

Сидоренко Сергей Иванович

**ОТРАЖЕНИЕ СРЕДНЕВЕКОВОЙ РЕАЛЬНОСТИ В СОВРЕМЕННОМ АНГЛИЙСКОМ ПЕРЕВОДЕ  
(НА ПРИМЕРЕ "РАССКАЗА МЕЛЬНИКА" ДЖЕФФРИ ЧОСЕРА)**

В статье анализируется отражение средневековой английской реальности, изображенной Дж. Чосером в его знаменитом "Рассказе Мельника", в современном английском переводе. Автор выделяет ряд компонентов, формирующих реальность рассказчика, и рассматривает, как переводчик доносит их до современного читателя на лексическом уровне. Среди основных анализируемых компонентов - маркеры хронотопа, элементы быта, внутренний мир, внешность и любовные ухаживания персонажей. Сравнительный анализ показывает, что адекватное отражение реальности среднеанглийского текста требует от переводчика понимания исторической динамики семантики и функционального статуса лексики оригинала. Помимо этого, переводчику приходится решать проблему "пристойности" чрезмерно натуралистического повествования Дж. Чосера.

Адрес статьи: [www.gramota.net/materials/2/2016/7-3/43.html](http://www.gramota.net/materials/2/2016/7-3/43.html)

Источник

**Филологические науки. Вопросы теории и практики**

Тамбов: Грамота, 2016. № 7(61): в 3-х ч. Ч. 3. С. 144-149. ISSN 1997-2911.

Адрес журнала: [www.gramota.net/editions/2.html](http://www.gramota.net/editions/2.html)

Содержание данного номера журнала: [www.gramota.net/materials/2/2016/7-3/](http://www.gramota.net/materials/2/2016/7-3/)

**© Издательство "Грамота"**

Информация о возможности публикации статей в журнале размещена на Интернет сайте издательства: [www.gramota.net](http://www.gramota.net)

Вопросы, связанные с публикациями научных материалов, редакция просит направлять на адрес: [phil@gramota.net](mailto:phil@gramota.net)

4. **Древнетюркский словарь.** Л.: Наука, 1969. 676 с.
5. **Каскаракова З. Е.** Словарь омонимов хакасского языка. Абакан: Хакасское книжное издательство, 2009. 256 с.
6. **Киргизско-русский словарь.** М.: Советская энциклопедия, 1965. 973 с.
7. **Кызласов А. С.** Структура корневых лексем в хакасском языке. Абакан: Хакасское книжное издательство, 2003. 152 с.
8. **Пекарский Э. К.** Словарь якутского языка. Изд-е 2-е. Л.: Издание Академии наук СССР, 1959. Т. II. 2508 с.
9. **Радлов В. В.** Опыт словаря тюркских наречий. СПб., 1905. Т. III. 2204 с.
10. **Радлов В. В.** Опыт словаря тюркских наречий. СПб., 1911. Т. IV. 2230 с.
11. **Русско-якутский словарь.** М.: Советская энциклопедия, 1968. 720 с.
12. **Серебренников Б. А., Гаджиева Н. З.** Сравнительно-историческая грамматика тюркских языков. Изд-е 2-е, испр. и доп. М.: Наука, 1986. 304 с.
13. **Сравнительный словарь тунгусо-маньчжурских языков:** материалы к этимологическому словарю / отв. ред. В. И. Цинциус. Л.: Наука, 1975. Т. I. А-Н. 672 с.
14. **Сравнительный словарь тунгусо-маньчжурских языков:** материалы к этимологическому словарю / отв. ред. В. И. Цинциус. Л.: Наука, 1977. Т. II. О-Э. 992 с.
15. **Толковый словарь якутского языка:** в 15-ти т. / под ред. П. А. Слепцова. Новосибирск: Наука, 2006. Т. III. Г, Д, Дь, И. 844 с.
16. **Тувинско-русский словарь.** М.: Государственное издательство иностранных и национальных словарей, 1955. 723 с.
17. **Фасмер М. Р.** Этимологический словарь русского языка / пер. с нем. и доп. О. Н. Трубачева. Изд-е 2-е, стер. М.: Прогресс, 1987. Т. IV. Т – ящур. 864 с.
18. **Хакасско-русский словарь.** Новосибирск: Наука, 2006. 1114 с.
19. **Этимологический словарь тюркских языков. Общетюркские и межтюркские основы на буквы "Ж", "Ж", "Й" /** отв. ред. Л. С. Левитская. М.: Наука, 1989. 295 с.

