

UKRAINIAN FAIRY TALES AND LEGENDS

UKRAINISCHE MÄRCHEN UND SAGEN

UKRAÏNSKIE BAŚNIE I LEGENDY

UKRAINA MUTU JA LEGENDID

FIABE E LEGENDE UCRINE

Українські Приповітки и Легенде

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ÚRSÉALTA AGUS FINSÉALTA UCRAINIS

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UKRAJINSKÉ POHÁDKY A POVĚSTI

CONTES ET LÉGENDES UKRAINIENNES

CUENTOS DE HADAS Y LENDAS UCRANIANA

OEKRAÏENSE SPROOKJEN EN LEGENDES

UKRAÏNU PASAKAS IR LEGENDOS

우크라이나 동화와 전설

UKRAÏNSKIE PASAKOS IR LEGENDOS

UKRAÏNAN SADUJA JA LEGENDOJA

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PËRRALLAT DHE LEGJENDAT E UKRAINËS

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BERNHARD LAUER

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AND LEGENDS

Kassel 2024



IMPRESSUM

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FOREWORD

After the Russian attack and the war of aggression against Ukraine, we put together documents and works of art from our collections related to Ukraine at the Brothers Grimm Center in Kassel and used them to create an exhibition, which we first presented in march 2022 in our showrooms at Brüder Grimm-Platz and afterwards also in the district hall of the County Council (Landkreis Kassel). This exhibition will now continue to travel and will give interested people initial access to the history and the culture of Ukraine.

In August 2022 we were also able to attend the conference of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) among the members of the International Committee of Literary and Composers Museums (ICLCM) presenting a lecture on this topic in the Museum of Czech Literature (Muzeum Literatury – Památník Národního Písémnictví · Pelléova 44/22, 160 00 Praha 6-Bubeneč). This publication is based on this lecture and has been enriched with numerous images from our collections.

May this issue help to strengthen understanding of the history and the culture of Ukrainian People and promote Ukraine to find its place in the community of all European peoples.

Kassel, summer 2024

Bernhard Lauer

HISTORY DATA

862 Scandinavian traders, the Varangians (Old Norse: “væringjar”; Old Slavic: “варяже” or “варязи”), advanced to the Black and Caspian Seas via the rivers Dūna (Daugava), Volkhov, Dnieper and Volga. Their descendants then dominated large areas of Eastern and Southeastern Europe and pushed back the steppe peoples. The Varangian Rjurik is named in old chronicles as the mythical founder of a Slavic Empire in Novgorod. His successor Oleg (Old Slavic: “Ольгъ”; Old North: “Helgi”) moved to Kiev in 882 and founded there the so-called “Kievan Rus”.

988 The Kiev Grand Duke Vladimir (ukrain.: Volodymyr), later called “the saint”, adopted Christian Orthodox faith.

1051 Foundation of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra (“Києво-Печерська лавра”) as an educational center for the entire Rus’.

1223 In the battle near the Kalka river, the Kievan Empire felt to the Mongols. After the destruction of Kiev (1240), the principality of Halych-Volhynia strengthened.

1321 After the battle near the Irpen river, many eastern principalities felt to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. At the same time, Moscow was growing.

1569 With the Union of Lublin, large parts of Ukraine were incorporated into the united Polish-Lithuanian Noble Republic. At the same time the Ottoman Empire advanced from the south and Muscovite Russia from the east.

1648 Short-term establishment of a Cossack state under Bohdan Chmel’nyč’kyj. As a result, the areas east of the Dnieper river were subject to strong russification, and the areas west of it were subject to further polonization.

1772 After the partitions of Poland (most recently in 1795), Galicia and Bukovina became part of the Habsburg Empire (until 1918), while Russia incorporated large areas in the east and south. The cities of Sevastopol (1783), Simferopol (1784) and Odessa (1793) were founded on the Crimea peninsula and on the Black Sea.

1917 Founding of the “Ukrainian People’s Republic” with an independent parliament (until 1920).

1922 Formation of the “Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic” as part of the Soviet Union. Stalin subsequently murdered almost the entire Ukrainian elite and in 1931/33 caused the death of around four million people through the forced collectivization of the farmers. Until 1939, Galicia, Bukovina and Bessarabia belonged to Poland and Romania respectively.

