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STUDY GROUP ON EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY RUSSIA

NEWSLETTER

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Contributions to the Newsletter should be addressed to:

The Editor: Professor A.G. Cross, Department of Slavonic Studies,
University of Cambridge, Sidgwick Avenue,
Cambridge CB3 9DA

Enquiries about membership of the Group as well as subscriptions should be sent to the Group's Treasurer:

Dr P. O'Meara, Department of Russian, Trinity College,
Dublin 2, EIRE

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SYNOPSES OF PAPERS READ AT THE 38TH MEETING OF THE STUDY GROUP AT HIGH LEIGH CONFERENCE CENTRE, HODDESDON, ON 6-8 JANUARY 1997

I. MAY SMITH (School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies, University of London), "Church Slavonic and the Influence of French on Eighteenth-Century Literary Russian"

In the eighteenth century the French language exerted a powerful influence upon literary Russian. This influence which began during the reign of Peter, grew in importance during the reign of Elizabeth when French was the language of the court. During the reign of Catherin II French prevailed to such an extent that it turned into what Ogienko termed "*boleznenniiu gallomaniiu*". As it came to dominate the courts of Eizabeth and Catherine II, French also became the language of the Russian aristocracy and of the Russian educated classes, as was the case in many European countries. In the reign of Catherine II ties with France were strengthened up until the events leading to the French revolution. These ties fostered the cultural Europeanisation of the Russian literary language.

This influence made itself felt at an early stage in life. The children of the aristocracy were educated by French or French-speaking Swiss tutors, and in the 1760s the study of the French language was made compulsory in state educational establishments. Thus, at an early age educated Russians spoke and read French, learnt the French classics by heart and were able to write in French fluently. The habit of speaking, reading and thinking in French inevitably had its effect on aristocratic idiolect. Gallicisms of all kinds penetrated their spoken and written Russian, while the loan-words from French which they used were pronounced with numerous French sounds.

Moreover, the enormous number of translations from the French had a powerful cultural and linguistic influence on Russian. These translations were eagerly read and the ideas they purveyed absorbed. In this way they served as a major vehicle for the introduction of a rich variety of linguistic and stylistic borrowings.

There is little doubt that the French language contributed significantly to the creation of the new Russian literary language. Some words were borrowed but a far greater number were either created or endowed with new meanings. Expressions and metaphors depicting feelings or psychological states; physical traits portraying emotions, qualities or defects; phrases describing the inner life of man, others referring to social or wordly habits and customs; polite forms of address, hyperboles, conversational phrases were imitated and entire syntactic and stylistic constructions were inculcated with minimal changes into the colloquial and literary Russian of the educated classes .

Another important element in the development of the Russian literary language involved changes in the use of Church Slavonic. The secularisation of the literary language did not hinder the use of Slavonicisms. Church Slavonic, however, was used in an innovative way. One characteristic device was the deliberate use of Church Slavonic in conjunction with colloquialisms or with words which had hitherto been considered contextually inappropriate. The result of such a juxtaposition was to produce satirical or comic effects.

This imaginative use was in direct contradiction with the rules proposed by Lomonosov, but it allowed more scope for the use of Slavonicisms. Indeed, Slavonicisms were not used merely for irony or comic effects: they could now be freely combined with colloquialisms and elements of popular and provincial speech. In this way, a stylistically neutralized Church Slavonic together with elements of popular and provincial speech became melded into a single literary language and were no longer confined to a specific style.

Church Slavonic played also an essential role in the formation of calques from the French, as Slavonic morphemes were often used to calque French words and Slavonic words were employed to introduce new meanings, set phrases. expressions and metaphors into Russian, for example, *khladnokrovie, slezy na ochakh, izmeriat' ochami*. Moreover. Slavonic syntactic constructions were brought into use under the influence of analogous constructions in French, for instance, *but'* followed by a genitive complement.

The meanings of the Slavonic words were strongly affected by these calques. Religious terms were employed to introduce secular meanings, for instance, *posviatit'*. The full significance of some words were weakened in order to accommodate the meaning of the French word, for example, *obozhat'*. The semantic range of other words were extended to include a new meaning, for instance, *chelo*. Words which up to that time possessed only a religious or spiritual meaning began to be used to describe a psychological state or condition, for example, *ozhivliat'*. Words possessing only a negative meaning acquired a positive one, for instance, *strast'*. Finally meanings which existed in Old Church Slavonic or Church Slavonic were revived under the influence of French, for example *imet' chest'*.

Under the influence of French Church Slavonic was strengthened and even revived. At the same time the long-standing authority of Church Slavonic often provided support to the borrowings from the French. An analysis of this interlocked relationship is essential to an understanding of the eighteenth-century literary language.

* * * * *

Hand-painted Globe (1773), designed by John Truscott, 'according to the latest astronomical observations'. Commissioned by Catherine II for her private apartments.

NOTES

I. IS THERE LIFE ON OTHER PLANETS? A VIEW FROM EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY RUSSIA.

> Let it be known that nobody under any circumstances may dare write or print anything about the multiplicity of worlds any more than about anything else that is opposed to the holy faith and is not in agreement with honest morals; and let this be on pain of the severest punishment for such a crime.[1]

These are the terms of an ukase that the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church requested the Empress Elizabeth Petrovna to issue in a petition of 21 December 1756. It is but one instance of how the Synod had been attempting from the late 1740's onwards to extend its censorship activity into the areas of scientific and literary writing. An archivist of the Synod annals of the period[2] records that the Synod was particularly concerned to suppress anything "discussing the multiplicity of worlds or the Copernican system and inclined towards naturalism".

This question of the multiplicity of worlds was well understood to mean the existence of other worlds inhabited by sentient beings, and this is a question that to this day is the object only of speculation, much if not most of it pretty idle at that. It might seem then slightly odd that it should have been singled out for the same measure of concern that was being given to the more substantial questions of the validity of the Copernican system or of 'naturalist' philosophy in general. Copernicus (1473-1543) had been dead for 200 years and more and his heliocentric model of the universe was by now accepted in scientific circles as established and demonstrable fact, not simply speculation; 'naturalism' is the approach to scientific enquiry that *characterises* Enlightenment science: it is in short the view that the natural world can be studied and described by reference to nature alone, i.e. in particular without reference to any scriptural or clerical

pronouncement. 'Enlightenment', of course, is not the sort of term that one would expect to find the Synod using in this context. The church was naturally concerned to resist any diminution in the applicability of scriptural authority, in the interpretation of which the Synod claimed exclusive prerogative, a prerogative it sought to enforce through whatever powers of censorship or coercion it could bring to bear.

The Copernican system was doubly alarming for the church - the Catholic no less than the Orthodox. In the first place, the Copernican system is justified by appeal to a 'naturalist' theory of knowledge that is in direct competition with the churches' claims to be the exclusive arbiters of what constitutes knowledge. More immediately, it overhauls the central and privileged position that mankind occupies in the canonical, geocentric model of the cosmos, for instead of the earth being looked upon as the rather large, unique and significant centre of a rather small and bounded universe, it was now being looked upon as an extremely small and peripheral item within an immense universe. In so diminishing the status of mankind in creation, the Copernican system correspondingly diminishes the status of a church that would justify its own existence by virtue of its being the sole authorised mediator between mankind and its Creator.

Now one particular possible implication of the earth not being the singular place that the church's interpretation of holy writ describes, is that there could well be other places like it that might similarly be inhabited by beings like ourselves. The question of the possibility of life on other planets became in Russia and elsewhere something of a test case, a particular arena in which the church and the secular forces of the Enlightenment were to contest the more general and fundamental issues at stake.

In 1730 the satirist and diplomat Antiokh Kantemir (1708-44) attempted to publish his translation into Russian of *Sur la pluralité des Mondes* by the French writer Fontenelle (1657-1757). It may have come as no great surprise to him that the Synod suppressed its publication, since it is evident from Kantemir's first Satire of 1729, *На хулящих учения* ('To the Detractors of Learning'), that he regards the clergy as hostile to the spread of new ideas. There are four voices in this Satire and each of them represents a

caricature of one of the various elements in Russian society that Kantemir identifies as resisting the spread of Enlightenment learning promoted (at least in the area of natural science) by Peter I. There is Silvan, the rapacious landowner who thinks he has all the learning he needs to maximise his income; Luka the socialite who regards learning as a waste of drinking time; Medor the Westernised dandy who thinks paper is better used for making hair-curlers; and, most importantly for this discussion, there is Criton the conservative cleric. "Schisms and heresies," says Criton, "are the children of science and he who languishes over a book arrives at ungodliness" (lines 23, 25).[3] "Our children, who before would listen with fear to what they did not know, have now started to read the bible " (ll. 29-32) and "they discuss and want to know the grounds and cause of everything" (l. 33). What ever next? Criton sees the new learning as alien to, and destructive of, the spirit of Russia - those who pursue learning "have forgotten how to drink kvas" (l.35) - and, worse still, "they think worldly power in church hands is excessive". What is this world coming to? Later in the Satire we are told how learning is harmful not only to the populace at large, but also to the clergy itself: "Someone writing a sermon will forget about some official certification, and this will harm the church's income; and in its income are the best rights of the church founded, and all the church's glory" (ll. 144-6). Learning, and piety itself for that matter, Kantemir suggests, are but distractions from what is the proper business of the church.

Kantemir's satire is pointed and unambiguous and would have won him few friends among the clergy, but it is positively understated in comparison with M.V. Lomonosov's (1711-65) *Гимн бороде* ('Hymn to the Beard') of 1756-7.[4] That the beard is not altogether standard subject matter for a hymn suggests immediately that some sort of lampoon is to be expected, and indeed the work has less in common with a hymn than with a rugby song. In common with the best hymns (and the best rugby songs), the poem has a chorus:

Борода предорогая!
Жаль, что ты не крещена
И что тела часть срамная
Тем тебе предпочтена

(Most dear beard! It is a pity that you were not baptised and that in this respect the most shameful part of the body was preferred above you.)

Not unquestionably delicate on Lomonosov's part, and obviously satirical in intent, but the fact that the beard is not present upon baptism, and so might thereby be regarded as sacramentally inferior to the rest of the body, is an argument that was raised *in earnest* in the centuries-long debate over the wearing of beards in the Catholic church, which was a debate indeed that far exceeded in length, convolutedness and acrimony the corresponding debate in the Russian church [5].

The indelicacy is compounded in ll. 3-5 of the second stanza, where the comparison turns from the male to the female genitalia:

[природа....]
Несравненной красотой
Окружает бородой
Путь, которым в мир приходим
([nature] surrounds with a beard of incomparable beauty the route by which we enter the world).

This ought to dispel any remaining doubts the reader might have concerning the respect in which he holds the wearers of the beard, that is, the Orthodox clergy who are the target of his lampoon. Lomonosov echoes both of the main points of Kantemir's earlier satire, but with considerably less restraint. Membership of the clergy secures wealth and status for the wearer of the beard:

Знатен чином и не скуден
Для великой бороды:
Таковы ея плоды!
Борода предорогая ... (ll. 54-6)

but, more central to Lomonosov's concerns as a scientist is the clergy's hostility to Enlightenment thought. The beard serves as a substitute for reason and for the senses:

О коль в свете ты блаженна,
Борода, глазам замена!

Дураки, врали, проказы
были бы без ней безглазы; (ll. 33-4 and 37-8),

it is a screen behind which false opinions can hide:

О завеса мнений ложных! (l. 62).

The specific example Lomonosov uses to illustrate the way in which the clergy thinks and behaves is that of our test case: is there life on other planets? The argument of lines 41-8 of *Гимн бороде* might be rendered as follows:

> If it is true that the planets are worlds similar to our own, the wise men on them, and worst of all the priests, would on the strength of their having beards make people believe that there is not a single one of us living here on earth. If anyone were to assert that in fact we are here, he would be tortured and burnt at the stake.

Lomonosov's intention here is plain, but he is using a not uncharacteristically slippery argument, one that will admit of more than one interpretation. The straightforward interpretation - that life on other planets is perfectly possible and so it is wrong for the clergy to punish people for asserting it - is the obvious intention; if need be, though, it *could* be read as an elaborate *reductio ad absurdum* in favour of the opposite conclusion: *if* there were life on other planets, *then* the clergy would be wrong to punish people for asserting it; insert here the unstated premiss that the clergy are never wrong, and it now follows that there cannot be life on other planets. QED.

Be that as it may, the Holy Synod took *Гимн бороде* at face value and responded with outrage.[6] Their first response was to invite Lomonosov to a private, unminuted meeting with them but any attempts to persuade him quietly to withdraw the offending, and indeed offensive, poem were to no avail and the meeting seems to have degenerated into a frank and uncompromising exchange of views. The unrepentant Lomonosov

soon responded with a no less immoderate sequel to *Гимн бороде, О страх! о ужас! гром!*,[7] in which these lines are by no means unrepresentative:

> Козлята малыа родятся з бородами:
> Коль много почтены они перед попами! (ll. 7-8).
> (little goats are born with beards: how greatly they are honoured among priests!).

With any chance of drawing a discreet veil across the matter now gone, the Synod applied to the Empress that she might condemn the poem and send Lomonosov to the Synod for 'admonition and instruction'. However, Lomonosov's influential friends at court, in particular his patron I. I. Shuvalov (1727-97), prevented the matter from going any further, though it looks probable[8] that they did not particularly relish such incidents and may quietly have suggested Lomonosov be a little more discreet in future.

What it was in particular that prompted this intemperate outburst from Lomonosov is not clear. One suggestion is that *Гимн бороде* may have been provoked by his outrage at how the Synod succeeded in 1756 in suppressing the publication of a translation that Lomonosov had commissioned of Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man* (1733)[9]. Alternatively, *Гимн бороде* may have been written as a rejoinder to a collection of sermons published around the same time by one Gideon Krinovsky. This Gideon Krinovsky rejoiced in the title of Court Sermoniser (придворный проповедник) to the Empress, and his published sermons contained sustained and vituperative attacks upon the scientific community. Whatever the case, it is clear that Lomonosov had long since been a particular focus for the hostility of the clergy. As early as 1747, some ten years before *Гимн бороде* appeared, Lomonosov had made it known that he entertained the possibility of there being life on other planets.

Lomonosov's *Evening Meditation on the Majesty of God on the Occasion of the Great Northern Lights*[10], written in 1743 and first published in 1747 as an illustrative passage in Lomonosov's weighty *Short Guide to Rhetoric*[11], is a work of a complexion and intent completely different from those of *Гимн бороде*. (It may though just be worth recording at this stage that when he wrote it, Lomonosov was

hardly in a position to be too outrageous: he wrote the *Evening Meditation* while he was under effective house arrest for a period of some nine months for getting drunk and starting a fight in the Geography Department of the Academy). In this short poem of 48 lines Lomonosov speculates on the causes of the Northern lights, which he presents as an apparent paradox in nature; cold fire, and daylight by night:

Се хладный пламень нас покрыл!
Се в ночь на землю день вступил! (ll. 23-4).

Although the title indicates that this is a meditation on the majesty of *God*, Lomonosov is not seeking to resolve the paradox in terms of any kind of divine miracle: he seeks the answer *in nature herself*:

Но гдеж, натура, твой закон? (l. 19).

That is, Lomonosov's is distinctively the 'naturalist' approach, and in lines 37-42 he advances a number of possible scientific explanations for the phenomenon: friction between ice particles in the air, the refraction of sunlight in dense air and, the explanation he arrived at later after much experimental work on the subject, the passage of electrical waves through the ether (which is more or less the proper explanation).

The majesty of God lies not in that he performs miracles, it lies in that his creation is orderly and subject to laws of nature that are discoverable by mankind. What makes Lomonosov's God majestic is that *he doesn't need to perform miracles*. The majesty of God is apparent in the immensity of creation as viewed from the Copernican perspective, and Lomonosov confesses himself bewildered by his own smallness within it; he is for example:

Песчинка как в морских волнах, (l. 7)
(like a grain of sand in the waves of the ocean).

He now raises the question of life on other planets and presents the possibility of this as evidence *in favour of* the majesty of God. Lines 13-18 can be rendered:

The mouths of the wisest men tell us, "Out there, there is a multitude of different worlds, countless suns burn there. There are peoples there, and the

> cycle of the ages. To the general glory of God, the laws of nature apply equally out there."

The plenitude of creation that is implied by the multiplicity of other worlds further confirms the majesty of God, as does the uniformity of the laws of nature throughout creation.

On the face of it, this shows on Lomonosov's part a profound and awed piety, but it is possible that what in fact we have here is an attack on church dogma by subtler means. For the church to deny the immensity and plenitude of creation in rejecting the Copernican system, and to deny its orderliness in rejecting 'naturalism' might now be presented as an impious diminution of God into no more than a performer of conjuring tricks in rather a small auditorium.

