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Dva veka russkoi klassiki,
vol. 5, no. 3, 2023, pp. 6–23. ISSN 2686-7494
Two centuries of the Russian classics,
vol. 5, no. 3, 2023, pp. 6–23. ISSN 2686-7494

Research Article

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Some Observations on the Importance of the Translation the Story “The Luminous Resurrection of Christ” in Shaping and Developing the Easter Tale

Abstract: The article examines the factors that contributed to the formation of the Easter story genre in Russia. The author connects this process with the work of the Slavophiles, analyzes the context in which the European “Christmas” fairy tale was not only translated in Russia, but was built into Russian culture. The symbol of this transformation was the story of Charles Dickens “A Christmas Carol in Prose,” which received the name “The Luminous Resurrection of Christ” in Russia. The article examines some of the changes made to Dickens’ text, on the basis of which it can be judged that the free translation of the work came out of the Slavophil environment. It is assumed that D. A. Valuev and A. S. Khomyakov jointly planned and carried out the translation and alteration of the story. The author of the article notes that the action is transferred to Russia, the setting of the story and the characters have Russian features, habits and names. So Christmas, the religious holiday at the center of Dickens’ story, was replaced by Easter.

Keywords: Easter story, Ch. Dickens, D. A. Valuev, A. S. Khomyakov, authorship, Slavophiles, artistic transformation, translation, processing.

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Received: July 01, 2023

Approved after reviewing: August 07, 2023

Published: September 25, 2023

For citation: Cavazza, A. “Some Observations on the Importance of the Translation the Story ‘The Luminous Resurrection of Christ’ in Shaping and Developing the Easter Tale.” *Dva veka russkoi klassiki*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2023, pp. 6–23. (In Russ.) <https://doi.org/10.22455/2686-7494-2023-5-3-6-23>

The Easter tale appeared in Russia in the 19th century. It bears the influence of literary and religious works dating back to previous centuries, such as the lives of the saints and biblical texts, both canonical and apocryphal [Nikolaeva: 10]. In addition to the didactic and symbolic language of the Gospel parables, an indirect though significant contribution to the codification of this genre is attributable to Easter hymnography and liturgical dramatisation, primarily the *Via Crucis* and the procession performed by the Orthodox faithful on the night of Easter to commemorate the announcement of Christ's resurrection [Kozina 2011: 159]. Popular traditions associated with Easter have also contributed to shape this genre, stimulating interest and heightening awareness.

The emergence of Easter stories in Russia is linked to the promotion of the authentically Russian element in the national spirit, and specifically to the literary output of the first Slavophiles. The 1840s were marked by a lively debate between Slavophiles and Westernizers whose discussions in salons and whose articles in literary journals were instrumental in helping to raise national self-awareness. The Slavophiles were alert, on the one hand, to everything that was being read and written in Europe of a philosophical, theological and literary nature, and, on the other, firmly committed to promoting a national culture in which the Russian element was clearly recognizable. It was in this context that the tale, which in the Western literary tradition was designated “for Christmas,” was not merely translated in Russia but underwent a thorough transposition into the culture of the country, becoming a tale for Easter. Emblematic of this transformation was Charles Dickens' tale, *A Christmas Carol in prose* (1843), which in Russia became *Svetloe Khristovo Voskresen'è. Povest' dlia detei (zaimstvovana iz Dikensa)* (“The Luminous Resurrection of Christ. A Tale for Children (adapted from Dickens)”), the title under which one of the earliest translations of Dickens' famous Christmas story appeared in 1844 [Dickens; Khomiakov 2021–

2023. 2: 399)¹. In recent times research has focused once again on the question of the authorship of this adapted Russian translation which first came out in Moscow, as a separate edition, with the translator remaining anonymous, as was customary at the time; then, the following year, the same translation was reissued by the *Biblioteka dlia vospitaniia* (“Library for Education”) under the title *Svetloe Christovo Voskreseniè: povest’* (“The Luminous Resurrection of Christ: the story”) (hereafter *Svetloe Christovo Voskreseniè: povest’*) and with a dedication to D. N. Sverbeevu (dedicated to D. N. S<verbeevu>)² [Khomiakov 2021–2023. 2: 392, 553]. The purpose of the present article is to demonstrate the Slavophile origins of this text, regardless of the precise identity of its author, and to emphasize its importance in the historical process which fostered the genesis and development of the Easter tale in Russia³.