1939 As a result of the Hitler-Stalin pact, Polish eastern Galicia, northern Bukovina and Bessarabia came to the Soviet Union. Mass shootings and deportations began there immediately.

1941 With Hitler’s attack on the Soviet Union, the entire Ukraine was occupied by the German Wehrmacht. More than two million Jews died in the Holocaust here alone. Many more millions died in the German war of aggression in Ukraine as a result of deportation and forced labor.

1945 After the Second World War, Galicia and other areas were annexed to Soviet Ukraine. The majority of the Polish population was resettled to Silesia, while around 300,000 Ukrainians were deported to Siberia.

1954 By decision of the Supreme Soviet, Crimea was given to Ukraine.

1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident.

1991 Exit of Ukraine from the Soviet Union · Establishment of an independent state as a parliamentary presidential republic

1994 Ukraine's renunciation of nuclear weapons while USA, England and Russia preserve together Ukrainian sovereignty

2004 Beginning of the so-called "Orange Revolution" with several weeks of peaceful protests against election fraud · As a result Viktor Yushchenko finally won the presidential election and appointed Yulia Tymoshenko as prime minister in 2005

2010 Viktor Yanukovych became president of Ukraine and developed pro-Moscow policies by persecuting political opponents and ultimately rejecting in 2013 the association agreement with the European Community

2013 Start of protests on the Maidan in Kiev against the Russia-friendly corrupt regime of Yanukovych

2014 Expansion of the Maidan protests with more than hundred deaths, in the end Yanukovych flees to Russia · Russian annexation of Crimea and military escalation in Donbass, during which a Malaysian Airlines airliner was shot down by pro-Russian separatists, killing 298 people · Declaration of the so-called "sovereign people's republics" of Donetsk and Luhansk

2022 Russia invades Ukraine with systematic destructions and war crimes.

CULTURAL HISTORY OF UKRAINE

Today's Ukraine is a young nation, but it is on its way to Europe, and we should support it in all respects! The history of Ukraine



1. Mosaic of the Praying Mother of God in the Cathedral of St. Sophia in Kiev, 10th century

ne has been marked over the centuries by great complexity and changeability. The term “Ukraine” contains the Slavic word for “border”, the name therefore means “borderland”, originally in particular the “border to the nomadic steppe”: that means the dividing line between sedentary and non-sedentary people and this had for centuries fundamental importance. This “borderland” was also the habitat of the Cossacks,

who played a significant role in Ukrainian history. The word “Ukraine” was first mentioned in the Old Slavic Hypathius Chronicle from the 12th century.

After the fall of the medieval Kievan State (the so-called “Kievan Rus”) – I will come back to this later –, the territory of Ukraine was always ruled by foreign powers until the 20th century: – first by the Polish-Lithuanian Noble Republic (the so-called “Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth”) in the north and in the west and the Ottoman Empire in the south, later also by the Grand Duchy of Moscow, which became particularly strong from 16th century.

In various historiographical narratives of modern times, however, this has led to the fact, that Ukraine was not presented as a country nor as a people nor as a linguistic nation. Our exhibition, organised under the title “Ukrainische Märchen und Sagen · Українські казки та легенди” in 2022 therefore pursues the goal of making clear to the audience the uniqueness and diversity of Ukrainian cultural history in contrast to prevailing narrative only of a thousand-year of Russian history.

In the encyclopedic dictionary “Le Grand Dictionnaire Historique (...) commencé en 1674 par Louis Moréri” (1643–1680); quoted here from the Basel edition of 1740) we read under the keyword “Ukraine” (vol. VI, p. 963 f.):

“Province dont une partie dependent de la Pologne & l’autre de la Moscovie (...). Ce nom signifie frontière en langue esclavonne à cause qu’elle confine avec les terres des Turcs & des Tartares ...”

[“a province dependent on Poland on the one hand and Muscovy on the other (...). The name means border in the Slavic language because it borders on the lands of the Turks & Tatars ...”].

