaları). The poet Ablyaziz Veliyev (1939) rendered the poems of the first cycle from Ukrainian into Crimean Tatar. The poet Yunus Kandym translated poetic works from the second cycle:

*That's where my thoughts tumble like rampant waters  
And pay fair tribute to that shimmering land,  
Where I did not spend a single afternoon  
And was ever cheerless even for one hour...  
That's the reason I have no words of reproach  
To cast in your direction, handsome country!  
It is not your fault that I have no future,  
It is not your fault that I'm so unhappy!  
(Sleep, 1891)*

*Şunda tez-tez uçar benim oylarım  
Selamlar aydın yuzlü diyarnı  
Bu erde men çoq kunlerni yaşadım  
Amma bir añ bile bahtlı olmadım  
Lâkin saña bir yaman söz aytalmam,  
Sen güzelsiñ! Seni iç de taşlamamam  
Taqdir sizim, bunda senin suçıñ eq,  
Men bahtsızım, bunda senin suçıñ yok.  
(Nagme, 1891)<sup>16</sup>*

## **Struggle for independence after WWI**

Close Crimean Tatar-Ukrainian relations manifested themselves rather clearly at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century during the struggle of Ukraine and Crimea for their independence in 1917-1918. Politicians, intellectuals and activists strove to coordinate joint efforts and actions against external enemies: Ukraine, led by the chairman of the Ukrainian Central Rada, Professor Mykhaylo Hrushevs'ky, and Crimea,

led by the prime minister of the Crimean People's Republic, Noman Çelebicihan (Chelebidzhikhan). Cafer Seydamet (Dzhafer Seidamet), "director" of foreign and military affairs in the Crimean national Government, repeatedly visited Kyiv to conduct negotiations with Ukraine's leaders, who were well-intentioned and sympathetic to Crimea's problems.

A vivid episode of Crimean Tatar-Ukrainian cooperation can be seen in Seydamet's memoirs. Seydamet was in the thick of all of the events that took place in the period following the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy. At the time, the peoples of the collapsing Russian Empire were caught up in a rise of national sentiment, which affected Ukraine as well as Crimea.

Seydamet's memoirs *Bâzi hâturalar*<sup>17</sup> (published in Russian as a series for the magazine *Poluostrov* [The peninsula] under the title *Nekotorye vospominaniya* [Some memories] in 2009 and 2010),<sup>18</sup> are without doubt one of the most valuable documentary sources for the history of Crimea and relations with Ukraine during this period.

It is impossible to imagine any era without the particular names and personalities associated with it. They are symbols of the period being depicted, as well as in many respects the creators of that history. It is no coincidence that one of the most valuable and idiosyncratic components of Seydamet's memoirs is the portrait gallery of his contemporaries that he provided. The meetings and exchanges with them left an indelible impression on the author's memory and, with an eye to conjuring up the spirit of the era, he filled his memoirs with portrait sketches of heroes and other personalities.

Seydamet left vivid episodes of meetings with Ukrainian political figures. For example, after a meeting with Volodymyr Vynnychenko (1889-1960) in Kyiv, Chairman of the General Secretariat of the Ukrainian Central Rada the author of the memoirs noted: "Although Vynnychenko did not inspire in us such trust as Shulhyn and Hrushevsky, he left the impression of a man undoubtedly using all of his means to the benefit of his people's interests".<sup>19</sup>

Another, no less interesting meeting with Seydamet took place with Chairman of the Ukrainian Central Rada Mykhaylo Hrushevskyy in Kyiv in July 1917, when he arrived with Amet Özenbaşlı (Ozenbashly) as representatives of the Tatars of Crimea. Describing their conversation with Hrushevsky, Seydamet noted:

*Grey-bearded, with an inspired face and small, darting eyes, energetic and decisive, he inspired surprise and admiration for his tireless work. The greatest of Ukrainian historians, who had trained a cadre of educated youth at the university in Lviv, now in Kyiv, was devoting all his strength to the creation of a new history of Ukraine. He undoubtedly understood the significance of historical heritage; better than others, he could set a goal in terms of aspirations and determine the shortest path to get there.*<sup>20</sup>

Seydamet noted Hrushevsky's ability to listen attentively to his interlocutor

and provide exhaustive commentary regarding this or that political event taking place at the time, emphasizing especially that the Russian Revolution would lead to the Russia's disintegration, whereby all of the non-Russian peoples would need to close ranks more tightly.<sup>21</sup>

Seydamet also provided portrait descriptions with respect to other Ukrainian political figures, e.g. Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Ukrainian People's Republic Oleksander Shulhyn and later acted as a head of Ukrainian government in exile, and Chairman of the Directorate of the Ukrainian People's Republic and commander Symon Petliura.

