

ԼՈՒԻԶԱ ԳԱՍՊԱՐԵԱՆ

Բանասիրական գիտ. թեկնածու, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ ԳԻ

ԴԻՔԷՆՍԻ «ՍՈՒՐԲՄՆՆԴԵԱՆ ԵՐԿԵՐԸ» ԶԱՅ ԳՐԱԿԱՆ ԱՒԼԱՆԴՈՅԹԻ ԼՈՅՍԻ ՆԵՐՔՈՅ

Յօդուածը նուիրուած է ԺԹ. դարավերջի եւ Ի. հարիւրամեակի սկզբի ռուս եւ հայ գրական-մշակութային միջավայրում Չարլզ Դիքէնսի՝ «Սուրբ Ծննդեան պատմութիւնների» գրական ազդեցութեան վերհանմանը: Մշակութային փոխանցման լոյսի ներքոյ ուրուագծուած են գեղարուեստական թարգմանութեան հայեցակարգին վերաբերող մի շարք հարցադրումներ՝ ի յայտ բերելով Դիքէնսի վէպերի ժառանգութեան եւ թարգմանութիւնների գործուն ընկալման իրողութիւնները Հայաստանում (յատկապէս Արեւելեան Հայաստանում): Ցաւով նկատուած է, որ հայերէն թարգմանութիւնները մեծաւ մասամբ կատարուել են ռուսերէն թարգմանութիւնների «միջնորդութեամբ»: Աւելին, ուսումնասիրութիւնը ցոյց է տուել, որ «Սուրբ Ծննդեան պատմութիւնների» վաղ թարգմանութիւնները ենթարկուել են զգալի ձեւափոխութիւնների՝ ելնելով ռուս եւ հայ լեզուամշակութային առանձնայատկութիւններից: Հիմնուելով Դիքէնսի ստեղծագործութիւններին՝ իբրեւ եզրակացութիւն նշում է, որ վաղ վիկտորիանական շրջանի Անգլիայի ընկերային-մշակութային համապատկերը գրեթէ հաւասարապէս հեռու է ռուս եւ հայ իրականութիւնից: Յարգինս ասուածի մշակութային փոխանցումը յանգեցրել է թարգմանութիւնների զգալի փոփոխութեան:

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DICKENS'S "CHRISTMAS CAROLS" THROUGH THE PRISM OF ARMENIAN LITERARY TRADITION¹

The popularity and evaluation of Charles Dickens's literary creativity in Armenia had a peculiar history, the specificity of which is determined by both historical, cultural and literary factors. Having been focused on the issues of existentialism and self-consolidation, the Armenian literary tradition took the path of the national-cultural heritage revival. One cannot fail to observe that the rapid changes in the world political-economic sphere and the implementation of industrialization led to reformulation of the literary tradition agenda. Those factors were not neglected by the Armenian literary realia of the XIX century, especially in Eastern Armenia, as a part of Russian Empire.

Many Armenian critics have repeatedly noted that the Armenian literature of the XIX–XX centuries was formed and developed under the beneficial influence of Russian classical literature and Russian translations of European classics. Many representatives of the Armenian cultural- literary elite studied Russian philology in the gymnasiums of the Russian Empire (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Astrakhan), and a profound knowledge of Russian literature made it possible embark into laborious work of translating not only the Russian classics, but also European authors – through the mediation of the Russian language and literary culture.

The translation process is perceived as an intertwinement of two cultures; the culture of original text and the translation text with the predominance of one or another. It is a process of original text "fraction" through the paradigm of contextual interpretation. Some theoretical approaches in the field of translation studies show that considerable attention is paid to the cultural aspect of translation, as well as the transmission of the cultural value of the source text. The pivotal factor of translation activity is cultural transfer, as a means of linguo-cul-

¹* Ստացրել է՝ 10.10.2023, գրախօսուել է՝ 15.10.2023; էլ. հասցէ՝ luisa.gasparyan83@gmail.com: հմբադիր՝ Գէորգ Սարեան:

tural enrichment, which aims at triggering the cultural revival spectrum of the given nation².