With the partitions of Poland from 1772 to 1795, this narrative changed at the end of the 18th century; now the areas in the east, in the middle and in the south were ruled by the Russian Tsarist Empire, while the western Ukraine (essentially Galicia and Bukovina) was occupied by Austria-Hungary. At the same time, the alliance of the new powers continued to push back the Ottoman Empire in the south – above all with the final Tsarist conquest of the Crimean peninsula and also of Bessarabia.

A caricature by the French artist Jean-Michel Moreau (Le Jeune; 1741–1814) shows the Russian Tsarina Catherine II with la-



2. Jean-Michel Moreau Le Jeune (1741–1814) and Noël Le Mire (1724–1801): *Gâteau des Rois* (*Cake of the Kings*). Caricature, 1773

ter German Emperor Joseph II and Prussian King Frederick II, dividing the Polish map like a pie, while the last Polish King Stanisław Poniatowski (1732–1798) is still trying to stop this. The map is shown north-facing, that means: north is at the bottom and south is at the top. This determined not only the fate of Poland but also that of Ukraine. From then, Ukraine was only presented as “Little Russia” and regarded as a “Russian province”. If you look at the encyclopedic dictionary, published by Brockhaus in 1836, you will find only a very short note about “Ukraine”:

“Ukraine ist ein, wahrscheinlich aus dem Polnischen, wo es so viel als auf der Grenze bedeutet, stammender, seit der Eroberung Kiows oder Kiews durch die Lithauer in allgemeinen Gebrauch kommender Name, welcher damals die äußerste Grenze gegen die Tataren und andere nomadische Stämme bezeichnete. Später verstand man unter Ukraine den ausgedehnten fruchtbaren Landstrich an den Ufern des mittleren Dniepr nebst den Sitzen der Kosacken mit ziemlich schwankenden Grenzen. Diese Gegenden, bis auf Peter den Großen ein beständiger Zankapfel zwischen Rußland und Polen, machen den größten Theil Kleinrußlands aus und sind durch herrliche Weiden, Pferde- und Rindviehzucht ausgezeichnet. Der Name Ukraine ist jetzt nur noch historisch ...”

[“Ukraine is a name, probably derived from Polish, where it means as much as on the border, in common use since the conquest of Kiev by Lithuanians, which at that time indicated the outermost border against Tatars and other nomadic tribes. Later Ukraine was described as extensive fertile tract of land on the banks of the river Dnepr, with seats of the Cossacks and rather shaky borders. These districts, a constant bone of contention between Russia and Poland until Peter the Great, make up the greater part of Little Russia, and are distinguished by splendid pastures, horse-breeding and cattle-breeding. The name of Ukraine is now only historical ...”]

Until the First World War, Ukrainians were referred to only as “Little Russians” or “Ruthenians”, and their language, literature and art were usually only presented in the context of Russian or Polish cultural history. This narrative has continued up to the present day. I would like to give you three examples.

1. At the end of the 20th century in 1996 the well-known German publisher Bechtermünz presented an opulent illustrated volume entitled “Rußland – Seele, Kultur, Geschichte” (Russia – Soul, Culture, History) for the preparation of “The Millennium Celebration of Russia” (“with the Blessing of His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Alexej II”). All cultural achievements and peculiarities of medieval “Kievan Rus” together with other Slavic principalities on today’s territory of Ukraine were there subsumed under the term “Old Russian”, which is unfortunately also used in modern Slavic Studies.

2. The national Russian ideology of subsuming the entire medieval East Slavic culture – hence the common cultural heritage of Ukrainians, Belarusians and Russians – under this scientifically one-sided and incorrect terminology was also shown in the great German-Russian exhibition entitled “Tausend Jahre Russische Kunst” (Thousand Years of Russian [*sic!*] Art). This exhibition was held in 1988 at Schloß Gottorf in Schleswig-Holstein; as is well known, the heir to the Russian throne Peter III came from there; in 1745 he married German princess Sophie Auguste v. Anhalt-Zerbst – the later Tsarina Catherine II. At the end he was murdered in 1762, less than six months after his accession to the Russian throne.