In 1927 the theory was put forward — and subsequently proposed again on more than one occasion — that the translator of *Svetloe Christovo Voskreseniè: povest’* was D. A. Valuev⁴, assisted by P. G. Redkin [Beketova: 17;

¹ Another translation also came out the same year under the title *Sviatochnye videniia (Povest’ Dikkensa)* (“Ghosts of Christmas.” A tale by Dickens) in the journal *Repertuar i panteon* (“Repertoire and Pantheon,” book 9,), 1844, pp. 562–605. Also in this case no mention is made of the name of the translator. Two transcriptions of the surname Dickens coexist in Russian: “Dikens” and “Dikkens.”

² The new edition of the complete works of Khomyakov reproduces the translation of Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol in prose*, published in the journal *Biblioteka dlia vospitania* of 1845 under the title *Svetloe Christovo Voskreseniè: povest’ (posviashchena D. N. S<verbeevu>)* (“The Luminous Resurrection of Christ. A Tale”. (dedicated to D. N. S<verbeevu>)). It is preceded by a short introduction by the translator who signs with the initial “M...” According to A. P. Dmitriev, the editor of the new opera omnia of Khomyakov, this may stand for the first letter of “Mitia,” pet name for Dmitrii, Valuev’s Christian name [Dmitriev: 556]. In 1845 this same translation appeared in the journal “Zhurnal dlia chteniia vospitannikam voenno-uchebnykh zavedenii” (“Journal of Readings for Cadets at the Military Training Institutes”) (1845, vol. 56, no. 223) [Dmitriev: 554].

³ At present there are systematic studies on the origin and development of the Easter story in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century [Zakharov; Kalenichenko; Esaulov; Nikolaeva]. Studies relating to the Russian-Soviet and post-Soviet period are sporadic and less systematic [Kozina 2019].

⁴ For a review of Valuev’s writings and a series of accounts from his contemporaries, see [Valuev 2010].

Katarskii; Dmitriev: 554]. Valuev was the editor of the journal *Biblioteka dla vospitania* (“Library for Education”), which he founded in 1843. The journal was intended to be a continuation of N. I. Novikov’s *Detskoe chtenie dlia serdtsa i razuma* (“Childhood Reading for the Heart and Reason”) and a number of writers and intellectuals were involved in founding it: M. P. Pogodin, T. N. Granovskii, N. M. Jazykov, I. V. Kireevskii, E. P. Elagina, V. A. Panov, Khomyakov and S. P. Shevyrev¹. Of these Khomyakov played a particular role. It is common knowledge that Valuev and Khomyakov enjoyed a very close working relationship, compounded by an identical commitment to Slavophile ideals, as well as by family ties — Valuev was the nephew of Khomyakov’s wife, Ekaterina Michajlovna Khomyakova². From childhood the Christian faith was firmly rooted in the ideologist of Slavophilism and inspired his wide-ranging literary output which embraced poetry, journalism, and historical-religious works, most notably *Tserkov’ odna* (“The Church is One”)³, parts of which Khomyakov dictated to Valuev, thus confirming their close partnership⁴. This powerful bond, severed by Valuev’s premature death, has prompted some scholars, in the wake of philological surveys conducted by V. A. Koshelev at the end of the last century, to conclude that the leader of the Slavophile movement was the author of the translation *Svetloe Christovo Voskresenè. Povest’* [Koshelev: 82; Mikhnovets: 133; Tamaev: 200; Markarov: 49]. However, the manuscript, kept at the State Historical Museum in Moscow⁵, recently underwent a graphic and stylistic analysis, conducted by

¹ Khomyakov and S. P. Shevyrev took over the editorship after 1845, the year of Valuev’s death [Klimakov: 9–10]. Even before 1845 Khomyakov and S. P. Shevyrev occasionally helped with selecting material for the journal when Valuev’s illness prevented him from working [Machova: 40].

