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ALLUSIONS IN ZHANG HEN’S “ODE TO THE WESTERN THRONE” AS A CHALLENGE FOR A TRANSLATOR OF THE TEXT INTO SLAVIC LANGUAGES

Abstract. The paper focuses on the identification and interpretation of allusions in Zhang Heng's "Ode to the Western Throne" as a translation challenge when reproducing these intertextual elements into Slavic languages. The author employs allusions to literary texts, philosophical treatises, mythology, astronomical concepts, social realities of ancient China. The paper has identified polysemantic allusions, referring to more than one texts, plots, motifs, characters, or names, which create additional allusive connotations; allusions creating metaphor, metonymy, and hyperbole; allusions as the codes of other semiotic systems, particularly sculptures; allusions contributing to parodic hypertext.

The main challenges related to translating allusions into Slavic languages include: conducting pre-translation analysis to identify the primary and additional allusive meanings, to reproduce symbolic meanings and mystical connotations; undertaking linguistic analysis of the source text to study metaphorical transfers derived from the donor space of allusions; recognizing the impact of allusions on other stylistic devices in the text, and determining translation techniques for ironic allusions to render in Slavic translations a suitable ironic tone.
Keywords: polysemantic allusions, ancient Chinese poetry, translation, metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole, hypertext.

**Formulation of the problem.** Translating a Chinese literary text into Slavic languages presents a real challenge for translators. This challenge arises not only from the logographic nature of the Chinese writing system, which consists of approximately 50,000 Chinese characters that function as ideograms and carry different meanings depending on the context, in contrast to the alphabetic nature of Slavic languages. It is also due to the unique features of Chinese grammar, such as the absence of verb conjugations, a different word order (unlike the subject-prominent nature of Slavic languages), and the lack of a grammatical category of tense, which is indicated Chinese by lexical deictic markers pointing to specific moments in time.

The complexity of translation lies, not least, in the fact that creative Chinese literary works contain numerous intertextual allusions and reminiscences to literary works, Chinese philosophy, as well as Chinese history, culture, and social realities, which are often not fully understood even by native Chinese speakers.

Slavic languages have their unique cultural and literary traditions, which can make it challenging to convey allusions rooted in Chinese culture or history. The translator must be able to find analogies or similar concepts within the Slavic culture to convey the meaning of the allusions in a new context. Translating allusions into Slavic languages involves facing linguistic complexities. Some allusions may rely on wordplay, puns, or other linguistic peculiarities that can be difficult to reproduce in another language. The translator must strive to preserve the meaning and original wordplay without losing the depth and significance of the original text. Certain allusions may refer to historical events or figures unfamiliar to Slavic readers, necessitating the translator to provide context or adapt the source text by replacing the allusions with more recognizable historical events for the target audience. In working with allusions, it is crucial to maintain accuracy and faithfulness to the original text. The translator must pay close attention to details to avoid losing the essence of the allusions or distorting their meanings.

In light of the above, the research focus of our article is dedicated to the allusions and reminiscences found in the poetic work "Ode to the Western Throne" by Zhang Heng (traditional Chinese: 張衡, Zhāng Héng) [1] – a renowned Chinese philosopher, encyclopedist, literary figure, poet, and outstanding scholar during the Western Jin dynasty (264/5–317) [2; 3].

The article aims to explore the various intertextual references and cultural echoes present in Zhang Heng’s poem. By delving into the Zhang Heng’s allusions to literary works, Chinese philosophy, historical events, culture, and social aspects, we seek to unravel the depth and complexity of his poetic composition. Furthermore, we will examine the challenges faced by translators in conveying these allusions and
how they must carefully navigate linguistic intricacies and cultural differences to maintain the essence and significance of the original text. Through this research, we hope to shed light on the rich cultural heritage of Zhang Heng and the interplay of literary and philosophical influences that shaped his poetic creation, while also highlighting the importance of preserving the integrity of these allusions in translations for Slavic audiences.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The article is based on four main research vectors related to the complexity of translating Zhang Heng's allusions into Slavic languages.

The first group of research associated with the theoretical premises of the article involves studies on Chinese Mythology [4; 5] and Chinese poetry [6; 7; 8; 9; 10], including its allusive characteristics [11; 12; 13]. According to the sixth edition of the Modern Chinese Dictionary, an allusion is defined as “The story or expression in the ancient book quoted in the poetry” [14, p. 3]. However, for a translator of Chinese poetic works into Slavic languages, the difficulty in interpreting and adapting allusions in the target text is also due to the fact that these allusions and reminiscences are not always intertextual and may refer to works of art, mythology, historical, social, cultural, and even economic realities of ancient times, as evidenced by the analysis of Zhang Heng's “Ode to the Western Throne.”