3. The narrative of “dominant Russian culture” has solidified and is finally shown in a popular German chronicle entitled “Rußland – Geschichte und Gegenwart” (Russia – History and Present), printed in Cologne in 1991. Here all cultural phenomena of the region from the ancient Scythians up to the present day are only related to Russia. Grand Duke Vladimir of Kiev, who accepted Orthodox Christianity in 988, becomes here “Rus-

sian Grand Duke” and the “Kievan Rus” is described only as the “germ cell of Russia”.



3. The Kievo-Pecherska Lavra (known as the Kiev Monastery of the Caves), founded in 1051 · Photo of the author, 2015

The cultural history of Ukraine is, nonetheless, characterized by a diversity and richness that is difficult to summarize in a short essay. Scythians, Greeks and numerous nomadic tribes have left their mark here since ancient times. The Slavic conquest took place after the invasion of the Huns and the great migrations of the fourth and fifth centuries. In the 9th and 10th

centuries, the powerful Slavic empire of the so-called “Kievan Rus” developed, which, however, broke up into numerous small principalities after the Mongol invasion of the 13th century.

One of the most important buildings in the early period of the “Kievan Rus” is the Cathedral of St. Sophia in Kiev with outstanding frescoes and mosaics. One of the oldest Slavic monasteries, the so-called “Києво-Печерська лавра” (Kievo-Pecherska Lavra), with a large number of important churches and underground monks’ caves is located also in Kiev and was always one of the most important spiritual centers of the Orthodox Church.



4. *Vasyl Demut-Malynov-s'kyj (1779–1846) and Peter Clodt v. Jürgensburg (1805–1867): Monument of St. Vladimir in Kiev, 1853*

Just as Germans and French look back in the same way to “Karl the great” or “Charlemagne” as a common founding myth, also the three

East Slavic peoples of Ukrainians, Russians and Belarusians see themselves in the tradition of medieval Kievan Empire (“Rus”). They refer above all to the Grand Duke in Kiev who accepted Orthodox christianity in 988; he is called today “Vladimir” in Russian, “Volodymyr” in Ukrainian and “Uladzimir” in Belarusian.

UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE + LITERATURE

The language and literature of the East Slavic peoples go back to the inconsistent but common tradition of Church Slavonic (“словѣньскъ љзыкъ”). The “Slavic apostles” Cyril and Methodius, who came from Thessaloniki (Θεσσαλονίκη) in the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium), translated gospels and liturgical texts for the proselytizing of the “Great Moravian Empire” (in German: “Großmährisches Reich”; in Czech: “Velká Morava”) in the 9th century, which aspired to oppose the influence of Rome. Their linguistic creativity subsequently formed the basis for the cultural development and flowering of the so-called “Kievan Rus” and all subsequent East Slavic principalities.



5. *The Kiev-Fragments or Kiev Folios · A seven-folio Glagolitic Old Church Slavonic manuscript containing parts of the Roman-rite liturgy · Latter half of the 10th century*

The term “Old Russian language” or “Old Russian literature” refers too one-sidedly to Muscovite and Tsarist Russia and should therefore be better and more appropriately rendered to the term “Old East Slavonic”.

The earliest documents of Old Slavonic literature are the so-called “Kiev Folios”. They probably date back to the 10th century and contain various prayers written in Glagolitic script. Today they are kept in the library of the Ukrainian Academy in Kiev. Linguistically, they relate to the Pannonian region, which – after the defeat of the Avars and long before the Hungarian invasion – was settled predominantly by Slavic people. In addition to the facsimile of the “Kiev Folios” we also exhibited a facsimile of the “Codex Asemanianus” kept in the Vatican Library in Rome, also written in Glagolitic.