In Turkey, Seydamet continued to cooperate with the Ukrainians through their émigré organizations. That he cooperated closely with certain figures of the Ukrainian liberation movement and even befriended them is confirmed in his memoirs. One can provide an analogous example, when Volodymyr Mursky, a well-known figure in émigré political circles, suddenly died in Istanbul in the mid-1930s. Mursky had been the representative of the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic in exile and a prominent figure within the Prometheus League in Turkey in the 1920s and 1930s. Living in Turkey, he worked closely with Turkic émigré organizations and coordinated work with them in their common struggle against Bolshevik Russia.

In Turkey, in 1930 Mursky had published his books *Ukrayna ve istiklâl mücahedeler* (Ukraine's struggle for independence), and 1932 *The Real Face of Russia* (Yeni Rusya'nın ic yüzü). These books found substantial resonance not only within émigré political circles, but also among active politicians in Turkey. Politicians in the West and Far East took an interest in this book as well. There is a known case when representatives of a Turkish military agency purchased 100 copies of the book for distribution throughout Turkey's military establishment.

It is necessary to note that after the book by Mursky came out, Seydamet published a review in the Crimean Tatar emigrant magazine *Emel*, in which he gave a positive assessment of the book. Having learned the sad news of Mursky's death, Seydamet likewise responded with an obituary in French in the journal *Prométhée*.<sup>22</sup> In his short article, every word, every sentence was filled with sorrow. He spoke warmly of their friendly relationship, his socio-political activity in consolidating common efforts in the confrontation with Bolshevik Russia. One can quote a fragment from Seydamet's article:

*We have been overwhelmed by new mourning in our exile: the sad news has left us crushed! Our dear friend has passed away! I was walking down the street when one of my friends told me that Mursky had died. Despite the fact that I have grown used to tragedy and misfortune, I did not want to believe this loss.*<sup>23</sup>

As we see, these lines fully reflect the author's anxiety and sorrow.

Seydamet finished the article with the words:

*Mursky was one of the Ukrainian patriots who lived in Istanbul for many years. He published the book *Ukraine's Struggle for Independence in Turkish*. By dint of this fact, he rendered an important service to Turkish patriots. Through his manuscripts and articles, his tireless activity, Mursky became useful not only to the cause of the Ukrainian people, but also to the causes of other oppressed peoples.*<sup>24</sup>

### Literary and History Studies, Mutual Translations

The desire to strengthen cultural and literary ties between Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians was especially clearly manifested in the multifaceted scientific and literary activity of the prominent Ukrainian scholar Ahatanhel Yukhymovych Kryms'kyy (1871-1942). Kryms'kyy was a Turkologist, orientalist, philologist, writer, poet, ethnographer, literary critic, and translator. He made a tremendous contribution to universal culture. His origins played a major role in his scientific and creative activity. His ancestors were from the Crimea. He considered himself a Ukrainian, but never forgot about his ancestors' homeland - the Crimea. From this sprung his enthusiastic and selfless service to science and culture, his desire to strengthen and enrich both Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar culture and literature. In this, the scientific collection *Studiyi z Krymu* (Studies on the Crimea), which was published in Ukrainian in Kyiv in 1930, was of considerable importance in his scholarly activity. Kryms'kyy's own works formed the core of the collection.

Krymskyy's services to the study of the history of Crimean Tatar literature and culture are inestimable. Kryms'kyy namely was one of the first to analyze the development of Crimean Tatar literature. A series of works published in the collection *Studiyi z Krymu*. (Pages from the history of the Crimea and the Crimean Tatars, Toward a history of the current 25% of the Tatar population in the Crimea, Chufut-Kale [a medieval fortress near Bakhchisaray]) presented Ukrainian readers for the first time with an opportunity to acquaint themselves with Crimean Tatar literature, culture, history, ethnography, and language. By drawing on historical facts, Krymskyy did much to destroy the outdated stereotypes rooted in folklore, belles-lettres, and history that impeded the scientific understanding of relations between the neighboring peoples, the Ukrainians and the Crimean Tatars, and their spiritual rapprochement.

