

Ad fontes: Borys Jakubs'kyj's *Nauka virshuvannia* and Formation of the Ukrainian Science of Verse

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Abstract. The essay describes an arduous process of formation of verse studies in Ukraine in the early 1920s. Borys Jakubs'kyj's book *Nauka virshuvannia* [The Science of Versification] published in Kyiv in 1922 served as the first harbinger of a new Ukrainian theory of verse. In developing his science of versification Jakubs'kyj relied on the instrumentarium of the proponents of the Formalist method in literary studies who belonged to the Petrograd Society for the Study of the Poetic Language, known as OPOJAZ, and primarily on the concepts developed by Boris Tomashevskij who pretty much singlehandedly established the OPOJAZ approach to verse theory. After the publication of Jakubs'kyj's book Tomashevskij also wrote a succinct review in which he expressed the wish to see it translated into Russian (which never happened).

Keywords: verse theory, science of versification, Ukrainian poetry, literary criticism in Ukraine, East Slavic Formalism, Borys Jakubs'kyj, Boris Tomashevskij (Tomashevshky)

Turning and turning in the widening gyre...

William Butler Yeats

Ad fontes! Тобто йдімо до перших джерел, доходьмо кореня.

Микола Зеров¹

The book of the Ukrainian literary scholar and critic Borys Jakubs'kyj (1889–1944) *Nauka virshuvannia* [Science of Versification] was released in 1922 by the Kyiv publishing house “Slovo”.² With dignified modesty, the

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¹ Mykola Zerov: “That is, let's go to the first sources, get to the root...” All translations from the Ukrainian and Russian languages are ours.

² The book was sent to printers in December 1921. Compare the announcement in the Kharkiv art magazine: “The ‘Slovo’ Publishing House commenced printing of Jakubs'kyj's book *Nauka virshuvannia* of about 8 author sheets in size” (*Shliakhy Mystetstva* [Ways of Art]. Misiashnyk khudozhnogo sektora Holovpolitovsity. 2 (December 1921): 145).

author called his work “an elementary textbook on versification”,³ however, the *Nauka virshuvannia* turned out to be the first groundbreaking example of a consistent presentation of the theory of verse in Ukrainian literary science. As the author stated in his introduction, “This little book is the first Ukrainian attempt to provide, albeit a limited overview of the science of versification, and present at least the first horizons of poetic art” (4).⁴

The phenomenon of Jakubs'kyj's book was justified by the context of the establishing of literary scholarship in Ukraine as a complex science. In the first half of the 1920s, the study of versification, invariably relegated to the theoretical category, occupied a secondary position in relation to literary criticism, which had a strictly pragmatic character, and to literary history, which appeared to be of a more applied nature (see Sinchenko 2014). So, from the point of view of the latter, the publication of the *Nauka virshuvannia* coincided with the resurgence of artistic life in Kyiv after several years of war, tragedy and darkness.

Surprisingly, such juxtaposition of theory and practice further expanded on the literary confrontation between two cultural capitals of Ukraine. The fact that Jakubs'kyj's book was published in Kyiv became a point of illustration: “The same goes for theorizing in the field of poetics. Kharkiv is a practitioner, Kyiv is a theorist. In opposition to a small but meaningful book ‘*Nauka virshuvannia*’ by Jakubs'kyj Kharkiv can only offer practical advice on how to write poetry. The critics from Kyiv badly or well represent ‘scientific criticism,’ while ours are engaged in popularization. Where Kyiv is an organized group, it feels itself, but where its artists have to do something at their own risk, it feels confused” (Dolenho 1923: 157).

However, even against the background of other scholarly editions presented in the announcements of the reopening publishing houses, a monograph on the theory of verse looked a tad strange,

The “Slovo” Publishing House has developed a lively activity in Kyiv. The following things are being printed now:

1) *Zbirnyk na koryst' holodaiuchykh* [Collection in Benefit of Those Starving].

³ Jakubs'kyj addressed his book to “Ukrainian lovers of poetry”, but at the same time saw as the task of his work, “in combining the popularity of the book with answers to the most difficult problems of modern theory of versification” (Jakubs'kyj 1922: V; further on in reference to the *Nauka virshuvannia*, we only mark the page numbers in that edition of Jakubs'kyj's book.

⁴ On Jakubs'kyj see Natalija Kostenko's introduction to the re-edition of the *Nauka virshuvannia*: (Kostenko 2007).

- 2) **B. Jakubs'kyj.** – *Nauka virshuvannia*.
- 3) Prof. **A. Loboda.** *Ukrains'ka narodna slovesnist'* [Ukrainian Folk Literature].
- 4) Acad. **S. Iefremov.** *Kotsiubyn'skyj, krytychno-biogr. nacherk* [Kotsiubynskyj: A Critical and Biographical Sketch].
- 5) Periodychni vydannia *Shevchenko ta ioho doba* [Shevchenko and His Times: Periodicals].⁵

In search of proper scientific instruments for his book, Jakubs'kyj turned to the works of his Russian counterparts, specifically adherents of the so called “Formal (i. e. Formalist) method”, the members of the Petrograd “OPOJAZ”, or the “Society for the Study of Poetic Language».⁶ First place among the Formalists' publications belonged to the works of Boris Tomashevskij. We cannot help noticing Jakubs'kyj's deep knowledge of Tomashevskij's concepts and theoretical ramifications, which were set out in his articles, and even in the journalists' reports of the scholar's public presentations.⁷ We can also assume that Tomashevskij himself noticed a deep trail of his studies of versification in Jakubs'kyj's monograph, as he responded to its publication with his own review in the Petrograd magazine *Kniga i revoliutsiia / Book and Revolution*, where at that time he was a regular author:

In our meager literature on the theory of Russian versification, Jakubs'kyj's book is an event. Written in Ukrainian and addressed to Ukrainian poets, it

⁵ *Shliakhy Mystetstva* [Ways of Art]. Misiashnyk khudozhn'oho sektora Holovpolitosvity. 2 (December 1921): 144.

⁶ Compare an explication of Jakubs'kyj's relationship with the Formalists made by one of the authors of the present article in Babak, Dmitriev 2021: 180–181.