In his *Letter on the Usefulness of Glass*[12] of 1752, Lomonosov does explicitly make just such charges of impiety, and although these charges are judiciously levelled at classical paganism and at Roman Catholicism, their equal applicability to Russian Orthodoxy is all too abundantly apparent. The letter is addressed to Lomonosov's patron Shuvalov in gratitude for Shuvalov's having secured for him a concession to open a factory for the manufacture of coloured glass; for the record, the financial difficulties of this venture were to dog Lomonosov for the rest of his life. The letter catalogues the various uses of glass, from the trivial to the more substantial, from beads and mirrors and glazed pottery through window glass and spectacles and on to navigational and scientific instruments - barometers, telescopes and microscopes. On this level the letter demonstrates how applied science can increase our pleasure, comfort and knowledge, but at another level, which can be regarded as the philosophical core of the *Letter*, Lomonosov asserts the impiety of rejecting 'naturalism' and the Copernican system.

In lines 205-237 of the letter, Lomonosov relates the classical myth of how the titan Prometheus stole the secret of fire from the sun and passed it on to mankind, and how he was for this act condemned by Zeus to eternal torment, the unsavoury details of which need not detain us[13]. Classical interpreters of this tale ascribe Prometheus' punishment to man's *hubris* in overreaching himself in the pursuit of knowledge that is not rightfully his. Lomonosov, however, overturns this interpretation full circle, and says that Prometheus suffers not for his illicit knowledge, but from the ignorance of those who would deny that such knowledge is attainable and who would withhold it from mankind. Further, Lomonosov claims his view to have been vindicated by history: where mankind had previously feared fire through ignorance and superstition, with understanding it has now become to him such a commonplace that he casually uses fire to light his pipe - by means of a burning-glass, incidentally. What is more, man with scientific understanding can *improve upon nature*, or in classical terms surpass the achievements of the Gods. In the manufacture of glass, the artificial product is now superior to the glass that occurs in nature as the result of volcanic activity:

Подобное тому [i.e. naturally-occurring glass]
сыскать искусством тщились,
И было в деле сем удачно мастерство:
Превысило своим раченьем естество. (ll. 38-40).

Of course, 19th Century Romantics and 20th Century environmentalists do not reject the classical interpretation quite so out of hand as Lomonosov does.

Lomonosov goes on from the Prometheus myth to describe how the Greek Stoic philosopher Cleanthes (331-233 BC) denounced on grounds of pagan religious dogma the heliocentric system proposed by Aristarchos of Samos (c. 310-230 BC) and how as a consequence of this the heliocentric system was not given renewed consideration until the time of Copernicus nearly 2000 years later. He compares to Cleanthes the Catholic clergy who burn incense to demonstrate that St. Augustine (354-430 AD) was right in denying the existence of the American continent:

Что есть Америка, напрасно он [i.e. St. Augustine] не верил:
Доказывает то подземный Католик,
Кадя златой его в костелах новых лик, (ll. 298-300).

Lomonosov now charges such people as Cleanthes with using the word of God in vain:

Возьмите сей пример, Клеанты, ясно вняв,
Коль много Августин в сем мнении неправ:
Он слово Божие употреблял напрасно.
В Системе света вы тож делаете власно. (ll. 307-310).

"Власно", "imperiously", that is , in the sense that these people like Cleanthes are wilfully and blasphemously taking it upon themselves to override the word of God as it is revealed in the System of the World.

Now that Lomonosov has shown the Catholics to be blasphemous, he makes his own declaration of faith in salvation through Christ:

О коль велика к нам щедрот его пучина,
Что на землю послал возлюбленнаго Сына!
Не погнушался Он на малой шар сотти
Что бы погибшаво страданием спасти. (ll. 321-4).
(and NB line 323: He did not disdain to come down to a *small* world).

What more could the Russian church ask of one of its faithful children?

Or is not Lomonosov in fact being provocatively disingenuous here? It may be that he is taking advantage of the fact that it makes no difference to the applied scientist whether or not God exists, whether or not there is salvation in Christ, *so long as this God is not supposed as intervening in the day-to-day running of the natural world.* What Lomonosov's actual religious views were is the subject of a different debate; what matters here is that he has demonstrated his case for the immensity and order of the universe, which opens in particular the possibility of life on other planets.

So far this has been established only as a speculative possibility, but on 26 May 1761 this possibility was to assume the status of a rather strong probability on the evidence of astronomical observations in which Lomonosov himself took part.

What happened on that date was that the planet Venus passed between the Earth and the Sun, an occurrence that had only once previously been recorded, which was in 1639. Such transits occur only infrequently[14] and in his *Transit of Venus*[15] Lomonosov reports the eagerness with which this one was awaited throughout Europe, including Russia, and the extensive and costly preparations made in order that it might be viewed from points all over the globe. In particular, the astronomers Popov and Rumovsky had been sent from the St. Petersburg Academy to remote Eastern Siberia - a journey of several months - in order to observe it from there. At the time of Lomonosov's writing his *Transit of Venus*, the intrepid duo had not yet returned, and Lomonosov only hopes that they had benefited from a cloudless day for their observations such as had been enjoyed in St. Petersburg. The data Lomonosov does have to hand at this stage are limited to those from the observations made in St. Petersburg itself.

While other observers were making frequent timed measurements of the position of Venus upon the disc of the Sun throughout the course of the transit, Lomonosov himself concentrated his own efforts on the few seconds of the planet first crossing the edge of the Sun at the beginning of the transit and then, some 6 1/2 hours later, the few seconds of the planet crossing the edge of the Sun at the end of the transit. What is of particular significance at these times is what happens to the appearance of the edges of the two bodies when they are close together but not quite in contact, that is, whether they appear sharply defined or somewhat blurred. This is how Lomonosov describes the end of the transit:

> On Venus leaving the Sun's disc, when its leading edge started to get near to the edge of the Sun and was to the naked eye about a tenth of the diameter of Venus away, there appeared on the edge of the Sun a bulge which showed itself more clearly the nearer Venus got to exit [...]

> Complete exit, or the final contact of the trailing edge of Venus with the Sun, was also attended by a certain indentation and a blurring of the Sun's edge.
>
> On making this observation Councillor Lomonosov concluded that the planet Venus was surrounded by a considerable airy atmosphere of the same nature (if not bigger) than that which envelops our earth since the loss of clarity on the well-defined edge of the Sun just before the arrival of Venus itself upon the Sun's surface signifies the arrival of the Venusian atmosphere onto the edge of the Sun. [...] As Venus was exiting, the touching of its leading edge produced a bulge. These things show nothing other than the refraction of rays of light in the atmosphere of Venus.

Although Russian and Soviet commentators on Lomonosov's scientific work have maintained, often with peevish indignation, that many of Lomonosov's discoveries have not been properly attributed to him by Western and bourgeois writers, it is Lomonosov who gets the credit for the discovery of the atmosphere on Venus.[16] What is important about Lomonosov's discovery for the current discussion is that the presence of a sizeable atmosphere on another planet was taken by Lomonosov and his contemporaries as a very strong indication that the planet might be able to support life. Lomonosov himself discusses this possibility in his Appendix to the *Transit of Venus*:

> Someone reading about the sizeable atmosphere around the planet in question might say: it is possible to imagine that because of this steam might rise on it, clouds condense rain fall, streamlets flow, streamlets combine into rivers, rivers flow into seas, various vegetation might grow everywhere by which animals might feed. And this, just like the Copernican system, is against the law [i.e. church dogma].

This appendix is an essay that restates, and no less forcefully, the view of the relative validity of religious and scientific knowledge that Lomonosov states in his *Letter on the Uses of Glass*. Here, though, perhaps because he is speaking to a wider audience or perhaps because he is mellowing with age and is still mindful of admonishments that may have been given to him over *Гимн бороде*, he is far more conciliatory over the value of holy scripture and is at pains to point out that what he is saying does not conflict with the orthodox faith, *so long as it does not attempt to intrude upon the use of science to explain the natural world.* For instance, he speaks of the Orthodox faith in these terms:

> [православие] кое святое дело само собою похвально, если бы иногда не препятствовало излишеством высоких наук приращению.
>
> ([Orthodoxy], which holy thing is of itself praiseworthy so long as it does not sometimes excessively impede the growth of [the sciences].)

He goes on to say how the church dogma that is at odds with the Copernican system and the possibility of life on other planets is rooted not in Christianity but in more ancient pagan superstition - again he cites Cleanthes and repeats the argument he makes in the *Letter on the Uses of Glass*. In further support of this he draws on several extracts from the writings of the early fathers of the Orthodox church, in particular, those of one Basil the Great, to show that these writers were well aware that certain holy texts dealing with the creation and construction of the universe are intended to be interpreted metaphorically rather than literally. Remember here that on account of his early education at the Slavo-Graeco-Roman Academy in Moscow he was well versed in the works of such writers. It is not too hard to speculate either that Lomonosov would at the same time not necessarily have been particularly reluctant to draw attention to the fact that he was quite probably far better read in the works of the old church fathers than were the majority of his clerical opponents.

That science does not conflict with a proper interpretation of holy writ is a point he makes repeatedly in the Appendix to the *Transit of Venus*, and perhaps most clearly where he writes this:

> The creator has given the human race two books. In one of them he showed his greatness, in the other, his will. The first is the visible world here, created by him in such a way that man, looking at the immensity, the beauty and orderliness of its construction, will recognise the omnipotence of God by means of the power of understanding given to him. The second book is holy scripture. In it is shown the creator's benevolent concern for our salvation. In these prophetic and apostolic spiritual books the interpreters and exponents are the great church teachers. In the book of the construction of this visible world, physicists, mathematicians, astronomers and other interpreters of the works of God operating upon nature, correspond to the prophets, apostles and church teachers in the other book. The mathematician is misguided if he tries to measure the will of God with compasses. The teacher of divinity is no less misguided if he thinks that he can teach himself astronomy or chemistry from the psalter.

With so potentially momentous a discovery to present to his audience, Lomonosov is concerned that any debate be confined to the scientific issues and not diverted into any irrelevant issues of theology. What he says will still though discomfit the contemporary church fathers, whose scientific standpoint he characteristically identifies with that of classical paganism and whom he belittles in comparison with their more august and enlightened Orthodox Christian antecedents.

Again, he is not exposing himself to any obvious charge of impiety, perhaps even quite the opposite, but surely the following must be at least suggestive that Lomonosov's declarations of piety might not after all be quite in sincere earnest:

> Some people ask, if there are people like us living on other planets, what is their faith? Has the Gospel been proclaimed to them? Are they baptised into the faith of Christ?

He answers his own question by suggesting that once the inhabitants of the as yet unexplored regions of this planet have been baptised, the missionaries might well turn to Venus and proclaim the Gospel there. He only hopes that their journey will not be in

vain, for he fears that our Venusian cousins might not have succumbed to the Fall of Man and so may not be in any need of their good offices. There must be at least a hint of mischief here. Could this even mean, one might wonder, that not only are there living beings on other planets, but that they might be living beings in a higher state of grace than we are? Whatever the case, it is clear that Lomonosov's interest in the possibility of the existence of living beings on other planets is not primarily a matter of his concern for the salvation of their immortal souls.

Charles Ellis (Bristol University)

References

[1] М. В. Ломоносов: *Полное собрание сочинений*, (hereafter *PSS* in references and 'Academy Edition' in text), S.I. Vavilov (ed.), 10 vols., VIII (Moscow and Leningrad, 1950-59), 1061. This quotation is from the editor's commentary to Lomonosov's *Гимн бороде*.

[2] *Ibid.*, p.1061. The archivist is one Aleksandr Kotovich, whose *Духовная цензура в России (1799-1855 гг.)* (St. Petersburg, 1909), is cited at this reference.

[3] Quotations from the Satire are based on an unpublished translation by Dr Derek Offord.

[4] *PSS*, VIII, 618-31.

[5] This is pointed out in the commentary to the poem in the Academy Edition, *PSS*, VIII, 1066-7.

[6] The historical detail that follows is again taken from the commentary to *Гимн бороде* in *PSS*, VIII, 1059-71.

[7] *PSS*, VIII, 627-9.

[8] My own speculation, not necessarily that of the Academy Edition.

[9] M.H. Abrams (ed.) *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 6th edn, 2 vols., (New York, 1993), I, 2263-70. That the Holy Synod would have been hostile to this

poem is not surprising: not only is it a testament to 'naturalist' philosophy, it is also quite unambiguous on the question of the multiplicity of worlds :

> See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
> Observe how system into system runs,
> What other planets circle other suns,
> What varied being peoples every star,
> May tell why Heaven has made us what we are. (ll. 24-8).

[10] *Вечернее размышление о Божием Величестве при случае великаго севернаго сияния*, *PSS*, VIII, 120-3.

[11] *Краткое руководство к красноречию*, *PSS*, VII, 89-378.

[12] *Письмо о пользе Стекла К ...[Шувалову]*, *PSS*, VIII, 508-522. The missing words from the title here are an extremely long string of Shuvalov's titles and accomplishments.

[13] But see for example the translation and commentary in H.B. Segel, *The Literature of Eighteenth-Century Russia*, 2 vols. (New York, 1951).

[14] "Transit" is the appropriate technical term here: the relative sizes and distances from the Earth of Venus and the Sun are such that Venus will not significantly obscure the Sun. It is exactly the same thing as an eclipse, except that the term 'eclipse' is normally reserved for where the nearer body (in earthly terms, generally the Moon) obscures a significant amount of the surface of the more distant body (generally the Sun). The precise details of their periodicity is that two transits separated by about 8 years (Earth years, that is) occur at intervals of every 105 (or so) or 122 (or so) years. The transit of 1639 would have been the first of such a pair, but the one of 1647 would only have been visible from parts of the Earth not then accessible to European observers. The transit of 1761 is the one in question here, and observing the subsequent one of 1769, which again was not visible from Europe, was one of the commissions of Captain James Cook in his 1768-71 voyage to the South Seas. The next transits took place in 1874 and 1882. The English astronomer Halley (he of comet fame) had shown in a paper of 1679, of which Lomonosov was aware, how observations of a transit of Venus will enable the observer to calculate among other things the distance of the Earth from the Sun. To this Lomonosov adds in his *Transit of Venus* (see following footnote) that the observation of the transit will yield information of more immediate practical use in navigation aside from the astronomical information. The astronomical detail given here is from the *Encarta* on-line encyclopaedia, Copyright Microsoft Corporation 1993.

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15 *Явление Венеры на солнце, наблюденное в санктпетербургской императорской академии наук майя 26 дня 1761 года*, *PSS*, IV, 361-76.

16 See for example the entry for 'Solar System' in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

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II. WHICH HADFIELD?

In Chapter VIII, 'Masters of the Arts', of my recent study *By the Banks of the Thames* (CUP, 1997, but actually published in November 1996) I mention for the first time in an English-language work the name of Hadfield, the mysterious painter of a series of twenty-six watercolours executed during Catherine's famous journey to the Crimea in 1787.[1] I had been alerted to their existence by a casual reference to them and their whereabouts in a 1974 article by the Russian art historian L.N. Timofeev;[2] and it was in the Hermitage's Department of Drawings that a few years ago I saw most of them, together with their green morocco folder. Several, but not all, of the watercolours bore inscriptions such as 'Hadfield 1787' or 'Hadfield - 1787 St Petersburg', but there was no further information available. However, I had overlooked an interesting reference to the watercolours in J.G. Georgi's noted *Opisanie rossiisko-imperatorskogo stolichnogo goroda Sankt-Peterburga* (1794), which was recently brought to my attention by Galina Andreeva of the Tret'iakov Gallery. In Paragraph 725, devoted to the collection of prints and drawings in the Hermitage, he writes: "there are various sets [*sviazki]* of the work of individual artists, painters, architects, engineers and others, preserved in the repository, including, for instance the Englishman *Gallfil'd*'s coloured depictions of some towns and events connected with the journey of Her Imperial Majesty to the Taurida district".[3]

Who was Hadfield? My research failed to come up with a definite identication, although I was certain that he was connected with the family of Charles Hadfield (d. 1776), owner of an inn in Florence much frequented by the British Grand Tourists from the late 1740s and himself portrayed on a famous painting by Thomas Patch, 'The Punch Party' (1760). I proposed the name of George Hadfield (1764-1826), brother of the painter well known under her married name of Maria Cosway. Maria had written of "my brother George Hadfield [who] had gained the Gold Medal & sent by the [Royal] Academy to Rome" and the editor of the of the study in which this autobiographical memoir appeared for the first time commented that "Her brother

became an artist, but did not attain to any special notoriety". [4] Clinching evidence of a Russian link was not, however, to be found.

