

**SOURCES FOR YULIAN OPILSKYI’S BIOGRAPHY
IN THE MANUSCRIPT DEPARTMENT
OF VASYL STEFANYK NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC
LIBRARY OF UKRAINE IN LVIV**

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The paper examines the documents illuminating the biography of the renowned Ukrainian writer Yulian Opilskyi (real name – Yurii Lvovych Rudnytskyi, 1884–1937), collected by his daughter, Anna Rudnytska. These sources are part of archive N 360 “Rudnytskyi Yurii Lvovych (Yulian Opilskyi) (08.10.1884 – 09.02.1937) – writer, novelist, pedagogue”, kept in the Manuscript Department of Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv. This extensive collection includes biographical documents, manuscripts of published and unpublished works (handwritten and typed), letters, photographs, and other essential sources that provide important details about Yu. Rudnytsky’s education, personal life, professional and creative activities, and family relationships.

Keywords: *Yulian Opilskyi, Rudnytski family, archive, Manuscript Department, historical literature, biography.*

Problem Statement. In 2024, we are commemorating the 140th anniversary of the birth of Yurii Lvovych Rudnytskyi (1884–1937), better known as Yulian Opilskyi¹. He was a prominent figure in Ukrainian literary circles from the early 20th century until his passing in 1937

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¹ The name “Opillia” comes from his native region in the north-western part of Podillia [16, p. 3; 20, p. 3]. M. Hnatiuk describes it as “a picturesque land between Zolota Lypa and Strypa rivers in Ternopilshchyna” [3, p. 5]. According to R. Hromiak and N. Yankova, Opillia is located in the western Podillia in Zolota Lypa and Dnister basin [4, p. 401; 36, p. 4]; this region is in the west of the upstream of Zolota Lypa, Koropnytsa, and the estuary of Strypa rivers [23, p. 1857–1858].

and is particularly well-known for his historical novels. After his death, his daughter, Anna Rudnytska, collected and expanded with her documents an archive of historical significance. This collection is now kept in the Manuscript Department of Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv. The archive N 360, titled “Rudnytskyi Yurii Lvovych (Yulian Opilskyi)² (08.10.1884³ – 09.02.1937) – writer, novelist, pedagogue”, is a testament to his life and work and a valuable resource for understanding Ukrainian literary history. It is divided into two main parts: biographical and family documents, creative documents and work materials. The collection provides valuable insight into the history of the entire Rudnytski family from the mid-19th to the early 21st century, so its content deserves our careful attention.

The paper aims to examine the sources for the study of Yu. Rudnytskyi’s intellectual biography in the Manuscript Department of Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv. This approach involves identifying the main groups and types of documents and evaluating their informational value and relevance for present-day research.

Research methods. Our examination of these documents involves using several source analysis methods and techniques, including their selection, classification, and critical analysis.

Analysis of previous research and publications. Scholars have mainly focused on the literary aspects of Yu. Rudnytskyi’s life and work. Notable studies include S. Dziurman’s papers [6–10] and her thesis titled “The Poetics of the Historical Prose by Yulian Opilskyi” [11]. As far as we know, Dziurman’s dissertation is the only comprehensive monograph-sized investigation devoted to Yu. Rudnytskyi. Additionally, T. Kara discussed the literary life of Yu. Opilskyi in thesis entitled “Ukrainian Historical Story of the First Half of the 20th Century”, [21, p. 103–106, 120–124, 148–151]. Recent papers have further analysed his works from a literary perspective, exploring elements of style (“Golden Lion”) [33] and the presence of mythological elements (“The Idols Will Fall”) [27].

² In this paper, we use the actual name (Yu. Rudnytskyi) and the literary pseudonym (Yu. Opilskyi) interchangeably.

³ The exact date of the writer’s birth is disputed [4, p. 398; 5, p. 159; 36, p. 4; 16, p. 3]. We accept the positions of R. Hromiak and N. Yankova, according to whom Yu. Rudnytskyi was born in Ternopil on October 8, 1884 [4, p. 398; 5, p. 159; 36, p. 4].

