

## P.B. Shelley's Poem *Ozymandias* in Russian Translations

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### Abstract

The article presents a comparative analysis of Russian translations of P.B.Shelley's poem *Ozymandias* (1817), carried out by Ch. Vetrinsky, A.P. Barykova, K.D. Balmont, N. Minsky, V.Ya. Bryusov in 1890 – 1916. These translations fully reflect the peculiarities of the social and political, cultural and literary life in Russia of the late 19th – early 20th Centuries, namely weakening of the political system, growing of interest to the culture of Ancient Egypt, and strengthening of Neoromanticism in opposition to Naturalism in literature. In the process of the analysis, we used H. Smith's sonnet *Ozymandias*, P.B. Shelley's sonnet *Ozymandias* and its five Russian translations. The methods of historical poetics of A.N. Veselovsky, V.M. Zhirmunsky and provisions of the linguistic theory of translation of A.V. Fedorov were used. The article will be interesting for those studying literature, languages, philology.

**Keywords:** P.B. Shelley, *Ozymandias*, Poetry, Literary Translation, Russian-English Literary Relations

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## Introduction

*Ozymandias* is a Greek form of a throne name of Ramesses II the Great, the Pharaoh of the XIXth dynasty, one of the greatest rulers of the ancient world, who ruled Egypt for 30-70-years; this is according to various sources from about 1279–1213 BC. Ramesses II is known to have ordered to carve a proud inscription in memory of his greatness and victories on the pedestal of the colossus in Luxor. When visiting Egypt in the 1st Century BC, the historian Diodorus Siculus found the obelisk of Ozymandias collapsed and half covered with sand, although the inscription was still discernible: “King of Kings am I, Ozymandias. If anyone would know how great I am and where I lie, let him surpass one of my works” (Diodorus, 1814: 370); Diodorus gave this inscription in the 47th chapter of the first book of his “Library of History”, describing the geography, culture and history of Ancient Egypt (The Poems of Shelley, 1817–1819, 2000).

Centuries passed, and the epoch of Napoleon Bonaparte in Europe died. In 1817, two young men, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Horace Smith, impressed by the news of finding of the statue fragment with the name of Pharaoh Ramesses II in Egypt or by watching the bust of “young Memnon” (a part of the Colossus in the “King of Kings” funeral temple complex, described by Diodorus Siculus as “the grave of *Ozymandias*”) in the British Museum, arranged a creative contest, having written two sonnets with the same name *Ozymandias* from 26-28 December 1817. Shelley’s sonnet was published in the newspaper *The Examiner* on 11 January, and the sonnet of Smith on 01 February 1818 (The Poems of Shelley, 1817–1819, 2000). The poems were extremely relevant, as the French Revolution had paradoxical consequences in England: the struggle against Napoleon was, on the one hand, the struggle for the commercial and industrial interests of England, and on the other hand, against the principles of the French Civil Code (the Code of Napoleon), which were gradually established throughout Europe under the influence of France. The English love of freedom, originally directed against Napoleonic

despotism, was eventually used to restore the old order, resulting in the loss of rights and freedoms that had become entrenched in the past decades. Turning to the millennial past, Percy Bysshe Shelley and his friend Horace Smith sought for showing the impotence of tyrants and despots attempts to resist the course of history.

During the research, we studied the works of contemporary researchers, who analysed P.B. Shelley’s creative work in various aspects.

Semiotics of Shelley’s sonnet form and its perception in Russia was illustrated through the sonnet *To Wordsworth*. The sonnet *To Wordsworth* (1816) is Shelley’s early work, famous as a reproach in betrayal of the revolutionary ideals. Nevertheless, Shelley’s skill in sonnets creation, his emotionality and erudition are vividly seen in it. While comparing the sonnet *To Wordsworth* with traditional models of the English sonnets in the late 18th – early 19th Centuries (Petrarchan and Shakespearean), Shelley causticity of an exposé was estimated. While explaining how Shakespeare’s practices, known to each Englishman (sonnet 116 about everlasting true Love), were reflected in Shelley’s sonnet, it was shown that writing of the sonnet *To Wordsworth* became for Shelley a fight with himself, with his ideals, doubts, poetic examples of his national culture. The comment to Shelley’s experimental sonnet served as a bright example to the fact that the semiotics of a form can be “foreign culture”, and knowledge of poetic, symbolic systems and foreign languages is necessary for successful cultural communication of Russia and West, for adequate mutual understanding (Khaltrin-Khalturina, 2008).

Due to the comparison of the peculiarities in the interpretation of the poet subject in *Leaves of Grass* by W. Whitman and *A Defence of Poetry* by P.B. Shelley and the parallels built between separate fragments of the English romantic’s treatise and Whitman’s ideas expressed in his poems provisions of Whitman’s poetic theory were cleared and specified (Nikitina, 2010).

The relevance of Shelley's invocations of patriotism to our understanding of the relationship between his poetry and his politics was argued. Often overlooked in Shelley's writings, patriotism is an essential concept to both Shelley's radical politics and his sociopolitical aesthetic in that, as a negation of self-love, it at once motivates the reformer and occasions community. Shelley's radical patriotism derives in part from the cosmopolitics of the 1790s English radicalism, and it shares with Paine's radicalism an orientation towards the future, an as-yet-imagined, unwritten future of England. Employed in the "popular songs", but explored in a diverse body of writings that includes political pamphlets and *On Love*, Shelley's patriotism is a proof, whatever the circumstance, that we love something besides ourselves. As such, it bears a close relation to the origin and function of poetry as theorised in *A Defence of Poetry* (Borushko, 2006).

