

ZENKEVICH, Mikhail Aleksandrovich (ЗЕНКЕВИЧ Михаил Александрович) (1886-1973).

Mikhail Aleksandrovich Zenkevich was a Russian poet and author, one of the founders of *Tsekh poetov* (The Guild of Poets) and the Acmeist movement – a representative of its left wing, Adamism. The association of Zenkevich and Narbut with Acmeism has often been referred to as one of a social and rather conventional nature, yet for both poets it was indisputable. Zenkevich’s first book, *Dikaia porfira* [*Savage Purple*, 1912], praised by Acmeism’s leader Nikolai Gumilev (1912), as well as by fellow poets Sergei Gorodetsky and Georgy Ivanov (1994), is on a par with Anna Akhmatova’s *Vecher* [*Evening*,1912], Vladimir Narbut’s *Alliluiia* [*Hallelujah*,1912], and Osip Mandelstam’s *Kamen’* [*Stone*, 1913] for its importance to the Acmeist aesthetic.

Zenkevich’s legacy is significant and diverse. He authored twelve books of poetry, two novels (*Muzhitskii Sfinks* [*The Peasant Sphinx*, 1928] and *Na strezhen’* [*To the River Bend*, 1994]), short prose, dramatic poems — *Al’timetr* [*Altimeter*, 1991-1921, 2004] and *Triumf aviatsii* [*The Triumph of Aviation,* 1937, unpublished] — translations, and critical articles. He became one of the founders of the Russian twentieth-century school of poetic translation and was the longest surviving member of Acmeism.

Zenkevich was the first theoretician of the Acmeist movement, publishing “Deklaratsiia kul’turnykh prav akmeizma” [“The Declaration of Cultural Rights of Acmeism”] in *Den’* (April 27, 1914). He dedicated his translation of ten poems by André Chénier*, Iamby i elegii* [*Iambs and Elegies*, 1921, unpublished],to Gumilev, his Acmeist mentor, after the latter’s execution by the Bolsheviks in 1921. After moving to Moscow in April 1923, he served as editor for several prestigious publishing houses and journals. He wrote the first Russian biography of the Wright Brothers (*Brat’ia Rait*, 1933) and became the first translator of American poetry into Russian (1939, 1946, with Kashkin).

During World War II, Zenkevich composed anti-fascist poetry (“Ot Staligrada k Tannebergu,” [“From Stalingrad to Tanneberg”, 1943, unpublished]) and recited it at the front. After the war, he continued writing poetry but rarely published. Instead, he headed the Moscow University Literary Society (1946-1947) and mentored young poets. During the 1950s and 1960s, he translated a great deal and travelled in his own country and abroad, including the United States and the United Kingdom. He corresponded with American author Mike Gold and poet Robert Frost, while maintaining close ties with surviving figures of Russia’s Silver Age like Pasternak and Akhmatova. Together with Leonid Chertkov, he compiled the first collection of fellow Adamist Narbut’s poetry. He died in 1973 in Moscow.

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