By the time my book was published, another article, which I had in fact written much later, 'Cultural Relations between Britain and Russia in the Eighteenth Century', had already appeared in *British Art Treasures from Russian Imperial Collections in the Hermitage*, the catalogue of the great exhibition organized by Professor Brian Allen, which opened at the Yale Center for British Art in October last year. It was Professor Allen who supplied the reference that persuaded me to change the attribution of the watercolours from George to his elder brother William Hadfield (b. 1761). There is in the archives of the Royal Academy a letter from William Hadfield, dated 1804, to his friend, the miniaturist Ozias Humphry, who annotated it to the effect that he was "brother of Maria Cosway. He died on the banks of the Euxine". [5] This still vague reference to the Black Sea, albeit at a much later period, possibly points to Hadfield's Russian links and his return to places he had visited some years earlier. The publication in the last few months of John Ingamells' remarkable *Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy 1701-1800* , compiled by John Ingamells on the basis of the archive that Sir Brinsley Ford gave to the Paul Mellon Centre in London, adds some substance to this conjecture, providing new information on all members of the Hadfield family.[6]

William, rather than George, Hadfield will be given as the artist in the catalogue to accompany the exhibition on Anglo-Russian artistic links (to c. 1860) which will open at the Tretiakov Gallery early in November this year. It will also be the first exhibition to put a selection of Hadfield's watercolours on public display , although the Yale catalogue contains the first of his watercolours ever to be reproduced (views of Smolensk and The Baths at Bakhchisarai on pp. 25 and 26). It is hoped that not only will his watercolours, which provide a unique pictorial accompaniment to Catherine's journey to the South, become known but that the

identity of the artist and the circumstances of his visit to Russia will be firmly established on the basis of new archival materials.

A.G. Cross (University of Cambridge)

References

1 *By the Banks of the Thames: Chapters from the Lives and Careers of the British in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 314-15.

2 L.N. Timofeev, 'Romanticheskie tendenstii v arkhitekture vtoroi poloviny XVIII v. - pervoi poloviny XIX v.', *Problemy sinteza iskusstv i arkhitektury*, vyp. 4 (Leningrad, 1974), 76.

3 I.G. Georgi, *Opisanie rossiisko-imperatorskogo stolichnogo goroda Sankt-Peterburga i dostopamiatnostei v okrestnostiakh onogo, s planom* (Spb., 1996), p. 325. (This is,incidentally, a resetting and not a reprint of the original Russian edition. The book first appeared, of course, in German in 1790 and there was also a French translation of 1793, both published in St Petersburg.)

4 G.C. Williamson, *Richard Cosway, His Life and Pupils* (London, 1897), pp. 12, 16.

5 Brian Allen and Larissa Dukelskaya (eds.), *British Art Treasures from Imperial Collections in the Hermitage* (New Haven and London, 1996), pp. 24, 35 (note 41).

6 John Ingamells (comp.), *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy 1701-1800* (New Haven and London, 1997), pp. 439-42.

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III. THE DEATH OF CATHERINE THE GREAT: THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE CLASSICS

In the epilogue to his spectacularly researched biography of Catherine the Great, John Alexander does a particularly fine job of laying to rest the infamous legend surrounding her death.[1] First and foremost, he is able to distinguish between the mundane recorded historical accounts of her stroke, suffering, and last hours (best in the words of her British physician), and the libelous myths that arose subsequently. The identity of the scandal-monger who first alleged that a horse was involved is probably irretrievably and certainly deservedly lost. As Professor Alexander notes, the story probably circulated orally for some time before it was written down.

My own suspicions centre on the intensely Russophobic, Polish, educated, and aristocratic community in Paris after about 1830, but this remains speculation. After the three partitions of Poland during her reign, the failure of Poland to regain its independence or borders at the Congress of Vienna, and the brutal suppression of their war of independence later, embittered Polish émigrés had good reason to despise Catherine, and to concoct and spread every manner of calumny.

In terms of her sexuality, her sequence of official favourites could, and did, provide the raw material for all sorts of slander and innuendo, even during her life. Although "she conducted her life with propriety and decorum,"[2] anti-monarchical libels, including the bestial, were commonplace in folk culture, print, woodcut and sketch in the eighteenth century, in Russia and across Europe. Here little explanation is required.

Still the question arises, whence the horse? The Classics provide a clue.

Upon receipt of Catherine's *Nakaz, Instruction Pour la Commission chargée de dresser le Projet d'un nouveau Code des Loix,*[3] Voltaire enthusiastically compared Catherine favourably to other female monarchs, to Queen Elizabeth of England, to Maria Theresa of the Hapsburg Empire, and also to **Semiramis** declaring that she had exceeded them, since no previous woman-monarch had ever been a legislator: she was the first.[4]

Why did he mention Semiramis?

Semiramis on the one hand was the prototype of the original earth goddess.[5] She personified the female cult figure for the entire ancient world, and was known and worshipped throughout the Greek, Anatolian, and Mesopotamian cultural spheres under one name or another. Her larger legend, however, blended religion, myth, and history. Daughter of the fish-goddess Decerto of Ascalon in Syria, Queen of Babylon, mythical founder of the Assyrian empire of Nineveh, worshipped under the name of Astarte or the Heavenly Aphrodite, alternately born of and ascendant to heaven after death in the form of a dove, and embodied as Queen of Heaven in the constellation Cassiopeia, Semiramis was the primeval female deity subsequently suppressed by male gods and masculine priesthoods.

Everyone in eighteenth-century educated society could know the history of Semiramis, for it was imbedded in fundamental and universal educational texts, in commonplace histories of the ancient world. In 1717 Crébillon could stage his **Semiramis: Tragédie.**[6] Voltaire could make the comparison because a generation later, he had produced his own **Semiramis: Tragédie en Cinq Actes,** which also provided the occasion for his *Dissertation sur la tragédie ancienne et moderne.*[7] Montesquieu could allude to her, writing that the riches of her Assyria, presumably those necessary to build the fabulous hanging gardens of Babylon, came from pillaging other nations.[8] All could assume some resonating familiarity with her on the part of their readers.

Most in the eighteenth century who knew Semiramis knew her through the historical writings of Diodorus Seculus, Diodorus of Sicily, writing between 60/59 BC to about 36 BC. A Latin text of his universal history had been published as early as 1472 in Bologna, and it was frequently reprinted in a variety of European cities thereafter. A bi-lingual Greek-Latin edition (Hanau, 1604) followed, but it was the annotated version of Amsterdam, 1746, by Petrus Wesseling, that constituted the monumental edition prior to the 19th century, standardizing the text and the accumulated commentary.[9] Diodorus credited the 23 books of *Persica* by Ctesias of Cnidus (ca. 390 BC) for some of his information. But Diodorus was the source for Crébillon, Voltaire, and the age.[10]

There were scores of possible parallels between this received legendary life of Semiramis and the real biography of the Empress Catherine of Russia. According to Diodorus, Semiramis had enslaved her husband with her beauty.[11] Thereafter she became the dominant personality in their marriage, and he relied on her for everything. This parable echoed Catherine's own memoir account of her dominant role in relations with the servile Peter III. Once, desiring to see her husband who was away on military campaign, Semiramis devised clothing which made it impossible to know if she were a man or a woman, and which gave her freedom of movement, especially for riding horseback. In battle it was her bravery and wisdom which had led to victory. Contemporaries could easily recall the equestrian portraits of Catherine, her account of her and Dashkova donning military uniforms to take control of events in June 1762, and perhaps even knew of Catherine's own account of her saddle which enabled her to ride demurely side-saddle in front of Elizabeth's court, and astride her mount elsewhere.

After the jealous, frenzied suicide of her husband (again an echo of reports of Peter III's death), Semiramis married the king, who begat a son, then conveniently died, leaving her to rule for many years gloriously as the queen. "Her nature made her eager for great exploits and ambitious to surpass the fame of her predecessor n the throne." During her reign, she would build Babylon, a wondrous city on swampland, she would build palaces and found other cities. Her reputation as a builder of cities was cited by Herodotus. In Media she would satisfy her taste for luxury. Unwilling to contract marriage for fear she would lose her throne, she chose the handsomest soldiers as her lovers: "She consorted with then and then made away with all who had lain with her." Catherine's court life in Petersburg, real and imagined, provided numerous parallels.

In addition to his crafted biography of a heroic Semiramis, Diodorus also reported variant accounts known to him, some of which provided additional points of contact with Catherine lore. From Ctesias of Cnidus he reported that Semiramis had received the sceptre of power, gave a banquet for the loyal military guard, then turned on her husband, imprisoned him, seized the throne, and thus could rule into her old age. After her own death, the story went, her son ruled; to do so he emerged from his

own palace, where he had lived locked away, seen by no one, devoted to a life of luxury and idleness, while his mother reigned. Ever fearful of his crown, her son had annually changed his guard and their officers, to forestall conspiracies. The parallels with the "paranoid" and "mad" Paul were obvious.

Thus any Classically-educated European, vaguely aware of Catherine's own life, and that of her husband or son, personal and public, could point to numerous points of contact with the Semiramis lore, whether his purpose was to slander her, or to praise her, as had Voltaire. Ambition, accomplishments, sensuality, lovers recruited from the guards regiments, seizures of power, city-building policies, and high politics all could feed the imagination of the poet, the diarist, or correspondent.

Still the question arises, whence the horse?

Another Classical author may provide the clue. Juba II, Roman King of Mauritania, husband of the daughter of Antony and Cleopatra (d. ca. AD 23), spread Greco-Roman culture throughout North Africa, and wrote prolifically in Greek.[12] His works are lost, and are known from citations by others. Pliny the Younger, in the eighth book of his famous *Natural History*, the one which deals with quadrupeds, with elephants, lions, panthers, dogs, and horses,[13] provided one of those citations when he wrote (fragment #22), "*Equum adamatum a Samiramide usque in coitum Iuba auctor est*".

Here at last is the beloved smoking horse, and a clear connection to the lustful Semiramis/Catherine.

I know not who initiated the defamatory story of Catherine's death, but whoever it was, he may have been familiar with French theatre of the eighteenth century. But it is a certain bet that his personal library contained the Latin Classics, certainly Diodorus, and more certain still, Pliny. In the eighteenth century, incidentally, that criterion eliminated almost all Russian nobles, but not the Ukrainian or Belorussian cultural and clerical elites in Russia.[14]

Max J. Okenfuss (Washington University)

References

[1] John T. Alexander, *Catherine the Great: Life and Legend* (New York/Oxford, 1989), pp. 324-5, 332-5.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 225.

[3] Text in French and Russian in *Polnoe sobranie zakonov*, 30 July, 1767, #12949, XVIII, 192-280.

[4] Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 101; elsewhere he compared her to Numa and Minos, to Lycurgus and Solon, and he called her Code "finer than Justinian's" A. Lentin (ed.),*Voltaire and Catherine the Great: Selected Correspondence* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 56, 80.

[5] Semiramis lore can be found in *Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography* (New York, 1880), III, 776-7; *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1982), III, Part 1, 243-4, 271-5, 314 and *passim*.

[6] J. de Crébillon, *Théaâre Complet*, Nouvelle Édition par Auguste Vitu (Paris, 1885), pp. 183-229.

[7] Voltaire, *Oeuvres Complétes* (Paris, 1886), 1-64. Voltaire's tragedy was performed in August 1748, fourteen years before Catherine's accession and the onset of their correspondence. Of later uses of Semiramis, one recalls also the opera by Rossini.

[8] Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, trans. by Thomas Nugent, I (New York and London, 1949), 334. Montesquieu also wrote, "It is contrary to reason and nature that women should reign in families..., but not that they should govern an empire. In the former case, the state of their natural weakness does not permit them to have the pre-eminence; in the latter their very weakness generally gives them more lenity and moderation, qualifications fitter for a good administration than roughness and severity": *Ibid.*, p. 108. Catherine, needless to say, knew her Montesquieu.

[9] Diodorus Siculus, *Diodorus of Sicily, Loeb Classical Library*, Oldfather *et al.*, I (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), xxiii-xxvii. Diodorus was published in Russian in a translation by Ivan Alekseev in 6 parts, St Petersburg, Academy of Sciences, 1774-5, in an edition of just 300 copies. This was a late publication of the once ambitious 'Society Striving for the Translation of Foreign Books'. See Max J. Okenfuss, *The Rise and Fall of the Latin Classics in Russia* (Leiden, 1995), pp 147ff.

[10] Maurice Dutrait, *Étude sur la vie et le Théatre de Crébillon (1674-1762)* (1895 (Slatkine Reprints, Genéve, 1970), p. 193. As it turned out, Crébillon by 1747 had

become the *censeur* through whose hands Voltaire's tragedy had to pass (*Ibid.*, pp. 91-108).

11 For the following, Diodorus, *op. cit.*, I, 359-421, esp., 363-7, 371-7, 393-5, 419-21, and *passim*.

12 One could learn of Juba recently from Umberto Eco, *The Island of the Day Before* (New York, 1966), p. 348, where he writes in passing that the historian Juba says that Semiramis, concubine of the King of Assyria, fell in love with a horse.

13 Plinius Secundus, *Natural History*, VIII, 155.

14 Such, at least, is a conclusion of my *Rise and Fall of Latin Humanism in Early Modern Russia*.

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DOCUMENTS

I. D.S. MIRSKY: A FORGOTTEN ARTICLE ON PETER THE GREAT (1931)

In the course of preparing for publication some letters by D.S. Mirsky from the Leeds Russian Archive,[1] we came across a fleeting reference to, and then tracked down, an article by him that is not registered in the principal bibliography of his work[2] and would appear to have been completely forgotten. The article concerns Peter the Great; it was published in the Paris journal *Vu*, 192(18 November 1931), pp. 2535-6.

This was a special Russian issue of the pioneering popular illustrated magazine of Western Europe, of the type best known to older British readers because of the much-lamented *Picture Post*. Mirsky's article includes three illustrations. The first shows the head and shoulders of the *voskovaia persona*, credited to the Hermitage; the second page of the article is rounded out with a rear-view shot of the statue at the Finland Station of Lenin on his armoured car addressing the workers. At the top of this second page is a rear-view photograph (again), but this time of the Bronze Horseman, with some small boys climbing up its granite base.[3] The caption, for once arguing (perhaps despairingly) *against* a symbolic reading of this monument, reads: 'Les gosses de Léningrad montent à l'assaut de la statue de Pierre le Grand. (Il ne faut pas chercher un symbole dans la présence du serpent qui n'a d'autre raison d'être que de soutenir la queue du cheval.)' This photograph is attributed to Lucien Vogel. The French socialist Vogel (1886-1954) was the founder of *Vu*, among many other influential enterprises in popular journalism. His Russian connections, so far as we are aware, have not been thoroughly investigated.

D.S. Mirsky had been in emigration since 1920, teaching Russian literature from 1922 at the School of Slavonic Studies. In the later 1920s he turned away from literature, published a number of historical studies, and involved himself with practical politics, chiefly in connection with the Eurasian movement.[4] He then wrote

a short biography of Lenin.[5] In May 1931 he joined the Communist Party of Great Britain. At some time very close to that of the *Vu* article, Mirsky set down an account of his conversion, also in French.[6]

Mirsky's article flaunts the hard-line Marxist stance that the author had adopted at the time of writing.[7] But, as with everything Mirsky wrote, it exhibits the force and cogency of his thinking; he was never indecisive and could not tolerate half-measures. It was these qualities, among other things, that involved Mirsky in several rancorous polemics after he returned to Russia in 1932; readers of the *Newsletter* will be familiar with the malevolent exchanges concerning eighteenth-century Russian literature in which he was involved.[8] Mirsky was arrested in June 1937, and died in the GULag in 1939.[9]

Pierre-le-Grand et les Soviets
Par le Prince Dimitri S. Mirsky

LORSQU'EN 1920 Georges Sorel, le premier, compara Lénine à Pierre le Grand, il crut sans doute honorer et exalter Lénine.[10]

Lorsque quatre ans plus tard Petrograd reçut le nom de Leningrad, seuls les émigrés russes et leurs intimes crièrent à la profanation de la mémoire de l'empereur. Or, aujourd'hui, il n'est pas nécessaire d'être communiste pour considérer que la comparaison de Sorel était démesurément flatteuse pour Pierre.