#### LEXICAL-SEMANTIC AND PHONOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE YAKUT AND KHAKASS HOMONYMS *саас*

**Semenova Ekaterina Vasil'evna**, Ph. D. in Philology  
*Institute of Researches in Humanities and Problems of Smaller Peoples  
of the North of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences*  
sevskn@mail.ru

The article deals with the lexical-semantic and phonological features of the Yakut and Khakass homonyms *саас* (saas). The results of the study have revealed that the modern Yakut homonyms *saas* have a semantic connection with the proto-Turkic word *ya:s̥*, and the semantics of the modern Khakass homonyms *saas* has no connection with it. The occurrence of the Yakut homonyms *saas I* "age; years" and *saas II* "spring" dates back approximately to the early XX century; the homonym *saas III* appeared in the 70s of the last century as a result of the disconnection of the first and second meanings of the homonym *'cāc* and the expansion of the word semantics. The phonological analysis has allowed revealing the following peculiarities: the complicated evolutionary transition of the proto-Turkic *\*j>s*; the proto-Turkic long vowel *a:* has remained in the modern Khakass language; in both languages the transition of the proto-Turkic *\*z>s* at the end of the word can be observed.

*Key words and phrases:* Turkic languages; vocabulary; semantics; phonology; homonyms; homonymous group.

УДК 81'25(045)

*The paper researches how medieval English reality of Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Miller's Tale" is brought across to the present-day reader in modern English translation. The author singles out some major reality-building constituents that make up the world of the famous story and looks at how the translator handles them in terms of the lexicon. Such reality-building constituents include locale markers; common practices characterizing people's life in a medieval English town; people's beliefs; household details; characters' individual appearances, courting and love-making, etc. The study showed a number of challenges posed by the intricate realism and bawdy farce of "The Miller's Tale" for the modern translator both in terms of words' meaning and functional status. In addition to difficulties resulting from the significant time distance between the original text and the modern English reader, the translator of "The Miller's Tale" faces the problem of language "propriety" in rendering explicit vocabulary relating to sex and physiological functions.*

*Key-words and phrases:* medieval text; modernization; reality-building constituents; translator's choices.

**Sidorenko Sergei Ivanovich**, Ph. D. in Philology, Associate Professor  
*National Aviation University, Ukraine*  
svsydorenko@gmail.com

#### REFLECTION OF THE MEDIEVAL REALITY IN MODERN ENGLISH TRANSLATION (A CASE STUDY OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER'S "MILLER'S TALE")

##### Introduction, Aims and Method

"The Miller's Tale" is undoubtedly the most entertaining story among those told by the personages of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" and deserves a special attention of a modern reader, giving us a realistic, though farcical, picture

of the world Chaucer lived in. In particular, it serves a comic illustration of men-women relationships so different from the stereotypical code of “courtly love” associated with medieval European literature. “The Miller’s Tale” is a fabliau, a genre of a short merry tale, generally about people in absurd and amusing circumstances, often naughty sexual predicaments, which was popular in medieval France and England. Such stories frequently involved a betrayed husband (the cuckold), his unfaithful wife, and a cleric who is the wife’s lover.

In “The Miller’s Tale”, Alison, the pretty young wife of an Oxford carpenter named John, has two suitors: a student, Nicholas, and the parish clerk, Absolom. Nicholas and Alison plan to spend the night together. To carry out the plan, Nicholas persuades John that a second Flood was coming and the only way for him and his wife to survive was to spend the night in separate tubs tied under the ceiling, so that when the Flood came they could cut the ropes and sail away. John follows Nicholas’s advice and spends the night in his tub while Nicholas and Alison enjoy the pleasures of love-making. That same night Absolom comes to woo Alison. Taking advantage of the dark night, the mischievous woman puts her backside out of the window for him to kiss. Thinking this a good joke, Nicholas does so too, but, tricked the first time, Absolom now fetches a hot ploughshare and buries it in Nicholas’s behind. Nicholas’s cries for ‘Water’ awaken John, who cuts the rope, falls to the floor and breaks his arm. The story ends with Alison rousing the neighbours to chase John, who they declare to be mad.

