

Title: Hryhorij Skovoroda in the Garden of Epicurus

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In early-modern Ukraine, evidence of the Christianization of Epicurus surfaces in the works of Gregory of Sanok, Simon Pecalides and Kyrylo Trankvilion-Stavrovec'kyj. Subsequently, Latin manuals of philosophy prepared by Stefan Javors'kyj, Teofan Prokopovych and other preceptors of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy contain many references to Epicurus. It is not surprising, therefore, that his impact on the worldview of Hryhorij Skovoroda (1722-94) is far from negligible. As Taras Zakydalsky aptly summarizes, the Greek philosopher taught Skovoroda "that sweetness, pleasure in the sense of joy is the end of life and is accessible to all, and that what is difficult is unnecessary and what is necessary is not difficult."

To date we lack a sustained reconstruction of Christian Epicureanism in early-modern Ukraine, one that also pays attention to poetry, drama, and historiography. Thus, for example, most discussions regarding Skovoroda's Epicureanism focus on his prose. My paper will consider his "Garden of Divine Songs," which concludes by juxtaposing Epicurus and Christ. I will argue that not only the final poem, but the entire collection alludes to the Garden of Epicurus, by addressing the obstacles which, according to the pagan philosopher, prevent humans from enjoying a happy life: fear of death; apprehension before the wrath of the "gods"; and the dread of suffering and of the inability to attain happiness. I will also compare Skovoroda's "Garden" with the "Garden" and "Hortus" of the English metaphysical poet Andrew Marvell (1621-78), and posit that both poets draw, in different degrees, on Horace's Epicureanism. My comparison will intimate the similarities and differences between the Christianization of Epicurus in post-Renaissance Europe and in Ukraine.

#### References

Hryhorij Skovoroda, *Povne zibrannja tvoriv*. Kyiv, 1973, vol. 1 Taras Zakydalsky, *The Theory of Man in the Philosophy of Skovoroda*, 1965, <http://www.ditext.com/zakydalsky/skovoroda.html> (Chapter 1)