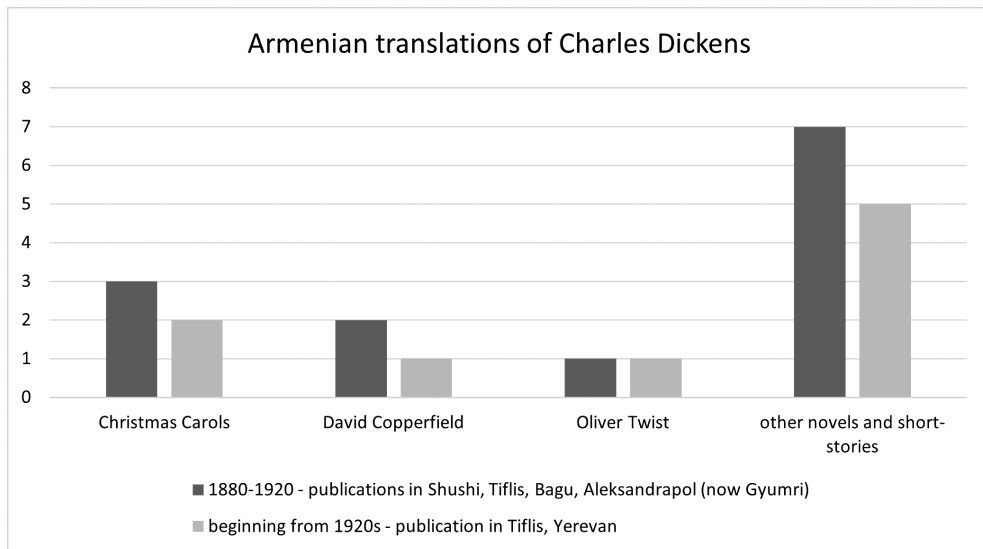
Based on historical testimonies and the travelogues of many diplomats, missionaries, scientists and merchants, many theorists underlined the role of Armenians in the Eurasian space and areal as a medium of cultural exchange between Eastern and Western civilizations.³

At the end of the XIX century, the Armenian cultural elite focused on the formation of education and cultural centers for common people and a special place was given to the education and upbringing of schoolchildren. In this regard a major role was given to the magazines and newspapers such as “Murch”, “Masis”, “Taraz” and others, which aimed at transferring poetic, moral, artistic (with the formation of a sense of ethics, morality, the desire for beauty) educational values. Armenian magazines, newspapers and private printing houses presented to the Armenian public the heritage of world literature,

Without deviating from the Armenian literary agenda of the time, the translations of Dickens’s creativity into Armenian led the target reader to the discovery of artistic anthropology and social romance with the shades of urban realism. One cannot fail to observe that the fate of Dickens’s works in Armenia was connected both with Russian (in Russian Empire Charles Dickens had popularity as a belletrist) and Western literary and translation traditions. His works were translated for both Eastern Armenian (published in Shushi, 1891, twice in Tiflis, 1897, 1904 journal “Murch” N 10, 11, Bagu, 1900, Aleksandrapol, 1894, Yerevan in different periods up to 2003) and Western Armenia (Constantinople, 1928) readers, as well as in the Armenian cultural centers and the Armenian Diaspora (Beirut, Athens, 1928, etc). On the cover of the publications in the Eastern Armenian the phrase – “permitted by censorship” is noticeable, which indicates that the translated or an abridged version was either intended for children (which is most likely), or assumed some censorship restrictions in terms of content.

² **М. Эспань**, История цивилизаций как культурный трансфер (пер. с франц.; под общ. редакцией Е. Е. Дмитриевой), Москва, 2018. **Д. Бахман-Медик**, Культурные повороты. Новые ориентиры в науках о культуре (пер. с нем. С. Ташкенова), Москва, 2017.

³ **В. Брюсов**, Об Армении и Армянской культуре: Стихи. Статьи. Письма. Ереван, 1963; **David M. Lang**, Armenia: Cradle of Civilization, Second edition, London, 1978; Archbishop **Mesrob Ashjan**, The Etchmiadzin Chronicles, Recorded by Missionaries and Merchants, Diplomats and Scholars, Yerevan, 2003.



In the Armenian social and cultural environment, Dickens's prose, its historical and literary specification (as related to romanticism or realism) became the subject of lively discussion and different interpretations. In the literary journal "Ardzagan" – «Արձագանք» (1892, N 100) an interesting commentary was given by an anonymous critic behind the initials "K.N." (presumably, the author of the comment was Nikoghayos Karamyan, a well-known literary critic, lecturer at the Gevorkyan Seminary of Etchmiadzin). Highly evaluating the Armenian abridged translation of "Martin Chuzzlewit" (in the Armenian version – "The School of Life") made from the Russian language by the priest Gyut Aganyan, the anonymous author indicated that Dickens's novels were efficient for education and upbringing of the younger generation in terms of psychological endurance and morality⁴. In the commentary there was a hidden critique of the realistic novels which unfolded the nuances of pessimism, social pragmatism and the harsh "side of life", which could be like "mortal blow" for humanity. The mankind, especially the young soul needed optimism and positive pathos. And it's not in vain that afterwards the translation of "Christmas Carols" entered as belletristic creativity into the festive lives of the Armenian readers.