Literary features of the English romantic's lyrical drama *Prometheus Unbound* were studied. On the one hand, the poet's views on the problem of changes in space life and history of mankind were analysed (Kazakova, 2010), on the other hand, it was concluded that both antique interpretations of the image of Prometheus – heroic, going back to Aeschylus's tragedy, and denying heroism, presented by Hesiodus, – found reflection in Shelley's work (Mikhaylenko, 2013).

The comprehension of the traditions of prophetic poetry in P.B. Shelley's creative work in comparison with W. Blake's, one can conclude that the poets understood the essence of poetic prophecy differently: if Blake's mystical visions corresponded to the Bible prophecies in their spirit, for Shelley, who called himself an atheist, communication between the poet and prophet had a metaphysical character (Mikhaylenko, 2014).

While studying modern Russian interpretations of Shelley's poem *To...* ("One word is too often profaned..."), belonging to representatives of so-called "boiler generation", poets-dissidents, the influence of the translation strategy on the character, conception and semantic accents of

the translation was established, the signs of the individual translation style were revealed, the translation good and bad points were noted (Matviyenko, 2016).

The functional semantic analysis of occasional collocations as a characteristic of the author's style in P.B. Shelley's poetry helped to reveal several types of occasional units, creating originality of the poet's lyrics: the author's metaphors, intended pleonasm, epithets, combinations of words, comprising opposite semes and, at the same time, incorporating general semes, on the basis of what the occasional value is created (Korshunova, 2017).

Communicative and pragmatic specifics of colour naming in poetic texts of P.B. Shelley were studied and the domination of the components, defining a work form, its symbolical value was found in units of colouring (Velichko, 2017).

While analysing B. Hewitt's study of Goethe's influence on two British poets – Byron and Shelley, it was stated that Goethe, Byron and Shelley – all sought to push beyond tragedy's reading of human existence, and especially its "understanding of the final limitedness of human potential", towards an "epic" conception of human possibility, which encourages "activity", "disavows" tragic "limitedness", and provokes "political activity" in particular. Hewitt sees this process as the beginning, ambiguously, in *Faust, I*, then gaining greater momentum in Byron's *Manfred*, *Cain* and *Don Juan*, Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* and the second part of *Faust* (Rawes, 2015). Hewitt argues, it was "German controversies about pantheism and atheism" and other "disputes and theoretical debates about poetry's relationship to other discourses, especially philosophy and theology" that so caught the attention of Byron and Shelley, who both developed "a sense that *Faust I* was vitally important, containing within it the seeds of a new way of representing, and, perhaps, affecting the course of human history with poetry" (Hewitt, 2017: 120).

Shelley's understanding of love as something sublime in close relation to the spirit of love or the soul of love, making the soul strengthen its power of good, enabling a man to live a

philosophical life with sacred beauty, like it is poem “Epipsychidion”, is considered to be different from that mentioned by ordinary people. Emily and “I” are combined into an eternal One, and the divine love is shown with the help of mythological narrative, which is like moist, fertile earth or lubricant that tends to make a literary work moving and touching enough, full of charming power (Cao, 2017).

The overly polemical and didactic style of Shelley’s youthfully rebellious *Queen Mab* is considered to be an obstacle to its appreciation. Moreover, it is insufficiently recognised that Shelley’s approach in it has a solid literary and philosophical foundation. His fierce “diatribes” against the existing order of things – the endemic and infamous alliance of state, religion and commerce – neither implode the aesthetics of the poem, nor are simply rough-hewn, adolescent invectives against custom and privilege. The composition draws strength from earlier precedents, most notably Lucretius’s “*De Rerum Natura*” which markedly influenced the Enlightenment. In the main body of his work, masked by the benign fairy, Queen Mab, Shelley steers a course modulating from castigation to mockery, counterbalancing diatribes with encomia – presented as reverse reflections of each other. Similar to a caricaturist, Shelley decodes and belittles the icons of state power which form a closed circuit of depravity, sealed off from public scrutiny or reform. Although compromised by vengefulness which the later Shelley disowns, the diatribes of Queen Mab clear a path towards a better world, pointing to the resonance and vitality of Shelley’s brave intervention (Weinberg, 2017).

Shelley’s following the words of Byron’s “*Epistle to Augusta*” (1816, published in 1830) was found in his message to L. Hunt: “may [“many”] mountains & seas no longer divide those whose affections are united” (1822) (Webb, 2017: 175).

It was argued that Shelley’s *Alastor* represents a critical engagement with the sublime, what occurs under the sign of Shelley’s obvious attraction to the sublime as an operative aesthetic and imaginative model. The poem critiques and warns of sublime aesthetic

education and the habits of mind it compels. The most deleterious aspect of the sublime, and the source of Shelley’s unease with it in *Alastor*, is its close relationship with ideology; and this proximity is the target of Shelley’s critique, for what *Alastor* warns of is the role of the sublime in the onset of ideology role, what is explored through an engagement with a range of theories of the sublime, from E. Burke’s to S. Ziek’s (Borushko, 2017).

Shelley’s public mourning the death of living W. Wordsworth in his poetry was studied. His renunciation of a narrow concept of selfhood not only informs, but germinates, his psychological and political principles, and in the process shapes his response to Wordsworth not as an “egotistical” poet, but as one who paradoxically and enviably escapes mutability by being ontologically identified with forms of non-life. Shelley brilliantly and correctly attributes this position to Wordsworth’s poetic thought through his poetic thinking in works such as *Peter Bell the Third*, and Shelley also finds such an alignment incomprehensible. His construction of Wordsworth is a sceptical dialectician’s disavowal of mute or dull inclusion. Shelley’s treatment of Wordsworth is connected to Shelley’s performative speech acts of inversion: life – death, heaven – hell, blessing – a curse. Shelley abjures Wordsworth for excessive love for otherwise inanimate things and awakening slumberous “thought in a sense” (Lindstrom, 2017: 44). Hazlitt, Keats, Lamb, and others, were quick to note the egotistical drive that informed Wordsworth’s *Peter Bell*, but in *Peter Bell the Third* Shelley claimed that Wordsworth went far beyond that. He insisted that Wordsworth had unintentionally satirised himself with devastating accuracy in the manner of Thomas Moore’s satire on political apostasy *The Fudge Family in Paris*. Shelley’s reading of the poem casts a fresh light on the importance of *Peter Bell* for an appreciation of the complexity of Wordsworth’s development as a poet at the time of writing *Lyrical Ballads*, a complexity that relates both to the controversial style of *Peter Bell*, and to the ambivalent relationships within the poem between the poet, narrator, protagonist, and reader (Williams, 2017).