² Ekaterina Michajlovna Khomyakova was the sister of the well-known poet, N. M. Jazykov, and of Aleksandra Michajlovna Jazykova, D. A. Valuev’s mother.

³ *Cerkov’ odna* (“The Church is One”) by A. S. Khomyakov met with considerable success in the West [Cavazza 2018].

⁴ This emerges from a study of the earliest manuscript of *Cerkov’ odna* (“The Church is One”) to have come down to us [Khomyakov 8: 237–239; 243–250].

⁵ The manuscript used for typesetting, kept in Moscow (GIM, F. 178, D. 11, FF. 1–59r), bears no trace of Khomyakov’s handwriting. On the other hand, what is clearly discernible are the numerous corrections made by Valuev on the text transcribed by a hitherto unidentified copyist; also recognizable is the handwriting of P. G. Redkin who was responsible for the stylistic revision of the translation which, however, was largely ignored during the printing stage [Dmitriev: 553–554].

A. P. Dmitriev, which has raised such serious doubts as to the reliability of V. A. Koshelev [Koshelev: 82] conclusions that in the new edition of the complete works of Khomyakov the text has been relegated to the *Dubia* section [Khomyakov 2021–2023. 2: 392–466]. In fact, an examination of the handwriting of this manuscript, and particularly the stylistic and lexical analysis, has led the *Pushkinskii dom* scholar to conclude that the translation should be attributed, not to Khomyakov, but to Valuev¹, who journeyed to Europe at exactly this time, between July 1843 and the end of January 1844, and spent a lengthy period in England. This theory is lent weight by Shevyrev's posthumous account of Valuev which highlights, not just his study of the movement in the Anglican Church, but his "splendid translations" of Dickens².

Even though some uncertainty remains as to the precise identity of the translator of *Svetloe Christovo Voskresen'e. Povest'*, an examination of some of the changes made to Dickens' text shows that this free translation issued from a Slavophile milieu, and it is highly likely that Valuev and Khomyakov planned and carried out the project together. It is worth looking more closely at these changes.

First of all, the translator of Dickens' tale transferred the action to Russia, and thus the setting of the tale and the characters took on Russian features, habits and names [Koshelev: 83]. Above all, though, Christmas, the religious festival at the centre of Dickens' tale, was replaced by Easter. By taking the feast of the Resurrection of Christ as the focus of the story, the literary design of the tale changed accordingly and, with it, the attendant traditional symbolism: thus Christmas presents, the turkey, garlands, holly, mistletoe and Christmas greetings gave way to eggs, kulič, the rooster, and the particular form of greeting which Orthodox Russians exchange at Easter, kissing one another three times.

Compared to Dickens' story, the translation adapted to life in Russia plays down the supernatural element, giving prominence instead to some of the distinctive components of the Easter tale which, as a genre in its own right, was to establish itself in the second half of the 19th century, thanks to con-

¹ The details of this analysis are provided by A. P. Dmitriev in his commentary on the second volume of the new complete works of Khomyakov, currently in preparation at the Pushkin House (RAS) in St. Petersburg, of which four of the planned twelve volumes have been published to date [Dmitriev].