⁷ Compare the appearance of three of Tomashevskij's works on prosody in the Jakubs'kyj's “Bibliografija” that supplements the *Nauka virshuvannia* (120). Moreover, it turns out in the course of the book, that Jakubs'kyj was well aware of Tomashevskij's public presentations from “On the Verse of the Songs of the Western Slavs”, “given in the Society of Zealots of Artistic Literature [in fact, the ‘Society of Zealots of the Artistic Word’ – A. U., G. B.] on 28 January 1916. [The report was] published in the magazine *Apollo* 1916, no. 2;” to the “Rhythm of Prose”, which “was presented in the Moscow Ling[ui]stic Circle in early 1920 and in a more complete form at a meeting of the Society of Artistic Literature at the Rus[sian] Inst[itute] of Art Hist[ory] on 26 June 1921. [...] Excerpts from this talk were published in the journals *Zhizn' Iskysstva* [Life of Art; then actually a daily. – A. U., G. B.] in 1920, nos. 454, 458 and 459 (controversy with Andrei Belyj) and *Kniga i Revolitsija* [Book and Revolution] in 1921, no. 10–11 (controversy with Valerij Briusov)”. We quote the author's descriptions after Tomashevskij 1929: 327.

interprets, in fact, the theory of Russian verse. The author devotes [only] about 10 pages to the special issue of Ukrainian verse.

According to the author's intentions, the book should be an elementary textbook of versification. There are no such textbooks, in any way satisfactory, in Russian literature. The illiterate products of Brazovskij⁸ and Shebuev do not count. Shul'govskij's chubby volume (*Theory and Practice of Poetic Creativity*) – the only book that teaches versification – is far from satisfactory and very chaotic. Meanwhile, it is precisely the absence of a brief, elementary exposition of the principles of versification that makes researchers of Russian verse wander in the jungle of indistinct concepts and unformulated problems.

Jakubs'kyj's book, in spite of its elementary nature, combines the conclusions of the latest research on Russian verse. The author found considerable erudition in the special Russian literature on versification and tried to note all the most important modern statements in the field of metrics. True, one can reproach the author for some compiling eclecticism of presentation: not everything that modern writers write about verse deserves attention, and some things are better to be ignored, but as the first independent experience, this book is very valuable.

It should be wished that the author republishes it in Russian.

The book is accompanied by a very valuable bibliography of Russian literature on versification, which includes about 200 titles. Unfortunately, the author arranged it in alphabetical order. A subject or chronological classification would be more convenient. (Tomashevskij 1923a: 52).

It goes without saying that before anything else, Tomashevskij was attracted by Jakubs'kyj's unbiased interest in the “technical” side of the subject of his research, as well as a rather confident handling of Formalist terminology. Within the framework of the OPOJAZ, the development of theoretical propositions on versification as a scientific discipline belongs almost exclusively to Tomashevskij. Other factors that he found intriguing were the novelty of Ukrainian material, the closeness of the author's approach to the scientific concepts of the proponents of the “Formal method”, and, most importantly, the thoroughness of the study of the previously published literature on verse theory, which even caused the snide remark from the reviewer, “not everything that modern writers write about verse deserves attention, and some things are better to be ignored” (Tomashevskij 1923a: 52).

⁸ A misprint, should be “Brodovskij”. Mark Brodovskij (1861–1919), a journalist, compiler of popular literary manuals and reference books *Rukovodstvo k stikhoslozheniju so slovarem rifm dlja prepodavanija i samoobuchenija* (St. Petersburg, 1887, 1895, 1907) and *Prakticheskoe rukovodstvo k tekhnike sochinenija* (St. Petersburg, 1888).

The leading Ukrainian literary-critical magazine *Chervonyj Shliakh* [Red Path] immediately reacted to Tomashevskij's review, "The Petersburg journal *Kniga i Revoliutsija* [Book and Revolution] published the review of the famous specialist in rhythmic and metrics in poetry and music Tomashevskij of Jakubs'kyj's book *The Science of Versification*. That review is very favorable, and expresses the wish for this book to be translated into Russian".⁹ Respect for Tomashevskij's expertise was also manifested in the fact that the publication of his fundamental *Theory of Literature* in 1925 was almost immediately met with a thorough and yet polemical review by literary scholar Borys Navrots'kyj (1894–1943) that had an intentionally long title: "Formalism or Subjective Aestheticism. (On the book 'Tomashevskij. Teorija literatury. Gosizdat. Leningrad. 1925', As an Attempt to Sum Up the Achievements of Lit[erary] 'Formalism')".¹⁰

Navrots'kyj stated that "the appearance of Tomashevskij's book is not accidental" and that *Theory of Literature* "should be considered the first attempt to summarize the achievements of previous researchers, former and current participants of the OPOJAZ – Shklovskij, Zhirmunskij, Tynianov and others" (Navrots'kyj 1925b: 205). In his subsequent monograph Navrots'kyj went even further, as he defined Tomashevskij's book as a sort of "crown" of the Petrograd "Formal school", in his words, *Theory of Literature* is "the result of everything that we had in the previous studies of Zhirmunskij, Shklovskij [and] Tynianov" (Navrots'kyj 1925a: 122).

Assessing the release of *Nauka virshuvannia* as a significant event in philology, Tomashevskij paid special attention to the practical orientation of Jakubs'kyj's monograph, "Written in Ukrainian and addressed to Ukrainian poets, it interprets, in fact, the theory of Russian verse. The author devotes [only] about 10 pages to the special issue of Ukrainian verse (Tomashevskij 1923a: 52).¹¹ Jakubs'kyj himself noted that within the Ukrainian tradition, versification as a scientific discipline had no previous precedents: "... the

⁹ *Chervonyj Shliakh* 3 (June 1923), 276. The monthly started being published in Kharkiv in April 1923 in place of the closed *Shliakhy Mystetstva*. The editors clearly outlined the "path" of *Chervonyj Shliakh*, presenting it as "a kind of Ukrainian *Krasnaja Nov'* [Red Virgin Soil]", meaning a well known Moscow magazine edited by Aleksandr Vorovskij (*Chervonyj Shliakh* 11/12 (1924), 265).