In this article, we deal with the issue of translation perception of English romantic poetry in Russia. The comparative literary studies used to consider the issue were written by M.P. Alekseyev and Yu.D. Levin (Levin and Fedorov, 1960). In the process of the analysis, we took into account the views of the Russian literature scholars – K.I. Chukovsky and, E.G. Etkind about K.D. Balmont's translations (Chukovsky, 1968; Etkind, 1963). Interesting facts about Shelley's *Ozymandias* have represented in the works of the researchers of P.B. Shelley's creative works Ch. Vetrinsky and V.Ya. Bryusov (Vetrinskiy, 1892; Bryusov, 1994). Thus, this research began with the introduction section, which sets up a rationale for the study; following this, materials and methods part outlining the specificity of translations comparing, preservation of semantic capacity of the original and its national colouring are outlined. In the final sections, the results are discussed on the specific translations of Shelley's works.

### Materials and Methods

As the material for the analysis, the sonnets with the same name *Ozymandias* by P.B. Shelley and H. Smith were selected together with their translations, carried out in the late XIX-early XX centuries by Ch. Vetrinsky, A.P. Barykova, K.D. Balmont, N.M. Minsky, and V.Ya. Bryusov, literary-critical articles, comprehending them. The methods of historical poetics used, approved in the fundamental research of A.N. Veselovsky, V.M. Zhirmunsky, allowed to comprehend the motives and images and to consider the features of originality. The provisions of the linguistic theory of translation of A.V. Fedorov were taken into account (Fedorov, 2002). We used comparative-historical, comparative-typological, and juxtaposing methods of analysing poetic texts.

In the last decades, scholarly works on the subject close to the problem studied were published. In the 1980s, the French school of the philosophical translation provided the formation of a particular special area of the literary translation study. Based on Benjamin's hermeneutics, referring to Steiner, the French

historian and theorist of translation Antoine Berman presented a translation as disclosure towards another that means a particular paradox. He speaks both about renunciation of the native language (that is, target language) and about fidelity to it, that is, about the expansion of borders of the native language and its enrichment at the expense of foreign language. In this regard, undoubted interest causes a theoretical controversy of modern French linguists-translators Henri Meschonnic and Jean-René Ladmiraal in the article *Poetics... / Theorems of Translation* (Meschonnic and Ladmiraal, 2011), in which two powerful concepts and translation theories face. On the one hand, Meschonnic's new poetics, constructed on the theory of rhythm and creative subjectivity, on the other hand, Ladmiraal's language philosophy, understood as knowledge, obliging to meet the requirements of the author's methodology, critical self-checking, realised by argumentative rationalisation.

All materials of Russian scientists can be divided into two large, broad groups: these are works on problems of the literary translation theory and history and researches in the field of comparative literary criticism, international literary and historical and cultural relations. Our research, relying on A.V. Fedorov's linguistic translation theory, observations over the language and style of works of art, is historical and literary as it is designed to introduce translated works into the context of the history of Russian literature.

The linguistic approach to the studying of the translation offered by A.V. Fedorov touches its very basis – the language, out of which any translation functions – its social and political importance, its cultural and informative role, its art value, and others are impracticable. At the same time linguistic studying of the translation, i.e. its studying in connection of two languages, allows building work specifically, operating with the objective language facts. Any researches and discussions on how the content of the original was reflected when translating, how the images of the literary work were recreated or re-embodied, will be pointless if they are not based

on the analysis of the language expressive means used when translating.

According to A.V. Fedorov's technique, while comparing the translations, the following aspects are subject to the consideration:

- lexical colouring of a word and a possibility of its transfer;
- a figurative word meaning in various phrases;
- transfer of a stylistic role of word-play;
- use of morphological means of a language;
- syntactic links and nature of a syntactic construction for a poetry rhythm;
- phonetic and graphics mean, a rhyme and a meter in poetry.

However, all facts from the area of the literary translation, in particular, the translator's attitude to the content of the original, with his interpretation, and sometimes distortion, which is expressed in omissions, insertions, some semantic changes, etc. cannot be explained using linguistics. Similar cases are caused by the ideology and aesthetics of the translator or the whole literary direction, that is, factors which do not have any relation to linguistics. At the same time, however, the analysis of such important questions of the literary translation as questions of the author's language skill and transfer of his individual style, demand a robust linguistic basis— only in relation to the literary norm of both languages considered the degree of the traditional or innovative character of the style of the original, and the degree of stylistic proximity to it in the translation can be defined and estimated. So, a linguistic approach to studying, being not sufficient for the solution of all problems of the translation (in particular, literary), is, undoubtedly, necessary in their exhaustive research. Therefore, according to A.V. Fedorov, while comparing the translations, preservation of semantic capacity of the original, its national colouring, features connected with the time of its creation and individuality of the original in the translation are considered (Fedorov, 2002).