² Shevyrev, S. P. Vospominanie o D. A. Valueve (A Memoir of D. A. Valuev) [Valuev: 347].

tributions from F. M. Dostoevskii, N. S. Leskov, L. N. Tolstoi, A. P. Chekhov and other great writers. In *Svetloe Christovo Voskresen'e: povest'* the feast of Easter is not mechanically substituted for that of Christmas. The change is reflected in the spiritual progress of the main character in which the fall, the resolution to amend, and the subsequent spiritual renewal are clearly delineated. These are all traits which are among the most important in the classification of the future Easter tale [Kozina 2019: 20–21], of which *Svetloe Christovo Voskresen'e: povest'* appears to be the prototype. Compared to Scrooge, the character of Skrug evinces greater psychological introspection and a conscious acknowledgement of his sins. In the fourth chapter, he goes further than Scrooge who merely forms a general resolution and swears to the spirit: "I will honour Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me that I may sponge away the writing on this stone" [Dickens 1988: 83]. The Russian Skrug expresses the reason for his repentance, his determination to turn over a new leaf and the fear, not so much of dying as of not living long enough to redeem himself, evincing a new awareness of life and death thus: "Я буду, обещаю тебе, строго соблюдать все праздники и от всей души воздавать всю должную честь Светлому Христову Воскресенью; я отдам свою жизнь, чтобы сделать, по мере сил моих, вечное Светлое Воскресенье для моих страждущих братьий!.. Я буду жить вами, настоящее, прошедшее и будущее, ибо каждый из вас, благодетельные духи, открыл мне новое, неведомое мною дотоле, Божье благословенье в жизни; и уроки всех вас, благодетельные духи, осветят и поведут за собой остаток моих дней на искупление всего, что доселе прожито мною в слепоте души и разума. — О, скажи мне, что я могу еще смыть с человеческого будущего тот срамный конец, к которому вела меня моя грешная, слепая жизнь"¹.

¹ I promise you, I will strictly observe all feasts and I will render due honour to the Luminous Resurrection of Christ with all my soul. As far as I am able, I will devote my life so that an eternal Luminous Resurrection may be accomplished for my suffering brothers! I will live, thanks to you, in the present, the past and the future, because each of you, beneficent spirits, has revealed a new divine blessing on life, hitherto unknown to me; and the lessons of you all, beneficent spirits, will light and guide the days of life that remain to me, in atonement for the way I have conducted my whole life until now, in the blindness of my soul

There are a number of clues which point to the Slavophile origin of the transposition of Dickens' story and of its proximity to both Valuev and Khomyakov. Stepan was the name of Khomyakov's eldest son who died, together with the second born Fedor [Tamaev: 204], at an early age. And it may be no coincidence that Stepa is the name of Krichev's son who, in the Russian translation, also dies. This alteration introduces a note of grief which is absent from Dickens' tale. Instead of to "that blessed star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode," the eyes of the reader are directed towards the symbol of the cross which little Stepa faithfully embraces, together with his family, in bearing with his infirmity to the last, leaving his loved ones with a memory of his mildness and devotion — as Skrug, in the company of the Spirit of the Future, learns in advance of the time. It is worth noting that an allusion to the importance of the cross and to the communion of prayer between the living and the dead can be found in Khomyakov's first letter to William Palmer of 10 December 1844: "Those who believe that the Holy Cross has been indeed the instrument of our salvation cannot but consider it as the natural symbol of Christian love; and if they reject a most natural and holy sign for fear of idolatry, they seem to be almost as inconsistent as a man who should condemn himself to voluntary dumbness for fear of idle words. In the like manner I think [it] rather reasonable [than otherwise] to believe that no bond of Christian love can be rent asunder by death in the spiritual world, whose only law is love" [Russia and the English 1895: 5].

This first letter to the Anglican pastor, whose acquaintance he probably made through Valuev [Khomyakov 2021–2023 8: 212–213], opens by explicitly thanking him for the English translation of the poem *K detiam* ("To my children")¹. These verses, composed after the death of the first-born, Stepan, and the second-born, Fëdor, were translated by Palmer and gave rise to a lengthy correspondence between Khomyakov and the Anglican

and my reason. Oh, tell me that from the future of mankind, I may yet erase this shameful epilogue to which my blind, sinful life has led me! [Khomyakov 2021–2023. 2: 454]