Though “The Miller’s Tale” is a version of a well-known comic story of which several forms are known, and which probably existed in the oral tradition of Chaucer’s time [18], Chaucer makes it into a piece of art, supplying the story with memorable characters, realistic details, intricate plot and a surprising end. Chaucer is remarkable among medieval authors for being able to break with the analogical or symbolic view of reality [11, p. 135]. As Stephen H. Rigby puts it, “the fabliau-world of the Miller is natural, material and tangible” [21, p. 48], and his tale “represents a carnivalesque exposé of the official culture of the Middle Ages” [Ibidem, p. 48-49].

In view of its literary value, this picture of the Miller’s world should be carefully preserved for the modern reader and the generations of readers to come. Written more than six centuries ago, Chaucer’s text may present some comprehension problems for today’s readers. G. Kolshansky argues that the correctness of perception of a literary text depends on the reader’s overall knowledge and mastery of the language code. Without mastering the language code, adequate decoding of the text produced in a different historical epoch and understanding of its author’s artistic principles and individual style is hardly possible [1, c. 73-75].

Besides purely linguistic aspects, the task of rendering “The Miller’s Tale” in modern English poses challenges related to moral sensitivity and propriety. No wonder, in a much-used early 20<sup>th</sup>-century translation of “The Canterbury Tales” by John Tatlock and Percy MacKaye [12], “The Miller’s Tale” is heavily censored. Custom at that time and long afterwards prevented the translator from literal reproduction of the “belligerent naturalism” (phrase used by Bernard F. Hupp) [16, p. 79] of the story. Chaucer himself, just before the tale proper begins, gives a warning to those readers who do not wish to hear ribald tales and invites them to *turne over the leef and chese another tale* [22, p. 67].

In view of the historical distance separating both Chaucer’s language and medieval mentality from ours today, in this paper we aim to look at how some of the details that shape the world of “The Miller’s Tale” are brought across to the modern reader. The modern English translation we chose for this study was performed by Gerard P. NeCastro, Professor of English at University of Maine at Machias, who hosts the eChaucer website [13]. Gerard NeCastro’s translation was chosen for several reasons. eChaucer’s web-site is a comprehensive collection of Chaucer’s originals and modern translations designed for the readers of the digital age. That means that whenever anybody gets interested in reading Chaucer today, browsing the Internet they are most likely to come across NeCastro’s site. Another factor which contributed to the choice of this translation is that it is a prose translation, which gives the translator essential freedom to stay close to the letter, sense and the spirit of the original work. Chaucer’s original text in this paper is cited from “The Riverside Chaucer” (third edition) [22].

To achieve our goal, we set out to single out the major reality-building constituents that make up the world of “The Miller’s Tale” and then look at how the translator handles them, i.e. which parts of the original lexical texture of the story are retained and which undergo modernization. Whenever we can do it, we try to provide our understanding of the motives behind the translator’s choices.

### Analysis and Results

The major reality-building constituents that make the world of “The Miller’s Tale” so tangible include locale markers; common practices characterizing people’s life in a medieval English town; people’s beliefs; household details; characters’ individual appearances, clothes, interests, likes, moral principles; courting and love-making, etc.

Andrew Moore refers to “The Miller’s Tale” as “the ignoble farce of life in its everyday guise in a familiar urban setting” [18]. The author makes this setting recognizable, introducing into his narration specific place-names and sights. The translator reproduces these names in modern form, sometimes adding a footnote. The very first line tells us that the action takes place in Oxford:

*Whilom ther was dwellynge at Oxenford... – A while ago there dwelt at Oxford (3187<sup>1</sup>)...*

The carpenter often went on business to Osney. Here the translator adds a footnote, explaining that Osney is a town near Oxford:

*this hende Nicholas Fil with this yonge wyf to rage and pleye, Whil that hir housbonde was at Oseneye... – Nicholas fell to play and romp with this young wife... when her husband was at Osney (3272-3274).*

<sup>1</sup> The numbers in parentheses refer to the lines in Chaucer’s “Miller’s Tale”

The narrator mentions the Tower of London and St. Paul's Cathedral:

*Ful brighter was the shynyng of hir hewe Than in the Tour the noble yforged newe. – Her hue shone more brightly than the noble newly forged in the Tower (3255-3256).*

This sentence in the translation is accompanied by a footnote which specifies the place and contains historical information which may not be known to a modern reader: "The Tower of London, which housed the mint".