Only later the Cyrillic alphabet, probably originated in Bulgaria, was established in the Kievan Empire. One of the most important medieval manuscripts is the so-called “Kievan Psalter”, written in Kiev in the end of the 14th century with more than 300 miniatures. The work contains the psalms of the “Old Testament”. The first text page shows in the upper half the Redeemer, next to him the Blessed Mother and John the Baptist, the Archangels Michael and Gabriel and the Apostles Peter and Paul. In the lower half the “Advice to the Dishonest” is represented in a miniature according to psalm 1.1.3: “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the un-



6. *Kievan Psalter* ·
Title. Kiev 1397



7. *The Kievan Psalter · Beginning of the text on fol. 2r with two miniatures. Kiev 1397 · Full facsimile: St. Petersburg: Iskustvo, 1978 (BLM: K 1397/1)*

godly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of God ...” The codex has an interesting history: it first came into the possession of the Jewish merchant and high Lithuanian civil servant Abraham Ezofovicz, who, after his conversion to Orthodox christianity, donated it to St. Nicholas Church in Vilnius in 1518. This codex is equally significant for Ukrainian, Russian and Belarusian cultural history. In the exhibition the facsimile published by the Russian Academy of Sciences was shown.

In the course of history, small and large centers arose throughout the territory of the “Kievan Rus” in which Old Church Slavonic, initially reserved only for liturgy, was enriched and mixed with local elements. However, the linguistic development of the entire East Slavic area up to the 18th century is characterized by the fact that no uniform literary and written language could develop. This can also be shown by the early Church Slavonic book printing, which

did not start in Moscow, but in Kraków (Cracow resp. Krakau), Vilnius (Wilna), L'viv (Lwów resp. Lemberg) and Ostroh (Ostrog). The slavic book printer Ivan Fedorov, who lived from around 1510 to 1583, came from Moscow, but he worked in Ostrog (Ostroh) and Lemberg (L'viv). His Bible, printed in 1580/81, is the first complete book in Church Slavonic language and equally significant for Ukrainian, Russian and Belarusian culture.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, the popular heroic poems of Ukrainian Cossacks played also an important role, as did the religious and secular Kievan Baroque literature too. But similar to modern Russian, the modern Ukrainian written and literary language only developed at the end of the 18th and in the beginning 19th centuries.



8. *Šestodnev (Book for six days).*
Early Church Slavonic print. Cracow 1491



9. *Malaja podorožnaja knižnica*
(Small collection on the go). Early Church Slavonic print. Vilnius · Wilna 1522



10. Ivan Fedorov: *First complete translation of the Bible into Church Slavonic. Ostroh · Ostrog 1580/81*

The satirical traves-ty “Eneida” (Енеїда: first published in 1798; completely in 1842 in Charkiv) by Ivan Kotljarevskij (1769–1838) is of out-standing importance for Ukrainian Litera-ture. The author, born in Poltava, recreates various aspects of the Ukrainian society in the second half of the 18th century. The po-pular depiction and the simple language of the work determined great success among contemporaries. La-ter, even operas were composed on the ba-sis of “Eneida”.

However, the real founder of modern Ukrainian literature is

Taras Ševčenko (1814–1861), who distinguished himself as a writer and a painter. Born into a family of poor serfs in the villa-ge Morynci in the Kiev Governorate, he had arduously acquired his education by self-taught. It was not until 1838 that he was

redeemed from serfdom in St. Petersburg in a lottery organized by artists and poets of the Russian capital, but he was arrested again in 1847 and deported to Central Asia on the orders of the Russian tsar.

Only in 1857 he was able to return, but due to poor health he died in St. Petersburg in 1861. With his collection of poems named “Kobzar” and first published in 1840, Taras Ševčenko took up the tradition of traveling singers, the so-called “Kobzars”. Their songs, mostly performed with bagpipes or bowl-necked lutes, usually relate to the history of Ukraine, telling from the Cossacks’ love of freedom or from the oppression of common people. In his poetry, Ševčenko always championed the common people and their striving for freedom and independence. He processed folk motifs, gave them a broader meaning, combining it with philosophical, political and ideological reflections on the destiny of the Ukrainian nation.