¹ Khomyakov's poem *K detiam* ("To my children"), preceded by W. Palmer's English translation *To my children* appears in the first chapter of the volume "Russia and the English Church in the Last Fifty Years" (London 1895) which contains the correspondence between Palmer and Khomyakov (1844–1854) [Russia and the English 1895: 2–3].

minister on predominantly ecclesiological subjects. This testifies to a particular interest in England on the part of both Khomyakov¹ and Valuev, one which included not just the literary sphere but also the religious, with a particular focus on the interdenominational debate which the leader of the Slavophile movement embarked on with Palmer in the very year that the Russian translation of Dickens' tale was first published at the Semenov press.

From faith in the death and resurrection of Christ springs love and also a new brotherhood of man. The word "brother" crops up more than once in the Russian translation of Dickens' tale. It is significant that in the fifth chapter of the Russian translation, while haranguing Krichev, instead of the epithet "friend" with which Scrooge addresses Bob Cratchit in Dickens' tale, Skrug uses the term "brother,"² not without emphasis, thus:

"А я вот что скажу тебе, братец, — продолжал Скруг, — что я больше терпеть этого не намерен, а потому... — и с ЭТИМИ СЛОВАМИ ОН ВСКОЧИЛ

¹ Both A. S. Khomyakov and his father S. A. Khomyakov were great admirers of English culture. A. Khomyakov wrote about it in the article *Mnenie inostrancev o Rossii* (Foreigners' Opinions on the Russians), published in *Moskvitianin* ("The Muscovite") in 1845, where Khomyakov writes "Thus, for example, England, the greatest and, unquestionably, the first in all respects among the Western powers, has not yet been understood either by its own writers or by foreign authors. Everywhere it appears as the creation of a certain conventional, dead formalism, of a certain struggle of interests lethal to the soul, of a certain cold calculation, of the subordination of rational principle to existing fact, and all this is mixed with a national and strictly personal pride [...]. But deep down England is not like that — full of spiritual life and vigour, full of good sense and love; not the England of the majority at elections, but of unanimity at the assize court; not the primitive England strewn with baronial manors, but the spiritual England that does not allow its bishops to fortify their dwellings; not the England of the East India Company, but the England of missionaries; not the England of the Pitts, but of the Wilberforces; the England which still has tradition, poetry, the sanctity of domestic life, warmheartedness and Dickens — younger brother of our own Gogol — and finally the merry old England of Shakespeare [Khomyakov 1988: 88].

² The term "friend" appears in the original English: "Now, I'll tell you what, my friend," said Scrooge, "I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore," he continued, leaping from his stool, and giving Bob such a dig in the waistcoat that he staggered back into the Tank again; "and therefore I am about to raise your salary!" [Dickens: 89–90].

со стула и ударил Кричева по плечу, — я намерен прибавить вам жалованья, сударь.”¹

We catch here an intimation of the Christian brotherhood theme, so important to the romantic vision of the early Slavophiles, and especially to Khomyakov, of whom Valuev was the friend and close associate. It resonates unmistakably in the poem *Kremlevskaia zautrenia na Rusi* (“Easter Matins at the Kremlin”)² where, at the end, the poet writes in reference to the risen Christ:

Мы слушаем; но как внимаем мы?
Сгибаются ль упрямые колена?
Смиряются ль кичливые умы?
Откроем ли радушные объятия
Для страждущих, для меньшей братьи всей?
Хоть вспомним ли, что это слово — братья —
Всех слов земных дороже и святей?³

The closing lines of this poem echo some pronouncements of Gogol, also considered one of the initiators of Slavophilism [Vinogradov 2014: 201], who, in the chapter *Svetloe Voskresen'e* (“The Luminous Resurrection”) of

¹ “And here’s what I’ve got to say to you, brother, — continued Skrug — I’m no longer going to stand for this, and so... — and with these words he bounded from his seat and gave Krichev a slap on the back, — I intend to raise your salary, sir” [Khomyakov 2021–2023 2: 465]. Christian brotherhood is also reflected in the political conception, particularly in Khomyakov’s Pan-Slavism. In the years from 1840 to 1850, poems, articles and letters on the brotherhood of Slavs and Slav freedom were widespread, especially in Czechia, Slovakia, among the Slav populations of the Balkan peninsula and in Bulgaria [Egorov: 70].