⁴ «Արձագանք», 1892, N 100: See also Վ. Փարթամեան, Հայ-անգլիական գրական արձնություններ, Երևան, 1975, էջ 250–255:

In general, Dickens's series of "Christmas Carols" were of particular interest, as in the early and middle Victorian era the cult of family hearth and warm relations became a special tradition, and the author successfully integrated Christmas traditions and his own childhood memories of the holiday in his Carols.

According to the critic G. Bloom, the creation of "Christmas Carols" was largely the effect of some biographical and historical factors that were intertwined with each other. In 1843, when "Christmas Carols" was written and published, Dickens's literary career was in crisis. After a rapid success of such novels as "The Pickwick Papers" and "Oliver Twist" there was a decline in Dickens's literary popularity, which was noticeable after the publication of "Martin Chuzzlewit" as evidenced by the low readership (and, accordingly, the decline of writers' incomes). In despair, Dickens even intended to give up his literary career smoothly switching to writing travelogues, which after his journey to the United States brought him a certain success. If it were not for the above-mentioned life circumstances and external factors, "Christmas Carols" and most of the author's successful novels and works would probably never have been written⁵.

"Christmas Carols", published shortly before Christmas in 1843, had an instant success. The first edition of 6,000 copies was sold out in a few days. The social message of Christmas stories was also important – the connection of readers with the real source of human happiness and the rejection of selfish life. The parables from Christian teachings were vividly manifested in the narration, which became the basis for the revival of the celebration of Christmas. The atmosphere of Christmas in "Christmas Carols" is conveyed in such a paradigmatic way that it has become part of not only British literature, but also, through a process of cultural transfer, entered the literary traditions of some other nations of Christian religion and culture. In addition, there are many other interpretations and versions of the Dickens Christmas story illustrating in theater, cinema, comics, etc. In this connection, Paul Davies, proposes to put distinction between Dickens's "Christmas Carols" and other paraphrased or reinterpreted versions of the same motif. For example, the animated version of Disney, with the character of Scrooge McDuck, the stingy uncle of three comical duck nephews can be included as a paraphrased version⁶.

⁵ H. Bloom, Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol, New York, 2011, pp. 16–19.

⁶ P. Davis, Critical Companion to Charles Dickens. A Literary Reference to His Life and Work, New York, 2007.

Gradually, the genre of Christmas stories entered the festive mood of people all over the world, and many periodicals were eager to publish amazing magical stories. In Russian reality F. Bulgarin, who in New Year editions of his newspaper “Northern Bee” («Северная пчела»), published funny stories revolving around “New Year’s visions” or “the spirits of the Old Year and the New Year”. Similar stories were published annually with the overtones of humor, magical predictions and moral-philosophical conversations⁷. The popularity of “Christmas Carols” in Russia was determined by another moment: in Russia, Christmas was merely a church feast and it was only until the middle of the 19th century when Christmas holidays were celebrated among the worldly people. In England the tradition of celebrating Christmas was much earlier, and Christmas holidays became family holidays, celebrated around the table or near the fireplace. According to Chesterton, through Christmas stories, Dickens revived the concept of warmth and solidarity between family members, shielding them from the outside world⁸.

Soon the popularity of Christmas stories spread throughout Russia, which also influenced on Eastern Armenia popular-literary realia. The first abridged and interpreted versions of “Christmas Carols” were published in Shushi (1891) and in Tiflis (1897). Later in 1904, the famous Armenian periodical “Murch” published the full literary translation of Dickens’s “Christmas Carols”.