Introductions to both older (which retain some value) and more recent publications of Yu. Rudnytskyi's works also examine their themes, plots, characters, and style. These studies include essays by P. Yashchuk [37; 38], M. Hnatiuk [3], R. Hromiak [4; 5], M. Ilnytskyi [16; 17; 20], and N. Yankova [36]. Scholars have noted the strong influence of I. Franko on the writings of Yu. Opilskyi [3, p. 6; 4, p. 401; 36, p. 6]. Additionally, several encyclopedic articles provide a brief yet comprehensive summary of our current knowledge about him [18; 19; 24]. Newspaper articles have also focused on Yu. Opilskyi's life and work, often commemorating his birth anniversary [15; 35]. The available research offers a detailed overview of his novels and stories, highlighting their literary value and significance for the development of Ukrainian literature during the 20th century. However, researchers have not conducted enough biographical-oriented studies that combine the analysis of his life and intellectual journey.

In previous research, some scholars have used documents from the family archive [3, p. 6; 4, p. 398–401; 5, p. 159–165; 36, p. 8], primarily discussing the manuscript of the writer's diary titled "A Life" («Житє») [4, p. 398; 5, p. 160–162; 37, p. 725–726]. R. Hromiak describes it in the following way: "A thick notebook, entitled 'A Life', consisting of 768 pages (only the first volume) and containing verses, novels, cultural-historical studies along with some geographical and comparative-philological notes. [...] the entries date from 1900 to 1908" [4, p. 398]. According to N. Yankova, "the first volume [...] contains [...] prose works with the author's definition of 'psychological studies'. The second volume includes autobiographical novels, tales, and a diary ('Notes')" [36, p. 8].

While many studies have focused on his writings, less attention has been given to his biography. In other words, Yu. Opilskyi's works are more well-known than his life. The archive, stored in the Manuscript Department of Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv, allows scholars to explore his biography and fill in the gaps in the history of the Rudnytski family. Although researchers have referenced some documents from the collection, most have not been systematically studied, making their content particularly valuable and indicating the need for further research in this area.

Presentation of the Main Research Material. The literary works of Yu. Rudnytskyi have received substantial attention from scholars, but little focus has been given to his biography. As a result, there is currently no comprehensive study of his life. This makes the writer's documents particularly valuable for researchers. These sources, along with published recollections of his daughter, A. Rudnytska [29], and literary scholar M. Rudnytskyi⁴ (1889–1975) [30], could be relied upon to reconstruct his biography or to provide a portrait of the entire Rudnytski family, shedding light on their personal lives and relationships.

Yu. Rudnytskyi was born in Ternopil in 1884, but in 1891 his family moved to Lviv. His mother and father passed away early, in 1896 and 1898, respectively, leaving behind four children: Lev, Stepan, Sofia, and the youngest, Yurii. After their parents' deaths, Sofia took care of her younger brother, who suffered from a spinal health condition, likely scoliosis [36, p. 5]. In Lviv, Yurii attended Polish (Lviv Teachers Seminary) and from the second grade [5, p. 159] Ukrainian (Lviv Academic Gymnasium) schools. After graduating in 1902, he studied German and classical philology for four semesters at the University of Lviv, attending lectures of O. Kolesa and K. Studynskyi [5, p. 159]. He then completed his higher education at the University of Graz, finishing in 1907. As a student, Yurii travelled extensively, visiting Italy, Greece, and Egypt [36, p. 5]. Afterwards, he returned to work in the gymnasium, teaching German and classical languages as well as history. From 1917, he worked as a referent of the School Regional Council and also edited handbooks. Yu. Rudnytskyi died in Lviv on February 9, 1937, and is buried at the Lychakiv Cemetery [5, p. 159; 36, p. 4–5].

The archive of Yu. Rudnytskyi was generously gifted to the Manuscript Department of Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine by the famous Ukrainian scholar, Stepan Antonovych Davymuka⁵, in 2023.