## Results

The poem of H. Smith, being didactic and monolinear, drawing a direct parallel to the English history of conquering the British peoples by the Romans, was not unusual for Russian translators; only when preparing the notes for the translation of *Ozymandias* by P.B. Shelley, K.D. Balmont had to translate two small fragments of it in order to make some analogies:

*"I am great OZYMANDIAS," saith the stone,*

*"The King of Kings; this mighty City shows  
The wonders of my hand." – The City's gone.*

(Shelly, 1877) –

*"I'm Ozymandias, the king of kings,  
And this powerful town is a witness  
Of miracles, made by my hand."*

*There's no town.*

(Balmont, 1907);

*We wonder, – and some Hunter may express*

*Wonder like ours, when thro' the wilderness*

*Where London stood, holding the Wolf in the chase,*

*He meets some fragments huge and stops to guess*

*What powerful but unrecorded race*

*Once dwelt in that annihilated place...*

(Shelly, 1877) –

*...over time some hunter will marvel at  
the huge debris of the place, where once  
unknown London stood, and where he  
now hunts wolves (Balmont, 1907).*

The sonnet of Shelley, unlike the Smith's, is built up much more difficult as it contains double irony, relying on playing up the meanings of two key verbs – **survive** and **mock**:

*...its sculptor well those passions read*

Which yet **survive**, stamped on these  
lifeless things,

The hand that **mocked** them and the  
heart that fed.

(The Poems of Shelley: 1817–1819,  
2000).

word	meanings
<b>survive</b>	1) outlive (in time)
	2) a) endure, withstand, bear 2) b) continue to exist; persist
<b>mock</b>	1) a) mock; make fun of, deride
	1) b) sneer, scoff
	2) mimic; parody, reproduce
	3) nullify (efforts); make useless, fruitless

Thus, we can talk about the interpenetration of two meanings: the new tyrants must **despair** both unable to compare themselves to the former despot on the scale of what was done and realise that everything is transitory in this world. Perhaps, no one of Russian translators in the late XIXth – early XXth centuries managed to convey the author’s irony that gave a double meaning to the English original:

*Managed to portray the entire world of  
passions*

*The artist in these stone features...*

(Vetrinsky, 1890),

*In the face, recreated with an artful hand.*

(Barykova, 1897),

*The experienced sculptor put in the  
soulless stone*

*The passions that could live through the  
centuries.*

(Shelley, 1998),

*They say, how deeply the sculptor  
understood the passions*

*That could survive the deceitful language,*

*The hand that served them, and the heart  
– their spring.*

(Minsky, 1907),

*Say their creator knew the depths of  
passions and thoughts*

*(That stand a number of centuries in a  
pile of decay),*

*The hand of those who moved, the mind  
of those who guided.*

(Bryusov, 1994).

As you can see, Shelley’s sonnet was repeatedly interpreted in Russia in the late XIXth – early XXth centuries: after the translation of *Ozymandias* (from Shelley) by Ch. Vetrinsky, published in No. 39 of *A. Gatsuk’s Newspaper* in 1890. A.P. Barykova proposed some other interpretation of the sonnet, published in her book *Stikhotvoreniya i Rasskazy* (Poetry and Stories) in 1897. K.D. Balmont first prepared some separate editions of Shelley’s translations since 1893, and then a three-volume *Complete Poetical Works*, published in 1903–1905 by *Znaniye* Partnership.

N. Minsky published the translation in volume 3 *Prosvety* of his own *Complete Poetical Works* in four volumes. V.Ya. Bryusov’s address of Shelley’s *Ozymandias* was subjected to controversy with K.D. Balmont (Bryusov wrote that Balmont “is the worst of bad translators” (Levin and Fedorov, 1960: 303), “he neglects the author’s style, while translating Shelley, Edgar Poe, and Baudelaire with the same Balmont’s language, ... and destroys all of them in the most precise sense of the word” (Levin and Fedorov, 1960: 351), and the poet’s own work, specifically, the poems *Assarhaddon*, *Ramesses*, *Egyptian Slave*. Later, the well-known Soviet

translators V.V. Levik and B.N. Leytin also addressed the interpretation of *Ozymandias*.

Ch. Vetrinsky is a pseudonym of a historian of Russian literature and public thought – publicist and journalist, playwright and critic V.E. Cheshikhin – who not only translated the poem “*Ozymandias*” but also wrote a detailed literary and critical essay on Shelley’s works, which was published in the journal “*Kolosya*” in 1892 (Vetrinsky, 1892). Bearing in mind that it was possible to “make up a correct concept” about Shelley’s poetry only by being “a witness to his daily life”, since “his words and actions best illustrate his works” (Vetrinsky, 1892: 239). Indeed, this Russian critic elaborated on the biography of the poet. He attempted to analyse his most significant works by supplementing his material with prosaic translations of fragments of the poems *The Spirit of Delight* (1834), *To a Sky-Lark* (1820), *Ode to the West Wind* (1819), *The Sensitive Plant* (1820), *Stanzas Written in Dejection, near Naples* (1824), the lyrical drama *Prometheus Unbound* (1818–1819, published in 1820), the tragedy *Cenci* (1819, published in 1820), and also pointed out the features of the poems *The Cloud* (1820) and *Ode to Liberty* (1820).

At an early stage of her creativity, a Russian poetess and translator, A.P. Barykova was creating her works that were democratic and actual, similar to the socio-accusatory, civic tradition of N.A. Nekrasov. Speaking in defence of the oppressed, persecuted and disadvantaged, she published her works in the newspaper *Nedelya*, journals—*Otechestvennyye Zapiski*, *Delo*, *Slovo*, *Russkoye bogatstvo*, *Severny Vestnik*, *Rodnik*. In the 1870s – 1880s, along with the original poems, the poetess, who was fluent in French, German, English and Polish, was actively publishing the translations from J. Richepin, V. Hugo, F. Coppee, P.-J. Beranger, J.-W. Goethe, H. Heine, A. Tennyson, E. Arnold, H. Longfellow, A. Chamisso and other poets. With her civic aspirations and democratic sympathies, when choosing works for translation, she selected only those works that were correspondent with Russian life; her translations often served civic ideas and

accusatory tasks related to them. One can feel this part in the translation of *Ozymandias*, created at the time when the poetess, gradually moving away from public life, came to L.N. Tolstoy and, having fallen under the strong influence of his moral teaching, became an active collaborator of his publishing house *Posrednik*.