In Western Armenia Dicken’s Christmas stories were translated from the original in 1928, Constantinople by N.K. Gontayan. It’s noteworthy to mention that novellas and short-stories dedicated to Kaghand (New Year) and Christmas were also widely spread in the Western Armenian literary sphere, especially in the end of the XIX century – Yeghia Termirchipanchyan, Yerukhan, Yervand Otyan, Gegham Barseghyan, Mari Svachyan, Sipil, Levon Shatrya and others were the vivid representatives of the subgenre, who published in various Christmas stories in Western Armenia literary periodicals. In this connection G. Hakobyan emphasized the underlying principles of the comprehensive illustration of Kaghand and Christmas customs and traditions in Armenian literary realia:

– Both Kaghand and Christmas in the Armenian literary works were sometimes illustrated identically through the paradigm of national-theological perception;

⁷ Е. Душечкина, Русский святочный рассказ. Становление жанра, Москва, 2023.

⁸ Г. Честертон, Диккенс. Календарные обычаи и обряды в странах зарубежной Европы. XIX – начало XX в. Зимние праздники, Москва, 1973, с. 86–91, 155.

- The theosophical-ontological aspect of the birth of Christ is always present in the texture of each Armenian literary creativity;
- The doctrine of Christian belief and ideology is the quintessential plot of the literary works;
- The strict maintenance of traditions and rituals is noticeable in each piece of verbal creativity⁹.

In the Russian and Armenian cultural environment, Dickens's "Christmas Carols" formed a bright and specific literary reputation which became stimulus for creating their own festive stories. An expressive and unique manifestation of the "cultural transfer" of Dickens's Christmas stories in the Russian social environment was made by the famous writer and Slavophile philosopher A.S. Khomyakov. The latter "transforms" Dickens's story "A Christmas Carol" in 1844 into a story called "Bright Sunday" («Светлое Воскресенье»). The action of the story is transferred to Russia, where the Christmas holiday is replaced by the Orthodox holiday of Easter – Christ Bright Sunday – Светлого Христова Воскресенья¹⁰.

The contextual adaptation or interpretation of Dickens's story by A. S. Khomyakov consistently met the requirements and expectations of the Russian linguistic and cultural realia, so that one can rightfully consider it as a Russified translation. The first thing we pay attention to in A. Khomyakov's translation/interpretation is the change in anthroponyms – the names of the characters and the main figures in accordance with the parameters of Russian culture, for example: Scrooge's sister Fen is translated as Katya, his sisters son *Dmitry*, *Scrooge* – *Skrug*, *Marley* – *Marlov*, *Krechet* – *Krichev*, *Little Tim* – *Styopa*. Other names are consistently Russified as well, such as *Petya*, *Ivan*, *Masha*, *Martha*, *Fedor Ivanovich*, *Matrena Vasilievna*, etc.

Dickens focused on the moral and ethical transformation of an individual, however unlike the main purpose of Dickens's original, some Russian and Armenian translators implemented the strategy of the contextual transformation, through the intense involvement of the biblical parables, moral and philosophical traditional specification in the Christmas stories. Thus, through the paradigm of the cultural transfer, the context of "Christmas Carols" passed the process of Russification and Armenianization.

⁹ For comprehensive perception of Kaghand and Christmas traditions in Western Armenian literature, see **Գ. Յակոբեան**, Ս. Էջմիածնի երախտաւորները (Ուսումնասիրութիւններ եւ յօդուածներ), Ս. Էջմիածին, 2007, էջ 385–393.

¹⁰ See http://az.lib.ru/h/homjakow_a_s/text_1844_svetloe_voskresenie.shtml

In Armenian literary tradition Dickens's "Christmas Carols" gave rise to about seven different Armenian translations or adaptations, which give us a solid background to prove that the interest towards the Christmas stories was high in the Armenian society. The translation and publication of Armenian Christmas stories had the same moral and ideological intentions as in Dickens's original.

One of the Armenian paraphrasis of "Christmas Carols" may have been made from an abbreviated Russian translation in Shushi in 1891 anonymously (the translator is marked with the Armenian letter "Մ. Տ-Դ" – English "M, T-D"). One cannot fail to observe that both translations (Russian and Armenian) are stylistically similar in the following parameters: 1. change in anthroponyms – the names of the main and secondary characters in accordance with Russian or Armenian culture. The names of the characters are transformed into Armenian based on the names of the holy book: Scrooge's sister Fen is translated as Մարիամ – Mary (p. 18), his school friend as Պօղոս – Peter (p. 18), his sister's son Յովհաննէս – John (p. 40), Little or tiny Tim as Մաթէոս – Matthew (p. 42).

If we compare the Russian translation of Rutzen with the Armenian anonymous translation done in Shushi, it becomes obvious that both translations are to a large extent similar to each other, which leads us to the conclusion that the Armenian translator took the Russian version (although there is no clear mention of that circumstance on the preface or in the front page of the Armenian translation). It is also possible that the translator's preface (if there was one) did not reach us.