Furthermore, a specific challenge for translators of ancient Chinese allusive texts into Slavic languages lies in the fact that intertextual allusions in the source texts may serve as means of realizing other types of transtextuality.

In this vein, the next theoretical premise of the article is the concept of transtextuality and its types proposed by the renowned semiotician and narratologist Gérard Genette, who distinguishes (a) intertextuality proper in the form of direct and indirect quotations, allusions, reminiscences, and other variants that reveal the presence of one text in another, (b) hypertextuality as the parodied reinterpretation of one text by another, (c) paratextuality as the relationship of the text with its title, preface, postscript, etc., (d) metatextuality, which includes the author's comments, and (e) architextuality, which identifies genre-related references in texts [15, p. 1–7].

Specific types of transtextual relationships based on allusion have been identified in Zhang Heng's "Ode to the Western Throne."

In this regard, an essential task for the translator of Zhang Heng's work into Slavic languages is the pre-translation analysis of the text, which not only delve into the various intertextual references, allusions, and reminiscences present in the original text grasping the deeper meanings and significance they carry but also allows for the identification of transtextual connections and the selection of appropriate translation methods to reproduce them in the target text.

Due to the fact that some of the allusions in "Ode to the Western Throne" are polysemantic, meaning they refer to more than one precedent text or phenomenon, the article highlights the concept of polysemantic allusion as one of its theoretical
premises. As far as we know, this concept has not been extensively analyzed in the context of ancient Chinese literature, neither from a linguistic nor a translational perspective.

In connection with this, in addition to intertextual analysis [16; 17; 18] aimed at identifying and interpreting markers of intertextuality, the article employs the method of analyzing polysemantic allusion [16, p. 1917], which reveals two or more decodable meanings by linking the allusion to multiple texts, plots, motifs, characters, or names. Each component of such a complex allusion "is capable of creating additional allusive connotations."

Translating such polysemantic allusions into Slavic languages poses a specific challenge for the translators, who may, based on their background knowledge, identify only one donor source of the allusion, and ignore other potential allusive interpretations. This oversimplification during translation may limit the full semantic parameters of the original Chinese source text.

The translator must be aware of the various possible interpretations and connotations that a polysemantic allusion can carry. To achieve a more accurate and nuanced translation, the translator should consider multiple potential donor sources and be open to capturing the multifaceted meaning of the allusion in the target language. This aspect of polysemantic allusions adds an extra layer of complexity to the translation process, requiring the translator to be highly skilled in both linguistic and cultural aspects, as well as possess a deep understanding of the intricacies of both the source and target languages and cultures. An interdisciplinary approach that combines literary analysis, linguistic expertise, and cultural knowledge becomes crucial in effectively conveying the rich semantic nuances of polysemantic allusions in Zhang Heng's poetry.

A certain portion of the identified allusions is metaphorical, where the allusive donor space forms the basis for a metaphorical or metonymic transfer. This characteristic of allusions in Zhang Heng's work necessitates the use of the method of analyzing conceptual metaphors [19] for further analysis.

As with polysemantic allusions, translating metaphorical allusions also requires the translator of the Chinese text into Slavic languages to apply specific transformations to preserve the metaphor in the target text without substituting it with a descriptive translation. To convey the metaphorical allusions accurately, the translator must possess a deep understanding of both the source and target cultures and languages. This understanding allows the translator to find suitable equivalents in the target language that maintain the metaphorical essence and connotations of the original allusions. Utilizing creative and contextually appropriate translations is essential to ensure the metaphorical depth and richness of Zhang Heng's work are preserved in the translated version.

The purpose of the article is to analyze the allusions in Zhang Heng's "Ode to the Western Throne" as a translation challenge when reproducing these intertextual elements into Slavic languages.
The research tasks include: (a) Identifying and interpreting polysemantic allusions, (b) Specifying metaphors based on allusive donor spaces - exploring the metaphoric transfers derived from the allusions, understanding how the original allusions serve as a foundation for creating metaphorical meanings, (c) Revealing the function of allusions in actualizing other stylistic devices - understanding how the presence of allusions enhances or influences the use of other stylistic techniques within the text, (d) Determining the role of allusions in transtextual relationships. By addressing these research tasks, the article aims to shed light on the complexities of translating allusions in "Ode to the Western Throne" and to provide valuable insights into the role of allusions as a significant aspect of intertextuality in the poetic work.

Presenting of the main material. Ancient Chinese authors were typically intellectuals with broad knowledge and a rich understanding of various subjects, which contributed to the high level of allusiveness in their works. The Tang Dynasty poets preferred to quote allusions in many methods, adopting the methods of explicitly quote, implicitly quote, positively quote, oppositely quote, practicality, virtually quote, etc. [20, p. 255].