Le personnalité de ce tsar a sans doute fortement frappé l'imagination de ses contemporains. Les Philosophes d'une part, la tradition russe de l'autre, ont concouru à lui prêter des proportions gigantesques. Le XVIII^{e} siècle en fit un demi-dieu, un dieu même. Un poète russe qui vécut sous le règne de sa fille Elizabeth n'alla-t-il pas jusqu'à dénommer le lieu de la naissance de l'empereur: «Un Bethléem russe»?[11]

Héros mythique et partant symbole quasiment religieux, mais aussi figure de roman qu'aucun Dostoiewsky ni aucun Balzac n'auraient su créer, si l'on se place au point de vue pittoresque ou littéraire, ce monarque barbare l'emporte sans aucun doute

sur le petit homme roussâtre et prosaïque que plus d'un de ses disciples avait pu prendre à la première rencontre pour un épicier et qui ébranla le monde d'une façon si peu romanesque.

Si l'on ne considère que le résultat historique de l'activité des deux hommes, ils peuvent être mis sur un pied d'égalité. Ne furent-ils pas tous deux révolutionnaires, et les révolutions auxquelles leurs noms sont restés attachés n'ont-elles pas été l'une et l'autre des événements de la première importance pour leur pays?

A ceux qui prétendent que la révolution léniniste n'a été un événement important que pour la Russie et qui ne croient pas que l'Octobre russe ne fut que le lever de rideau d'un Octobre mondiale, — il est tout naturel de parler du Tsar et du Communiste comme de grandeurs d'ordre comparable.

Cependant, il est clair que le rôle de Pierre fut très different de celui de Lénine. Lénine n'était pas seulement un homme d'action, c'était aussi un marxiste, c'est-à-dire un homme qui savait ce qu'il faisait et où il allait, pour qui la pratique n'était que le corollaire de la théorie, qui, en appliquant les lois dialectiques établies par Marx, à la réalité révolutionnaire, créa un nouveau type d'action politique et transforma ce qui avait été jusque là un jeu de hasard en une technique scientifique qui réussit parce qu'elle permettait de prévoir.

Le caractère révolutionnaire de la réforme dite de Pierre le Grand ne peut être méconnu. Il ne s'agissait pas seulement de «l'européanisation» du costume, de la coiffure, des mœurs, des caractères d'imprimerie, du vocabulaire mondain et administratif qui, d'ailleurs, ne fut qu'un symbole et un indice de changements plus profonds. Les procédés administratifs dont on usa furent nettement révolutionnaires.

On ne procéda jamais par la réforme d'institutions existantes, mais on en créa chaque fois de nouvelles et c'est au sein de celles-ci qui se poursuivit l'œuvre réformatrice.

Les nouvelles administrations étaient des créations *ad hoc*, des comités révolutionnaires comparables à ceux de la Convention. La justice, purement créatrice, procéda sans aucun souci de légalité ou de précédent. En général, le régime était celui d'un dictature révolutionnaire, c'est-à-dire d'un pouvoir libre de toute légalité et de toute tradition, mais qui avait ceci de paradoxal que le chef du régime était en même

temps le représentant de la légalité traditionnelle, le représentant-né de tout ce qu'on voulait abolir.

Le but que se proposait le gouvernement de Pierre était de faire de la Russie rurale, arriérée et pauvre, l'égale au point de vue économique des pays industriels de l'Occident. Ce but parait bien semblable (et Staline même l'a reconnu) à celui que s'est proposé la République des Soviets.

Pour celle-ci, l'industrialisation at l'américanisation qui ont remplacé l'européanisation, ne sont que les détails d'un plan autrement vaste dans lequel la pauvre et arriérée Russie a le devoir de servir d'exemple et d'avant-garde socialiste à des pays plus avancés qu'elle.

Le progrès économique, tel que le concevait Pierre, ne devait servir qu'à des buts essentiellement nationaux, n'aboutir qu'à une grande croissance du pouvoir militaire et politique de l'empire des tsars. Il est donc plus juste de comparer la réforme accompli par Pierre le Grand à la révolution impériale du Japon,[12] à la révolution kémaliste en Turquie[13] ou à l'œuvre d'Amanoullah en Afghanistan.[14]

On a beau comparer les méthodes de dictature révolutionnaire employées par Pierre à celles du gouvernement soviétique, une différence subsiste: l'action dictatoriale des bolcheviks a toujours été l'expression des intérêts, plus ou moins conscients, des sentiments plus ou moins clairs de vastes masses de travailleurs, elle a eu l'approbation plus ou moins tacite des ouvriers et des paysans, alors que l'action dictatoriale de Pierre le Grand ne fut que l'expression des intérêts et de la volonté d'une minorité dirigeante dont le principal besoin était de trouver un moyen de mieux exploiter les masses paysannes.

L'européanisation que l'empereur se proposait n'était que la transformation de la société moscovite féodale et *servagiste* en une société moderne et européenne, c'est-à-dire foncièrement bourgeoise, et le transfert du pouvoir des mains du haut clergé et des boyards aux mains de la bourgeoisie marchande et des grands industriels.

Mais les contradictions du programme des réformateurs rendait l'européanisation sociale de la Russie impossible. La première d'entre elles n'était-elle pas la nécessité de conquérir les routes commerciales, et, en première ligne, le littoral

baltique. Cette conquête indispensible au succès du programme bourgeois fut doublement avantageuse à la noblesse servagiste. La conquête, c'était la guerre, la guerre, c'était le pouvoir aux mains de l'armée, c'est-à-dire de la noblesse. Dès le début, l'Empire russe modernisé reçut ce cachet militariste qu'il devait garder toujours. C'est par l'intermédiare de la force armée et principalement de la Garde impériale, que la noblesse, au cours du XVIII^{e} siècle a su faire respecter sa volonté. D'autre part, la conquête de la côte baltique rendait plus facile d'exportation des produits agricoles, du lin, du chauvre du Nord-Ouest, résultat du travail des serfs. Ceci contribua puissament à établir l'hégémonie des servagistes.

La seconde contradiction inhérente au programme mercantiliste résidait dans l'impossibilité pour les nouvelles industries de trouver un main-d'œuvre libre. L'absence presque complète d'un artisanat dans les villes, et la domination d'une économie naturelle dans le plat-pays créaient des conditions où il n'était ni nécessaire ni possible pour le travailleur de vendre sa main-d'œuvre. Pour qu'il devint ouvrier industriel, il n'y avait d'autre moyen que de l'y forcer. C'est ainsi que la naissance de nouvelles industries, loin de moderniser les relations sociales ne fut qu'une occasion pour rendre le servage encore plus universel. Dès le début la main-d'œuvre industrielle fut presque exclusivement serve. Les propriétaires des mines et des usines, possesseurs de serfs comme la noblesse foncière, firent facilement corps avec la noblesse (d'autant plus que c'est des rangs de la noblesse qu'une grande partie en était sortie), et en formèrent la couche la plus influente et la plus privilégiée. En fin de compte, les forces modernes et bourgeoises libérées par la réforme ne servirent qu'à faire de la Russie un pays plus féodal, plus servagiste, plus entièrement dominé par la noblesse qu'elle ne l'avait été avant Pierre.

Il arriva ainsi ce qui arrive nécessairement à un pays dont le tissu social est resté voisin de l'économie naturelle, mais qui se trouve puissament attiré dans les tentacles du marché mondiale. Car ce fut la demande européenne qui força les nobles et les magnats industriels russes à produire la potasse, le lin, le fer, et ce fut aussi la bourgeoisie européenne (anglaise, surtout), qui en profita plutôt que les marchands russes.

Les progrès du capitalisme dans une société où l'échange pour ainsi dire

cellulaire est encore peu développé ne peut aboutir qu'à une recrudescence de l'exploitation extra-économique, de la force brute féodale, du servage sous une forme ou sous une autre.

Le régime de Diaz au Mexique[15] ou de Gomez au Vénézuéla[16] correspondent à ce que fut au XVIII^e siècle la dictature servagiste en Russie. Le contexte mondial est différent, l'effet pour les travailleurs du pays en question est sensiblement le même.

La prétendue révolution de Pierre le Grand n'est ainsi pas même l'égale de cette révolution marchande et antiféodale que fut la Réforme dans les pays de l'Occident. Pourtant, c'est avec elle que la «réforme» russe pourrait le mieux être comparée. Ce qui accentue la similarité de ces deux réformes c'est que le seul secteur du front social où l'effort des réformateurs russes eut un effet à peu près révolutionnaire fut l'Eglise.

Des causes purement économiques avaient progressivement affaibli le haut clergé et compromis sa part relative dans l'alliance des forces dirigeantes. Son prestige idéologique fut ébranlé encore plus puissament par le mouvement du Raskol — mouvement réactionnaire quant à son idéologie, mais qui avait à sa base une révolte de la petite et moyenne bourgeoisie contre la féodalité ecclésiastique et la bureaucratie servagiste. A la suite du Raskol, l'Eglise officielle perdit pour une grande partie du peuple — et précisément la plus sincèrement et fervemment religieuse — tout caractère d'autorité. Il fut par conséquent facile pour Pierre de plier l'Eglise à ses désirs simplement en plaçant des hommes de confiance dans les hautes postes hiérarchiques et d'effectuer ce que les tsars moscovites n'avaient jamais osé, une mainmise bureaucratique sur les biens ecclésiastiques.

Les terres du clergé restèrent il est vrai propriété nominale de l'Eglise, et ce ne fut qu'un demi-siècle plus tard que Catherine II en acheva la confiscation.

Mais ce fut le règne de Pierre qui sonna le glas du haut clergé en tant que classe sociale. L'Eglise devint un département de l'administration dépourvu de toute indépendence, et le clergé une quantité socialement négligeable. C'est cette sécularisation qui contribua plus que tout autre chose à donner à la Russie *servagiste* et féodale du XVIII^e siècle un aspect superficiellement moderne et européen, comme

c'est l'absence de dynasties royales qui donna, au XIX^{e} siècle, un faux air démocratique aux républiques de l'Amérique latine.

Sous Catherine II, la Russie était, l'Angleterre et la Hollande mises à part, le pays le plus laïque d'Europe. Ni la forte réaction cléricale qui commença sous Alexandre I^{er}, ni le réveil religieux qui se manifesta au sein de la bourgeoisie ne purent relever l'Eglise russe du niveau où elle était tombée au XVIII^{e} siècle. Si après la Révolution elle s'est effondrée si complètement, si irrémédiablement et avec si peu de bruit, ce fut en grande partie la conséquence de la sécularisation effectuée par Pierre le Grand.

Mais de même qu'une hirondelle ne fait pas le printemps, cette sécularisation n'était pas le signe d'une vraie «européanisation», d'une régénération bourgeoise de la Russie. Ce ne fut que cent ans plus tard que les premières pierres d'une Russie moderne et bourgeoise furent posées. Petit à petit l'échange cellulaire se développa, la corvée commença à être remplacée par les paiements en espèces et une main d'œuvre ayant besoin d'argent pour payer ses redevances féodales constitua une réserve de travail disponible pour l'entreprise capitaliste.

La Russie moderne et européenne date non pas de la «révolution industrielle» si spectaculaire, inaugurée par Pierre le Grand, mais des humbles commencements de l'industrie cottonière, une industrie où pendant longtemps maîtres et ouvriers restèrent également serfs, grevés de lourdes redevances à leurs seigneurs, mais qui dans leurs rapports réciproques comme dans leurs rapports avec le marché étaient déjà régis par les lois de la «liberté, de l'égalité et de Jérémie Bentham».

On voit que la réforme de Pierre le Grand ne mérite pas le nom de révolution qu'on a bien voulu lui donner — et cela non pas parce qu'elle fut l'œuvre d'un souverain, car la révolution impériale au Japon a droit à ce titre — mais parce qu'elle n'aboutit pas à un changement de classe dirigeante. Ses visées furent frustrées par les contradictions de sa tâche. Il n'y eut même pas de contre-révolution: la poule bourgeoise couva simplement un canneton féodal.

En est-il de même de la révolution léniniste? La Révolution d'Octobre fut-elle autre chose qu'un 10 août?[17] autre chose qu'une pointe poussée dans l'impossible par des révolutionnaires qui s'étaient proposé des buts irréalisables et dont le résultat net

ne pouvait être que celui-même de la solide révolution bourgeoise? Au moment du Nep, beaucoup l'ont cru, — tous pourrait-on dire, sauf ceux dont l'action seule pouvait réfuter ce point de vue.

La renaissance de l'industrie progressive n'aurait pas suffi à le réfuter. Le Plan Quinquennal tel qu'il s'annonçait en 1928 n'était pas encore une réfutation. Une U.R.S.S. où les points stratégiques seraient entre les mains de l'Etat prolétarien, mais où l'énorme base agricole serait toujours constituée par des millions de petits propriétaires, toujours prête à enfanter à nouveau ces capitalistes embryonnaires que sont les Koulaks, à monter à un assaut insidieux et sans cesse recommencé de la citadelle industrielle des communistes, une U.R.S.S. en un mot telle que la voulaient Boukharine et Trotsky, aurait été une U.R.S.S. aussi peu socialiste que la Russie du XVIII^{e} siècle était peu bourgeoise, aussi foncièrement bourgeoise que celle-ci était féodale.

Les dirigeants communistes ont fait ce que les gouvernements mercantilistes du XVIII^{e} siècle n'ont pas su (ni voulu) faire. Ils se sont attaqués à la base, à la structure cellulaire, à l'unité fondamentale de la société agicole, à la petite propriété, à la production individuelle, à la relation achat-vente qui lie le producteur individuel au marché.

La Révolution communiste ne fut consommée que le jour où la grande poussée vers le collectivisme de la production agricole fut commencée — et menée à bout. Sans la révolution agraire de 1929-30 qui constitua les *Kolkhoz* et «liquida les *Koulaks* en tant que classes [sic]», l'U.R.S.S. serait restée un géant d'acier socialiste sur les jambes d'argile petit-bourgeois. C'est la transformation des tissues mêmes de la société paysanne qui va en faire un organisme homogène, socialiste de haut en bas.

D. S. MIRSKY

Richard Davies (University of Leeds), G.S. Smith (New College, Oxford)

References

[1] Richard Davies, G.S. Smith, 'D.S. Mirsky: Twenty-Two Letters (1926-34) to Salomeya Halpern; Seven Letters (1930) to Vera Suvchinskaya (Traill)', *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, NS XXX(1997), in press.

[2] Nina Lavroukine, Leonid Tchertkov, *D.S. Mirsky: Profil Critique et Bibliographique* (Paris, 1980).

[3] Joseph Brodsky's version of a familiar Leningrad view of these two statues was reported by Tatiana Zhirmunskaia at a memorial evening for the poet on 9 February 1996: В Ленинграде есть только два гениальных памятника: 'Медный всадник' и 'Ленин на броневике'. [...] Стоит Петр на вздыбленном коне, с одной стороны он опирается на Сенат и Синод, с другой - на Адмиралтейство, сзади - Исаакевский собор, показывает он на Академию Наук. И Ленин стоит - с одной стороны у него райком партии, с другой - 'Кресты', сзади, на всякий случай, Финляндский вокзал, а показывает он на 'Большой дом' (*Mansarda*, I 1996), 71.

[4] See G.S. Smith, *The Letters of D.S. Mirsky to P.P. Suvchinskii, 1922-1931* (Birmingham, 1995), *passim*.

[5] D.S. Mirsky, *Lenin* (London and Boston, 1931).

[6] D.S. Mirsky, 'Histoire d'une Emancipation,' *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, 37(1 September 1931), pp. 384-97; translated into English in D.S. Mirsky, *Uncollected Writings on Russian Literature*, ed. and with an Introduction by G.S. Smith (Berkeley, 1989), pp. 358-67.

[7] During the time his views were undergoing this decisive turn, Mirsky was writing what is probably his most unjustly neglected book, *Russia. A Social History* (London, 1931); the section about Peter (pp. 183-6) is particularly relevant to the views he expresses in the article reproduced here.

[8] See P.N. Berkov, *Vvedenie v izuchenie istorii russkoi literatury XVIII veka* (Leningrad, 1964), pp. 196-203. Self-righteous and sanctimonious though it is, this appears to be the earliest serious discussion of Mirsky's contribution to Soviet criticism after his rehabilitation in June 1962.

[9] See G.S. Smith, 'What Happened to D.S.Mirsky?', *The British East-West Journal*, 98(1994), pp. 10-11.

10 Georges Sorel (1847-1922), the theorist of revolutionary syndicalism; Mirsky refers to his 'Pour Lénine', written in September 1919, and included in the fourth edition of his *Reflexions sur la Violence* (Paris, 1920); see the reprint of this book (Paris, 1972), pp. 375-89. The relevant passage begins: 'On pouvait dire de Lénine qu'il veut, comme Pierre le Grand, forcer l'histoire...' (p. 380). Maksim Gor'kii also compared Lenin to Peter the Great, in the opening passage of his speech in Moscow on the occasion of Lenin's 50th birthday on 23 April 1920, asserting that Peter's significance was confined to Russia and Western Europe, while Lenin was 'not only for Russia, but for the whole world, for our entire planet'; see Maksim Gor'kii, *Sobranie sochinenii v 30-i tomakh*, XXIV, *Stat'i, rechi, privetstviia 1907-1928* (Moscow, 1953), 204.