The reference to St. Paul's is very casual, in the context of the design of Absolom's shoes, and is likely to look vague to the modern reader, unused to fashion patterns based on architectural masterpieces, so in this case the translator rightfully resorts to expansion to explicate the original meaning:

*With Poules wyndow corven on his shoos... – His leather shoes were carved in such a way that they resembled a window in Paul's Church (3318).*

The realistic setting defined by recognizable place-names and architectural sights is strengthened by the narrator's use of personal names, not only those of the main characters (Nicholas, Alison, John and Absolom), but also of minor personages – servants Robin and Jill, Gervase the smith.

The narration is full of details describing the life of inhabitants of a medieval English town. We come to know that well-off inhabitants of Oxford rented out rooms to the university students. John the carpenter kept a *hostelrye*, now an archaic word denoting 'a house where lodging and entertainment are provided, an inn, a hostel' [3, p. 409]. In the translation the noun is replaced by *lodging house*:

A chambre hadde he in that *hostelrye* Allone ... – He had a chamber to himself in that *lodging-house* (3203-3204)...

The carpenter kept a *knave* and a *mayde* to help about the household. If the latter word has retained its meaning till today, the former in the meaning 'a male servant' has become archaic [4, p. 725] and in the translation is replaced with *boy*:

But Robyn may nat wite of this, thy *knave*, Ne eek thy *mayde* Gille I may nat save. – But Robin your *boy* must not know of this, and I cannot save your *maid* Jill either (3555-3556).

Every morning the town-dwellers were woken up by the *belle of laudes*, the first of the day-hours of the church, and in the evening they went to bed at *corfew-tyme*. Both "lauds" and "curfew" have survived, though the functional load these words had in Chaucer's world has been considerably diminished by the 21<sup>st</sup> century. "Lauds" is in modern English functionally limited to ecclesiastical contexts [20, p. 847]. "Curfew" was 'a regulation in force in medieval Europe by which at a fixed hour in the evening, indicated by the ringing of a bell, fires were to be covered over or extinguished; also the hour of evening when this signal was given' [2, p. 1263]. In modern English this meaning is historical and requires certain background knowledge on the part of the reader. Nevertheless, the translator keeps both words, obviously considering them as attributes of the scene maintaining historical authenticity of the story:

And thus lith Alison and Nicholas, In bisynesse of myrthe and of solas, Til that the belle of *laudes* gan to ryng... – ...they were in mirth and glee, until the bells began to sound *for lauds* (3653-3655)...

The dede sleep... Fil on this carpenter right, as I gesse, Aboute *corfew-tyme*... – The dead sleep... fell on this carpenter even about *curfew-time* (3643-3645)...

One of the most popular public entertainments in Oxford of that time must have been watching plays performed in the open air. Absolom used to play the part of Herod to show his "cheerfulness and skill":

*Somtyme, to shewe his lightnesse and maistrye, He pleyeth Herodes upon a scaffold hye. – Sometimes, to show his cheerfulness and skill, he would play Herod on a high scaffold (3383-3384).*

The translator supplies this line with the footnote explaining the choice of part and its effect on the audience: "Playing Herod in the Corpus Christi plays was an honor, as it was one of the most notable parts in the play cycles, as Herod was a boisterous madman to whom the audiences responded with delight."

From birth to death, the life of the medieval people was dominated by the church. People's prayers for good health and well-being were directed towards Christ, whereas illnesses, sudden death and other misfortunes were attributed to evil spirits. The characters of "The Miller's Tale" often appeal to Jesus, refer to Satan, say prayers and mention favourite saints – Saint Thomas of Kent, Saint Frideswide, Saint Benedict, Saint Neot. Whenever the spelling of the name has changed over the time, the translator, of course, modernizes it:

This carpenter to blessen hym bigan, And seyde, "Help us, *Seinte Frydeswyde!*" – The carpenter began to cross himself and said, "Help us, *Saint Frideswide!*" (3448-3449).