¹⁰ *Chervonyj Shliakh* 5 (1925), 205–209. See, also the translation of Navrots'kyj's essay into Russian (Babak, Dmitriev 2021: 542–554).

¹¹ All the more inappropriate is the annotation in the recent compilation of Mykhajl' Semenko's works in Russian, that describes Jakubs'kyj, as the "author of a number of works, including the study *Nauka ukraïnskogo stikhoslozhenija* [The Science of Ukrainian Versification] [sic!]" (Semenko 2016: 367).

Ukrainian reader will have to turn to Russian literature, as the most accessible and closest in terms of the principles of versification” (2). Therefore, the *Nauka virshuvannia* was a book that discussed both Russian and Ukrainian Verse. And the “10 pages” which Tomashevskij had specifically mentioned, appeared to be a crucial moment for the foundation of Ukrainian science of versification.

Although *Nauka virshuvannia* was set by Jakubs'kyj as a propaedeutic tool along with some other books on how to write poetry,¹² it was the first of its kind to introduce and establish the theory of verse as a scientific discipline in Ukraine. The embarrassment of local literary criticism in matters of versification, which preceded *Nauka virshuvannia*, was illustrative in the example of Andrij Nikovs'kyj's response to the book review section of the first issue of *Muzahet*, a “monthly of literature and art” (Kyiv, 1919). Noting that Jurij Mezhenko's review of Pavlo Tychyna's poetic debut of 1918 *Soniashni clar-nety* [The Clarinets of the Sun] “already reads like a new word in Ukrainian [literary] criticism, with a fresh tone, with a high level of appreciation of a critic-reader, which is actually necessary to approach the works of the new day”, when it came to the “technical” aspects of reading poetry, Nikovs'kyj experienced vicissitude and cried for help:

However, Ivanov-Mezhenko's mathematics, when he tries to do a chemical analysis of one poem with the moving, visual, olfactory, etc. images, does not yet speak to the heart. And even less (in Mezhenko, I can miss it) Ulrich Stuttner's article, I believe with the revolutionary drawings of the meter by Dmytro Zahul.¹³ Oh, well – pictures, but what do they mean and what do they say? To

¹² Compare an observation made by one of the authors of the present article: “In the first half of the 1920s, there appeared a number of theoretical articles and textbooks on the study of poetry. Among them (we are talking only about individual editions) are Stepan Haevs'kyj's textbook *Theory of poetry* (1921), Maik Johansen's studybook *Elementary laws of versification* (1921), Valerjan Polishchuk's practical aid *How to write poetry* (1921) [...]. The first thing to notice is the genre of these books. Almost all of them are called either ‘studybooks’ or ‘practical aids’, which emphasizes their applied nature. Their main goal is to teach young Ukrainian authors ‘how to write poetry’ and thus raise the level of national literature, thereby ‘modernizing’ it” (Babak, Dmitriev 2019: 161–162).

¹³ It should be noted that soon enough the poet Dmytro Zahul published his own “textbook” with a preface by no one but Jakubs'kyj: *Poetyka. Pidruchnik po teorii poezii* (Kyiv: Knyhospilka, 1923). Compare Mykola Zerov's observation about the state of Ukrainian literary criticism in his letter to Ieremija Ajzenshtok on September 30, 1926: “And the fact that it is more pleasant for me to read Shklovskij than Koriak, and Ejkhnenbaum is twenty times more pleasant for me than Zahul. This is because Shklovskij, Ejkhnenbaum excite thinking, stimulate it, sharpen my

tell the truth, I do not understand. To be honest, I will copy this wisdom for my readers. This is what is drawn:

U—U—U—U—UU
 U—U—U—
 U—UUU—UUU—UU
 U—U—UU
 U—U—U—

And this is what is added:

“The first line begins with iambs, preserving dactyl in the rhyme. The second line is identical to the second line of the first stanza. But the third line has a completely new pattern. It deviates from iamb”..

Et cetera. No text. What is it about? And if all this was written not for such ignoramuses as for example me, the sinner, so why the gallant Ulrich Stuttner ended his article with a stenciled statement that D. Zahul’s “undoubtedly has an honorable place among our poets of current times”. Honorably. There should be no more honorable places... It is the old father-in-law who loves *honor*, but it is the young son-in-law who loves to *take it*. Let him take it. (Nikovs’kyj 1919: 1592)¹⁴

Unlike contemporary literary criticism, which regarded the verse peculiarities of poetic production solely as a manifestation of creative preferences, Jakubs’kyj approached versification as a science with a real scholarly determination. His ideas on the theory of verse come unbidden, even, as he noticed in his autobiography, “from the very first years of my student life, I focused on questions of methodology and theory of literature” (Sami pro sebe 2015: 476). Thus he became one of the first proponents of Formalism in Ukraine and one of the first to apply the “Formal method” in practice, consistently using Taras Shevchenko’s poetic heritage as primary material for formal analysis, starting with the 1921 article “The Form of Shevchenko’s Poetry” (Jakubs’kyj 1921).¹⁵

perception of literary fact” (Zerov 2015: 659). See Zahul’s article on the same topic: “Pro nashu krytyku” (*Pluzhanyin* 6/7 (1926), 5–9).

¹⁴ Compare Jurij Mezhenko-(Ivanov)’s review of Zahul’s book of symbolist poetry *Na hrani* (Kyiv, 1919) in: *Knyhar’* 22 (June 1919), 1494–1497.