The complexity of translating allusions into Slavic languages is further compounded not only by the diversity of allusions to numerous literary and non-literary sources but also by the fact that these allusions often take on a form that strays far from the original donor text. This significantly increases the linguistic barrier for the translator when dealing with a text containing allusions and attempting to translate it into Slavic languages.

The main characteristic of the allusions and reminiscences in Zhang Heng's "Ode to the Western Throne," which presents a particular challenge in their reproduction into Slavic languages, is their metaphorical nature and polysemy.

The allusion in the line "Volopas stands to the left from here, Weaver abides to the right from here" is polysemantic, as it simultaneously refers to three donor spaces:

1. Ancient statues of the lovers Volopas and Weaver, installed on the eastern and western shores of Lake Kunmingchi [21].

2. The constellations Cygnus, represented as Volopas, and Lyra, represented as Weaver – a constellation composed of three stars (alpha (Vega), beta, and delta)

3. The ancient legend of how the Lord of Heaven separated Weaver and Volopas with the Milky Way, and they can only meet once a year when a bridge of swallows is formed over the Milky Way.

This rich and multi-layered allusion draws from various cultural, mythological, and astronomical references, adding depth and complexity to the poetic context. Translating such a polysemantic allusion presents a challenge for the translator to convey the multiple connotations and cultural significance effectively in the target language.
An example of a polysemantic allusion is the reference to the Danlin Forest in the line "The beautiful vegetation grows densely, resembling the Danlin Forest". On one hand, the name of the forest is associated with the legend of the ancient giant, Kuafu, who lived on the mountain called "Heavenly Pillar" in the northern desert. Kuafu, who could cover hundreds of miles in one step, tried to race against the sun itself to gain respect from the gods.

According to the legend described in the "Catalog of Mountains and Seas" [22] he set off as soon as he saw the sun rise in the east. He ran again and again, despite strong fatigue and the scorching heat emanating from the sun, which caused him great thirst, but he could not stop as the distance between him, and his opponent narrowed. When he reached a deep pit where the sun was setting, and was close enough to embrace it, his arms were already too weak to reach. Although he dried up the Yellow River and the Wei River, the thirst was only temporarily relieved and remained unbearable. Knowing that only the cool water of the Northern Sea could quench his thirst and revive his body, he headed north, but could no longer run. Suddenly he collapsed, his enormous weight shook the heavens and the earth, and a deafening sound echoed through the mountains and valleys. His body turned into a huge mountain, and his staff turned into a vast peach orchard. Feeding on his flesh and blood, the peach forest continued to expand until it covered thousands of square miles. The peach forest was named the Danlin Forest.

This magical forest was not only lush, green, and abundant, but also rejuvenating and life-giving. Thanks to the legend, the Danlin Forest is associated with the symbol of fertility and rejuvenation, which serves as an additional allusion in the line from the Ode – about the eternally resurrecting and life-giving nature, linked to ancient Chinese cult of fertility.

The phrase "The waves irrigate the shizhun mushrooms on the boulders of the shore, washing the lingzhi mushrooms" gains additional contextual meaning through an allusion to mythological connotations associated with the mentioned types of mushrooms. In particular, the Lingzhi mushroom (靈芝) is considered a magical fungus in Chinese mythology, believed to bestow longevity, and possess the ability to resurrect the dead. In the chronicles of Sima Qian [21], the terms 芝 zhī – "woody mushroom" and 靈 líng - divine spirit" were first used together in a syntagmatic context. Similarly, the Shizhun mushroom carries mystical connotations from ancient Chinese mythology. The divine associations of these mushrooms are documented in the names of Taoist temples as "shrines of mushrooms."

By incorporating allusions to these mythological mushrooms, the line in question gains deeper symbolic significance and evokes mystical imagery, enriching the poetic context and providing a multi-layered reading experience. Translating such allusions effectively requires the translator to be aware of the cultural and mythological significance of these mushrooms in Chinese tradition to maintain the intended poetic depth and meaning in the target Slavic languages.
The metaphorical allusion “the hands of immortals” in the line “[Ordered] to install on tall columns the hands of immortals to collect the pure dew dripping from the clouds” is based on an allusion to the nearby columns of the Bolian Tower, on which bronze dishes were placed. As dew accumulated in the dishes and was considered a means to prolong life, in other words, to achieve immortality [23, p. 43], the allusion becomes the donor input space for metonymy that combines characteristics of somatic metaphor and metonymy: "Dishes with dew for prolonging life - the hands of gods" (since the gods are immortal).

This illustrates how the allusions in Zhang Heng's “Ode to the Western Throne” are not straightforward references to the original context but involve creative and metaphorical transformations. The translator must be attentive to such complexities to accurately convey the layered meanings and poetic expressions present in the original text when translating it into Slavic languages.