The interjection *benedicitee!* (from a Latin canticle) is replaced by the common modern formula of blessing "God bless!":

Why rise ye so rathe? Ey, *benedicitee!* – ... why are you up so early? Eh, *God bless* (3768)!

In the following case the translator reduces the original sentence, obviously wishing to avoid excessive detailing of the kinds of prayer performed by the carpenter:

This carpenter seyde his *devocioun*, And stille he sit, and *biddeth his preyere*... – This carpenter sat still and *said his prayers* (3640-3641)...

Of special interest is the funny night-spell pronounced by John to wake up Nicholas from his pretended stupor.

Therwith the nyght-spel seyde he anon-rightes On foure halves of the hous aboute, And on the thresshold of the dore withoute:

*"Jhesu Crist and Seinte Benedight,  
Blesse this hous from every wikked wight,  
For nyghtes verye, the white pater-noster!  
Where wentestow, Seinte Petres soster?"*

– And at that point he said the night-spell, toward the four corners of the house and on the outside of the threshold of the door:

*“Jesus Christ and sweet Saint Benedict  
Bless this house from every wicked sprit.  
For the night-hag, the white pater noster;  
Where did you go, Saint Peter’s sister?”* (3480-3486).

The translator tries to follow the wording of the original spell closely, offering two footnotes for “white pater-noster” and “Saint Peter’s sister”. “The white pater-noster” is explained as “variation on the Our Father”. According to “A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles”, White Paternoster and Black Paternoster were names given to specific charms against evil spirits [6, p. 551]. Leslie K. Arnovick suggests that “white pater-noster” probably refers to a white prayer bead which marked the praying of the Pater Noster and therefore stands for the Lord Prayer [10, p. 27].

Saint Peter’s sister is referred to by G. NeCastro as not clearly identified. Scholars agree that the last line of the charm rhymes well with *pater noster* but looks a complete gibberish. Leslie K. Arnovick suspects that due to the formulaic nature of incantations the carpenter did not understand it either [Ibidem].

Another word that is a challenge to a translator in this charm is *verye*. The meaning of this word in Middle English is obscure, it occurs only as part of a charm [9, p. 154]. The translator shows himself quite inventive with the choice of “night-hag”, which fits perfectly into the rhythmical structure of the charm. Such translation agrees with the interpretation offered in “The Riverside Chaucer”: *for nyghtes verye* – against the evil spirits of the night [22, p. 72].

Small household details contribute significantly to the realistic picture of the tale’s world. Nicholas’s chamber is *ydight with herbes swoote* (“decked with sweet herbs”) (3205), it has *bookes grete and smale* (“books great and small”) (3208) and an *astrelabie* (“astrolabe”) (3209), as Nicholas practiced astrology. The furniture includes a *presse ycovered with a faldyng reed* (“clothes-press covered with a red woolen cloth”) (3212). John and his wife Alison slept in a *bour* (“bedroom”) (3367) which had a *shot-wyndowe* (“casement-window”) (3358). The carpenter and his servant heave Nicholas’s door with a *staf* (“staff”) (3465). To survive the coming flood, John prepares a *knedyng trogh* (“kneading-trough”) (3548), a *kymelyn* (“brewing-tub”) (3548) and *vitaille* (“provisions”) (3551), namely, *breed, and chese, and good ale in a jubbe* (“bread and cheese as well as good ale in a large jug”) (3628). As seen from these examples, the translator keeps the original word if in modern English it has the same meaning as in Chaucer’s text, bringing its spelling up to date, or replaces the obsolete word with a corresponding equivalent in use today.

“The Miller’s Tale” is remarkable for its detailed description of the main personages. Within the scope of this paper we will only briefly look at the narrator’s description of John’s wife, Alison. Alison is a young, pretty woman, obviously discontented with her old husband and willing to cheat on him with a handsome scholar. Rendering her description in modern English, the translator, depending on the functional status of the original word in modern English and its semantic history, follows one of the following methods:

1. preserves the word of the original. This is, of course, possible, if the translator is sure that the modern reader will understand the word in the same meaning Chaucer uses it.

Alison was *fair* “fair” (3233), with the body of a *wezele* “weasel” (3234), she had a *likerous ye* “a lecherous eye” (3244) and *blake browes* “black eyebrows” (3245-3246).