¹⁵ See, also Jakubs’kyj’s short review of *Duma pro Tarasa Shevchenko* (Odesa, 1917) in *Knyhar’* 21 (May 1919), 1420; and, more importantly, his subsequent articles where he looks at the formal aspects of Shevchenko’s poems: “Iz studij nad Shevchenkovym stylem” (*Shevchenkivs’kyj zbirnyk*. T. 1. Edited by P. Fylypovych. Kyiv: Sorabkop, 1924, 58–77); “Do problemy rytmu

The very title of Jakubs'kyj's book *Nauka virshuvannia*, which appealed simultaneously to Horace's *De arte poetica* [Science/Art of Poetry] and Valerij Briusov's *Nauka o stikhe* [Science of Verse], was intended to present versification as a combination of the art of the word as well as the poetic technique, that is, as a subject the study of which deserved special attention. "Versification, like every art", cautiously stated Jakubs'kyj, "has its own technique that is quite complex... The magic of poems lies not only in their good content, but rather in a special form, which actually makes them poetry and distinguishes them from prose" (2). He found justification for such a scientific attitude in the evolution of poetic means, in the "brilliant development of our poetry", which is reflected in the appearance in Ukrainian poetry of "new approaches, sophisticated technical means, luxurious and masterful formal achievements" (4).¹⁶

According to Jakubs'kyj himself, the main principles of the *Nauka virshuvannia* were developed throughout the preceding 12 years of his studies, as he explained in the autobiography, "My first student work was a report back in 1911 on the topic, 'The latest methods of studying poetic works based on Andrej Belyj's book *Symbolism*.' I defended my thesis on 'Nikitin's Verse' in 1913. My [gold] medal work was to be on 'The Evolution of Verse in New Russian Literature', but it was not completed due to military conscription. In

Shevchenkovoji poeziji" (*Shevchenko ta joho doba. Zbirnyk 2*. Kyiv: Knyhospilka, 1926: 70–83).

¹⁶ At that time Ukrainian literary critics paid close attention to the achievements of the autochthonous Russian-language poetry. For example, "Benedikt Livshits' two books of poetry were released in Kyiv: *Iz topi blat* and *Bolotnaja Meduza*. The books are interesting in content and well published" (*Chervonyj Shliakh 2* (1923), 269). However, *Bolotnaja Meduza* [The Marsh Medusa], which was supposed to be released, was never published unlike *Iz topi blat: Stikhi o Petrograde* [From the Swampy Marshlands: Poems about Petrograd], with the cover art by Mark Kirnarskij (Kyiv, 1922). A different issue of the same magazine reported on Grigorij Petnikov's new book of poetry *Bajun* and his editorials work on the anthology *Molodaja Germanija* [Young Germany] (*Chervonyj Shliakh 8* (1923), 281). A very important announcement appeared in yet another issue: "Russian poet Aleksandr Gatov prepared for publication his second book of poems *Pojushchie derev'ja* and together with 'pluzhany'n' [the leader of the literary group 'Pluh' (Plow). – A. U., G. B] Serhij Pylypenko – *Antologija ukrainskikh poetov v russkikh perevodakh*" (*Chervonyj Shliakh 4/5* (1923), 251). In his review of this edition, Ahapij Shamraj criticized the editors for their disorderly presentation of contemporary Ukrainian poetry, which deprived readers of the opportunity to appreciate the formal lyrical achievements of recent years: "However, modern poems will not make the impression that the editors hope for, mixing the works of representatives of various schools, scattering the works of old poets everywhere – thus they neutralized the brightest achievements, both in form and content of the strongest representatives of the contemporary poetry. [...] That material had to be arranged chronologically, with a concentration on certain schools and movements" (*Chervonyj Shliakh 4/5* (1924), 295–296). For more on the history of this anthology, which opened with a preface by the famous literary critic Oleksandr Bilets'kyj / Aleksandr Belets'kij (see Pashko 2016).

1919 I became a full member of the Ukrainian Scientific Society in Kyiv, then of the Historical and Literary Society at the Academy of Sciences, where I presented my papers ‘The Evolution of Rhythm in Poetry’ and ‘The Sociological Method in the History of Literature’” (Sami pro sebe 2015: 476).

Jakubs’kyj’s book is structured around five main parts, which are: “Theory of verse rhythm”, “Classical (metric) versification”, “New (tonic) versification”, “Poetic euphony”, and “Strophics”. Each of these parts contain several individual sections that are properly marked with the paragraph sign and numbered. The structure of the *Nauka virshuvannia* splendidly reflects the *widening gyre* of the theory of versification being established in Ukraine as a scientific discipline.

In the début chapter “The Theory of Poetic Rhythm” the author turns to the study of the controversial provisions in the contemporary theory of versification. The first of them is the ratio of the musical rhythm and the poetic rhythm. Jakubs’kyj rightly notes that the “auditory nature of poetry” is exactly the feature that makes verses related to music, however, as he states, “until now, many researchers of rhythm believe that there is no difference between the laws of musical rhythm and poetic rhythm, that there is only one rhythmic principle” (9).

Jakubs’kyj confirms this thesis by referring to the works of Rudolf Westphal, Piotr Sokal’sky, Nikolaj Shul’govskij and Andrej Belyj (10). The latter indeed paid attention to this problem but lingered on the statement that it appeared to be, “a matter so complex that we do not have enough experimental data to have a complete picture of this relationship” (Belyj 1910: 555). In his own verisimilitude, Jakubs’kyj wrote that musical rhythm is based on the concept of tact, “a unit of time, which, sometimes combining several sounds, remains unchanged and constant all the time (at least for a certain interval of a piece)” (11).

In his opinion, classical versification, based on vowel length, is an example of the exact following of the laws of musical rhythm (the division of time into equal measures). However, the modern system of versification does not provide such an opportunity, since, firstly, it is based on the alternation of stresses in the verse line. Secondly, caesura and logical pauses break the uniformity of the beat. Finally, a syllable can consist of both vowels and a vowel and several consonants, and that distinctly affects the length of time required to pronounce it.

Jakubs’kyj also distinguished three degrees of rhythmization: the simplest is the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables (“arses and theses”), the more complex is the alternation of lines of the same length (with approximately the same number of feet), and, finally, the highest is the alternation

of stanzas in a poem. Thus, a foot,¹⁷ a verse line and a stanza act together in serendipity as rhythmical elements of any poetic text. Jakubs'kyj assigned a separate place in the system of rhythmization to grammar, which “helps to feel a verse line as a separate rhythmic member: most often a verse line is a complete grammatical sentence”, and “a stanza [usually] provides a completion to a complex sentence, to a thought” (23).