⁴ M. Rudnytskyi – Ukrainian writer, literary critic, translator, journalist, and a significant literary figure of the interwar period (1918–1939) [22, p. 3]; also, a distant relative of Yu. Rudnytskyi [30, p. 163–164].

⁵ S. Davymuka (b. 1947) – Ukrainian economist, political figure, scholar (Doctor of Economic Sciences, Professor), recipient of many prestigious awards [25].

After conducting the initial technical and research analysis of the documents, we have divided the archive into two thematic blocs, or inventories. The first part consists of personal documents belonging to Yu. Rudnytskyi and his immediate and extended family, including his parents, siblings, wife and her relatives, and their children – a son and a daughter. These documents provide insight into their education, personal lives, and professional endeavors. The second part contains his works in various forms (handwritten and typed) as well as work-related materials. Most of the documents are in Ukrainian, German, and Polish.

The archive is organised into two thematic inventories: inventory N 1 – “Biographical and Family Documents” (1860–2003) and inventory N 2 – “Creative Documents and Work Materials” (1902–1935). The first inventory contains 114 files and has two chapters titled “Biographical Documents” (27 files) and “Family Documents” (87 files). The second inventory includes 44 files and also has two sections titled “Creative Documents” (24 files) and “Work Materials” (20 files).

The group of Yu. Rudnytskyi’s biographical documents is relatively small but holds significant informational value (files N 1–27). It encompasses the years 1891–1937 and focuses on the writer’s education, personal relationships, and professional activities. In essence, these sources capture the key moments in his life. For example, there is a document from the city Magistrate allowing him to reside in the city of Lviv community (July 6, 1905) [12, fol. 1]. Additionally, there are personal documents such as a letter he sent to his future wife M. Kordiuk (June 21, 1913) and a marriage certificate (August 30, 1913) [32, fol. 1–5]. The archive also contains a document permitting Yu. Opilsky to travel to the Kolomyia county of the Chernivtsi province during World War I⁶ (December 30, 1914) [28, fol. 1]. Finally, an order for the organisation of his funeral (February 9, 1937) provides important details regarding this event [13, fol. 1].

One of the most important items in the archive is Yu. Opilskyi’s diary divided into three large parts (files N 2, 4, 10). It covers the periods from May 21, 1903, to May 15, 1908; May 3, 1904, to July 26, 1911; and January 2, 1908, to May 2, 1913. The first and the second parts of

⁶ The Russian Empire occupied this area during World War I, namely from August 1914 to August 1917 [26].

the diary were likely written in Graz and Lviv, while the third part was written after the writer's return to Lviv, allowing us to look at the events from his perspective.

Yu. Opilskyi's biographical documents include his school diplomas from the Imperial-Royal Teachers Seminary in Lviv and the Academic Gymnasium in Lviv, covering the years 1891 to 1902 (files N 1, 3, 5–7). They provide information about the subjects he studied, the marks he received, and other important evidence from his formative years. Following these are the certificates and the diploma he obtained from the University of Lviv and the University of Graz. These sources include copies of his participation in colloquiums and his graduation diploma from the University of Lviv, highlighting Yu. Rudnytskyi's continuous intellectual development as a student. Important details provides a document affirming a stipend for the study on the 4th course in the Philosophy Faculty at the University of Graz (July 6, 1905).

The biographical documents mainly focus on his career as a teacher (files N 11–14, 17, 19, 21, 23–25). They consist of records from the School Council regarding his employment (September 9, 1907 – July 29, 1914), documents from the examination commission confirming his qualification as a teacher (April 15, 1908 – January 17, 1910), a letter concerning his trial period as a teacher (June 7, 1909 – November 1, 1910), a request for a German translation of a certificate and a school diploma (October 18, 1910), records about his assessment and a temporary certificate (January 18, 1911 – October 25, 1912), records of his hiring and firing by the School Council (June 5, 1918, June 29, 1919), a document confirming his acceptance to teach Ukrainian seminars (September 12, 1919), a document detailing his work experience and salary calculations (March 16, 23, 1921), a financial document from the School Council of the region (January 21, 1924), a teaching qualification diploma from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education in Warsaw (April 7, 1924), a decree establishing his permanent position and a document conferring the title of school professor (April 6, 1929). Other work-related documents (files N 18, 20, 26) include letters from the printing house of the “Dilo” society (October 22, January 30, 1918), a document from the “Dnister” society in Lviv regarding financial support (September 20, 1919), and an invitation to

the Ukrainian Scientific Congress from the Ukrainian Academic Committee in Prague (June 30, 1931).