*Therto she koude skippe and make game, As any kyde or calf... – ...she could skip and make merry as any kid or calf* (3259-3260)...

2. replaces the original word which has become obsolete, rare or associated with a certain historical context, with a semantic equivalent or synonym common in modern English:

A *ceynt* she werede, barred al of silk, A *barmclooth* as whit as morne milk... – She wore a striped silken *belt*, and over her loins an *apron* white as morning’s milk (3235-3236)...

When a modern equivalent fails to render all semantic connotations of the original word, the translator makes up for it, explicating these shades of meaning with the help of additions:

She was ful moore blisful on to see Than is the newe *pere-jonette tree*... – She was more delicious to look on than the young *pear-tree in bloom* (3247-3248)...

The now obsolete word *pere-jonette* referred to “an early ripening kind of pear” [6, p. 590]. As this “early ripening” contributes to Alison’s sexual assets, the translator compensates for the loss of this connotation with the phrase “in bloom”.

Sometimes the translator can be reproached for not choosing a more accurate equivalent, as in the following lines:

The tapes of hir white *voluper* Were of the same suyte of hir coler. – ...and of the same black silk were the strings of her white *hood* (3241-3242).

The word *voluper* in Chaucer’s time denoted “a form of head-dress worn especially by women” [9, p. 305]. The word “hood” does not give the modern reader a correct idea of what Alison wore on her head, though this detail is important to preserve the authenticity of her portrait. The option “cap” offered by “The Riverside Chaucer” [22, p. 68] seems to be much more adequate.

The translator’s choice can also be doubted in the following line:

She was a *prymerole*, a *piggesnye*... – She was a *primrose*, a *pig’s-eye*... (accompanied with a footnote: “Primrose, a pig’s-eye, two small flowers”) (3268).

If “primrose” looks an adequate substitute for *prymerole*, a name given to one or more early spring flowers, including the primrose, and was in Chaucer’s time figuratively used in reference to a pretty young woman [6, p. 1364], “pig’s-eye” appears to be a misinterpretation of Chaucer’s *piggesnye*, which in Middle English meant “one specially cherished; a darling, pet” and was commonly used as an endearing form of address, chiefly to a girl or woman [Ibidem, p. 849].

3. keeps the original word, even though it has become archaic in modern English – possibly, as a reminder of the historical context. For instance, in the following example the translator keeps the word “wench”, which is functionally marked as archaic in modern English [17, p. 1875]:

...There nys no man so wys that koude thenche So gay a popelote or swich a *wenche*. – ...there is no man so wise who could imagine such a *wench*, or so lively a little doll (3253-3254).

As this word is archaic, the translator thinks it necessary to provide a footnote: “wench – woman of a lower class”. In fact, the note is somewhat misleading, as the meaning “a girl of the rustic or working class” was first registered in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, whereas in Chaucer’s time the word “wench” meant “a girl, maid, young woman” without any particular reference to her social status [9, p. 314].

The last reality-building constituent of “The Miller’s Tale” we will look at in this short study is courting and love-making. Physically explicit scenes make this tale distinct from other narratives in “The Canterbury Tales”, creating problems for lexicographers, editors and translators. In addition, Middle English is marked by striking imprecision in the use of words having to do with sexual, reproductive or excretory functions [14, p. 783].

The ways of gaining Alison’s favours pursued by Nicholas and Absolom are quite different – Nicholas’s is direct, quick and successful, Absolom’s is “courtly”, exhausting and doomed to failure, as Alison does not conceal that she prefers Nicholas. If Nicholas’s courting is base and almost instantly transforms into love-making, the description of Absolom’s efforts gives us amusing notion of the “high standards” of wooing he probably borrowed from books about courtly love. He *his gyterne hath ytake* (“he took his cittern”) (3353) and *syngeth in his voys gentil and smal* (“sang in his sweet small voice”) (3360) under Alison’s window, he *waketh al the nyght and al the day* (“remained awake all night and all day”) (3373), *kembeth his lokkes brode, and made hym gay* (“combed his spreading locks and preened himself”) (3374), he uses *meenes and brocage* (“go-betweens and agents”) (3375), sends his love *pyment, meeth, and spiced ale, And wafres, pipyng hoot out of the gleede* (“mead, and wines sweetened and spiced, and wafers piping hot from the coals”) (3378-3379) and, because she is from the town, offers her *meede* (“money”) (3380). The night when Absolom hopes to kiss Alison he takes special care to look attractive. He *cheweth greyn and lycorys, To smellen sweete* (“chewed cardamoms and licorice to smell sweetly”) (3690-3691) and *under his tonge a trewe-love he beer* (“put a true-love charm under his tongue”) (3692). This “true-love charm” may sound enigmatic for the modern reader. The translator does not offer any footnote to comment on the phrase. Usually editors identify the *trewe-love* as herb paris (*Paris quadrifolia*), assuming that the plant was associated with luck in love [15, p. 302]. “The Riverside Chaucer” defines it as “a four-leafed sprig of herb paris in the shape of a fourfold true-love knot” [22, p. 75].