Nineteenth-century Ukrainian poetry, in contrast to Russian poetry, is truly folk literature. Almost all of the



11. *Leontij Kašteljančuk: Portrait of Ivan Kotljarevskiy. Painting, 18th c.*



12. *Ivan Kramskiy: Posthumous portrait of Taras Ševčenko. Painting, 1871*



13. Taras Ševčenko: *Kobzar'*. Title with frontispiece of the first edition. St. Petersburg: Tipografija K. Fišer, 1840

great Russian writers came from the nobility, enjoyed an excellent education and were able to acquire the entire universe of art, poetry and music in European capitals and resorts.

Compare f.e. the fate of Ukrainian poet Taras Ševčenko with the live of Russian writer Ivan Turgenyev, (1818–1883) who was about the same age: Turgenyev not only lacked for material things, but could live more in Paris or Baden-Baden than on his Russian estates near Orel.



14. Unknown Artist: Portrait of Lesja Ukraïnka (Pseud.: Larisa Kosáč). Graphical collage for the Council of Europe, 2019

After the Polish uprising of 1863, the dissemination of Ukrainian literature for all publications and on the stage was banned and punished throughout the whole Russian Empire. Nevertheless, the Ukrainian language and literature were able to develop further, especially in Galicia, which



15. Meeting of Ukrainian Poets in L'viv / Lemberg (1898) on the occasion of the centenary of Kotljarevs'kyj's "Aeneid". Bottom: Mychajlo Pavlyk, Jevhenija Jarošyns'ka, Natalija Kobryns'ka, Ol'ha Kobyljan'ska, Syl'vestr Lepkyj, Andrij Čajkovs'kyj, Kost' Pan'kivs'kyj · Middle: Ivan Kopač, Volodymyr Hnatjuk, Osyp Makovej, Mychajlo Hruševs'kyj, Ivan Franko, Oleksandr Kolessa, Bohdan Lepkyj · Top: Ivan Petruševyč, Filaret Kolessa, Josyp Kyšakevyč, Ivan Truš, Denys Luk'janovyč, Mykola Ivasjuk

belonged to Austria-Hungary until 1918. Its most important representatives subsequently included Ivan Franko (1856–1916), Mychajlo Kocjubyns'kyj (1864–1913) and Lesja Ukraïnka (1871–1913). On the occasion of the centenary of "Eneida" a meeting of Ukrainian poets took place in L'viv (Lemberg) on 31th October 1898, which was documented in a photograph. In the 20th century, the three East Slavic literatures had finally to fit into Soviet culture, accompanied by an important exile poetry.

UKRAINIAN FAIRY TALES AND LEGENDS

Under the influence of romantic concepts, interest in folk poetry developed in the 19th century also in the Tsarist Empire. Folk songs, fairy tales, sagas and legends from all parts

of the country were collected and documented. Texts from Ukraine were initially given only the term “Little Russian” and were published rather only in Russian. In the famous collection of “Russian folk tales” (Russkie narodnye skazki) published in Moscow from 1855 to 1863 by Aleksandr Afanasiev (1826–1871) we can find, f.e. more than fifty texts based on Ukrainian sources.



16. Taras Ševčenko: Portrait of Mychajlo Maksymovyč. Drawing, 1859 · Title page of Maksymovyč's "Ukrainian Folk Songs". Moscow: Univ. Tip., 1834



17. Friedrich Bodenstedt. Photo, 1860 · "Coll. of Ukrainian Folksongs", 1845

Early references to storytelling tradition in Ukraine can be found in old chronicles, in legends of saints and in the heroic epics of the Cossacks. The ethnologist Mykola Certelev (1790–1869), from Georgian nobility,

published already in 1819 a collection of heroic and love songs from “Little Russia”. After him, the botanist and later rector of the Kiev University Mychajlo Maksymovyč (1804–1873) edited in 1827 in Moscow “Little Russian Songs”, using from 1834 onwards the term “Ukrainian”. Some of these texts were edited in German in 1845 by the writer and translator Friedrich Bodenstedt (1819–1892).