As is known from the Roman Jakobson and Piotr Bogatyriov's survey *Slavianskaia Filologija za gody vojny i revoliutsii* [Slavic Philology in Russia During the Years of the War and Revolution] (Berlin, 1923),¹⁸ the issue of the

¹⁷ Jakubs'kyj draws attention to the fact that some modern scholars of verse reject the concept of the foot, e. g. Valerjan Chudovskij or Evgenij Perlin: “From our point of view, this is a temporary fuse, as a reaction to the ‘school routine’. The foot exists in versification as a conditional, abstract concept” (21–22). Perlin's lectures on versification in the Kyiv “Workshop of the Artistic Word” was mentioned by the poet-constructivist Nikolaj Ushakov in his memoirs “Kiev i ego okrestnosti”: “The Whites took Kharkov. Behind Kiev, the territory of gangs began. One of the regiments revolted in the city. Kiev was under martial law. Ehrenburg was repeatedly arrested for walking the streets late and was invariably released as a poet. He founded a workshop of the artistic word, where he lectured, mainly himself, about whatever he had to, about children's poems, about assonances, about piety and robbery of François Villon, about the good love of the archpriest from Ita, about spells for a toothache, about the fact that Bal'mont reminds of a parrot, and that it is impossible to read Gumiliov, since Briusov alone is quite enough. E. I. Perlin taught versification. Makkavejskij read his work on pseudo-classicism from a huge folio. Mandel'shtam also wanted to teach the students, but was terrorized by Apukhtin's aficionados. The temperature of Kiev's poetic life invariably rose. In 1919, the almanac *Hermes* was published, in which Aseev, Petnikov and Shklovskij took part” (Ushakov 1929: 122–123).

¹⁸ It should be noted that despite periodic book announcements about émigré book publishing activities, for example: “The writer *B. Pasternak* prepared a volume of poetry and prose, which is published in Berlin (‘Helicon’ Publishing House). The same publishing house releases the book by *F. Sologub*, ‘*Baryshnia Liza*’ and *V. Shklovsky's* ‘*Khod konia*’” (*Chervonyj Shliakh* 1 (1923), 271); or: “The Ladyzhnikov Publishing House (in Berlin) is releasing Maksim Gor'kij's memoirs in German translation” (*Chervonyj Shliakh* 5 (1925), 189), – getting such publications to Ukraine was sporadic and clearly problematic. Probably it is for this reason that the Berlin editions of the “*Opojazovtsy*” (Shklovskij's *Khod konia*, Jakobson's *Noveishaja russkaja poezija*, as well as Jakobson and Bogatyriov's *Slavianskaja filologija v Rossii za gody vojny i revoliutsii*, an offprint from the journal *Slavia*) remained out of the scope of Ukrainian critics and reviewers. A different picture was observed in relation to the publications originating in Czechoslovakia; for example, “No. 3/4 of the magazine *New Russia* (*Das neue Russland*), which is being edited in Prague, published a very interesting article about two of our Ukrainian artists – Babis and Glushchenko” (*Chervonyj Shliakh* 7 (1924), 246); and a corresponding review of the same issue of the *New Russia* magazine (*Chervonyj Shliakh* 8/9 (1924), 337). Compare also: “A short Anthology of Contemporary Ukrainian Poetry is being prepared for publication in *Prague*. Participating in translations are: Najman, Gora, Gozhejski, Bibl, Bednash and others. Edited by Bila-Krynytsia and Najman” (*Chervonyj Shliakh* 8/9 (1924), 328); etc.

interdependence of metrics and syntax was raised a few times at the Moscow Linguistic Circle (MLK), where two separate meetings were entirely dedicated to this scientific problem. At the meeting of June 1, 1919, Osip Brik presented his paper “On Poetic Rhythm”, and three weeks later, on June 28 Sergei Bobrov spoke at the MLK on the “Establishment of ‘Influences.’”¹⁹ In addition, in 1920, at one of the gatherings of the OPOJAZ in Petrograd, Brik read another paper, “On Rhythmic-Syntactic Figures” (Jakobson, Bogatyriov 1923: 24–25), which was highly praised by Boris Ejkhenaum in his essay “Theory of the ‘Formal Method’”, first published in Ukraine in Ukrainian translation,²⁰ as one of the distinctive works of Formalism that served as a beginning for the “development of the ‘problem of verse’ as such”, and was supposed to lead, if published, “to new theoretical views on verbal art [and] on the nature of poetic speech” (Ejkhenaum 1987: 394).²¹

The next topic that Jakub’s’kyj approached in the *Nauka virshuvannia* was the relationship between rhythm and meter, or to be precise, the peculiarities of this relationship. Noting that, “in the last 10–12 years, the terms ‘rhythm’, ‘rhythmics’ have begun to be used in an unusual and perhaps inappropriate way” (29), which, in turn, had caused terminological confusion, he pointed out the following: “This confusion concerns the relationship between the terms ‘rhythm’, ‘rhythmics’, and ‘meter’, ‘metrics.’ The guilty party are the new Russian scholars of versification” (29). According to his assumption, by having adopted Greek terminology (where meter means “measured, rhythmic poetic language”), the traditional school of versification studies reduced the rather complicated concept of poetry to the “simple counting of feet”, while “not paying attention to the fact that the complex variety of our verses does not allow itself to be squeezed into the harsh schemes of these meters” (29).

¹⁹ For more details on the MLK meeting on June 1, 1919, see Pilshchikov, Ustinov 2020: 392–395. The minutes were first in Pilshchikov 2017: 161–175. For more details on the MLK meeting on June 28, 1919, see Pilshchikov, Ustinov 2020: 400.

²⁰ That essay was published in Ukrainian in *Chervonyj Shliakh* in 1926. A year later Ejkhenaum included “Theory of the ‘formal method’”, this time in original Russian, in his collection *Literatura: Teorija. Kritika. Polemika* (Leningrad: Priboj, 1927).