² The poem *Kremlevskaia zautrenia na Rusi* (“Easter Matins at the Kremlin”) is dated 3 aprile 1849 on the basis of a letter from the Countess A. D. Bludova to V. A. Zhukovskii in which she pays tribute to “the Christian sentiment” and the “compositional mastery of verses” of Khomyakov’s included in the letter. This poem was first published in the journal “Moskvitianin” (The Muscovite), 1850, vol. III, no. 9, (May, book 1), section 1, part 1. [Khomyakov 2021–2023. 1: 587–588.

³ We listen; but how do we hearken? / Do our stubborn knees bend? / Are our arrogant intellects humbled? / Do we open our arms cordially / To our sufferers, to all our younger brothers? / Do we at least remember that this word — brothers — / Of all earthly words is the dearest and holiest? [Khomyakov 2021–2023. 1: 220]

the *Vybrannye mesta iz perezpiski s druž'iami* ("Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends"), reproaches Christians for their lukewarmness in celebrating Easter: "Выгнали на улицу Христа, в лазареты и больницы, вместо того, чтобы призвать Его к себе в дома, под родную крышу свою, и думают, что они христиане!"¹

Returning to the free translation of *Svetloe Christovo Voskresen'e: povest'*, besides the prominence accorded the word "brother," with regard to the Easter joy which Skrug experiences, the point is made that it is not the general excitement associated with receiving Christmas presents, as it is in Dickens' original tale², but a state of being which springs from the exercise of charity, in turn a consequence of the deep, intrinsic meaning of Easter. Thus, in spelling out what it is that goes to make up the joy of Easter, the Russian translation of *A Christmas Carol* comes to a close in this way:

"Он больше не водился с духами по Светлым Воскресеньям. Но si про него зато все говорили, что никто не умел быть так весел и счастлив в Светлое Воскресенье, как он; что никто не умел так хорошо праздновать его, с таким любящим вниманьем и так много делать добра и помогать своему ближнему... с той любовью и кротостью христианина, которая требует, чтобы не ведала наша левая, что подает правая...

Дай-то Бог, чтобы и про каждого из нас мог всякий то же сказать: что сумеем и мы сделать из каждого Божьего дня — Светлое Воскресенье каждому последнему из наших страждущих братьев, — когда только нас ни призовет к нему его строгая нужда³.

¹ "They have thrust Christ out into the street, into the lazarettos and hospitals, instead of calling Him to themselves, in their own homes, under their own roofs, and they think they are Christians!" [Gogol' 6: 187]

² "But now a knocking at the door was heard, and such a rush immediately ensued that she with laughing face and plundered dress was borne towards it the centre of a flushed and boisterous group, just in time to greet the father, who came home attended by a man laden with Christmas toys and presents. Then the shouting and the struggling, and the onslaught that was made on the defenceless porter! The scaling him with chairs for ladders to dive into his pockets, despoil him of brown-paper parcels, hold on tight by his cravat, hug him round his neck, pommel his back, and kick his legs in irrepressible affection! The shouts of wonder and delight with which the development of every package was received!" [Dickens: 41]

³ "He no longer had anything to do with Spirits at the Luminous Resurrection, but on the other hand everyone said that no one knew how to be as cheerful