11 [Aleksandr Sumarokov], 'Rossiiskii Vifleem', *Trudoliubivaia pchela*, Aprel' 1759 goda, pp. 240-41. It is unlikely that Mirsky knew this article in the original; his source was probably the reference to it in vol. 26, chapter 3 of S.M. Solov'ev, *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen*. The article is also referred to ('Naivno-nechestivoe sravnenie Petra V. s Iisusom Khristom, i Kolomenskogo sela s Vifleemom') in K. Bestuzhev-Riumin, *Russkaia istoriia*, I (St Petersburg, 1872), 6, in the course of a condemnation of the excessive significance ascribed to individual personalities in recent historiography. Mirsky also mentioned 'Russian Bethlehem', this time with an attribution to Sumarokov, in his *Russia. A Social History* (see n. 7 above), p. 207.

12 Mirsky has in mind the 'Meiji restoration' (1868) and the subsequent period of westernization in Japan. He had studied Oriental languages at the University of St Petersburg from 1908 to 1911—Chinese under Ivanov, Japanese under Postyshev; he wrote to his father that the Japanese language was 'dovol'no legok'—, but he did not take a degree. See P.P. Perkhin, 'Odinnadtsat' pisem (1920-1937) i avtobiografiia (1936) D.P. Sviatopolk-Mirskogo. K nauchnoi biografii kritika', *Russkaia literatura*, 1(1996) [pp. 235-62], p. 259. Mirsky remained interested in what b.p.c. was called the 'Far East' for the remainder of his life; he was one of the few participants in the *émigré* Eurasian movement who had any philological knowledge of these things.

13 Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938) began the modernization of Turkey in 1923; Mirsky would probably have had in mind here that one of his first actions, in 1924, was to abolish the caliphate.

14 Amanullah came to power early in 1919; Soviet Russia was the first country to recognise his regime, on 27 March that year. He immediately invaded India, and secured important concessions from the British. He proclaimed himself king in 1926 and initiated a programme of westernization, in reaction against which he was deposed in 1929. The policies he promoted (especially the liberation of women) have recently been under attack in Afghanistan yet again...

15 Porfirio Díaz (1830-1915) ruled Mexico with a rod of iron, making extensive use of secret police; the beginnings of a modern transport system were installed with the benefit of foreign capital, but rural impoverishment led to growing discontent, and Díaz was forced out by Madero's revolution (strongly abetted by Emiliano Zapata) in 1911.

16 Juan Vicente Gómez (1857-1935) pursued policies similar to those of Díaz.

17 On 10 August 1792 the Paris mob stormed the Tuileries, formed a new commune to replace the legally elected one, and forced the Assembly to suspend Louis XVI and order elections for a National Convention.

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II. BRITISH SOURCES FOR CATHERINE'S RUSSIA: 2) PAUL GILCHRIST'S 'GENUINE LETTER' TO CHARLES SAUNDERS, 1762[1]

We have long schooled ourselves to look suspiciously on any printed source that parades "authentic" or "genuine" in its title. There is a high probability that "true memoirs" are anything but; intrepid travellers have roamed the world, discovering new lands, new tribes, new wonders, but all too frequently only in their imagination, and the books they produce are mere "travellers' tales", i.e lies, or at best, embellishments; men and women recount their life-stories in as graphic and as harrowing detail as the novelist's skill allows. The eighteenth century in many respects marks the apogée of the lie, transmitted with panache and style and infinite in its transmogrifications. Russia has been on the receiving end of its fair share of fabrications and forgeries, mystifications and manipulations. Some were so patently fradulent that the imposture was immediately exposed, although the charge of falsehoods was also brought against unpalatable truths; others were only discovered subsequently; yet others still await their unfrocking. What is remarkable, however, is how popular with historians and biographers remain even the long-since unfrocked and discredited travel accounts by such as Chantreau and William Thomson and Daniel Defoe's notorious confection attributed to "a British Officer in the service of the Czar", *An Impartial History of the Life and Actions of Peter Alexowitz* (1723), even more provocatively retitled in its second edition as *A True, Authentick and Impartial History* ... (1725).[2]

On the other hand, little attention, critical or positive, has been paid to a publication which promises much about the events surrounding the overthrow of Peter III and the accession to the throne of his consort, crowned as Catherine II. *A Genuine Letter from Paul Gilchrist, Esq; Merchant at Petersburgh, to Mr. Saunders, in London:Giving a particular and circumstantial Account of the great Revolution in Russia, and the Death of Peter II. the late Emperor* London, 1762) is, however, a surprisingly rare item. It is not registered in the catalogue of the British Library or in

the NUC and a search on ESTC proved negative. It is nonetheless entered in Peter Crowther's bibliography of English-language sources for pre-1800 Russia and is not marked as unseen, although I suspect from its description that he found it in the Publichka's *Catalogue de la section des Russica.* [3] The text I am reproducing here is in fact from a photocopy of the original in that great collection.

The rarity of the work accounts, at least partially, for the absence of references to it in Anglo-American writings on Catherine's Russia. Only in Carol Leonard's recent study of Peter III is there seeming evidence that a scholar has used the text, although the quotation is not exact and no page number is given.[4] Its author moreover is described as "one eyewitness", which was one of the several things he was not (not least since the quotation refers to a debate in the Senate). Professor Leonard uses elsewhere for her account of the 'revolution' the detailed account provided by Vasilii Bil'basov in the second volume of his unfinished history of Catherine (as, of course, does every scholar), but she ignores the words of caution which he voices about the letter's 'genuineness', both in his survey, 'Istochniki po istorii perevorota', and again in his great annotated bibliography, which comprises the twelfth volume.[5]

Bil'basov comments that the "istoriia 'deviati dnei', ot 28-go iiunia po 6-e iiulia 1762 goda, bogata istochnikami vsiakogo roda i posobiiami samogo raznoobraznogo kharaktera" (II, 467); and among them there are to be found no small number of publications similar to*A Genuine Letter*, quick-fire responses to events of great interest and moment for European nations in the aftermath of the Seven Years' War. Such was the *Lettre de Pétersbourg au sujet de la dernière revolution* (Francfort, 1762). Bil'basov's suspicions about Gilchrist's letter were aroused above all by the dating of the Editor's preface as 18 August 1762 and that of the letter itself as 6 August, and he comments that more than three weeks were necessary to make the journey from the Russian to the British capital. The dating of the letter is patently absurd and within the text there are confusing shifts between Old and New Style dates as well as obvious errors (e.g. the meeting of the Senate and Synod is dated 9 July (28 June), while 10 July (29 June) is given as "the day appointed for the revolution").

Bil'basov limits himself to criticism of chronology in volume XII, but he is much more damning in volume II: "fal'sh etikh otmetok ochevidna" and concludes that "vse pis'mo sochineno v Londone, po slukham, v luchshem sluchae, po chastnym pis'mam iz Peterburga". Bil'basov's instincts were correct, but the sources for the deception would seem more obvious than he suggests. The idea that the 'Editor' used private letters for his concoction does not really bear scrutiny : apart from the fact that private letters would take at least as long as official dispatches (even if carried by the governmental courier), the basic sources of information about the 'revolution' were readily available to the British reading public by the beginning of August, despite the protestations of ' Editor' and 'Gilchrist' that "we have not yet had any good or circumstantial account of that very extraordinary change" (p. iii). Among the first to be informed of the events in Russia and the first to inform their governments were usually and not unexpectedly the ambassadors and diplomatic representatives. It was from their dispatches and from similar official sources that the newspapers and chronicles of the day compiled their versions with different degrees of creative amplification.

The British ambassador at the time of the coup was Robert Keith, an intimate of Peter III but not of Catherine, and it was his dispatch of 1/12 July that brought the first detailed account to the British government, although Sir Joseph Yorke's report from The Hague to the Earl of Newcastle on 28 July that "the Revolution in Russia is confirm'd" probably arrived a day or two earlier.[6] Keith's dispatch and an encoded letter of the following day, which included his request for his recall, were handed by the courier Walker to George Grenville, the Secretary for State, on 3 August. At regular intervals thereafter, Keith communicated further details and developments as they arose: thus, in his dispatch of 9/20 July, he described the circumstances of Peter III's death as contained in an announcent from the College of Foreign Affairs, and in that of 12/23 July mentioned Catherine's 'declaration' about Russia's intentions vis-à-vis Prussia which had been handed the previous day to the Prussian ambassador, Baron Goltz, and which is also mentioned in the Gilchrist letter.[7]

London newspapers and journals were quick to pass on details. Thus, the *London Chronicle* for example in its issue for 31 July-3 August printed Catherine's manifesto of 28 June/9 July. [8] Horace Walpole's correspondence, particularly with his friend Sir Horace Mann, the British representative in Tuscany, highlights how avidly he followed the unfolding drama of the coup, gleaned from his reading of the newspapers and from his contacts in government. In a letter to Mann, begun on 31 July, he reported the revolution, based on "imperfect" reports from Holland, but in a long addition, dated 4 August, he could write: "The Russian revolution is confirmed; the papers have produced a declaration of the new Czarina, in which she deposes her husband with the utmost sangfroid" and he proceeded for several pages to give his highly individual paraphrase of the events. [9] On 12 August, Walpole tells Mann that he had seen Keith's first dispatch (of 1/12 July), but was horrified by his reading in that day's *London Chronicle* a translation of 'The Manifesto published by the Empress upon the death of Peter III, her consort'.[10] Texts of the various declarations were soon to be published in *Gentleman's Magazine* [11] and in the 'Account of the late surprising Revolution in Russia, by which Peter III lost the Imperial Crown', which appeared in the August number of the *Royal Magazine* . [12] It is this latter publication which is of particular interest in the present context.

Keith's dispatches, and reports based on them, may be said to provide a parallel and complementary, rather than a contradictory version of the events of late June-early July (O.S.), to that found in the Gilchrist letter. It is, on the other hand, the article in the *Royal Magazine* that we find fully incorporated in *A Genuine Letter*. Since both items were published at the end of August at the earliest, it would seem that they were using independently a common source, which I have not been able to establish. The 'Account of the late surprising Revolution', beginning with the sentence 'The Emperor of Russia had been for some days at his county-house at Oranjebaum..." and ending with Catherine's declaration on Peter's death, corresponds in all but a few particulars to pp. 4-15 of *A Genuine Letter*.[13] There is, however, additional material both before and after these pages which likewise was available from printed sources

and offers nothing new. The slant is, however, decidedly pro-Peter and in this respect mirrors the very interesting 'Reflections on the Death of the late Emperor of Russia' which had appeared in the same number of the *Royal Magazine* as the aforementioned 'Account'.[14] In the latter we find a paean to Peter and a condemnation of the ficklenness of public opinion; in the former we read of the "sceptre that was but a few months before given him by the unanimous voice of the people, and which he swayed with so much justice and humanity, during his short, but glorious reign" (p. 3).

The most glaring evidence of the concocted nature of the Gilchrist letter is to be found in its concluding section, where the observation that "This affair has undoubtedly made a great noise through all *Europe*; but the people here are so much used to things of this sort, that they do not seem to mind it; and we do not now even so much as talk of it" is followed by the suggestion that "if we consider the kind of government this empire is under, we shall not wonder that it is so subject to change" (p. 21). We are then treated to notes on govement, mores and religion (pp. 22-7) that on the one hand bore by their predictability ("the people in some of these provinces are even at this day mere savages" or "their churches are filled with miserable paintings, without shade or perspective") and on the other, perplex by their references to the 'Czar', often in the present tense ("the Czar himself eats flesh on all of them [fasts] in private houses"). The tsar is of course Peter I and all these pages are lifted from Charles Whitworth's *An Account of Russia as it was in the Year 1710*, which had been published for the first time only in 1758 as one of the first productions from Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill Press. The editor has simply played around with the original sequence, his pages 22-7 corresponding to pp. 50-1, 55-7, 39-40 and 41-5 in Whitworth. [15] The first edition of *An Account of Russia* had been limited to 700 copies and despite the fact that the work was soon to re-appear in volume II of *Fugitive Pieces* (1761 and 1762), it was probably considered recondite enough a source to be freely plundered.

Although *A Genuine Letter* may be safely excluded from any list of eye-witness accounts of the coup of 1762 and the fictitious Paul Gilchrist from the ranks

of British merchants in Russia,[16] the work nevertheless has its proper place on the shelves of Russica, fully embraced by the definition of "écrits sur la Russie en langues étrangères". It reflects very well the mixed reactions of the British public to the overthrow of Peter III and the accession of Catherine II , particularly the strong vein of sympathy for the tsar evinced by Robert Keith and most notably by HoraceWalpole in England and shared by many of his friends and correspondents.[17] As such and also as an item of extreme rarity it would seem to merit re-publication in a journal that has always been concerned with Anglo-Russica.[18]

A.G. Cross (University of Cambridge)

References

1 See 'British Sources for Catherine's Russia: 1) Lionel Colmore's Letters from St Petersburg, 1790-1', *SGECRN*, No. 17 (1989), 17-34.

2 See generally Percy G. Adams, *Travelers and Travel Liars, 1660-1800* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1962). For eighteenth-century Russia, see my 'The Armchair Traveller "in" Catherine II's Russia', in *R*.ossiia, *Zapad, Vostok: Vstrechnye techeniia* (Spb., 1996), pp. 313-21. Harry W. Nerhood, *To Russia and Return: An Annotated Bibliography of Travelers' English-Language Accounts of Russia from the Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Columbus, Ohio, 1968), pp. 35-6, items 120 and 125, includes both Chantreau and Thomson, whom he describes as "businessmen", and also Joseph Marshall and John Richard (pp. 29-30, items 98 and 102), whom I have also put in the large basket of travel liars.

3 Peter A. Crowther (comp.), *A Bibliography of Works in English on Early Russian History to 1800* Oxford, 1969), p. 192, no. 2049; *Catalogue de la section des Russica, ou Ecrits sur la Russie en langues étrangères*, I (St Petersburg, 1873), 458, no. 599.

4 Carol S. Leonard, *Reform and Regicide: The Reign of Peter III of Russia* (Bloomington and Indianopolis, 1993), pp. 141, 201, note 27.

5 *Istoriia Ekateriny II*, II (Berlin, 1900), 489; XII, pt. 1(1900), 7. A recent Russian reference to the Gilchrist letter is found in Vladimir Plugin's "documentary tale with an admixture of fiction", *Alekhan, ili Chelovek so sramom* (Moscow, 1996), p. 128, although it is clear that the author has not looked beyond the title and cites it as one of the works that "began to proclaim and extol" the revolution.

6 British Library, Ad. Ms. 32,941, f. 80v.

7 Keith's dispatches are found in *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva*, XII (Spb., 1873), 1-40.

8 *London Chronicle*, XII, 120.

9 *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, edited by W.S. Lewis, XXII (New Haven, 1960), 52-61. See in general my article 'Condemned in Correspondence: Horace Walpole and Catherine "Slay-Czar"', *Journal of European Studies*, XXVII (1997), 129-41.

10 *HWC*, XXII, 64.

11 *Gentleman's Magazine*, XXXII (1762), 386, 439.

12 *Royal Magazine: or Gentleman's Monthly Companion*, VII (1762), 104-6.

13 There are on occasion differences in phrasing, spelling, and dates.

14 *Royal Magazine*, VII, 89-90. I first drew attention to this essay in my exhibition catalogue, *Anglo-Russian Relations in the Eighteenth Century* (Norwich, 1977), p. 10, item 20.

15 Whitworth's rare work has become available (although only in 300 copies) in a recent reprint with Russian translation by N.G. Bespiatykh and detailed commentary by Iu. N. Bespiatykh, *Rossiia v nachale XVIII veka. Sochinenie Ch. Uitvorta* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1988). Paul Dukes reviewed this edition in *SGECRN*, no. 17 (1989), 49-50.

16 Gilchrist was nonetheless the name of a merchant family in eighteenth-century St Petersburg. The death of James Gilchrist (b. 1752) on 3 May 1789 is recorded in the Register of Births, Marriages and Deaths of the English Church in St Petersburg: Guildhall Library, Ms. 11, 192B, f. 111.

17 See my 'Condemned in Correspondence', pp. 139 and 141, notes 54-5.

18 The text is reproduced as printed, complete with misprints, spelling mistakes, wrong dates and mangled Russian names, but without further commentary!