²¹ Despite Ejkhenaum’s comment that Brik’s work remained “not only unpublished, but, as it seems, even unwritten», in “On Rhythmic-Syntactic Figures” he, “demonstrated the presence in verse of stable syntactic formations inextricably linked with rhythm. Thus, the concept of rhythm lost its abstract character and entered into connection with the very linguistic fabric of the verse—with the phrase. Metrics receded into the background, retaining the importance of literacy, the alphabet” (Ejkhenaum 1987: 394).

Jakubs'kyj emphasized that this problem was pointed out by Andrej Belyj, who defined rhythm as, “symmetry in meter violations, i. e., some complex uniformity of digressions”.²² Such understanding of rhythm was adopted by almost everyone who researched Russian versification, in particular Valerij Briusov and Nikolaj Nedobrovo, both of whom defined *meter* as the *main* concept, and *rhythm* as a *secondary* one. Jakubs'kyj disagreed with this approach on two points.

First, he noted that this is an erroneous perspective, since “metrical verses” are also rhythmical: “Rhythm is the main necessary concept in verses. [...] By ‘meter’ they [Greeks] understood the regularity of the poetic text, the rhythm of words, while by ‘rhythm’ – the order of the musical melody within a time-frame. [...] Therefore, it would be possible in versification not to use the term rhythmic at all. *Metrics* is the [veritable] science of poetic rhythm” (31–32).

Then Jakubs'kyj rightly pointed out the methodological fallacy of both Belyj and Briusov, for whom meter was a *generic* concept, and rhythm was a *specific* one. Following his plausible supposition about this mistake which he expressed in the essay “Form of Shevchenko’s Poetry” (Jakubs'kyj 1921: 58), he then stated in the *Nauka virshuvannia* that everything is quite the opposite: “Rhythm is a division into parts, orderliness, regularity; meter is a division into regular, equal parts, which is not always the case in verses. Rhythm is a generic concept, and in relation to it a meter is a specific one” (32).²³

This statement established that the *meter* should be considered as some ideal scheme for the alternation of stresses in a verse line (exactly like it was viewed by Belyj or a “recovered Formalist” Viktor Zhirmunskij.) Therefore, Jakubs'kyj resolutely suggested, “to use the words ‘rhythmics’, ‘rhythm’, ‘rhythmic’ wherever talking about the regularity of verses, while the terms ‘meter’, ‘metrical’ should be used to designate *correct* [meaning, *regular*. – A. U., G. B.] rhythms” (32). Despite the correct definition of the relationship of *rhythm* and *meter* (as generic / specific), the author of the *Nauka virshuvannia* made a mistake, insisting on their equivalence: “You may use the terms ‘meter’ and ‘rhythm’ as comparable concepts” (32).²⁴

²² Andrej Belyj defined meter as follows: “Under the meter of a poem, we mean the connection of feet, verse lines and stanzas with each other” (Belyj 1910: 396).

²³ Jakubs'kyj reinforces his thesis by making a reference to the prominent philologist Faddej Zelinskij (Tadeusz Zieliński) in *Apollon* 2 (1916), 55.

²⁴ Compare his arguments in the article “Novyj perevod ‘Buch der Lieder’ Gejne”, which was written for the publication of the translation of Heine’s book into Ukrainian: Hajnrykh Hajne. *Knyha pisen’*. Pershe povne vydannia v perekladi D. Zahula i V. Kobyljans’koho. Kyiv, 1919 (*Knyhar’* 19 (March 1919), 1171–1178).

Having adopted such a terminological attitude, Jakubs'kyj extrapolated this inaccuracy to the next part of his book. Thus, describing the system of classical versification, he replaced the concept of *meter* with the meaning of *rhythm*: "... the categories of rhythms we have are the same as those of the Greeks: disyllabic [binary], trisyllabic [ternary], tetrasyllabic, with different alternations of arses and theses. We took the names for these rhythms (= meters) from the Greeks, replacing everywhere in our concepts the principle of length with the principle of stress" (44).

After Jakubs'kyj described the main classical meters and stanzas, he emphasized the practical significance of the theory of metrical versification for modern studies, to which he devoted a special section, entitled "The Significance of Classical Versification for Our Versification". Here, due to the foregone conclusions, the author's intentions may not seem entirely clear, however, they can be explained by taking into account that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the need to focus on the classical system of versification served as a cause of justified doubt. For example, the poet Bozhidar (Bogdan Gordeev, 1894-1914), a follower of Velimir Khlebnikov, wrote in his literary manifesto *Raspevochnoe edinstvo vsekh razmerov* [Chanting Unity of All Meters]: "The *oldfashioned-new* idea of the *co-orderliness* of Russian and Greek meters seems to me a *deeply-fallacious* undertaking, even by omitting the rooted difference between the *pronouncing* of the vowels in these speeches, because the abundance of Greek names for feet are the remains of a folk, local or playful birth of verse, crushed and sifted into long lists of meters by numerous idle scribes" (Bozhidar 1916: 14).²⁵

In the next part of his book, "New (tonic) versification", Jakubs'kyj proposed to distinguish between two prosodic principles, or principles of rhythmization: the *metric* principle (the alternation of long and short syllables) and the *tonic* principle (the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables). Ukrainian verse is tonic, and within it, two systems of versification predominate: the *syllabic* system and what he refers to as the *metro-tonic* (i. e. syllabic-accentual) system. Both of them realize "the general tonic way of rhythmization of the word, part of the new *tonic* versification of contemporary times" (52). At the same time, *metric* (i. e. classical) versification provided an inventory of meters and a classification of feet. Jakubs'kyj believed that "under the influence of the metric and metro-tonic systems, syllabic versification began to assimilate the principles of rhythmization through alternation of stresses" (78).

²⁵ Here we retain Bozhidar's "Futuristic" orthography and punctuation.