It was only later that true-to-the-text recordings of Ukrainian folk poetry based on oral tradition were undertaken. Ivan Rudčenko (that is: Ivan Bilyk; 1845–1905) published in 1869 an extensive collection of fairy tales under the title “South Russian Folk Tales”. However, the Tsarist ban on the Ukrainian language severely hampered further publications. For example, the collection of 642 Ukrainian fairy tales compiled by Andrij Dymyns’kyj (1826 or 1829–1905) was not printed until 1928. Therefore, editions of Ukrainian fairy tales in the Russian, Polish and German languages must also be taken into account up to the beginning 20th century. Important collectors and publishers were further Ihnatij z Nyklovych, Mychajlo Drahomanov, Pavlo Čubyns’kyj, Volodymyr Lesevyč, Borys Hrinčenko, Volodymyr Hnjatuk and many others. Writers such as Ivan Franko



18. Panas Myrnyj (Pseud.: Panas Rudčenko; 1849–1920) and Ivan Bilyk (Pseud.: Ivan Rudčenko; 1845–1905)



19. Jury Wowk (Heorhyj Volkov):
Ukrainian Fairy Tales. Vienna
 - Berlin - Leipzig - Munich:
 Rikola, 1921

(1856–1916) or Lesja Ukraïnka (1871–1913) published artistic adaptations of Ukrainian fairy tales. The exhaustive documentation of “Ukrainian Fairy Tales” compiled by folklorist Petro Lintur (1909–1969) and published in German by Akademie-Verlag in 1972 in Eastern Berlin is especially useful for research.

Ukrainian fairy tales can be roughly divided into three groups: magic or heroic tales, animal tales and everyday tales. Under the influence of the Catholic example and fable poetry, fairy tales became a special educational position. Human strengths and weaknesses are symbolically expressed in it.

The contrast between good and evil and between truth and lies has also a social character. The arbitrariness and excess of the landowner or the tsar, the moral decay of the clergy or general vices such as greed, laziness, drunkenness, talkativeness or ingratitude are accused in Ukrainian fairy tales. The hero always loves truth, work and diligence, and he is ready to help and support the poor and disenfranchised.

The first fully illustrated edition of Ukrainian fairy tales was published by Lotte Heller and Nadija Surovcova in 1921 by



20. Ukrainian Fairy Tales: "The Three Brothers", "Little Brother and his Entourage", "King Dragon" and "The King's Brother". Vienna, 1921

Austrian and German publishing house “Rikola”, based in Vienna, Berlin, Leipzig and Munich. It contains eight full-page illustrations by Ukrainian artist Heorhyj Volkov (1899–1961), in German “Jury Wowk”. This artist came from Kiev and fled in 1920 to Rome to escape the Bolsheviks who were also invading Ukraine. In 1922 he was admitted to go to Prague with a Nansen visa and worked there under the naturalized name “Jiří Vovk” as an illustrator and commercial artist until his death in 1961. His pictures are not only among the earliest

Ukrainian fairy tale illustrations, but also among the most beautiful.

Ukrainian fairy tales, especially animal tales, were often published with illustrations in the Soviet Union and also distributed in Western languages by the Moscow foreign language publishing house around the world. For example, there is an edition in French from 1955 entitled “Contes Populaires Ukrainiens où l’on Parle des Animaux”, which was illustrated with colored pictures by famous artist Ėvgenij Račev (1906–1997). There were also editions in other Western languages.



21. Ėvgenij Račev: *Ukrainian Fairy Tales (where we talk about animals)*. Transl. by Alice Orane. Moscow: Langues Étrangères, 1955



22. Ukrainian Fairy Tales: "The Cat Pan Kotofej", "The Goat Dereza",
"The Couc and the Ram" and "Sister Fox and Friend Wolf".
Moscow: Langues Étrangères, 1955



23. Ol'ha Jakutovyč (*1950; Ill.): "The Water of Rejuvenation" and "Ivan the Wind". From the edition: "How Ivan Visited the Sun – Ukrainian Heroic Fairy Tales". Kiev: Dnipro, 1989 (Edition in German)

24. Kost' Lavro: Kazka pro kotyka ta pivnyka. Ukraïnska narodna kazka u zapysi Lesi Ukraïnky (The Cat and the Rooster. Ukrainian Folk Tale Recorded by Lesja Ukraïnka). Kiev: Dytjače vydavnyctvo, 2008