Let's compare the epilogue of "Christmas Carols" with the Russian translation of Rutzen and the Armenian one (Shushi, 1891);

С тех пор Скрудж стал совсем другим человеком. Он всю остальную жизнь свою помнил учение Христа. И когда, бывало, вспоминал свою горькую одинокую жизнь, проведенную им в непосильных трудах и обременении себя неведомо для чего-то, восклицал: – Правду сказал Христос: «Придите ко мне все трудящиеся и обремененные, и Я успокою вас». Скрудж получил успокоение, как только бросил жить для самого себя (Рождественская сказка. М.: Посредник, 1887, с. 36)

Եւ իր ամբողջ կեանքում հետեւում էր Քրիստոսի Աւետարանին: Եւ հէնց որ երբեմն յիշում էր իւր անաշուայ կեանքը, երբ ծանրաբեռնուած զանազան գործերով ասշուում էր, ինքն էլ չիմանալով թէ՛ ինչու համար, միշտ բացակայէր իր. «Ճշմարիտ է ասել Քրիստոսը. – «Եկա՛ք ան հանգիստ և

քեռնաւորք՝ եւ Ես հանգուցից զձեզ»: (Զ. Դիկկենս, Ծննդեան Պատմութիւն, փոխադրեց Մ. Տ.–Դ., Շուշի, Մահմէտի Յսկոբեանցի տպարան, 1891 թ., էջ 42)

Whereas the original has the following epilogue:

He had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterwards; and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless Us, Every One!

One cannot fail to observe that there is a clear tendency to reverberate the form and meaning of narration to make it more accessible to target readers' world-view and for the natural smoothness of cultural-religious peculiarities. Needless to say, that by employing the method of cultural transfer the translator solved double challenge: input a piece of world literature into national agenda and juxtapose it with the local sociocultural realia by using the strategy of generalized contextual transformation.

One cannot fail to observe that Dickens's novels had an undeniable influence on famous Armenian authors, such as Perch Proshyan, who translated the novel "David Copperfield" (Tiflis, 1898) into Armenian. Reflecting on the features of realism as an artistic direction, the Armenian critics repeatedly turned to the creative experience of Charles Dickens. The Armenian literary agenda could not but react to the rapid world transformation – capitalism, prominent with the concentration of industrial production and capital in the large cities changing dramatically the social and cultural life. Well-known Armenian authors, in particular Shirvanzade, highly appreciated the objective description of city in Dickens's verbal creativity, and it was Shirvanzade who created in his works a miniature of industrial cities and revealed the characteristic features of the Armenian society and industrial elite.

The Armenian periodicals also had its own popular Christmas stories with the aim of creating something magical and optimistic. The "Oriental Press" – «Արեւելեան մամուլ»¹¹ published Sarkis Palapanyan's Christmas story for children and adolescents with similar philosophical and ideological messages in the framework of Armenian cultural narrative. The Christmas novella is accompanied by a brief commentary, which presented the purpose of the story and the essence of Christmas traditions in the world literary culture. Presenting the terminology of different countries, such as German – *Weihnachten*, Italian – *Natale*, French – *Noël*,

¹¹ «Արեւելեան մամուլ», 1895, N 3, էջ 70–75:

Russian – *Рождество Христа*, Sarkis Palapanyan sought to convey to the younger generation the profound significance of Christmas in the culture of other nations. Describing some Christmas traditions, such as decorating Christmas tree, preparing delicious food and sweets on Christmas eve and presenting gifts to relatives, the story-teller indicated that his goal was to create such novels for the Armenian children.

The action of the children's Christmas story took place in Smyrna, the main character of the work was Zarmair, the son of a wealthy businessman, who was joyfully riding a bicycle on the eve of the Christmas holiday (underlined on January 5th, according to the Armenian Church), when he suddenly ran into a child from a poor family and hurt him. The whole story then revolved around two children's judgments about the unfairness of life. The narrative of the story indicated three main holidays in the Armenian tradition: Kagand (New Year), Christmas, Easter. Returning home, the child entered into a dialogue with his rich father, asking why God created evil and good, rich and poor. Father's answer had a deep moral and philosophical context, thus;

«Նա մարդը բանական ստեղծեց, երկիր մը շնորհեց անոր որ իր աշխատութեամբ արգասաւորէ, ծառեր որ տան ծաղիկներ ու պտուղներ, բաշխեց նիւթական բարիքներ, որոնցմէ կը օգտուի մարդս իր տաղանդին չափովը: ...Թշուառութիւնը չարիք մ'է զոր մարդ իր սխալմունքներով կը բերէ իր վրայ: Թշուառութիւնը գրեթէ միշտ կը հալածէ պարսպորդները, ծոյլերը, շռայլները եւ ոնրագործները»¹².