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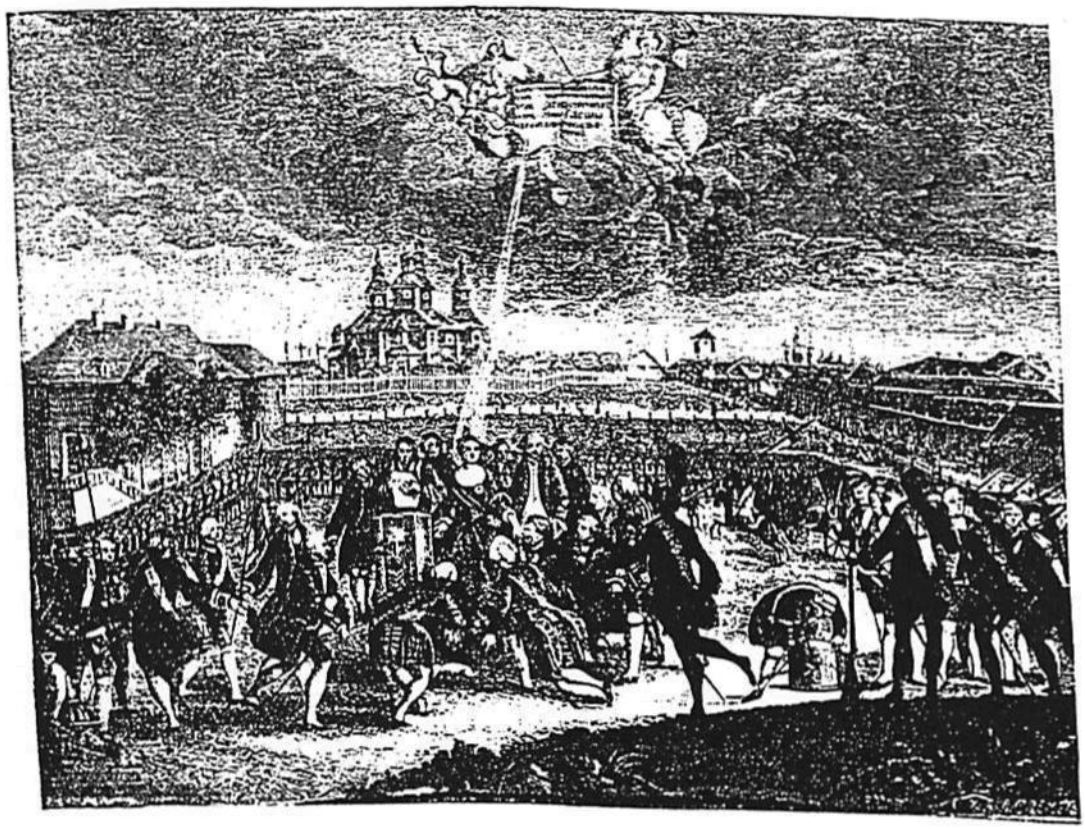

The Izmailovskii Regiment Takes the Oath of Loyalty to Catherine
Drawing by Joachim Conrad Keestner, 1760s

A GENUINE

LETTER

FROM

PAUL GILCHRIST, Esq;

Merchant at PETERSBURGH,

TO

Mr. SAUNDERS, in LONDON:

Giving a particular and circumstantial Account of the great Revolution in RUSSIA, and the Death of PETER III. the late emperor.

IN WHICH

That very EXTRAORDINARY Affair is set in a true Light.

To which is added,

A short Account of the GOVERNMENT, RELIGION, LAWS, and INHABITANTS of that Nation.

LONDON:

Printed for J. WILLIAMS, at the Corner of the Mitre-Tavern, Fleet-Street. M. DCC.LXII.
[Price ONE SHILLING.]

THE EDITOR TO THE PUBLIC.

MR. SAUNDERS lodged the following account of the great revolution of *Russia* in my hands, and authorized me to make it public. And indeed I am surprized we have not yet had any good or circumstantial account of that very extraordinary change. A change that is likely to make great alterations in the political system of *Europe*, and which, it is thought, will greatly (Page iii) retard a general peace.—— I am authorized to say, there is nothing but what may be depended on as facts in the following pages. It is the genuine contents of a LETTER from one gentleman to another, that was not originally intended to be made public; and therefore the reader must only expect a narrative of facts, related in a plain and familiar manner, unadorned with the flowers of rhetoric, and elegance of diction.

AUGUST 18,

1762.

(Page iv)

A LETTER, &c.

PETERSBURGH, August 5, 1762.

Dear CHARLES,

WE have, for this three weeks past, been in the utmost confusion, owing to the deposition of our late Emperor PETER III. of which, no doubt, you have heard long ago: but as there are always various accounts of things of this consequence, and so many misrepresentations, that it is often difficult to get at the truth, I flatter myself, that a circumstantial account of that affair will be more agreeable to you, than anything I have to (Page 1) send (the inclosed order and bills only excepted).

THIS great affair was so well contrived, and the scheme so deeply laid, that it was not even suspected, and so well was the late Emperor beloved, that it was sometime before his well-wishers would believe it. Some of the principal people at the court having having been set aside upon the accession of PETER III. are suspected to have been the contrivers of his ruin, tho' it was afterwards approved of by the whole senate, who assembled together on the 9th of *July*, when the debates run very high, and after solemn and mature deliberation, it was determined that PETER III. should be deposed.

COUNT *Rasoumowski*, late commander in chief of the *Cossacks*, Count *Panin*, governor of the Great Duke, son to PETER III. (Page 2) and Field Marshal *Butterlin*, were the people appointed to put the resolution of the senate into execution.

AND here, my friend, permit me to remark the treacherous part the present Empress (who was wife to our late unhappy Emperor) undertook to act against her husband. It was not publickly known that the Emperor and Empress lived unhappy together; but it cannot supposed there was much affection on her side, or she would never have been compelled, against all laws, human and divine, to have taken upon her the royal command, as she did, in his absence, and to have even threatned his life,

if he made any resistance to recover a sceptre that was but a few months before given him by the unanimous voice of the people, and which he swayed with so much justice and humanity, during his short, but glorious reign. (Page 3)

BEFORE I proceed to relate the particulars of this extraordinary affair, it will be necessary to observe, that there were some murmurs of discontent prevailed in the Emperor's guards about the palace, and some other *Russian* regiments, owing, as it is generally thought, to their being jealous of the favour the Emperor shewed to his *Holstein* troops. These guards were therefore prepared before-hand, for this sudden change.

THE Emperor had been for sometime at his country-seat at *Oranjebaum*, and the Emperess [*sic*] at another seat, called *Petershoff*. On the 10th of *July*, the day appointed for the revolution, the Empress arrived in this city, at six o' clock in the morning, and immediately went to the palace, where, after assembling the guards, she desired them to support her ; and they accordingly proclaimed her Empress of all the *Russias* ; (Page 4) at the same time declaring the Emperor, PETER III. to be dethroned.

AFTER this proclamation was made, during which time the gates of the city were kept shut, the new sovereign went to the church of *Rasansky*, where, after divine service, all the grandees of the empire took the oath of fidelity to her, to whom she declared, that she took the reins of government purely for the good of the country. Immediately after these ceremonies, in order to prevent disturbances, her Imperial Majesty thought proper to secure the person of prince *George* of *Holstein*, who, upon the first alarm, made some resistence at the head of his regiment, but receiving a violent wound on the head with a sabre, he was taken prisoner.

OTHER necessary precautions being taken, the Empress, dressed in the uniform (Page 5) of the guards, and wearing a blue ribbon, mounted her horse, and put herself at the head of about ten thousand men, and marched with them to *Oronjebaum* [*sic*], in quest of the Emperor, but did not find him there, for that prince

was gone to *Petershoff*, with an intent to dine with the Empress ; but when he arrived, was greatly surprised to find she was not there, and hearing that she had set out early in the morning for *Petersburgh*, dispatched several couriers, one after another, to know the reason of her going, but none of them returned.

AT last some grenadiers, disguised like peasants, found means to get to *Petershoff*, and informed the Emperor of what had happened. Upon hearing this unexpected news, he thought there was no safety for him, but in flight, and therefore immediately got into a Yacht, and would (Page 6) have made his escape to *Cronstadt*, but upon finding the gates shut against him, he was obliged to return to *Oranjebaum*, where, in order to secure himself as well as he could, he got together as many peasants as he could collect, and intrenched himself.

IN the mean time the Empress advanced at the head of her troops, and sent to acquaint the Emperor, that all resistance would be to no purpose, and that the best thing he could do, would be to submit, in order to prevent greater mischiefs. This message was no sooner delivered, than the *Holstein* troops, of which his guards was composed, laid down their arms. The unfortunate Emperor finding it was all over with him, resigned his sword, went in a coach to *Petershoff*, and submitted himself to the clemency of the Emperess [*sic*]. (Page 7)

SOME people pretend to say, that when he came there, he did not speak a word; others assert, that he only asked his life, and denounced his throne and dominions in *Germany*. But be that as it will, it is certain he was immediately secured; and those who were set to guard him, were strictly charged not to answer any question he might ask.

THUS was this memorable revolution brought about, supported by many grandees of the empire. Several favourites of the late emperor have proved unhappy victims of it. And the reigning Empress has occasioned many persons to be arrested who were friends to the late Emperor: but prudence will not permit me to mention their names. I shall severely feel the effects of it, for I have lost two of my best

friends; and should it please God to spare me one year more, (Page 8) I hope to see *Old England* again, for I have never yet, in all my travels, met with its equal in any respect.

AS soon as her present Imperial Majesty had taken upon her the government of the empire, and received the oath of fidelity of a great number of people of distinction, as before mentioned, she caused the following manifesto to be published.

PETERSBURGH, *June* 28, (O.S.) 1762.

" WE CATHERINE the Second,
Emperess and sole Mistress of all
The *Russias*, &c. &c. &c.

ALL the true sons of *Russia* have clearly seen the great danger to which the *Russian* empire has been actually exposed. First, The foundations of our orthodox *Greek* religion have been shaken, and its traditions exposed to total ruin; (Page 9) insomuch, that it was really to be feared, left the faith established from all time in *Russia*, should be entirely changed, and a foreign religion be introduced. In the second place, the glory of *Russia*, acquired by the effusion of so much blood and treasure, and raised to the greatest height by her victorious arms, has already been trampled under foot, by the peace lately concluded with her late enemy. And lastly, the interior arrangements of the kingdom, which serve as a basis to her welfare, have been totally overthrown. For these causes, overcome by the imminent dangers with which our faithful subjects were threatened, and beholding their manifest and sincere desires in this respect; we confiding in the Almighty, and his divine justice, have ascended the sovereign and imperial throne of all the *Russias*, and received the solemn oath of all our faithful subjects. (Page 10)

"THIS manifesto being published, the Emperess [*sic*] caused the following note to be sent to all the foreign ministers for their information."

Note to the foreign Ministers.

"HER Imperial Majesty having this day ascended the sovereign throne of all the *Russias*, to satisfy unanimous desires, and urgent prayers of all her faithful subjects, and true patriots of this empire, she has ordered the same to be communicated to the several foreign ministers residing at her court; and the strongest assurances to be given them, that it is her Imperial Majesty's unalterable intention to maintain a strict friendship with the sovereigns their masters.

"A DAY shall, without loss of time, be appointed, in which the foreign ministers (Page 11) may have the honour of making their court, and presenting their compliments of felicitation to her Imperial Majesty."

Done at PETERSBURGH, *June* 28th, (O.S.) 1762.

PETER III. was so closely confined, that no person was permitted to visit him, but such as the Empress authorized; and we in the city do not yet know where he was confined; some say in one place, and some in another, but I believe very few people do actually know the place, and those that do, dare not divulge it. However, seven days after his deposition, on the 17th of *July*, it was given out, that the late Czar was defunct, and that his death was occasioned by a violent fit of the cholic; others indeed said it was owing to some accident attending the piles. What was the real cause of his death, I cannot pretend (Page 12) to say, and time only will discover; but dethroned kings seldom live long; and king *Charles* I. was so sensible of this, That he was heard to say, "There is but a short interval between the imprisonment of princes and their graves."

THE corpse of the late unhappy Czar is carried to the cloyster of St. *Alexander Newsky*, where it is to lie in state during our new Empress's pleasure. The following manifesto was published by order of her present Majesty, upon hearing of the death of PETER III. her consort.

"WE *Catherine*, by the grace of God, Empress and Autocratix of all the *Russias*, the seventh day after our accession to the throne of all the *Russias*, having received advice that the late Emperor, PETER the Third, thro' an accident attending the piles, to which he was sometimes subject, had a violent fit (Page 13) of the cholic; not to be wanting in any point of christian duty, or in obedience to the holy commandment by which we are obliged to preserve the life of our neighbour, we immediately ordered that he should be furnished with every thing necessary to prevent the dangerous consequences of that accident, and for the re-establishment of his health, by all the assistance that medicine could afford; but, to our great regret and affliction, yesterday in the evening we were informed, that by the permission of the Almighty, he was deceased.

"FOR these reasons we have directed his body to be carried to the monastery of *Newsky*, there to be interred. In the mean time we exhort, by our Imperial and maternal voice, all our loyal subjects to forget what is past, to render the last honours to his remains, and to implore God sincerely for the repose of his soul; (Page 14) looking, however, upon this sudden death as a special effect of divine providence, the decrees of which, as to the future state of our crown and country, are solely known to his divine wisdom.

Done at PETERSBURGH, July 7th,-1762. O.S."

THE maiden name of the present Empress, was SOPHIA AUGUSTA; but when she was married to the late Emperor, she assumed that of CATHARINE ALEXIEWNA. She is now in the thirty-third year of age, and was married to the late Emperor in *September* 1745. She has had issue the prince PAUL PETROWITZ, heir to the empire, now about nine years old, and the princess ANNA PETROWNA, in the fourth year of her age. The Empress is far from being an ordinary woman, she is of

middle stature, and rather genteel than otherwise, of a fierce, (Page 15) haughty, and imperious aspect. As to her virtues I must be silent.

THE Emperor, on the contrary, was humane, tender, compassionate, and gentle in his dispositions; and it is generally thought, that the humanity and goodness of his heart impelled him to interpose his good offices in bringing about a general pacification, and which occasioned him to form those very connections that have unfortunately proved his ruin.

VARIOUS are the accounts, and the reasons assigned for this deposition; and indeed it is impossible for me to tell the real cause; and I believe nobody yet knows but the actors themselves. The prevailing and most natural conjecture is, that many grandees, and persons of great influence being turned out of their places upon the accession of PETER III. (Page 16) were so much displeased thereat, that nothing would satisfy them while PETER was on the throne: add to this, many people were dissatisfied with the Emperor's conduct, and the hasty connections he had formed with other powers, that were before looked upon as enemies to this court. If we consider all these matters, and the little regard the Empress had for the late Emperor, we shall no longer wonder that this great affair was effected with so much ease, and without any bloodshed.

SOME wise people here, who pretend to know secret springs and movements of our state affairs, pretend to say, that our senate was worked up by the clergy, who set forth, in the most alarming manner, the different changes made by the late Emperor, his amazing sympathy for the king of *Prussia*, and (Page 17) his weakness in giving up the conquest that had cost *Russia* so much blood and treasure.

AMONG other extravagant stories that prevailed, when this affair was first known, I cannot help mentioning the following. It was said that the present Empress, dressed in men's cloaths, at the head of the horse-guards, went to *Oranjebaum*, a summer-palace, about twenty miles from *Petersburgh*, with an instrument ready

drawn up, and said, " Come, Sir, will you sign this your abdication for the good of me and your son? If not, we must take another method with you." This, and a thousand other nonsensical reports, were spread in a day's time; so that I shall not wonder, if you have not heard the truth of this affair before mine reaches *London*, which contains simply (Page 18) the facts as they really happened, without any exaggeration of circumstances.

THE present Empress expresses a very great regard for the *English* nation, and we daily expect an ambassador from *London* to arrive. She has likewise confirmed, by a declaration in writing, that she will religiously observe the peace concluded with the king of *Prussia*, which was delivered to Baron de GELTZE, the *Prussian* minister here, on the 11th of *July*, O. S. and so far as we can yet learn, she is determined to be strictly neuter during the continuation of the present war; so that if the king of *Prussia* has lost a sincere and good ally in the Emperor, he has not got an enemy in his successor, which, we hope, will be a means of facilitating a general and lasting peace. (Page 19)

WE have news here, that a *French* nobleman is now actually in *London* with the substance of the terms of peace, which, it is said, are agreed to by both parties. Prince GEORGE of *Holstein*, and all the gentlemen from that fief, are desired to depart from *Russia*, and all the *Holstein* troops are to follow immediately, part of which, it is said, she intends to disband, which looks as if we had entiredly done with the war. Every thing is now quiet; and tho' the friends of the late Emperor are not very well pleased with the present government, yet they are prudent enough not to let the least murmur of discontent escape them.