Metonymic allusion presented in "Haijo amuses on the dark shallows, the whale is thrown onto the shore and wriggles" refers to the stone statues of giant fish and turtles that adorned the surroundings of the lake, as known from "Records of the Grand Historian: Han Dynasty I" by Qian Sima [21]. The intersemiotic allusion to the sculptures becomes the donor space for the metonymy based on the transfer of the statue images associated with sea creatures to the sea spirit Haijo.

In the ode, allusions also serve as a means of creating hyperbole, as in "Flocks of birds swiftly fly and somersault in the air, herds of animals run and walk...(...) like frightened waves, (...) there are so many of them that Bo Yi couldn't even name them all." The hyperbolic effect is achieved through the allusion to Bo Yi, an advisor to Great Yu, the founder of the dynasty. According to legend, Bo Yi could name the names of any animals and creatures.

Also identified is the function of allusion as a hypertext - an ironic parody of the donor text.

In the Ode, various designations and actions are used to describe bandit gangs, such as despising death, venerating the spirit, forming cliques, gathering in gangs, "truly numerous are their crowds," and "their followers are like clouds." At the same time, these characteristics are directly borrowed from the Shangshu (Shūjīng 書經, - “Venerated Documents”), an ancient Chinese text also known as The Book of Documents or Classic of History [24; 25], which is one of the revered Confucian canons served as the foundation of Chinese philosophy for over 2,000 years. This indicates cultural connections and the reuse of literary motifs in Chinese literature and culture.

In connection with this, direct quotes from the revered Confucian book, borrowed to characterize bandit gangs, not only allow readers to see the interrelations between the two texts and understand the Ode in the context of ancient Chinese literary traditions but also serve as a means of hypertexual irony or satire, and a parodic reimagining of the source text. This allows the author of the Ode to
play with traditional images and readers' expectations. Besides, such intertextual inclusions-citations can be seen, in our view, as allusions or reminiscences, as they may be recognized as quotes by a very limited circle of readers.

Another example of intertextual allusion as a means of actualizing hypertexual connections in the "Ode to the Western Throne" can be the quantitative allusion to the number of residences in the empire: "In the districts and principalities [of the empire], there are one hundred and forty-five palaces and chambers." The source space of the allusion is a fragment from Li Shan's book "Past Affairs of the Three Capital Districts," which contains the allusive number 145: "During the time of Qin, there were 145 halls and residences."

Thus, the allusive number 145 refers to the period of the reign of Qin Shi Huangdi (秦始皇帝), who ruled the Qin state from 245 BCE to 210 BCE. At the same time, the Ode narrates the period of Emperor Wu-di (漢武帝), who ruled more than a hundred years later than Qin Shi Huangdi, from 141 BCE to 87 BCE. Accordingly, the number of palaces and chambers in the empire during the reign of Emperor Wu-di could not possibly be equal to the number of residences during the reign of Qin Shi Huangdi, as stated by Li Shan. This suggests that the employment of the allusion was likely intended to create a certain ironic undertone.

Reproducing in translation to Slavic languages the allusions integrated into ancient Chinese literary texts to emphasize certain stylistic effects such as irony, satire, or sarcasm can be a challenging task for the translator. When translating ironic allusions, translators often face a dilemma between preserving the meaning of the original and creating a suitable ironic undertone in the target language. This requires a creative approach and a balancing act between faithfulness to the original and its adaptation to a new culture and audience.

Conclusions. The difficulty of translating "Ode to the Western Throne" into Slavic languages is due to the author's use of numerous allusions and reminiscences, which refer to literary texts, philosophical treatises, mythology, astronomical concepts, social realities of ancient China, and more. In the source text, several groups of allusions have been identified: Polysemantic allusions, connected with multiple texts, plots, motifs, characters, or names, which create additional allusive connotations; Allusions as the donor's input spaces for metaphor and metonymy, as well as metaphtonymy; Allusions as a means of creating hyperbole and other stylistic devices; Intersemiotic allusions, referring to codes of other semiotic systems, particularly sculptures; Allusions creating an ironic or parodic hypertext.

The main challenges related to translating such an allusive text into Slavic languages include: conducting pre-translation analysis of the text to identify allusions, their primary and additional meanings, which evoke deeper symbolic meanings and mystical images, and their functions in actualizing intertextual connections; choosing appropriate translation methods and transformations to adequately reproduce or adapt the allusions in the translation without resorting to
descriptive translation; linguistic analysis of the source text to study metaphorical transfers derived from the donor space of allusions, identifying how the original allusions serve as a basis for creating metaphorical meanings; recognizing how the presence of allusions reinforces or influences the use of other stylistic devices in the text, as allusions often take a form that deviates significantly from the source donor text; determining translation techniques for ironic allusions that preserve the meaning of the original and create a suitable ironic tone in the target language.

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