By indicating that the rhythm of a tonic poem is based on stress, Jakubs'kyj noted that it created “more and more new rhythms” (61). He explained this phenomenon referring not only to such elements of rhythm as the number of syllables in a verse line, alternation of stresses, and catalexis, but also the number of words in a verse line, their lengths, and “small caesurae” (i. e. word-boundaries; Georgij Shengeli's term). Following Tomashevskij, the author of the *Nauka virshuvannia* succinctly pointed to the role played by enclitics and proclitics, “words that are combined in the language with the word that stands next to it and have a common stress with it” (64). It is not a coincidence then that, for Jakubs'kyj, “the best and most recent view of the caesura” (61) was offered in Tomashevskij's “The Rhythm of Iambic Tetrameter Based on Observations of the Verse of *Evgenij Onegin*” (first published in 1917), in which Tomashevskij simultaneously examined “the following rhythmic phenomena: 1) the distribution of stresses in a verse line and 2) the arrangement of word-boundaries” (Tomashevskij 1929: 94).

In his paper “On the Verse of the Songs of the Western Slavs” (1916), Tomashevskij, citing the works of Valerian Chudovskij, spoke of a new trend in versification studies, calling for the subordination of the concept of rhythm to declamation, and the concept of “foot” to be replaced by “skaz” [recitation]: “I will note a different trend in modern literature on rhythm, this is a trend that builds verse on ‘skaz’. They say that a verse line breaks up not into feet, but into words, verse lives as ‘skaz’. This makes the science of rhythm dependent on the study of the sound forms of living speech. Only a reciter can know anything about rhythm” (Tomashevskij 1929: 74–75). However, Tomashevskij refuted this trend for the reason that “until now it was considered unclear how poetry should be read”, whereas Jakubs'kyj saw a pragmatic component in it: “The real rhythm of a poem will depend on the words that make it up” (67). He cites an example: an iambic line may sound as a line with a “trochaic rhythm” if all its words except the first monosyllable are disyllabic paroxytons (66; compare Tomashevskij 1923b: 45–46).

Jakubs'kyj paid special attention to Ukrainian versification. He took the classification proposed by Stepan Smal'-Stotskyj and Fedir (Theodor) Gartner (Smal'-Stotskyj, Gartner 1914: 171–191) as the basis for his theoretical constructions and identified three types of rhythm that are characteristic of Ukrainian poetry. The first type is based on the rhythm of folk songs, mainly that of *kolomyjkas*; the second type is syllabic verse, which developed under the influence of Polish versification; and the third type is *metro-tonic* verse, which developed under the influence of Russian versification. To these three types Jakubs'kyj added *vers libre* or “free verse”, which he considered to be the result of a struggle “with all sorts of metrical bonds” (79).

Using Vladimir Perets' essay "On the History of 'Little Russian' [Ukrainian] Literary Verse" as a foundation for his theoretical constructs, Jakubs'kyj wrote that Ukrainian versification altogether came from Poland. Therefore, the first Ukrainian poems were of a syllabic nature, but fell under the influence of folk poetry. In turn, "such elements of artificial verse as the number of syllables, which is the same in the adjacent lines, caesura, systematic rhyming could not but influence folk poetry" (77), and this led to both the "tonicization" of syllabic poetry and the "syllabization" of folk songs. "The result of all these processes", explained Jakubs'kyj, "was that classical Ukrainian verse, Shevchenko's verse, can be considered both folkloric and syllabic" (77).

The author of the *Nauka virshuvannia* defines *kolomyjka* verse as follows: "every verse line contains four tacts, each tact contains four syllables of equal length, only the last tact of each verse line contains two double-length syllables, and they are rhymed" (73), according to the scheme:

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 ♪♪♪♪ ♪♪♪♪ ♪♪♪♪ ♪♪

Then he cites the Polish-Ukrainian folklorist Czesław Nejman's definition of *kolomyjka* as having a [(8+6) + (8+6)]-syllable formula (73). These definitions are similar to the ones accepted later. Kiril Taranovski defined it as a 8+6-syllable verse with a tendency toward a trochaic distribution of stresses (Taranovski 1953/1954: 178). Modern Ukrainian folklorist Marko Plisest'kyj defined *kolomyjka* as "a rhymed couplet, in which the verse lines are divided by two caesurae into three cola: of four, four and six syllables" (Plisest'kyj 1966: 665).

Jakubs'kyj observed that the *kolomyjka* verse is the "basic, dominant rhythm" that Shevchenko used in "58% of all the poems" included in *Kobzar* (73). Later Taranovski confirmed this figure but added an important caveat: "...this 2:1 ratio in favor of *kolomyjka* verse is not valid for all periods of Shevchenko's work. ...in the first period of Shevchenko's oeuvre [1838–1845], *kolomyjka* verse is ten times as frequent than iambic verse; in the second period [1846–1850], Shevchenko uses both types of verse almost equally, whereas in the third period [1857–1861], iambic tetrameter is three times as frequent than *kolomyjka* verse" (Taranovski 1953/1954: 179).

The most interesting episode in this chapter of the *Nauka virshuvannia* appears to be the conclusion that Jakubs'kyj came up with when answering the question, "which of these systems is the most natural for Ukrainian versification, which can be considered the essence of Ukrainian versification?"

(79). As a possible solution, he proposed “the latest theory of ‘rhythmic unity’ of all systems of versification” (79), which turned out to be the Bozhidar’s concept of *Raspevochnoe Edinstvo* [chanting unity]. A native of Kharkiv and a Futurist, Bozhidar set forth this concept in his eponymous book issued posthumously by Sergei Bobrov through his publishing house “Tsentrifuga” [Centrifuge] in 1916. However, Jakubs’kyj made a certain reservation, observing that “Chanting Unity” is most certainly, “an incredibly valuable book, but full of methodological and terminological above-mentioned mix-up” (79).

Bozhidar’s concept was based on the notion that all meters tend to unite in a common rhythm (“chant”): “A foot, a verse line, an *-aine* [‘stishie’, a group of lines], a poem – by their likeness are transformed into growing engines of a single spiritual *moveme* [‘dvig’] of the creator. All feet (meters), and therefore verse lines, *-aines*, poems are thrown into the unity of the creative *moveme*: the entire *moveme* task of creativity rushes into the search for a certain single meter – the charter of that wondrous decorum of being that is the perfect universe...” (Bozhidar 1916: 56).