25. Nadija Ponomarenko (*1951): "The Miracle of the Stone Hill" – Ukrainian Folk Tales from the Green Carpathians ("The Wall of Diamonds", "The Three Grains and their Gifts", "The immortal" and "Lucifer's Daughter"). Translated by Irene Ueberwolf. Kiev: Dnipro, 1987 (Edition in German)

In modern times Ukrainian fairy tales have repeatedly been published not only in Ukrainian or Russian, but also in German, English and French. From Kiev editions have been distributed throughout Europe. Numerous young Ukrainian artists created outstanding illustrations. In doing so, they took f.e. on specific Cossack motifs on the one hand, but also on folk motifs from the



26. Svitlana Kim: *Bilingual edition of the Jewish fairy tale "Chavele"*. Kiev: Veselka, 1992

Carpathian region on the other hand. For our exhibition we were able to collect more than fifty different richly illustrated editions up to the present.

A rather rare but very interesting phenomenon is the fairy tale “Chavele” from Ukrainian Galicia, published in Kiev in 1992, which was retold simultaneously in Ukrainian and Yiddish by Hanna Šnejderman with images by Svitlana Kim (*1947). The Ukrainian text is read in this edition from the front and the Yiddish text from the back. The somewhat strange story tells about the youngest daughter “Chavele”, who stays at home alone, tidies up and cleans while her father has gone to the synagogue with his son “Šmulik” and her mother has gone to the mill with her older daughter “Rochele”. A priest then comes by and takes „Chavele” to the church (ukrain.: “kostel”). The family later first asks ducks and roosters about “Chavele”, but only the turkeys know where she really is. At the end, the family is reunited.



27. Bilingual edition of the Jewish fairy tale “Chavele” in Ukrainian and in Yiddish. Kiev: Veselka, 1992



28. Mykola Kompanc: Braty Grimm – Kazki. Transl. by Sidor Sakydon. Kiev: Veselka, 1976

Finally, also the “Children’s and Household Tales” by the Brothers Grimm, along with other collections of fairy tales by Charles Perrault, Wilhelm Hauff or Hans Christian Andersen, were published in finely illustrated Ukrainian editions. We were able to document numerous editions from the Soviet era to the present day.

Our exhibition was first presented in the Brothers Grimm Center in Kassel, later on a larger scale with presentation of music by Ukrainian composers in the Kassel district hall. The



29. Borys Djedorov: *Nimec'ki narodni kazky zapysani bratami Grimm. Dlja molodšogo škil'noho viku (German folk tales recorded by the Brothers Grimm. For School-Age Children). Title with "Hänsel and Gretel" and Illustration "The Ghost in the Glass". Kiev: Veselka, 1982*

exhibition initially consisted of three graphically designed information panels about the history of Ukraine, about the language and literature of Ukraine, and about the tradition of Ukrainian fairy tales and legends. In addition, we presented documents on ancient Slavic and Ukrainian cultural history in facsimile editions. The territorial history of Ukraine was illustrated with maps from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and current photographs of important cultural and architectural monuments in the country testified the Ukrainian contribution to the history of fine arts. The main focus however was on illustrated editions of Ukrainian fairy tales and legends, designed by numerous Ukrainian, Russian and also German artists, and finally on various Ukrainian editions of Grimm's fairy tales, which have also attracted the interest of many Ukrainian artists. The exhibition is now also available in electronic form in English and in German and can be loaned out for further presentations on request.

Many people, especially women and children, today have fled Ukraine. We therefore could welcome groups from Kiev, Charkiv and even Bucha in the Center of the Brothers Grimm. In the future we want to establish further contacts with colleagues and museums of Ukraine, and I think ICOM and ICLCM should follow!

May freedom and democracy prevail in Ukraine – and also in Belarus and in Russia!

Bernhard Lauer
Head of the Center of the Brothers Grimm
Association of the Brothers Grimm in Kassel · Germany



*30. Ukrainian Exhibition at the Center of the Brothers Grimm in Kassel
(April 19th to May 13th, 2022)*