The collection closed with a historical and literary essay by Kryms'kyy, *Literatura krymskikh tatar* (Literature of Crimean Tatars), which briefly shed light on literary life during the period of the Crimean Khanate, more recent Crimean Tatar literature after the annexation of the peninsula to Russia, the activity of Ismail Gasprinsky (Gaspirali, 1851-1914) and his newspaper *Terdzhiman* (Translator), the association of literary figures around the newspaper, the new, youthful literary

forces at work after the Revolution of 1905, the creative work of writers in the decade preceding 1930. Kryms'kyy's brief, academically logical, and laconic analyses and assessments of Crimean Tatar literature demonstrated his broad erudition, his deep and thorough knowledge of the peninsula's national literature, and his constant interest in following Crimea's literary process.

For Kryms'kyy, the 1930s were a period of official persecution, deep, spiritual upheaval and hardship. Placed in the category of unreliable elements, he lost his job, title, and publishing rights. He was left in isolation and difficult financial circumstances. In July 1941, Kryms'kyy, who had by then suffered a stroke, was arrested by the NKVD authorities and subsequently sent to a common colony in Kazakhstan, where he died in January 1942.

One can see that interest in Crimean Tatar literature did not wane in the 1920s and 1930s. For example, the Kharkiv magazine *Chervonyi Shliakh* (Red path) published an article by Abdulla Latif-zade in Ukrainian called *Korotkyy ohlyad kryms'ko-tatars'koyi literatury* (Brief Review of the Crimean Tatar Literature) in its December 1927 issue. There, the author characterized in general terms the development of Crimean Tatar literature from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>25</sup>

Ukrainian poetry, including poems by Taras Shevchenko as well, became treasures of the Crimean Tatars only in the second half of the 1930s. In 1939, Shevchenko's "Testament" was translated into Crimean Tatar for the first time, and already in 1940, the Crimean Tatar-language collection *Saylâma šiirler* (Selected poems) was published. The translations for this volume were provided by famous Crimean Tatar poets such as Amdi Alim (1908-1942), Şamil Aladin, Maksud Suleyman (1909-1953), and others.<sup>26</sup>

In the last two decades, the talented Ukrainian poet, translator, and literary expert Mykola Myroshnychenko played a special role in the renaissance and development of Crimean Tatar-Ukrainian literary ties. Thanks to his diligence, works by a whole range of authors have seen the light of day in Ukrainian translation, including the publishing of Yunus Kandyama's *Sary an'* (Yellow moment, 1997), Yunus Temirkaia's *Yol uzerindeki yarıq* (Light over the road, 2001), as well as others - in Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar.<sup>27</sup>

In the period since 1999, the publishing house *Dolya* (Fate), based in the city of Simferopol, has published landmark works by Taras Shevchenko, which were included in the collection *Uzak' ve yak'yn Shevchenko* (Distant and close Shevchenko), in Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar, while Shevchenko's poem *The Caucasus* was published in a separate book in four languages: Ukrainian, Crimean Tatar, Russian, and English. In 2001, a collection of selected works by Lesya Ukrayinka was published in two volumes: *Baqiylik avuçındaki çeçek* (Flower in the palm of eternity) and *Orman türküsü* (The Forest Song).

At the start of 2002, the premiere of a theater production based on subject matter of poems found in Ukrayinka's collection *The Forest Song* was held at the Crime-

an Tatar Musical-Dramatic Theater with Akhtem Seitablaev as producer.

The All-Ukrainian Information-Cultural Center in Simferopol has made a notable contribution to strengthening Crimean Tatar-Ukrainian cultural and literary ties. With editorial and publishing support from the All-Ukrainian Information-Cultural Center, it was possible to publish books by Lesya Ukrayinka, a collection of poems by Yunus Kandyama *Umiut iipi* (Thread of hope), and other titles.

For a period of several years, Crimean Tatar poet Yunus Kandyam enjoyed a fruitful collaboration with Mykola Myroshnychenko in the translation of Ukrainian authors into Crimean Tatar. Thanks to their initiative and perseverance, an anthology of Crimean Tatar literature was published in 2005. The first volume, entitled *Molytva lastivok / K'arylh'achlar duasy* (Prayer of the swallows),<sup>28</sup> included prose by writers from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the second volume *Okrushyna sontsia / Kuneshten bir parcha* (A bit of sun),<sup>29</sup> contained poetic works by each nationality's most important authors.

### **Theater, music and applied art**

This all-encompassing, very professionally prepared publication was an important event in the cultural life of Ukraine and the Crimea. It created the opportunity to familiarize a wide Ukrainian reading audience with the rich literary heritage of the Crimean Tatars. Presentations and reading conferences dedicated to this unique publication took place in a whole range of libraries, schools, and institutes of higher learning in the Crimea and in Ukraine. For example, in 2007, such presentations took place at Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University, the Crimean University of Industry and Pedagogy, and other locations. By the way, this anthology, was published within the framework of a series specially established in Ukraine *Spadshchyna kryms'kotatarskoyi dukhovnosti* (Legacy of Crimean Tatar spirituality).