THE persons that are supposed to have been the principal actors in this affair, are already well rewarded and promoted for their fidelity to the Empress. (Page 20) Among the rest, the princess *d'Aschkoff*, a young lady about twenty years of age, a niece of the Great Chancellor WORONZOW, at whose house the conferences were held, has been invested with the order of ST. CATHERINE. On the 13th the foreign

Ministers, in consequence of an invitation, went to court, and complimented the Empress upon her accession to the throne, but the *Prussian* Minister was not there, tho' he was invited among the rest. She received them all very graciously, and said, she should make it her particular study to preserve and keep upon good terms with their royal masters.

THIS affair has undoubtedly made a great noise through all *Europe* ; but the people here are so much used to things of this sort, that they do not seem to mind it; and we do not now even so much as talk of it. And if we consider (Page 21) the kind of government this empire is under, we shall not wonder that it is so subject to change. The government is, in the last degree, absolute, not bound by any law or custom, but entirely depending on the breath of the prince, by which the lives and fortunes of all the subjects are decided; the common compliment of the greatest nobility being, I AM THY SLAVE, TAKE MY HEAD. Oh, happy *England*, how different are thy laws!

HOWEVER, such as are employed in the state, have their share of arbitrary power, their proceedings being without appeal, all in the Czar's name, which they to often abuse, to satisfy their avarice, revenge, or other guilty passions. For right between private men, they have written laws and precedents, which they generally follow, tho' without any obligation; and their methods (Page 22) are easy, and short enough, could their justice be proof against the temptation of a bribe, which is seldom found in this nation.

THIS empire was divided into eight governments by the Czar, in 1710, *viz.* i. MOSCO, and its dependencies. 2. ARCHANGEL. 3. ASOPH, and the DON. 4. CASON and ASTRACON. 5. CHIOFF and UKRAINE. 6. SIBERIA. 7. LIVONIA, INGRIA, PLESCOW, and NOVGOROD. 8. SMOLENSKO.

THESE places were given to eight of his favourites, while *Veronitz*, and the ship yards, were to be a small government apart, which the Czar reserved in *petto*. The governors have the disposal of all employments, civil and military, receive the

revenues, and defray all the expences in their several provinces, and (Page 23) send a certain sum yearly into the great Treasury, clear of all charges.

THE people in some of those provinces are even at this day mere savages. The peasants are perfect slaves, subject to the arbitrary power of their lords, and transferred with goods and chattles; they can call nothing their own, which makes them very lazy; and when their master's task is done, and a little bread and firing provided for the year, the great business of their life is ended; the rest of their time they idle, or sleep away, and yet they seem contented. A couple of earthen pots, a wooden platter, wooden spoon, and knife, are all their household goods; their drink is water, their food oatmeal, bread, salt, mushrooms and roots; on great days a little fish or milk, if it is not a fast; but flesh they taste very rarely. (Page 24)

THEIR religion is the Eastern or *Greek* church, still more corrupted by ignorance and superstition; they think to satisfy the second commandment, by allowing no carved images, but their churches are filled with miserable paintings, without shade or perspective, and yet some of those dawbings, as well as finer strokes of the *Italian* pencils, are said to be the work of angels; particularly a celebrated piece of the *Virgin Mary*, with three hands, which is preserved in the monastery of *Jerusalem*, about thirty miles from *Mosco*. The respect paid to these pictures is the grossest kind of idolatry, and makes up a principal part of their devotion; to these they bow and cross themselves; every child has its own patron saint allotted him at baptism, and every room its guardian picture in a *corner*. The *Russian* place of honour, to which strangers (Page 25) pay their reverence coming in, before they begin their business, or take any notice of the company: these representations are all called by the general name of BOG, or GOD. The rest of their worship is in observing the fasts, which are four in a year, besides *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*, and very severe; in frequenting the church, if nigh at hand, once a day, in lighting up wax candles to their saints and often repeating the GOSPODI POHMELI, or, *Lord have mercy upon me*, without any farther attention. Since the war, and frequent voyages of their young gentry, they begin to be less strict in their fasts; the Czar himself eats flesh on all of

them in private houses, but refrains from giving any scandal in public. Their churches are very numerous, some of stone the rest of wood, all built in the form of a cross, with five little cupolas; every nobleman's seat has one; to build a (Page 26) church being thought a meritorious act and laying a sort of obligation on heaven, tho' they are left at liberty to frequent them.

THUS, my dear friend, have I endeavoured to give you an account of this extraordinary affair, as well as to give you some idea of our constitution, laws, government, and inhabitants; and in my next I shall take more notice of our trade, and the produce of the country, *&c.* but as I have already greatly exceeded the bounds of a letter, I hope you will permit me to subscribe myself,

Dear CHARLES,

Your truly affectionate friend,

P. GILCHRIST.

REVIEWS

I. **De la Nevill' [Foy de la Neuville],** ***Zapiski o Moskovii.*** Translated and edited, with introduction and commentary, by A.S. Lavrov. (Moscow-Dolgoprudnyi: Allegro-press, 1996). 304 pp.

The account of a visit to Russia in the summer and autumn of 1689 by an obscure Frenchman named Foy de la Neuville or Neufville, first published in Paris in 1698 under the title *Relation curieuse et nouvelle de Moscovie*, has long been both a useful source of colourful quotations (references to Russians being 'suspicious and mistrustful, cruel, sodomites, gluttons, misers, beggars and cowards' and the regent Sophia's enormous bulk are among the choicer gems) and an object of scholarly suspicion. The author tells us that he left Warsaw in July 1689, accredited by the king of Poland as an envoy to the Muscovite court and travelling disguised as a Pole. (At one point he claims that his mission was to collect information about the activities of envoys from Protestant Brandenburg-Prussia, although this is probably one of several mystifications). Neuville's visit to Moscow coincided with what he calls the 'revolution' of August–September, during which the regent was overthrown by Tsar Peter's supporters. Having made the acquaintance of a number of leading figures and made rude remarks about most of them, Neuville quit Moscow in mid-December and returned to Warsaw early in January 1690.

My own interest in Neuville sprang from my studies of the careers of Prince Vasilii Vasil'evich Golitsyn and Tsarevna Sophia Alekseevna, whose reputations owe more than a little to what Neuville wrote about them, positive in the former case, negative in the latter. Subsequently, I edited a new English translation of Neuville's account (*A Curious and New Account of Muscovy in the Year 1689*, translated by James A. Cutshall, SSEES Occasional Papers:London, 1994), the introduction to which contains several references to the work of the young St Petersburg scholar Alexander Lavrov, the editor of the text reviewed here. It was he, for example, who first alerted me to the existence of two manuscripts of Neuville's work in Hanover. It

is the fuller of these two texts (Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek, Handschriftenabteilung, no. 1750) which Dr Lavrov has now published, both in the original French and in a new Russian translation. Neuville's dedication to King Louis XIV (missing from Hanover MS) is reproduced from 'Relation curieuse et nouvelle de mon voyage en Moscovie de l'an 1689' (Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des Manuscrits, nouvelles acquisitions françaises, 5114) and variants are also included from Pierre Aubouin's 1698 published edition. The latter, which formed the basis of my own Neuville edition, contains substantial interpolations and corrupt spellings. The link between it and the Paris MS remains 'debatable' (p. 45).

The most recent Russian version of Neuville, published in the anthology *Rossiia XV-XVII vv. glazami inostrantsev*, edited by Iu.A. Limonov (Leningrad, 1986), appeared with minimal notes and cosmetic cuts (all traces of sodomites had disappeared, for example). Alexander Lavrov's work not only includes a complete new translation, but also an extensive introduction (pp. 7-53), which summarises the current state of scholarship on Neuville, and detailed and informative commentaries (pp. 203-37). From the outset Dr Lavrov firmly states that Neuville was a 'real historical figure' (p.7), who actually did visit Russia. (For a long time the account was dismissed as an 'armchair' compliation). Any doubts still lingering after the studies by Ferdinand Grönebaum (*Frankreich in Ost- und Nordeuropa* (Wiesbaden, 1986)) and Isabel de Madariaga ('Who was Foy de la Neuville?', *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, XXVIII (1987), 21–30) ought now to be totally dispelled. Lavrov adds to the stock of contemporary traces of Neuville, citing a letter from Leibniz dated 1692 and adding details on the Frenchman's career in Poland and mission to Venice from the memoirs of Francois Dalairac (*Les Anécdotes de Pologne, ou Mémoires secrets du règne de Jean Sobieski III*, 2 vols, Paris, 1699). There is also a report from the French foreign archive (Correspondence politique, Pologne, t. 83, fol. 14) from Neuville's sponsor in Warsaw, the Marquis de Béthune, dated 6 January 1690, which refers to Neuville's recent mission to Moscow, although, as the editor points out, it 'poses more questions than its answers' (p. 32). Most intriguing is the discovery in the same archive of Neuville's signature on a covering note, dated 3 November 1691, to a letter from Béthune to J-B. Colbert, Marquis de Torcy. This is the only known

autograph. The handwriting of the signature is different from the text, but the latter appears to be in the same hand as the Paris MS, which seems to indicate that they were copied by a regular helper or secretary of Neuville's (see p.40 and photograph on p. 250). These new discoveries, interesting though they are, dispel only a little of the fog which surrounds Neuville. Trails run cold, for example the archive at Beauvais, where Neuville is supposed to have been born, was destroyed in the First World War and, more perplexing still, even such a tireless and meticulous researcher as Dr Lavrov has failed to find any traces of Neuville in Russian archives (p. 23), which may in part be explained by the fact that he travelled under an assumed name.

In addition to new 'finds', the introduction has a useful examination of the diplomatic background, although Dr Lavrov is right to assert that the account was not a diplomatic report as such, but rather was intended for a circle of 'scholars and diplomats interested in Russia' (p. 38). He revisits the repercussions caused by its publication and its influence on, for example, the diplomat Andrei Matveev and Voltaire, whose copy of the 1699 Hague edition of *Relation curieuse* is now in the Russian National Library. Pushkin's library, on the other hand, did not contain a copy, although the book was recommended to him when he was researching Peter's reign.

One or two weaknesses may be identified. Although Dr Lavrov acknowledges that Neuville (like most writers of traveller's accounts) borrowed from his predecessors, he does not always identify specific examples. Neuville's mistake about mixed bathing in Russia (mentioned on p. 51), for example, is probably not so much evidence of his 'hostility' towards Russian (although there is plenty of that) as of his borrowing a salacious detail which was a stock reference from Herberstein onwards. Other criticisms are of a technical nature. The poor quality of the printing in the French texts make its quite difficult to decipher the footnotes and footnote references which set out variants in the texts. The abbreviations are not clearly explained anywhere. There are a few misprints (e.g. *London Gasette* on p. 21), although in general the citations from Latin script are accurate. Perhaps it is not surprising that there are some errors in the French, given the often bizarrely erratic spelling, grammar and punctuation of the original. On p. 57, line 5, for example, the

word 'des' is missing and on p. 59, line 19, 'rends' should be 'rendu'. (This was checked again the facsimile of the same page reproduced in the book. A perusal of the whole text would doubtless reveal more mistakes). Despite these technical difficulties, this edition is invaluable, not least for its extensive bibliographies which fully acknowledge Western scholarship on Neuville. There are detailed indexes (thematic and proper names) and the useful addition of original spellings of non-Russian proper names given in brackets. This is the first in a new series *Rossiia i rossiiskoe obshchestvo glazami inostrantsev XV-XIX vv.*, which is to be published by the appropriately named 'Peter the Great' Centre for the Humanities at the Moscow Physical-Technical Institute. The foreword makes an eloquent case for the usefulness of a genre which was not always acknowledged in Soviet times (when it was sometimes claimed that foreigners were unable to comprehend 'Russian reality'), or even in the Post-Communist period, where attitudes to foreigners remain unstable as Russia continues to review its relationship with the rest of Europe.

Lindsey Hughes (SSEES, University of London)

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II. **Claus Scharf, *Katharina II. Deutschland und die Deutschen.***
Mainz (Vg. Philipp von Zabern), 1996. XV, 570 pp. Plates. Tables.
First published without illustrations as vol. 153 in the series
Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für europäische Geschichte Mainz, 1995

Claus Scharf's book originated in the research project set up by Lev Kopelev, in exile in West Germany during the 1980s, to study German and Russian views of each other in historical perspective. The Kopelev project has produced a number of interesting volumes in the series "West-östliche Spiegelungen" --some six so far (1985-92, ed. Mechthild Keller or Dagmar Herrmann), covering the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Scharf's contribution to the project appeared in 1992; but his researches led him much further, to a comprehensive study which became first a Halle doctorate and finally this handsome and beautifully illustrated second edition, textually identical to the first but seeking to interest a broader and less specialist audience.

In one perspective, this book can find a place in the immense outpouring of German research, in general academically very respectable, on German relations and interactions with Eastern Europe (including of course Russia) which has developed especially since 1989, with significant financial and institutional support from the German authorities. But Kopelev's inspiration in fact had other springs: on the one hand the strained Soviet-West German relations of the early 1980s, on the other the fashionable historical interest in national identity and mentalities history, the problems of ethnic and national interactions and stereotypes. The aim was an exposition of the complexity of Russo-German relations of all sorts, and a bilateral, mutual unravelling of false perception and assumption, even if at that stage neither GDR nor Soviet scholars could take part. Scharf's initial hesitation about including an originally German princess on the Russian side was soon overcome; and his work has now gone beyond the limited question of Catherine's *Deutschlandbild*, her understanding of her native country, to include the wider question of her actual relations with Germany and with Germans.

The organizational principle of the book is biographical: the focus is resolutely on Catherine personally, even during discussion (for instance) of foreign

policy. A long and thoughtful introduction sets the scene. Scharf discusses the historiography of Catherine and her reign, the present state of sources, and the 'historiographical tradition'. The latter includes particular obeisance to Kliuchevskii and a useful account of German contributions to the 'Catherine as hypocrite' approach (esp. Theodor Schiemann). Scharf also confronts the protean identity of 'Germany' in the eighteenth century, which in practice becomes the Holy Roman Empire, defined as 'the political space of German history' (p. 38) over against Austria and Prussia. He likewise comments judiciously on the problem of Enlightened Absolutism, emphasizing solidarity between contemporary monarchs and monarchists and the importance for theories and rulers of the 'communications network' of the European Enlightenment. Scharf's analytical framework is uncontroversial, emphasizing the modernization of Russia pursued as a means to military and political success among the European great powers; the assumption of gradual convergence between post-Petrine autocracy and Western absolute monarchies; and awareness of the multifarious results of Russia's increasing integration into European and world systems.

The body of the book is divided into eight main sections: I: Memories of Germany -- the picture of Germany which emerges from Catherine's childhood impressions as mediated through memoirs and correspondence. II: 'The Protestant ethic, German language and good police' -- the fruits of Catherine's early education and socialization. III: Reform impulses from Germany -- the Empress's reading of German political writers, and her essentially German-inspired school reform. IV: Germans in the Russian Empire -- Germany as a reservoir of settlers and of useful employees, and the particular significance of the Baltic provinces. V: Enlightenment, Classicism and Sensibility -- the often under-estimated role of Germany and Germans in the development of Russia's literature and art. VI: Russian history, German history, universal history -- Catherine's own historical and philological researches and her German assistants in them. VII: Dynastic relations with German Courts -- including German princes in Russian service. VIII: Catherine's foreign policy in relation to Germany, from the Seven Years' War to the French Revolution.

Scharf's conclusions emphasize the fundamental importance of the growth of cultural communications across Europe in the period for an understanding both of Catherine and her context -- communications not just bilateral but in all directions, and of all currents of thought, 'Anti-Enlightened' as well as 'Enlightened'. At the same time Catherine's basic reform-mindedness was in his view determined by the Protestant (Lutheran and Huguenot) religious influences of her youth (some interesting discussion along the way of the extent to which she did and did not speak 'Luther-German'), even after her decisive encounter in the 1750s with the political thought of the French Enlightenment. In terms of practical politics, Scharf suggests, she only learned how to run a Court through her Russian experiences: Frederick II's possible influence as role model is subjected to nuanced and perceptive analysis. Germany itself Catherine saw not only as a source of ideas and reservoir of well-trained servitors, but also as a political arena requiring crisis management: the Austro-Prussian conflict was something she had grown up with, and she perceived Russian interests to lie in maintaining the balance of power between the two, that is, within Germany, apart from the European balance as a whole. Consequently she sought no conquests for herself within Germany and by using Russian influence to keep Austria and Prussia from war with each other she guaranteed peace in Germany for 30 years. She failed however to keep Russia completely independent in its freedom of action, and while her initial commitment to a Prussian alliance entangled her in the Polish partitions, her loyalty to Austria prevented her in the 1780s from encouraging the small princes of the Holy Roman Empire to an independence of action which might have made German resistance to revolutionary France more effective.