Among numerous European authors who were in the sphere of K.D. Balmont’s creative interests (H. Ibsen, G.J.-R. Hauptmann, E.T.-W. Hoffmann, F.-M. Hoorne, A. Gaspari, H. Sudermann, R. Muther, N. Lenau, Ch. Marlowe, W. Whitman, J.-W. Goethe, A. Musset, H. Heine, A. Tennyson, J. Slovaski, S.-T. Coleridge, Ch. Baudelaire, O. Wilde, etc.), Shelley occupied a special place; that was the reason for the Russian poet and translator to make the complete translation of all the works of Shelley, realised in the late 19th – early 20th Centuries. Indeed, “the fact of the individual translation of several tens of thousands of rhymed poems of such a complex and profound poet as Shelley can be called a feat in the field of Russian poetic translated literature” (Russian Biographical Dictionary, 1998: 196). Dared to translate all of Shelley’s works, Balmont considered the English predecessor to be close to him, admired him (this idea is imprinted in Balmont’s original poem “*To Shelley*”:

*My best brother, my bright genius,  
With you I’ve merged into one.  
Between us is a chain of tortures,  
Of similar heavenly delusions  
Always a radiant link.*  
(Balmont, 1980).

However, he blamed the Russian interpreter for his subjective predilections having imposed an indelible imprint on Shelley translations.

When reproducing some verses of *Ozymandias*, with various adequacy, V.Ya. Bryusov “accurately, as a whole, carrying out his translation, let the readers feel the great simplicity and epical style of Shelley’s language, causing among them an effect identical to the original” (Nuralova et al., 2008: 299-300). The

translation of *Ozymandias* by V.Ya. Bryusov, first published in 1916, was the subject of separate research (Bedjanian, 2002), but the concept about the position, taken by this translation, among the original works of both V.Ya. Bryusov himself and other Russian writers have never been considered. L.G. Panova in her article investigated similarities between Shelley's poem and *Ramesses* (1899) by V.Ya. Bryusov, *The Grave in the Rock* (1909) by I.A. Bunin, and *I was in the country of Memoirs...* (1919) by Vl.Sirin (V.V. Nabokov), written as if they were a continuation of Shelly: the sonnet *Ozymandias* by P.B. Shelley (1817), was in the sphere of his V.V. Nabokov's Anglophile interests... The history of the creation of "Ozymandias" was known in the 1910-s, at least according to the comments to the sonnet, made by its first translator Balmont... The first among Russian poets, who named the stone sculpture of Shelley's *Ozymandias* as *Ramesses*, was Bryusov in *Ramesses* (1899):

*Along the impassable roads of the royal desert,*

*Weary with thirst, I wandered.*

...

*And, finding a monument, forgotten in the sands,*

*I fell to the stone platform.*

...

*Lines, circles, human faces, vultures –*

*I sorted, trembling, the hieroglyphs:*

*"About oblivion, they tell me, – oh, laughter.*

*They tell the centuries about my victories!"*

*– Who are you, a daring warrior? an anxious spirit?*

*Are you Ozymandias? Assargadon? Ramesses?*

*I do not know you, your predictions are false!*

*Inhabitants of deserts, we are insignificant whatever*

*In the ages of the earth and the eternity of heaven.*

*And then Ramesses stood in front of me.*

The same did Nabokov, but two decades later. It was *Ozymandias* by Shelley, followed by *Ramesses* of Bryusov and *The Grave in the Rock* of I.A. Bunin, who gave birth to Nabokov's traveller, excited by the slow verb (Etkind, 1963: 67).

N. Minsky is the pseudonym of the talented poet N.M. Vilenkin; he, being fluent in modern and ancient languages, translated two of the most famous Shelley's poems in Russia – *Queen Mab* (1812, published in 1813) and *Alastor: or The Spirit of Solitude* (1815, published in 1816), his poem *Dedication* (also called *To Hurriet*, 1810), *Good-night!* (1820), *The Cloud* (1820), as well as several plays by W. Shakespeare and J.-B. Moliere, the poem by G.-G. Byron (*Sonnet to Chillon*, *Sonnet to the Lake of Geneva*, *The Dream*, etc.), works of P. Verlaine, A. Musset, G. Flaubert, and finally the full text of Homer's *Iliad* (1896). It is interesting to note that the translation of *Ozymandias* coincided with the emergence of poems and translations of N. Minsky, caused by the first Russian revolution of 1905–1907— the famous *Hymn of the Workers* (*Workers of all countries, unite!..*), and the translation of the *Internationale* by E.Pottier. One of the best poems of Russian philosophical lyrics, called *Like a dream the deeds and thoughts of people will pass...*, written by N. Minsky, contains the following lines:

*The hero will be forgotten, the mausoleum will decay,*

*And in the common ashes will merge*

*Wisdom, and love, and knowledge, and rights,*

*As from a slate board unnecessary words*

*Will be erased by an unknown hand*

(Russian Biographical Dictionary, 2001),

This poem clearly resemble the theme of *Ozymandias* and reflect the spiritual closeness of

English and Russian poets. Although according to the tasks and religious-philosophical system he developed, N. Minsky did not at all strive to follow the traditions, he was primarily concerned with meonism of lyric poetry, that is, a bizarre mixture of scientific thinking and poetic fantasy, coming from that charm, dear to the human soul, of everything non-existent and incomprehensible. According to the concept of N. Minsky, only the extraterrestrial truth, nothingness, meon (after the Greek “non-existent”, Plato’s term) could be a true sacred thing, since every category of our mind, and also all moral categories, like conscience, the instinct of self-sacrifice, faith, have their oppositions in the notion of their non-existence. Considering that only the idea of absolute non-existence, being the basis of everything that exists, can become the source of true, unselfish religion; N. Minsky, in his original and translated texts, offered some kind of fusion of survivors of Narodnik ideas and motives of conscientiousness, caused by them, self-sacrifice in the name of people with Nietzsche’s ideas and bizarre Eastern mysticism.