As a rule, the books in this series are issued in Ukrainian or parallel Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar translation. Within the framework of this series, the books were published in Kyiv as well as in Simferopol.

Crimean Tatar-Ukrainian ties have taken shape in the field of art as well. In this, the Crimean Tatar Academic Music and Drama Theater, the Crimean Tatar folklore ensemble *K'yrym*, and the artistic ensemble *Khaitarma* have shown themselves to be particularly active. Their members have ventured beyond the Crimea to perform in Kyiv and Ukrainian regions, putting on stage productions and concert programs that familiarize Ukrainian viewers and the public at large with treasures from the Crimean Tatar people's centuries-old art.

Starting in 2004 and extending over the course of several years, the theater festival *Krymskii kovcheg* (Crimean ark) was held, on the basis of Crimean Tatar theater. During the festival, theater collectives from Kyiv and Ukraine's regions

participated alongside other theaters, presenting their most successful new stage productions. With great curiosity and enthusiasm, Ukrainian viewers in Kyiv, other provincial centers and towns throughout the country attend the concerts of the ensembles *K'yrym* and *Khaitarma*, thereby discovering for themselves the multifaceted and original art of the Crimean Tatar people, which had remained largely unknown to them for so long.

The popularization of Crimean Tatar applied art among the Ukrainian public is being pursued within the framework of the project *Krymskyy stil'* (Crimean style), led by Mamut Churlu. In Churlu's words, the project's basic goal is the unification and coordination of efforts by Crimean Tatar artists and masters of applied folk art working in different genres of national art based on the study of the ancient ornaments and traditions of past folk craftsmen, as well as the renaissance and development of all the many forms that fall within the Crimean style of national art and their widespread popularization among the inhabitants of Ukraine.

Within the framework of realizing the project *Krymskyy stil'*, a series of exhibitions were organized in Kyiv, Lviv, Mariupol', and Simferopol. On display were several hundred works by Crimean Tatar artists and masters of applied art in painting, sculpture, embroidery, weaving, ornamental painting, ceramics, metal processing, wood, leather, and jewelry.

The realization of the project *Krymskyy stil'* also facilitated the creation of *Chatyr-Dag'*, a creative union of artists and like-minded persons. They strive to identify talented persons - first and foremost among children and adolescents - who have the desire and technical skills to work in artistic and applied folk art, to refine their craftsmanship through the study of past national examples, as well as to create unconventional works of modern Crimean Tatar decorative-applied art and to popularize them among the Ukrainian public.

The Days of Crimean Tatar Culture, held in Lviv in August 2004 and February 2007, generated lively interest among local inhabitants. The program included exhibitions and a series of other events within the framework of *Krymskyy stil'*, encounters and training sessions with famous Crimean Tatar artists and masters of decorative-applied art such as Mamut Churlu, Rustema Skibina, Asana Galimova, Abdul Seyt-Ametova, and others.

The Days of Crimean Tatar Culture took place in Kyiv from 16 to 22 December 2003. Within the framework of the Kyiv program, an exhibition of works by famous Crimean Tatar artists was opened in the National Museum of Art under the title *Krym glazami krymskikh tatar* (Crimea through the eyes of the Crimean Tatars), while the State Museum of Ukrainian Decorative Folk Art held an exhibition of Crimean Tatar featuring examples of embroidery, weaving, ceramic, and jewelry. This event was important for the Crimean Tatars themselves, inasmuch as the exhibition presented works by artists who had been born and lived a large part of their lives in places of deportation. Only with their return in the 1990s had

they been able to experience Crimea fully, and these feelings were reflected in their works. Particularly noteworthy are the works of famous artists such as Ramiz Ne-tovkin, Irfan Nafeev, Zarema Trasinova, Rustem Eminov, and others.

The gala concert that took place in the building of the National Opera of Ukraine provided a kind of artistic chronicle, a theatrical presentation of the Crimean Tatar people's history from the time of the Crimean khanate to the present day. With this journey to Kyiv, the organizers and performers demonstrated not only a desire to talk about the Crimean Tatars's rich and unique culture, they demonstrated a desire to refine their craftsmanship and grow creatively.

## Conclusion

It is necessary to note that in the first three decades of the previous century Ukrainian-Crimean Tatar ties were normal, natural as between neighbors. But over the course of several decades in the post-war era, they vanished. Rather they bore an ideologized character: the general deportation of the Crimean Tatars from their native lands, repressions on the part of the Soviet authorities, and, as a result, the emergence of public contempt and animosity toward the Tatars. All of this had negative consequences in every sphere of life in the Crimean Tatar community.