Scharf's study offers no radical reinterpretations or challenges to the current Western orthodoxy on Catherine, but he brings a huge erudition to his subject and deepens and enriches the areas with which he deals. This is very much the book of a German historian. If Scharf showed his command of Russian history in his impressive contribution to the multi-authored German *Handbuch der Geschichte Russlands* (1986-8) here his command of German sources and genealogy, and of the detail of international, dynastic and cultural connections in Germany, is equally well-founded. One small example: an anecdote in Catherine's memoirs about a childhood visit to the

Hamburg opera connects here (p. 84) to the religious dimensions of cultural policy and the 'opera quarrel' in Hamburg of the 1670s-80s, when Pietists briefly but unsuccessfully forced the opera's closure. Crucial in its reopening was the distinguished orthodox Lutheran churchman Johann Friedrich Mayer, later chased from Greifswald by the troops of Peter I, who became a significant religious influence upon the family of Johanna Elisabeth, Catherine's mother. At the same time Catherine's different versions of this episode provide material for Scharf's broader discussion of the purpose and nature of the memoirs as a work of memory, literature and politics. The memoirs are considered as autobiography, as the 'secularised account of a religious calling' (*eine säkularisierte Berufungsgeschichte*, p. 98), as a particular variant of women's history, as an example of standard eighteenth-century cultural discourse, and as a political tool. The reach of Scharf's coverage and the depth of his sources are reflected in the massive bibliography and the very full, at times almost self-indulgent apparatus, thankfully here in footnotes so that one does not have constantly to turn to the back. Nevertheless, the text is extremely well-written: the profusion of material is distilled into a clear narrative which is very agreeable to read. (And Scharf pays his respects to the currently fashionable historiographical concept of 'return to narrative'.)

At the same time, Scharf's command of the sources is directed towards a new view through synthesis as much as through primary research. There is no material here taken direct from archives; the sources, primary and secondary, are all published, and the presentation takes place on a different level from that of, say, Anthony Cross's recent *By The Banks of the Neva*, which its author aptly described as an 'archaeology' of the British community in Russia. The sources at Scharf's disposal are voluminous, but by no means exhaustive. Scharf calls here for a new edition of Catherine's works; he is a member, together with American and English colleagues, of the 'Catherinian Commission' recently formed by Aleksandr Kamenskii to publish Catherine's papers. Much new material remains to be excavated; but it will be at least some time before the published source base evolves so far as to necessitate review of his work in this book.

From one perspective Scharf's work is vulnerable to possible criticism. In his discussion of Catherine's history-writing, much indebted to Tatishchev, he writes (p. 252):

> Catherine also took over Tatishchev's timelessly valid political-didactic explanation of why a patriotic historiography may not exclude the history of other peoples: for every people a knowledge of its own history and geography is more useful than familiarity with those of foreign nations, but without knowledge of the latter's history, especially that of neighbouring peoples, one cannot know one's own clearly and comprehensively.

It is undoubtedly important to know how Catherine II related to Germany, German culture and German affairs, especially given her origins. But how far can this one dimension of her mental world be treated in isolation? Scharf is well aware of her interest in other national cultures, well read in the relevant sources, and brings them judiciously into the discussion where appropriate; but the focus and the weight of exegesis naturally remains essentially on things German, a prominent feature of much German scholarship on Russia and East Europe in the past decade. In Scharf's case, however, this approach may be considered justified: at this level of detail, and with 459 pages of text already, a broader scope of enquiry is too much to ask. And within its limited sphere Scharf's book is a triumph of scholarly synthesis and reflection; it will be an essential building-block in all future attempts to encompass the larger history of Catherine and her reign.

Roger Bartlett (SSEES, University of London)

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III. **Mark Al'tshuller, *Epokha Val'tera Skotta v Rossii: Istoricheskii roman 1830-x godov.*** (Sankt-Peterburg : Akademicheskii proekt, 1996). 340pp.

Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley*, the first historical novel in English was published in 1814; Mikhail Zagoskin's *Iurii Miloslavskii*, Russia's first historical novel, appeared in 1829. The latter owed its conception to the former, and this comprehensive study demonstrates how deep was the impress of Scott's example on his emulators from Zagoskin onwards into the 1830s: chapters are devoted in turn to Zagoskin, Bulgarin, Lazhechnikov, Masal'skii, Polevoi, Zotov and Pushkin. Readers of this *Newsletter* might object that undue notice is being given here to a study which focuses on a period well outside even the elastic boundaries which members of the Study Group have allowed for the "eighteenth century": the ultimate terminus has never gone further than 1825! The objection may be met by two points of justification. Firstly, an opening chapter shows how the Russian historical tale of the late 1820s did not emerge under the sole influence of Scott's novels on an empty native stage. A second justification is that early Russian followers of Scott also tracked him in dealing mainly with the history of the eighteenth century, a history still resonant in living memory. " 'Tis Sixty Years Since" was *Waverley's* significant sub-title and it was reproduced in the Russian translation of 1827, *Veverlei, ili Shest'desiat let nazad.*

The discussion of Russian "historical tales" at the turn of the century begins, of course, with Karamzin's *Natalia, boiarskaia doch'* (1792) and *Marfa Posadnitsa* (1803). The former hardly qualifies since it is really a sentimental tale, set in the past.. By the time he came to write *Marfa Posadnitsa*, however, Karamzin was already in training for his future work as a professional historian. This was the first serious historical fiction that preceded Walter Scott and prepared the Russian public for the reception of Scott. The substantial claim that is made for Karamzin is that a dozen years before *Waverley*, in his balanced attitude to the confrontation between democratic and monarchic principles in fifteenth-century Novgorod, he had anticipated Scott's particular stance: one of tolerance, understanding and sympathy for both sides, however violently opposed they might be, in any historical struggle.

It is in the context of the other quasi-historical tales of its time that *Marfa Posadnitsa* was outstanding. A slavish regard for Ossian was still predominant in works such as M. Murav'ev's *Oskol'd*, Narezhnyi's *Rogvold* and Zhukovskii's *Mar'ina roshcha* and unfinished *Vadim Novogorodskii*, described as a mélange of "Russian names and slavono-Ossianic landscapes". In belittling Ossian's part in preparing the ground for the historical novel, Al'tshuller is in agreement with Scott himself who was disgusted by Macpherson's dissimulation. Yet the adolescent Waverley's catholic reading which probably reflected Scott's own experience, included Ossianic works that, he confessed, developed the "imagination" if not the "understanding".

Al'tshuller seems to have forgotten Ossian when the asserts that, as the romantic aesthetic aroused interest in folk cultures, "Scott's novels made wild and savage Scotland, *hitherto of little interest to anyone* [my italics WGJ], one of the most intriguing corners of the then world." The "Livonian" tales of Bochkov and Kiukhel'beker were undoubtedly affected mainly by Scott's treatment of Scotland, but when Bochkov in 1827 encouraged his reader to go to Livonia and Estonia where "the admirer of the Scottish bard will quiver with delight on seeing what a sumptuous feast awaits his gaze and imagination", one wonders whether the "Scottish bard" is exclusively Scott, or whether the shade of Ossian may also be present.

That the ground being prepared for the reception of the historical novel still had its rocky places is shown by F.N. Glinka's tale about Bogdan Khmel'nitskii (1816-17), a work divided into a long historical introduction and a sentimental narrative. It was an illustration of how in the Russian writer's mind the eighteenth-century division of literature into distinct generic categories was still considered essential. A historical chronicle could not be contaminated by fiction.

It is an "intergeneric dialogue", to use the term devised by Andrew Baruch Wachtel in his *An Obsession with History: Russian Writers Confront their Past* (Stanford, 1994) that marks the crucial new stage in the development of the historical tale in the 1820s. The advance is linked with A.O. Kornilovich (1800-1834), a professional historian who composed vivid sketches of life under Peter the Great. From his historical essays based on substantial archival research, Kornilovich moved easily to historical fiction in 1820 with his *Utro vechera mudrenee* where Peter

appeared as a living character with human failings described not by the twenty-year old author but by a fictional narrator of great age.

By this stratagem of using a narrator who could transmit tales through the generations, as did Scott with his sequence of *Waverley, Guy Mannering,* and *The Antiquary*, Kornilovich presented history as living memory extending into the present. It is intriguing that it was on Kornilovich's sketches of Petrine society that Pushkin drew for social details when writing his projected *Arap Petra Velikogo*, based on his own family tradition.

The Russian historical novelists, it is true, would occasionally follow Scott away from the eighteenth century of their immediate forbears to the far distance of the Middle Ages, but it is striking how many of the novels discussed here are located in a near past: from Zagoskin's *Russkie v nachale os'mnadtsatogo veka* and *Roslavlev, ili Russkie v 1812 godu*, through Bulgarin's *Mazepa*, Lazhechnikov's *Poslednii Novik* and *Ledianoi dom*, Masal'skii's novel about the newly-built St Petersburg, *Chernyi iashchik*, and *Regentstvo Birona*, to Zotov's *Tainstvennyi monakh, ili Nekotorye cherty iz zhizni Petra I*. It is rightly suggested that it was the dramatic situations of the period that accounted for the popularity of Petrine times, but the accessibility of that near past to Russian memory should not be discounted as another reason for the predominance of the eighteenth century.

It is certainly significant that Pushkin's *Kapitanskaia dochka*, the most successful of the Russian historical novels, as well as being the most faithful to Scott's example, could well share *Waverley's* subtitle of '"Tis Sixty Years Since".

W. Gareth Jones (University of Wales, Bangor)

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EDITOR'S POSTBAG

NEXT MEETING OF STUDY GROUP

The next meeting of the Study Group will take place at the High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, from tea on Monday 5 January 1998 to lunch on Wednesday 7 January. Papers already offered for what promises to be an even more varied, international and interdisciplinary programme than usual include: Joachim Klein (Leiden), 'Lomonosov and the Tragedy'; Alexei Makrov (St Andrews/Russia), 'The Architecture of Nikolai L'vov'; Alexis Martin (USA), 'Russian Popular Views of Napoleon and the Napoleonic Wars'; Elena Mozgovaia (Spb.), ' Late Eighteenth-Century Russian Works on the Theory of the Figurative Arts'; Gerald Seaman (NZ), 'Musical Elements in Eighteenth-Century Fashion Magazines" (with musical accompaniment). Further offers of papers should be addressed to Prof. Lindsey Hughes, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU (e-mail l.hughes@ssees.ac.uk), who will send out booking forms in November. Please note that forms are not sent to all members abroad. Anyone who expects to be in the UK in January and would like to attend should also contact her.

THE VI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

All enquiries about the July 1999 Leiden Conference should be addressed to Prof. Joachim Klein, Hugo de Grootstraat 18, NL-2311 XL Leiden, Netherlands.

CONFERENCE: 'PETER THE GREAT AND THE WEST: NEW PERSPECTIVES'

Marking the tercentenary of Peter's visit to England and organized jointly by the National Maritime Museum and the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, this conference will be held at the Queen's House, Greenwich , from Thursday 9 to

Saturday 11 July 1998. A BOOKING FORM ACCOMPANIES THIS NUMBER OF THE *NEWSLETTER*.

OTHER CONFERENCES

Without resting on their laurels after their recent successful conferences on Catherine and Shuvalov, Drs Tat'iana Artem'eva and Mikhail Mikeshin are now turning their attention to Jeremy Bentham and Aleksandr Radishchev. Dr Artem'eva writes from St Petersburg with the following details.

MAY 1998: **The Science of Morality: A Conference for the 250th Anniversary of Jeremy Bentham.**

Long list of possible topics, including the Benthams in Russia and Reception of Ideas of Jeremy B. in Russia.

Proposals, requests, abstracts, papers (up to eight pages) accepted up to 1JANUARY 1998. E-mail and ascii text files very welcome. PO Box 264, B-358, St Petersburg, 194358 Russia.

Telephone: ±7 (812) 514 9380; Fax: ±7 (812) 218 4667

E-mail: art@hb.ras.spb.su.

AUGUST 1999: **Philosophy as Fate: A Conference for the 250th Anniversary of A.N. Radishchev.**

Suggested topics include:

Russian Philosopher: Rebel, Writer, Official?

The Nobleman-Philosopher as a Social Type

Verdicts on the Eighteenth Century

Russian Thanatos: Meditations on Life, Death and Immortality

Forms and Styles of Philosophical Genres

Philosophy in the Age of the Philosophes

What is the Russian God? Meditations on God in Russian Eighteenth-Century Literature

Can Manuscripts Be Burnt? Fates of Thinkers and Their Texts

Dix-huitiemisme and Postmodernism: The Eighteenth Century in the Mirror. Contact addresses as above. Proposals etc by 31 JANUARY 1999

INDEX

John Simmons kindly offered to prepare an index of the first twenty-five issues of the *Newsletter*. The unfortunate illness of his wife has prevented him from completing it in time for this issue, but we hope very much to include it next year.

PROCEEDINGS OF GARGNANO CONFERENCE

Maria di Salvo writes to say that the publishing house La Fenice which produced *A Window on Russia* is to close. She has bought up copies of the proceedings, which may be purchased from her - e-mail to disalvo@imiucca.csi.unimi.it. (Copies in America may also be obtained from Oriental Research Partners.)

PUBLICATIONS

Among recently published works written and edited by members of the Study Group mention should be made of: Aleksandr Kamenskii, *Zhizn' i sud'ba Imperatritsy Ekateriny Velikoi* (Moscow: Znanie, 1997); Evgenii Anisimov (with S.A. Prokhvatilova), *"Gorod pod morem", ili Blistatel'nyi Sankt-Peterburg: Vospominaniia, rasskazy, ocherki, stkhi* (Spb.:Lenizdat, 1996); Wladimir Berelowitch and Olga Medvedkova, *Histoire de Saint-Pétersbourg* (Paris: Fayard, 1996).

REVIEWS

It is becoming a yearly plea, but the poor response is even more discouraging, given the great number of works being published in Russia on all aspects of eighteenth-century Russian culture. On recent visits to St Petersburg and Moscow I have bought

some twenty-five books on architecture, painting, landscape gardening, estate culture, history, literature, and language, as well as biographies and anthologies, many of which have been produced in comparatively small editions and most of which deserve some mention and appraisal. Reviews of Russian-language works are still a comparative rarity in western scholarly journals and it would be gratifying if we could fill the gap to some degree in our own areas of specialization.

I would be interested to receive reviews of, for instance: V.S. Lopatin (ed.), *Ekaterina II i G.A. Potemkin: lichnaia perepiska 1769-1791* (Moscow: Nauka, 1997) (in series 'Literaturnye pamiatniki'), together with O.I. Eliseeva, *Perepiska Ekateriny II i G.A. Potemkina perioda vtoroi russko-turetskoi voiny (1787-1791) : istochnikovedcheskoe issledovanie* (Moscow: Vostok, 1997); Iu. N. Bespiatykh, *Peterburg Anny Ioannovny v inostrannykh opisaniiakh* (Spb.: Blitz, 1997) and *Arkhangel'sk v XVIII veke* (Spb.: Blitz, 1997), edited by him; T.A. Artem'eva, *Russkaia istoriosofiia XVIII veka* (Spb.:Spb. Univ., 1996) and *Mysli o dushe: Russkaia metafizika XVIII veka* (Spb.: Nauka, 1996), edited by her; V.M. Zhivov, *Iazyk i kul'tura v Rossii XVIII veka* (Moscow: Shkola "Iazyki russkoi kul'tury", 1996); Ivan Ukhanov, *Rychkov* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1996); V.N. Zakharov, *Zapadnoevropeiskie kuptsy v Rossii. Epokha Petra I* (Moscow: Rosspen, 1996); S.I. Nikolaev, *Literaturnaia kul'tura petrovskoi epokhi* (Spb.: Dmitrii Bulanin, 1996). Numerous books on St Petersburg are appearing and the flow will increase as we approach 2003. Two major books (in addition to those already mentioned by Anisimov and Bespiatykh) are: Moisei Kagan, *Grad Petrov v istorii russkoi kul'turySpb.: Slaviia, 1996)* and Iu. V. Artem'eva and S.A. Prokhvatilova (eds.), *Zodchie Sankt-Peterburga: XVIII vek* (Spb.: Lenizdat, 1997).

As an inducement to reviewers, the Study Group would be prepared to re-imburse them for the cost of the book reviewed — on production of the receipt for the Treasurer. Please let me know in advance which books you wish to review.