The central idea of the context was the following: God created mankind as a rational being so that he could be useful to the earth with his diligence and talent. Misfortune, however, was the evil that a person might have brought upon himself because of his mistakes. The inactive, lazy people and those who sinned a lot often became unhappy and miserable. The Christmas story for children is to unfold the values: faith and diligence, welfare, the richness of human soul. The father convinced his child, that the person himself was the source of his troubles, illustrating examples from the Holy Script. Within the framework of the story, the young readers revealed important message – the difficulties of life can be overcome through faith and belief in the birth of Jesus Christ and the miracle of Christmas holiday (January the 6th).

¹² «Արեւելեան մամուլ», 1895, N 3, էջ 74–75.

If the work of Sargis Palapanyan finished with optimistic overtones (Zarmair gave his toys, clothes and holiday sweets to a poor boy), then Shirvanzade's story "Ako's Christmas Tree" – «Ակոյի տոնածառը» had a tragic ending. The drama of the worker Galoust, earning honestly all his life, had no money to buy a Christmas tree for his only son -Ako. In despair, Galouste committed a theft and bought a Christmas tree for the child. However, his spiritual world was in great turmoil, and his character was in decline. He had only one wealth – impeccable innocence and honor, which he lost. Analyzing his character, we can conclude that he is a deeply religious person. The simplicity and purity of Galust's character are revealed in the following context: 1. when the manager accused another person for theft, Galust voluntarily confessed his guilt; 2. since he was an honest and simple person, the manager left his home to his family, but deprived him of his job.

Five days later, Galust's body was found on the beach, in the sand, he committed suicide. The pivotal ideology of the story is Dostoevsky's philosophy of "crime and punishment" – each crime has its punishment¹³.

Thus, the Armenian literary culture revival can be manifested through the cultural transfer and the phenomenon of translation. The article sketches the reception of Dickens's heritage in Armenia in the late XIX century as a "classic", whose literary reputation had already been established in the Russian literary field. One cannot fail to notice that Russian translations of Dickens played "intermediary" role, especially in Eastern part of Armenia. The conclusion is made that the socio-cultural context of early Victorian England illustrated in Dickens's works are almost equally alien to the Russian and Armenian cultural realia. The cultural transfer led to the significant modification in translations for the purpose of smooth perception in significantly different socio-cultural and geopolitical usus.

¹³ See **Ալեքսանդր Շիրվանզադե**, Երկերի լիակատար ժողովածու, հատոր ութերորդ, Երևան, 1934, էջ 329-338. see also **S. Freud**, Dostoevsky and Parricide, in J. Halliday/P. Fuller ed., *The Psychology of Gambling*, 1974, p 170; <https://pep-web.org/search/document/GW.014.0399A?page=P0399>

https://hy.wikisource.org/wiki/Ակոյի_տոնածառը

ՀԻՄՆԱԲԱՌԵՐ

Գրական ասպարեզ, Չարլզ Դիքենս, Շուշի, Մահտեսի Միրիջան
Յակոբեանցի տպարան:

РЕЗЮМЕ

Статья посвящена исследованию литературной роли книги «Рождественские повести» Диккенса в русской и армянской литературной средах конца XIX и начала XX веков. Обозначается спектр вопросов касательно концепции художественного перевода в свете культурного трансфера. В анализе очерчивается ситуация активной рецепции наследия и переводов произведений Диккенса в Армении (особенно в Восточной Армении) конца XIX, которые, в большинство случаев, переводились через «посреднической» роли русских переводов. Исследование показало, что ранние переводы «Рождественских повестей» были видоизменены: наблюдаются определенные трансформации, обусловленные лингво-культурными особенностями как русской, так и армянской среды. Делается вывод, что социокультурный контекст ранней викторианской Англии (на материале работ Диккенса) практически одинаково чужд как русским, так и армянским культурным реалиям. Соответственно, культурный трансфер привел к значительной модификации переводов с целью более плавного восприятия контекста, в существенно отличающихся социокультурных и геополитических условиях.