This tendency changed with the start of the Tatars' return to the Crimea en masse in the early 1990s and the attainment of Ukrainian independence. Since then, cultural and literary ties between the two peoples have assumed an irreversible character.

The tragedy of the Crimean Tatars, their general deportation, was understandable to the Ukrainian people. The Ukrainians themselves had lived through the tragic events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the Red Terror of 1918-1920 and the Great Famine of 1932-1933 organized by the Soviet authorities.

Not everyone believed the Soviet version that the entire nation had been guilty of "treason" during the German occupation. Those who suffered the most were those who remembered pre-war Crimea, "Tatar" Crimea. And such people were not few in number, neither in Crimea nor in Ukraine as a whole. Such thoughts were not alien to writers and poets, and those thoughts were reflected in their work. The best confirmation of this are the poems of Orest Ivanovych Korsovets'kyy (1925-2000), a Ukrainian poet and scholar from Vynnytsia region whose adopted home was the Black Sea region of Crimea:

*The song is silenced, yet I must hear it  
A foreign trouble has become mine  
The Tatar fate is embedded within my soul  
I walk through a fog, my soul is weep...*

The Crimean Tatars knew Korsovets'kyy, loved him, and even protected him, fully aware of his conflicts with the chauvinists.<sup>30</sup>

In the creative work written by poets about the Crimea, there is an optimism and logical connection between the advent of "better times" and the sheer fact of the indigenous people's return. One can even speak of a "Ukrainian-Crimean phenomenon". Poets from the Ukrainian lands speak of the Crimean Tatars with overt sympathy, convinced of their better future:

*Let's build a madrasah  
And universities, too.  
For our children and theirs,  
This will all come true.*<sup>31</sup>

These optimistic lines belong to Anna Hrytsyuk. The faith of this poet in better times is based on her knowledge of this people's positive character traits.

Orest Korsovets'kyy in his poems, which are imbued with a special optimism, dreamt of "his" Crimea, where, as in the Crimea of Svyatoslav Sosnovs'kyy (1937-1993, editor at the publishing house Tavriia, murdered in Simferopol), Petro Hryhorenko (1907-1987 Soviet dissident and later exilé), Vyacheslav Chornovil (1937-1999, Ukrainian dissident and later politician, died under unclear circumstances). They always recognized the indigenous people with their own proper place. Therefore, Korsovetskyj wrote with joy:

*The mirages are dissolving,  
They're going, the Tatars.  
They are whi-i-irling! They are whi-i-irling!  
May their path be easy!*<sup>32</sup>

Thus, the poet confirms that, in addition to the Russified Crimea, a Tatar and Ukrainian Crimea still exists, well-meaning and averse to chauvinism.<sup>33</sup>

An important factor in the intercommunication and mutual enrichment of Crimean Tatar-Ukrainian culture is the creative work of individual activists in the field of art, their civic activism and longing to make a contribution to the cause of popularizing the best examples of their own national culture and art among their neighbors.

In the field of cinematography, several landmark films were made in the 2000s. For example, in 2003, Oles' Sanin, a young Ukrainian director, made the film *Mamai*, and in 2004, director Oleksandr Muratov made the film *Tatarskyy triptikh* (Tatar triptych), which was based on three works by Mykhaylo Kotsyubyns'kyy. The main roles in these two films were played by Crimean Tatar actors, which provided

for an atmosphere full of national color.

Another landmark event in Crimean Tatar culture was the making of the first Crimean Tatar feature film *Khaitarma* by director Akhtem Seytablaev. The film recounts the deportation of Crimean Tatars in 1944. With extremely scarce funding but a tremendous degree of enthusiasm on the part of his compatriots, Seytablaev succeeded in making a film about a people's terrible tragedy. Thanks to Seytablaev's film, Ukrainians learned about the genocide that befell the Crimean Tatars. The film found great resonance and garnered much praise from Ukrainian and foreign audiences. By way of example, it is necessary to mention the screening of the film that took place at the Ukrainian Embassy in Berlin on September 26, 2013. The event was attended by local residents and representatives of the Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian diasporas living in Germany.

Summing up the foregoing observations, it can be noted that Crimean Tatar-Ukrainian cultural and literary contacts have successfully endured the trials of challenging periods of the two peoples' histories, especially in the last three decades since the establishment of an independent Ukrainian state, the mass return of Crimean Tatars from their places of deportation to their historical homeland, and their integration into Ukrainian society.

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## Endnotes

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