In contrast to Absolom’s, Nicholas’s “courtship” takes only minutes. On the day when Alison’s husband was away he *fil with this yonge wyf to rage and pleye* (“fell to play and romp with this young wife”) (3273), *prively he caughte hire by the queynte* (“secretly he caught hold of her genitalia”) (3276) and demanded Alison’s love while *he heeld hire harde by the haunchebones* (“held her hard by the thighs”) (3279). After they had reached agreement to cheat on John, Nicholas *thakked hire aboute the lendes weel* (“petted her well on her limbs”) (3304) and *kiste hire sweete* (“kissed her sweetly”) (3305).

The word *queynte* was a Middle English euphemism for “genitalia”, referring to “an elegant, pleasing thing” [Ibidem, p. 69, 1281]. Interestingly, “A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles” published in early 20<sup>th</sup> century, does not give any definition of the noun, providing only illustration of its use in the given above quotation from “The Miller’s Tale” [7, p. 13].

The word *lend*, obsolete in modern English, in Chaucer’s time referred (chiefly in the plural form) to the loins, also, the buttocks [5, p. 195]. As seen from the example above, the translator makes the anatomic reference less straightforward, using the word “limbs”.

In a couple of cases the translator prefers to leave out explicit details. For instance, the following sentence in modern English lacks a whole clause about what Absolom kissed as a result of the practical joke played on him by Alison:

Thus swyved was this carpenteris wyf, For al his keypyng and his jalousye, *And Absolon hath kist hir nether ye*, And Nicholas is scalded in the towte. – Thus the carpenter lost his wife, for all his watching and jealousy; and Nicholas was sore burned (3850-3853).

The compound *nether ye* was used in Middle English to denote the anus. The word *nether* means “lower” as in “netherworld” or “Netherlands” (also known as the Low Countries), and thus the compound equates the anus to a kind of lower eye [19, p. 82].

In the same sentence the translator omits the name of the place where Nicholas was “sore burned” – *the towte*, meaning “the buttocks” [8, p. 193].

### Conclusion

This brief study of how Chaucer’s world of “The Miller’s Tale” is rendered in modern English translation proves the necessity of translating Chaucer’s text for today’s readers in view of the historical developments that have affected the English lexicon since Middle English. We should give credit to scholars who, like Professor G. NeCastro, dedicate themselves to preservation of literary masterpieces of earlier periods for future generations. The study showed the challenges posed by the intricate realism and bawdy farce of “The Miller’s Tale” for the modern translator both in terms

of words' meaning and functional status. The translator's prevalent strategy, allowed by the prosaic form of the translation, lies in (whenever it is possible without affecting the original meaning) keeping the wording of the original, bringing its spelling to conformity with today's norm. At the same time, a considerable bulk of words that have gone out of use, underwent semantic change or shifted to the periphery of the English word-stock, are replaced by equivalents or synonymic matches common in modern English. In the case of "The Miller's Tale" the translator, in addition, faces the problem of language "propriety" in rendering explicit vocabulary relating to sex and physiological functions.

The prospects of further research can be connected with deeper insight into reality-building constituents of a medieval text and translator decisions aiming at their adequate preservation for the modern reader.