Shelley’s sonnet is well orchestrated; the English original is full of multiple shifts, rustling sounds [s, z, ʃ, ʒ, θ, ð, tʃ, dʒ] and cross rhymes that give the rhythmic movement peculiar originality and create a gliding impression, resembling a continuous rustle of sand. We should note, only Ch.Vetrinsky did accurately reconstruct the pattern of the original (abab acdc edef ef), while Barykova abandoned the sonnet form and, retaining the author’s shifts, used paired rhymes (aabb ccdd ee), which broke the poem into brief rhythmic periods, what, in its turn, affected the intonation. Only in the final of her interpretation that skillfully conveyed the expressive intonation through rhythmic repetition, reinforced by in-line pauses, the pair rhyme began alternating with the covered one (fgg fhh), tonally completing the narrative. Balmont’s scheme is simpler than the original one, but it is much closer to the classical form of an English sonnet, associated primarily with the name of Shakespeare – abab cdcd efef gg; Bryusov repeats in many respects Balmont’s scheme, corresponding to the classical canons, however,

the last verse of the third stanza moves to the fourth – abab cdcd efe fgg. N. Minsky did not always keep internal pauses and shifts, that slow down the movement of the verse, having partially lost the smoothness, solemnity and majesty of the tone of the work; the rhythmic pattern of his interpretation is also different – abba ccdd efe fgg.

The original sonnet of fourteen verses is encased by Shelley with an original compositional frame, a kind of introduction, creating the construction of a “story in a story”:

*I met a traveller from an antique land*

*Who said...*

(The Poems of Shelley: 1817–1819, 2000).

Russian translators were mostly true to this method of Shelley:

*From the traveler I heard*

*The Story...*

(Vetrinsky, 1890),

*I met a traveler, he came from distant countries*

*And told me...*

(Shelley, 1998),

*Towards me a traveler came from the ancient land*

*And uttered...*

(Minsky, 1907),

*I met a traveler who arrived from ancient countries.*

*...he said...*

(Bryusov, 1994),

However, Barykova, trying to make the picture reconstructed more monumental, immediately begins the narrative with the depiction of the statue, omitting the introductory verses.

A truly sad sight is the remains of a former colossus in the desert:

*...Two vast and trunkless legs of stone*

*Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,*

*Half sunk, a shattered visage lies.*

(The Poems of Shelley: 1817–1819, 2000).

In the translation of Ch.Vetrinsky, one pays attention to a steppe instead of a desert, which does not agree with the real place of the action:

*... In the **steppe** there stood a pair of legs*

*Huge, stone. Near them lay*

*A broken face, buried in the sand.*

(Vetrinsky, 1890);

However, having used inversion, the translator achieves some mysticism of the described picture. So did other interpreters, e.g. N.Minsky:

*...among the sands – the ruins of the past days –*

*Stand two stone legs of the giant,*

*Lies a broken face in the dust not far.*

(Minsky, 1907),

Bryusov:

*In the desert... two stone legs*

*Stand, beside them a fraction that preserved*

*The features of the face, lies, buried in the sands.*

(Bryusov, 1994),

Balmont:

*... far away, where the eternity is guarding*

*The desert silence, among the sands deep*

*The fraction of the statue disintegrated lies.*

(Shelley, 1998),

But Balmont omits the mentioning of the legs and the statue fraction, having facial features. Barykova extends the description of the Colossus, adding to the characterisation of the desert an epithet *boundless*, and the image of a dilapidated high pedestal:

*A huge monument, a shrine of old times,*

*Stands in sand waves of a boundless desert:*

*Two stone legs, a high pedestal*

*Dilapidated; and near, turned to dust,*

*A legless idol with a broken head.*

(Barykova, 1897).

Description of the fallen Colossus in Shelley's poem acquires its colour due to the lexemes **frown**, **wrinkled**, **sneer**, **cold** and **command**:

**...frown,**

And **wrinkled** lip, and **sneer** of **cold command**.

(The Poems of Shelley: 1817–1819, 2000).

word	meanings
<b>frown</b>	1) shifted brows; gloomy look; bend one's brows, scowl
	2) expression, display of disapproval
<b>wrinkled</b>	1) wrinkly, crumpled
<b>sneer</b>	1) mockery, prickly; contemptuous smile
<b>cold</b>	1) chill
	2) unfriendly, inhospitable; indifferent
	3) impartial, objective, disinterested
	4) cold (causing oppressive feelings)
<b>command</b>	1) command, control
	2) pressure, coercion
	3) domination, power

Ch. Vetrinsky strengthened the expressiveness of the description with the help of metaphors:

*With contempt, the forehead wrinkled  
was breathing,*

*Cold laughter was snaking on the lips...*

(Vetrinsky, 1890).

Striving to represent the expression of the statue's face more accurately, Barykova widened the fragment to a full stanza:

*In cold, contemptuous features,*

*In a malicious and arrogant grin on his  
lips*

*The passions, living in the cruel heart, are  
frozen,*

*The triumph of unbreakable power is  
shining.*

(Barykova, 1897).