Generally speaking, in the transposition of *A Christmas Carol* to Russia, it is possible to detect a certain concordance with themes that recur in the writings of Valuev, Khomyakov and other writers who shared their ideas. It is important to bear in mind that it was precisely in the early 1840s, following a broad-based comparison between Russia and Europe, that the Slavophiles began to think deeply on the subject of the early churches and the universal Church. It was in this context that Valuev grew interested in the history of the Church of Abyssinia and the origins of the Church among the Celtic peoples [Valuev: 339]; in 1844 Ju. F. Samarin presented his doctoral thesis in philosophy, *Stefan Iavorskii i Feofan Prokopovich* (“Stefan Javorskii and Feofan Prokopovich”), written under the direct influence of Khomyakov, who probably finished *Cerkov’ odna* (“Church is alone”) in November 1845¹. Samarin and Khomyakov shared a determination to demonstrate that the Orthodox Church was the only true Church as opposed to the heterodox churches². For them, as for Valuev and the other Slavophiles, the Orthodox faith was not only a subject of study; it was the lynchpin of the “Russian-Slav” project whose aim was to revive the “vital principles” of Rus’ and to promote “the development of an authentic Russian culture.” On this matter Khomyakov argued that every national culture is determined by the identity of the people; however, more than anything else, culture is determined by faith [Khomyakov 1988: 141], he contended, and arrived at the following synthesis: “Корень и основа — Кремль, Киев, Саровская пустынь, народный быт

and happy about the Luminous Resurrection as he did, that no one was able to celebrate it as well as he did, with such loving observance and the ability to do so much good and to help his neighbour... with that Christian charity and meekness which requires that the left hand should not know what the right hand does...

God grant, for each one of us too, that we may all be able to say the same thing: that we are able to make each of God’s days a Luminous Resurrection for the least of our suffering brothers as soon as the plea of his dire need reaches us [Khomyakov 2021–2023. 2: 466].

¹ To be precise, by 3 November 1845 when Valuev left Moscow to go abroad, but death overtook him at Novgorod three weeks later, 23 November 1845 [Khomyakov 2021–2023. 8: 208].

² Their observations were essentially identical, differing only in the genre of the utterances: Ju. Samarin’s were analytical and scientific in style; Khomyakov’s are blunt and concise, in keeping with the catechesis and apologia genres [Cavazza 2007: 162–174].

с его песнями и обрядами и по преимуществу община сельская”¹. This idea of culture will be further pursued and developed in the work of Dostoevskii, where, in the person of the peasant Marey, he offers a virtuous portrait of the Russian people, from contact with whom — he notes in *Dnevnik pisatel'ia* (“Diary of a Writer”) — great writers such as Pushkin, Turgenev and Goncharov have drawn exceptional strength [Dostoevskii 22: 43–44]². As presented by Dostoevskii, the protagonist of the Easter story *Muzhik Marei* exhibits, vividly and compellingly, some of the principal positive qualities of his people: naivety, purity, meekness and kindness — all virtues which, according to Dostoevskii, represent the ideals of the Russian people throughout history, ideals made vividly present in the lives of the saints Sergii Radonezhskii, Feodosii Pecherskii and Tikhon Zadonskii [Dostoevskii 22: 43].

In Petr Micheev’s steadfast determination not to kill a cruel superintendent and, in spite of himself, to submit humbly to his brutal treatment, Tolstoy depicts the deep Christian faith of the Russian man (Russian *mužik*). In his portrayal of the protagonist of the Easter story *Svechka* (“The Candle”), he draws attention to the creative spiritual strength of the people, in full accord with the aesthetic vision of the early Slavophiles, particularly with Khomyakov who, speaking of the character Susanin in his review *Opera Glinki Zhizn’ za tsaria* (Glink’s opera — “A Life for the Tsar”), written in the very year 1844, had applauded, not his “individual strength” (личная сила), but rather that “profound, unshakeable strength of a healthy society” (та глубокая несокрушимая сила здорового общества) based on the principles of *obshchina* [Khomyakov 1988: 68–69]³.

It is therefore apparent that the substitution of Easter for Christmas in the translation *Svetloe Christovo Voskresen'e: povest'* is a tangible reflection of the programmatic orientation of the Slavophile movement in the cultural sphere. The translation does not merely substitute the setting and Russianize the names; it embeds the characters in the “Orthodox world of Russian life”

¹ “The root and foundation are the Kremlin, Kiev, the Sarov hermitage, the daily life of the people with their songs and rituals and, for the most part, the rural *obshchina*” [Khomyakov 1988: 161–162].