The documents in the second part of the archive showcase the creative activity of Yu. Opilskyi (files N 1–24). M. Hnatiuk characterises the writer and his work in the following way: “Today we can imagine ourselves a creative workshop of a writer. He mainly wrote in the evenings after finishing everyday pedagogic work. It was best to work in the summer when the family vacationed in cosy places near Lviv or in the Carpathians. As A. Rudnytska recalls, the writer thoroughly checked all historical events and individual battles with the help of maps and documents, then worked on a plan and a plot, the composition of a work” [3, p. 6].

The most significant among the creative documents is the manuscript of Yu. Opilskyi’s largest novel “Ghouls” (“Opyri”), which includes parts such as “On a Black Path” (part two) and “Ivashko” (part three); part one is absent (files N 4–15). Other works of the writer (files N 2–3, 16–23) include “A Novel from the Times of the Punic Wars”⁷, “About Truth”, “Struggle of Shadows. A Historical Sketch from 1399”, “Something about Napoleon”, the 1927 manuscript of “The Idols Will Fall” novel, an unfinished novel written between 2 June and August 1929, which concerns 1807, entitled “Death to Lacking Strength”, a story relating to the year 1848 “Khmel. A historical tale” («Хмель»), a work about ancient Scandinavia titled “The Route of Giants”, and the novel “The Fool”. Several manuscripts have not been published.

During his early years, Yu. Opilskyi attempted to write poetry, and there are verses from 1902 to 1911 [14]. While studying in Graz, he collected maps which he later used in his writings. These maps depict cities, states, and continents, aiding him in creating more precise and believable stories [2]. His work materials also include notes from philosophical literature [1]. The archive contains a German-Ukrainian dictionary consisting of 18 volumes presented alphabetically (files N 27–44). These volumes were created between October 26, 1916, and October 4, 1919, indicating a systemic approach by Yu. Opilskyi in his work as a

⁷ The Punic Wars were three military conflicts between the Roman Republic and Ancient Carthage from 264 to 146 BC, resulting in the destruction of the Carthage. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Punic-Wars>; Retrieved from: https://www.worldhistory.org/Punic_Wars/.

teacher. He used this dictionary while developing a handbook [5, p. 162] of the German language⁸ for students at the gymnasium where he taught⁹.

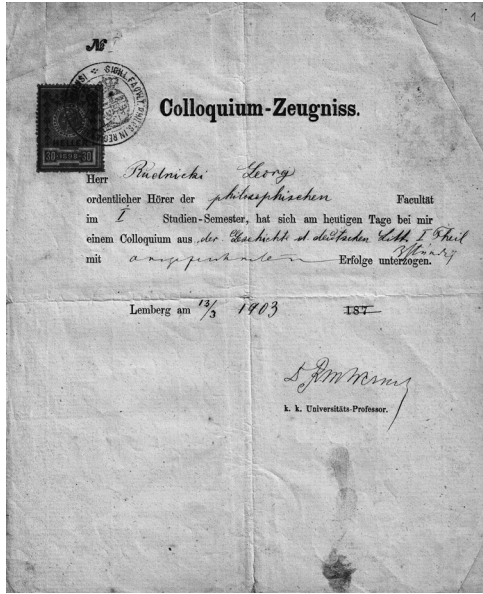
Conclusions. The acquisition of Yu. Rudnytskyi's archive by the Manuscript Department of Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv is crucial for preserving the legacy of this renowned Ukrainian writer from the interwar period (1918–1939). The documents, which contain his biographical information, manuscripts of his works, and work-related materials, provide valuable sources for studying his biography and intellectual journey. They shed light on his personal life, education, creative and professional activities, and relationships with relatives. Therefore, they enhance our understanding of various aspects of his private and public life and deepen our knowledge of an important period in Ukrainian literary history.