In Balmont's translation, the power of passions of the face is shown through hidden comparison with *all-devouring fire*:

*Through the features half erased there  
goes a haughty flame,*

*Desire to make the whole world serve  
him.*

(Shelley, 1998).

In their most conservative interpretations, in terms of emotional expressiveness, N.Minsky and Bryusov omit the mentioning of the look, and make the image of the former ruler not so negative by softening certain characteristics:

*Hardly compressed mouth, a grin of  
proud power.*

(Minsky, 1907),

*The brow and the fold of the lips  
arrogantly curved*

*Say their creator knew the depths of  
passions and thoughts.*

(Bryusov, 1994).

When interpreting the inscription on the monument:

*"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:*

*Look on my works, ye Mighty, and  
despair!"*

(The Poems of Shelley: 1817–1819,  
2000),

Ch. Vetrinsky and Balmont attempted to preserve Shelley's allusion to contemporary history in verse:

*I am Ozymandias, I am the king of kings!*

*Look! Everything was created by my  
power!*

(Vetrinsky, 1890),

*I am Ozymandias, I am a powerful king of  
kings!*

*Look at my great deeds,*

*Lords of all times, all countries and all  
seas!*

(Shelley, 1998).

At the same time, Shelly's work lost its meaningful ambiguity, being translated by both translators, who omitted the important verb *despair* (*lose heart, come to despair*); only in the translation of Bryusov this ambiguity is clearly preserved:

*Bow down!*

*This is Ozymandias, who is called King of  
Kings.*

*My works, kings, see – and despair!*

(Bryusov, 1994).

For Barykova and N.Minsky, Shelley's transparent allegory had no special philosophical implication, as it was exclusively used for political purposes – for criticising the political system that existed in Russia; the translators show the collapse of absolute power with the help of a method of tragic irony:

*I am Ozymandias. I am the king of kings,  
great.*

*This is the work of my hands! Envy, rulers!*

(Barykova, 1897),

*I am Ozymandias, a great king of kings.*

*Look at my deeds and tremble!*

(Minsky, 1907).

The empty, colourless and soundless picture, described by Shelley in the final of his work, is slightly coloured by Ch. Vetrinsky (“**yellow**”) and voiced (“**wind**”) in the translation of N. Minsky:

*Nothing besides remains. Round the decay*

*Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare*

*The lone and level sands stretch far away.*

(The Poems of Shelley: 1817–1819, 2000),

*That’s all... Around the colossal remnants*

*Far away the desert without borders lies,*

**Yellow** in piles of sad sands...

(Vetrinsky, 1890),

*There is nothing around. A decayed mausoleum*

*Is surrounded by the desert. Roams a free **wind**,*

*And stretch the sands, boundless and barren.*

(Minsky, 1907).

By repeating the lexeme **everything** three times, Barykova creates an effect of despair, doom, which is closest to the original:

*And **everything** is lifeless, **everything** is empty, **everything** is silent*

*Around it. The desert stretches, mute,*

*Covering with sand the remains of the past.*

(Barykova, 1897).

Balmont’s version does not go against the literary logic of the original, describing the desert sands that merge with the sky:

*There is nothing around... Deep silence...*

*The desert dead... And the heavens above it...*

(Shelley, 1998),

However, it is characterised by the deliberate use of unfinished sentences, aimed to show the paradox of the former power of *Ozymandias* and complete oblivion of the results of his work. The interpretation of Bryusov, which most accurately conveys the intention of the English author, is remarkable for the translator’s emphasising the vastness, the limitlessness of the picture described, what is strengthened by the original concluding verse:

*There is nothing else. Around large stones*

*Vastness, emptiness, and only flat sands*

*Stretch far away, wherever you look.*

(Bryusov, 1994).

## Discussions

It should be noted that the specific translations of Shelley’s works, made in the late 19th – early 20th centuries, including the translations of *Ozymandias*, were not often the objects of attention of the Russian literary criticism at that period. The exception was, perhaps, only Balmont’s translations, which received ambiguous estimates. Thus, in the article in *Severnny Vestnik* and in the review in *Artist*, published in 1893, Balmont’s translations were rated as great and talented works, which, however, did not completely reveal the richness of Shelley’s poetry: “Mr. Balmont interprets, as he can, and his skill is, no doubt, remarkable... The author is just beginning to work in the field of literature and, judging by the beginning, we can hope that he will complete the work successfully; ...in general it seems that an exact prosaic translation of such works is easier and more expedient than an inaccurate poetic translation” (New Books. Poetry, 1893: 52-53); “The translator is a passionate admirer of the English poet. Shelley’s works coincide with the personal mood of the translator; this is not formal work, but labour, combined with high pleasure... Shelley is most difficult to translate. The most accurate translation in prose is not able to convey the tenderness and energy of poems, their poetics and deep content” (Balmont, 1893: 191-192). As we see, among various judgments, there were also some, that proposed, for greater accuracy of the English

poetic originals rendering, to resort to prosaic translations into Russian, what, however, being justified in the first third of the 19th century, could hardly be relevant in the late 19th – early 20th centuries.

K.I. Chukovsky's opinion about Balmont's translations was the most rigid; he considered the Russian translator complementing Shelley's verses with "the candy-box beauty of cheap romances", at the same time "gluing some trivial epithet to almost every word": "Balmontizing Shelley's poetry, Balmont gives the British poet his own sweeping gestures... thus appeared a new person, half-Shelley, and half-Balmont – I would say, something like Shelmont. This is often the case with poets: when translating, they overemphasize their selves and the more expressive the personality of the translator, the more they obscure the author from us. Precisely because Balmont has such an outstanding literary personality, he, having an excellent talent, is not able to reflect the individuality of another poet in his translations. And with his talent being somewhat dandified, Shelley turns also dandified with him" (Chukovsky, 1968: 104). The position of K.I. Chukovsky influenced greatly on the literary criticism judgments of the subsequent period (in particular, E.G. Etkind mentions that Balmont, true to the principle of "pleasant translation", "dilutes the concentrated thought of Shelley, explaining everything, which does not seem clear enough to him and decorating with epithets everything, which does not seem beautiful enough to him" (Etkind, 1963: insert page number), and the minimal attention to the translations of Balmont from Shelley in general. Only in 2007, the first thesis was defended at the Institute of Russian Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences, one of the chapters of which was devoted to the study of Balmont's translations from Shelley (Ivanova, 2007).