Jakubs’kyj found unexpected confirmation of this assumption in the phenomenon of Taras Shevchenko, who “as early as the middle of the 19th century, with extraordinary, unheard-of ease, in the same poem, moved from one system of versification to the second, from the second to the third, while maintaining that brilliant ‘rhythmic unity’ which is inherent in any integral work of art” (81). He explained that Ukrainian verse is tonic verse based on the coexistence of these versification systems and “now that we have in front of us, in the latest theory [of Bozhidar. – A. U., G. B.], the newest principle of ‘rhythmic unity’, we can only be proud of the fact that we have never closed ourselves within the framework of one, always and invariably narrow system” (81).

In the fourth part of the *Nauka virshuvannia*, dedicated to “poetic euphony”, Jakubs’kyj drew attention to the melodiousness of the Ukrainian language, defined the concepts of alliteration, assonance and dissonance, and gave a classification of rhymes following Valerij Briusov’s *Nauka o stikhe* [Science of Verse], which he considered “the most detailed” (93). He also wrote that “Ukrainian poets have so far done extremely little work on rhyme”, and “only in recent years have our symbolist poets paid attention to rhymes, just like the symbolist poets in both West and Russia” (94). Jakubs’kyj linked the appeal of the “representatives of new directions” to assonance and dissonance rhymes to “foggy”, “obscure” and “fleeting” moods in modern poetry, which could hardly “correspond to the clear accuracy demanded by the rhymes” (96).

In the last part of the book, “Strophics”, the author considers various types of stanzaic (strophic) patterns, and then focuses on the so-called “canonized

stranzai forms” (i. e. fixed forms): stances, terza rima, sestina, ottava rima, triolet, lai, virelai, ritornello, canzone, rondel, rondeau, sonnet, and sonnet corona. The less widespread fixed forms, such as decima, glosa, ottava siciliana, ghazal, tanka, and a few others, are simply listed at the end of that chapter because they are not yet found in Ukrainian poetry (108).

The *Nauka virshuvannia* concludes with a “Bibliography”, that lists works on verse theory in both Ukrainian (one and a half pages) and Russian languages (a larger number on pp. 112–122). In his review, Boris Tomashevskij remarked about the bibliography, that “the author arranged it in alphabetical order”, and suggested that, either “subject or chronological classification would be more convenient” (Tomashevskij 1923a: 52), as he obviously hoped to see a Russian edition of the Jakubs’kyj’s book. He also mentioned Jakubs’kyj’s bibliography in his treatise *Russian Versification: Metrics* (Tomashevskij 1923b: 144).

Tomashevskij’s other comment was even more prized, as he stated in his review that “as the first independent experience”, *Nauka virshuvannia* “is very valuable” for the formation of the Ukrainian science of verse (Tomashevskij 1923a: 52). Indeed, in the context of the actual interest of literary critics to the formal and “technical” aspects of poetry in 1920s Ukraine,²⁶ Jakubs’kyj’s “textbook on versification” came as a completely revolutionary study. And all despite the fact that with all the important discoveries in *Nauka virshuvannia*, such as separation of the musical rhythm and the poetic rhythm; establishing the relationship between meter and rhythm; the importance of syntax and grammar in the theory of verse, etc., the author remained largely captive to ideas of his time.

²⁶ Cf. in this context, the approach of Bozhidar’s classmate at the Kharkiv 3rd male gymnasium, poet and philologist Maik Johansen which he derived from the “Formal method”, especially in his critical assessment of the first two books by Heorhyj (Jurij) Shkurupij: Korol’ Futuropererij Geo Shkurupij, *Psikhetozy. Vitryna tretia* (Kyiv, 1922), and Geo Shkurupij, *Baraban. Vitryna druga* (Kyiv, 1923). In his review Johansen, among other things, compares the “destructiveness” of the Ukrainian Futurists with the Aleksei Kruchionyk’s corresponding avant-garde methods: “We have already noted that the destruction of the Panfuturists, their ruining of art are not as terrible as they paint them to be. In this case they are lagging behind when compared with the Moscow futurists”. Further Johansen writes about the Panfuturists’ *zvukotvorchestvo* [soundcreation], which in turn is hardly comparable with Vladimir Majakovskij’s *zvukopis*’ [soundwriting]: “It would be a sin to equate this *soundcreation* with the ingenious inventions of the *soundwriting* Moscow futurists—it is enough to mention at least Majakovskij’s “Our March” (*Chervonyj Shliakh* 2 (1923), 303–304). On critics’ reaction to Geo Shkurupij see: Oleh S. Ilnytskyj. *Ukrainian Futurism, 1914–1930: A Historical and Critical Study*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997, 262–263 et passim. For more examples of Majakovskij’s influence on the Ukrainian Futurists, see: Javorskaja, Ustinov 2021: 285–291.

Although Jakubs'kyj's book was not enough lauded when published, it reached dizzying heights in terms of bibliometrics. In 1924, Aleksandr Bagrij (1891–1941) included *Nauka virshuvannia* in his pioneering bibliography, dedicated in its entirety to the “Formal method” in literature (Bagrij 1924: 268).²⁷ A year later, the book appeared in the steadfast “Bibliography of Poetics” appended to Tomashevskij's *Theory of Literature* (Tomashevskij 1925: 221). Sergei Balukhatyj, the compiler of that bibliography, explained in a special note that he had included “only those works on poetics that are of actual importance, either theoretically or methodologically” (Tomashevskij 1925: 211 fn. 1). Or “both”, we can add in the case of Jakubs'kyj's *Nauka virshuvannia*.²⁸

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²⁷ In this edition “Bibliography” from the *Nauka virshuvannia* has a separate entry in the special section “Indexes and articles, which contain lists of the historical and literary works of the *Formal school*”.

²⁸ We dedicate our essay in loving memory of Seriozha Shkarupo (1973–2021), a poet and a dear friend. Galina Babak's contribution to this paper was funded by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft: DFG) under Germany's Excellence Strategy in the framework of the Cluster of Excellence “Temporal Communities – Doing Literature in a Global Perspective” (EXC 2020, Project ID 390608380).

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