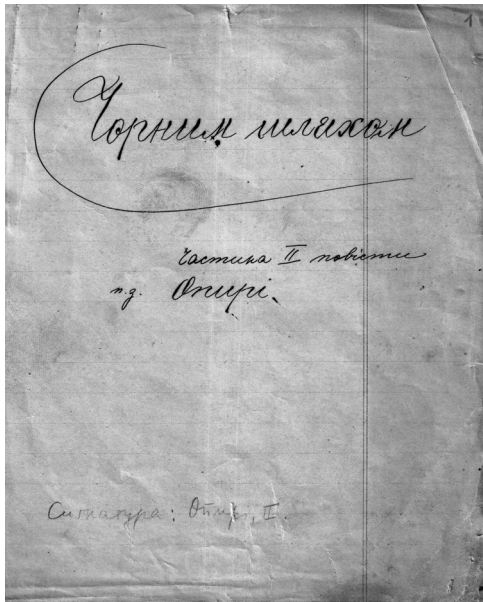
Yu. Opilskyi (on the right) playing chess at his apartment in Lviv. Around the 1920s

⁸ Published as “Textbook for the Study of the German Language” in Lviv in 1917 [31].

⁹ One of the documents contains an agreement between Yu. Rudnytskyi and O. Terletsykyi (Ukrainian pedagogue, historian, and member of the Shevchenko Scientific Society) regarding the publication of a handbook of the German language (October 5, 1922) [34, fol. 1].



Colloquium certificate. Faculty of Philosophy, Lviv University, 1903



Title page of the "Ghoul" novel (part two). Handwriting, 1919

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Джерела до біографії Юліана Опільського у відділі рукописів Львівської національної наукової бібліотеки України імені В. Стефаника

У статті класифіковано й проаналізовано документи, які висвітлюють життєпис визначного українського письменника Юліана Опільського (літературний псевдонім Юрія Львовича Рудницького, 1884–1937). Ці джерела зібрала в одну колекцію його донька Анна Рудницька. Нині вони є частиною архіву № 360 «Рудницький Юрій Львович (Юліан Опільський) (08.10.1884–09.02.1937) – письменник, романіст, педагог», що зберігається у відділі рукописів Львівської національної наукової бібліотеки України імені В. Стефаника. До цієї об'ємної колекції належать біографічні документи, рукописи неопублікованих і опублікованих праць, листи, фотознімки та інші важливі джерела, які містять цінні свідчення про освіту, особисте життя, професійну й творчу діяльність Ю. Рудницького, висвітлюють його родинні стосунки.

Результатом наукового опрацювання документів особового архівного фонду стало створення двох описів, кожен з яких складається з двох розділів. До опису № 1 «Біографічні та родинні документи» увійшли шкільні атестати Ю. Рудницького, свідоцтва про участь у колоквиумах та університетський диплом, його лист до майбутньої дружини (М. Кордюк) і свідоцтво про вінчання, документи з місця праці (Академічної гімназії у Львові) тощо. Також сюди належать документи родичів письменника, зокрема батьків, братів і сестри, дружини та її родичів і дітей – доньки й сина. До опису № 2 «Документи творчої діяльності та робочі матеріали» належать рукописи творів письменника («Ідоли падуть», «Опирі», «Роман з часів Пунічних воєн» та ін.), а також зроблені в студентські роки випуски з філософської літератури, вирізки з картами та укладений під час праці вчителем у гімназії німецько-український словник. Хронологічно колекція охоплює період 1860–2003 рр. Вивчення цих документів дає змогу повніше й достовірніше відтворити життєвий шлях та об'єктивніше оцінити багатогранну інтелектуальну спадщину Ю. Рудницького, цілісніше осмислити історію української літератури.

Ключові слова: Юліан Опільський, сім'я Рудницьких, архів, відділ рукописів, історична література, біографія.