Based on Shelley's *Ozymandias*, it was proved that "timelessness can be achieved only by the poet's words, not by the ruler's will to dominate. The fallen titan *Ozymandias* becomes an occasion for Shelley's exercise of this most tenuous yet persisting form, poetry. Shelley's

sonnet, a brief epitome of poetic thinking, has outlasted empires: it has witnessed the deaths of boastful tyrants, and the decline of the British dominion he so heartily scorned" (Mikics, 2010: 127-128).

In other words, following the thought of the critic L. Brinsman, who remarked on "the way the timelessness of metaphor escapes the limits of experience" in Shelley (Brinsman, 1978: insert page number), "Shelley's poetic rendering of the legend of *Ozymandias* is even more memorable than the original story itself. It is also an emphatic political statement indicating the cruel and destructive nature of the empires of man and their outcomes. This beautiful sonnet outlasts the so-called mighty empires based on control and terror. These empires get eroded and destroyed, leading to the disintegration of civilisation and culture. However, neither time nor distance can obliterate the works of art, making the artist immortal" (Krishna, 2014: 154).

It was also shown how Shelley's use of form and vocabulary produce a poem that transcends its sources (Hebron, 2014).

The intrinsic and extrinsic elements in Shelley's poem *Ozymandias* were analysed by means of the formalist criticism approach, that is, making the interpretation and analysis of the work of literature itself, focusing on the words of the text rather than facts about the author's life or the historical milieu in which it was written (Bhakti, 2016). Imagery (visual and auditory) and figurative (symbol and irony) language, which makes Shelley's poem more beautiful and amazing to read, was described (Bhakti, 2016).

A line-by-line analysis of Shelley's poem *Ozymandias* was made (Lompa, 2016). There were found themes of power (of nature and politics) and pride (political and artistic), and the only symbol of political tyranny – the statue of *Ozymandias* (Lompa, 2016).

While studying the reception of Shelley in Russia perhaps, the clearest case of political (mis)use of Shelley by Marx and Engels was found; they saw in the poet a "revolutionary through and through" who, had he lived longer, "would consistently have stood with the vanguard of

socialism" (Polonsky, 2008: 233). While referring to this information in *The Reception of P.B. Shelley in Europe* (The Reception of British and Irish Authors in Europe Series), which consists of eighteen chapters, written by a total of twenty-four scholars, and deals with the reception of the author in France, Italy, the Iberian Peninsula, Romania, Germany, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Russia, Bulgaria and Greece, we can find information devoted to Shelley and music (Schmid and Rossington, 2008).

There was an attempt to explain how a translator's inappropriate linguistic choice may influence the target language reader's aesthetic reaction, on the basis of the sonnet *Ozymandias* by Shelley and its three Ukrainian translations (Zasyekin, 2010). The outline of a theoretical framework for the analysis of the translation of literary texts viewed as a psycho-semiotic phenomenon and based on the evaluation of earlier attempts in this direction, and the results of a psycholinguistic empirical study of translations, is given. Central to this framework is the recent insight that the human cerebral hemisphere functional asymmetry somehow plays a role in structuring the fictional text by its author and in its processing by the interpreter (Zasyekin, 2010).

Also, Shelley's contribution to the early development of Russian Symbolism was analysed (Wells, 2013). Wells's paper highlights some features of Shelley's *Ozymandias*, contains three Russian versions by Barykova, Minsky, Balmont and shows that "the English poet could be interpreted in different ways in order to support radically different aesthetic ideas, and to reflect both the views of the literary establishment and those of the emerging Symbolist movement" (Wells, 2013: 1230). The three different translations of Shelley's *Ozymandias* reveal a considerable range of interpretive response – from the largely utilitarian treatment of Barykova, through the more nuanced approach of Minsky, which combines promotion of the political theme with a more sophisticated awareness of the multiple perspectives of Shelley's poem, to the

appropriation of Shelley to the Symbolist world view championed by Balmont.

In our research we went further in comparison, having added two more translations by Ch. Vetrinsky, V.E. Cheshikhin and V.Ya. Bryusov, having studied critical articles and having confirmed Shelley's role as a catalyst in expressing a range of radically different aesthetic views. So, such comparative studies can provide new exciting results in perspective.

### Conclusion

Speaking about the interest of Russian translators of the late 19th – early 20th Centuries to Shelley's poem *Ozymandias*, we could explain a sudden burst of public attention to the text, which emerged long before its first Russian interpretation, by the events, actual for that epoch— political and social (weakening of the political system in Russia, the first Russian revolution and others ), cultural (the growing attention to the culture of Ancient Egypt – during the three decades from the 1890s to the 1920s, the Russian poets wrote about two hundred verses and poems on Egyptian themes (to compare: this is seven to eight times more than for the whole 19th Century before V.S. Solovyov), and literary (strengthening of Romanticism tendencies in Russian poetry, that is Neoromanticism, which appeared in contrast to Naturalism in literature). Though none of the Russian interpreters of *Ozymandias* escaped any losses each of them created a translation close to the original, preserving the characteristic shifts, slowing down the intonation, and even bringing it closer to epic one.

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