#### References

1. Колшанский Г. В. О понятии контекстной семантики // Теория языка. Англистика. Кельтология. М.: Наука, 1976. С. 69-75.
2. **A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles** / ed. by J. A. H. Murray et al. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1893. Vol. II. 1320 p.
3. **A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles** / ed. by J. A. H. Murray et al. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1901. Vol. V. Part 1. 532 p.
4. **A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles** / ed. by J. A. H. Murray et al. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1901. Vol. V. Part 2. 770 p.
5. **A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles** / ed. by J. A. H. Murray et al. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1908. Vol. VI. Part 1. 548 p.
6. **A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles** / ed. by J. A. H. Murray et al. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1909. Vol. VII. 1700 p.
7. **A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles** / ed. by J. A. H. Murray et al. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1914. Vol. VIII. Part 1. 970 p.
8. **A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles** / ed. by J. A. H. Murray et al. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1926. Vol. X. Part 1. 1080 p.
9. **A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles** / ed. by J. A. H. Murray et al. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1928. Vol. X. Part 2. 1212 p.
10. **Arnovick L. K.** Written Reliquaries: The Resonance of Orality in Medieval English Texts. Amsterdam – Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing, 2006. 292 p.
11. **Burton T. L., Greentree R.** Chaucer's Miller's, Reeve's, and Cook's Tales. An Annotated Bibliography. 1900 to 1992. Toronto – Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1997. 287 p.
12. **Chaucer G.** The Complete Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer / translated by John S. P. Tatlock and P. MacKaye. N. Y.: Macmillan Co., 1952. 607 p.
13. **eChaucer. Chaucer in the Twenty-First Century** [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <http://machias.edu/faculty/necastro/chaucer/translation/ct/03milt.html> (дата обращения: 03.08.2015).
14. **Farrel Th. J.** 1989: Privacy and the Boundaries of Fabliau in The Miller's Tale // ELH. Winter, 1989. Vol. 56. No. 4. P. 773-795.
15. **Fein S. G.** 1991: Why Did Absolon Put a "Trewelove" under his Tongue? Herb Paris as a Healing "Grace" in Middle English Literature // The Chaucer Review. Spring, 1991. Vol. 25. No 4. P. 302-317.
16. **Hupp B. F.** A Reading of the Canterbury Tales. N. Y.: SUNY Press, 1967. 245 p.
17. **Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English.** Edinburgh Gate: Pearson Education Limited, 2003. 1950 p.
18. **Moore A.** The Miller's Prologue and Tale: Study Guide [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <http://www.universalteacher.org.uk/poetry/millerstale.htm> (дата обращения: 03.08.2015).
19. **Morton M.** The Lover's Tongue: A Merry Romp through the Language of Love and Sex. Toronto: Insomniac Press, 2009. 235 p.
20. **New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language.** College Edition. Delhi: Surjeet Publications, 1988. 1822 p.
21. **Rigby S. H.** Chaucer in Context: Society, Allegory and Gender. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996. 205 p.
22. **The Riverside Chaucer** / ed. by L. Benson. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990. 1332 p.

### ОТРАЖЕНИЕ СРЕДНЕВЕКОВОЙ РЕАЛЬНОСТИ В СОВРЕМЕННОМ АНГЛИЙСКОМ ПЕРЕВОДЕ (НА ПРИМЕРЕ «РАССКАЗА МЕЛЬНИКА» ДЖЕФФРИ ЧОСЕРА)

Сидоренко Сергей Иванович, к. филол. н., доцент  
Национальный авиационный университет, Украина  
[svsydorenko@gmail.com](mailto:svsydorenko@gmail.com)

В статье анализируется отражение средневековой английской реальности, изображенной Дж. Чосером в его знаменитом «Рассказе Мельника», в современном английском переводе. Автор выделяет ряд компонентов, формирующих реальность рассказчика, и рассматривает, как переводчик доносит их до современного читателя на лексическом уровне. Среди основных анализируемых компонентов – маркеры хронотопа, элементы быта, внутренний мир, внешность и любовные ухаживания персонажей. Сравнительный анализ показывает, что адекватное отражение реальности среднеанглийского текста требует от переводчика понимания исторической динамики семантики и функционального статуса лексики оригинала. Помимо этого, переводчику приходится решать проблему «пристойности» чрезмерно натуралистического повествования Дж. Чосера.

*Ключевые слова и фразы:* среднеанглийский текст; модернизация; элементы, создающие реальность; выбор переводчика.