² For the similarities and overlap between Dostoevskii’s cultural programme and that of the early Slavophiles, see [Cavazza 2020].

³ Khomyakov’s aesthetic and historical-cultural vision can also be glimpsed in the idea of the people and the conception of history in Tolstoy’s epic novel *Voina i mir* (“War and Peace”). [Fenomen: 58–60].

[Zacharov: 254], portraying the Russians' special affection for Easter and the traditions and customs associated with it, with the aim of emphasizing a particular trait of their culture closely linked to Orthodoxy.

Underlying this transformation is the realization that, in Russia, Easter resonates more deeply than Christmas in the faith and customs of the people. And it was through this free translation of Dickens' Christmas story that the Slavophiles highlighted the specific nature of this religious responsiveness and the popular traditions associated with it. Shortly after the publication of *Svetloe Christovo Voskresen'e: povest'*, in the final chapter of the *Vybrannnye mesta iz perepiski s druž'iami*, Gogol, too, spoke of "the Russians' particular involvement" in celebrating Easter¹, while in more recent times the idea that Easter is a dominant feature of Russian literature has led the scholar V. S. Nepomniashchii to speculate on the existence of two different typolo-

¹ «В русском человеке есть особенное участие к празднику Светлого Воскресенья. Он это чувствует живой, если ему случится быть в чужой земле. Видя, как повсюду в других странах день этот почти не отличен от других дней, — те же всегдашние занятия, та же вседневная жизнь, то же будничное выраженье на лицах, — он чувствует грусть и обращается невольно к России. Ему кажется, что там как-то лучше празднуется этот день, и сам человек радостней и лучше, нежели в другие дни, и самая жизнь какая-то другая, а не вседневная. Ему вдруг представляется — эта торжественная полночь, этот повсеместный колокольный звон, который как всю землю сливает в один гул, это восклицанье "Христос воскрес!", которое заменяет в этот день все другие приветствия, это поцелуй, который только раздаётся у нас, — и он готов почти воскликнуть: "Только в одной России празднуется этот день так, как ему следует праздноваться!"» ("The Russian takes part in the feast of the Luminous Resurrection in a way that is special. This involvement is the more intense if he should happen to find himself in a foreign land. Seeing how, everywhere, in other countries, this day is hardly distinguishable from the others — business as usual, the same daily life, the same weekday expression on people's faces — he is saddened and cannot help turning to Russia. It seems to him that there they celebrate this day better, that everyone is more joyful and better than on other days and also that life is different and not the same as always. Suddenly he imagines this solemn midnight, this ringing of bells everywhere which, as in a single echoing chime, unites the whole world, this exclamation: 'Christ is risen!'; which on this day replaces all other greetings, this kiss which is exchanged only in our land, and he is almost ready to exclaim: 'Only in Russia is this day celebrated in this way, as it is fitting it should be celebrated!'.") [Gogol' 6: 185].

gies of culture: Western culture, based on Christmas, and Eastern Orthodox culture, centred on Easter [Nepomniashchii: 453].

For the purposes of studying the genesis and development of the Easter tale, it is important to recover the underlying reasons that prompted the author of this adapted translation of assuredly Slavophile origin to alter Dickens' literary and religious references to the liturgical calendar. The alteration effectively transformed Dickens' tale from a Christmas story to an Easter povest', in which some of the main formal features of the Easter tale are clearly discernible, though it would only subsequently become established as a genre. Thus the translation *Svetloe Christovo Voskresen'e: povest'* stands as an indispensable precursor for the study of this literary genre whose canon was to take a settled form in the second half of the 19th century and which was to endure, not without difficulty and with some innovations, to the present day [Kozina 2020: 32; Cavazza 2023: 245].

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