

BOOK REVIEW

GIULIANO Giuseppina, SHISHKIN Andrei (ed.): *Archivio russo-italiano XI / Русско-итальянский архив XI*. Salerno: Edizioni Culturali Internazionali, 2020. 318 p.

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Received: 2 December 2022 • Accepted: 19 December 2022

Published online: 23 March 2023

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The volume calls the attention to new developments in Russian and Italian literary, fine arts, and cultural relations in the 19th and the 20th century through previously unpublished documents. The authors of the studies examine the works of some well-known and lesser-known Russian authors, critics, and artists who were connected in some way and for a longer or shorter period of time to Italy. Some writings, most of which are in Russian, discuss the bond between the two countries along several aspects. The volume can be a useful resource for both professionals and the general public; one of its great virtues is that the abstracts in English, German, and Italian in the last chapter provide a comprehensive picture and summarize the individual studies. The chapters are connected to each other only in certain cases, for example, on the basis of the relationship of the individual authors with Vyacheslav Ivanov. The index of names at the end of the publication makes easier the orientation in the volume.

The main topic of the first study (Igor Vishnevetsky: *Italy and Russia in the poems and poetry translations composed by Stepan Shevyrev in 1829–1833, 1837, and 1843*) (pp. 7–101) is the analysis of Stepan Shevyrev's poems and translations which were written during the poet's first trip to Italy (1829–1832), when he was the tutor of Princess Zinaida Volkonskaya's son, Prince Alexander Volkonsky. The study provides a general insight into Shevyrev's biography and oeuvre, which has been the subject of few research works so far. The first volume of his poems was published only 75 years after his death. Vishnevetsky divides the poet's oeuvre into several periods, one of the most significant of which appeared to be between 1824 and 1829, when Shevyrev was greatly influenced by the works of Goethe, Schiller, and Mickiewicz. But the height of his oeuvre was between 1829 and 1832, during his first residence abroad, namely in Italy. His poems and translations written between 1833 and 1848 can be grouped as follows: 1) a long-planned but

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barely started translation (the rough translation of the first four cantos of the *Divine Comedy*; 1839, Rome); 2) experimental translations of the Italian improviser poet Giovanni Giustiniani's works; 3) philosophical and political poems with a strong religious component; 4) other poems, including two dedicated to Gogol. During this period, Shevyrev not only worked on belles-lettres but also advanced in his academic career, since in order to become an assistant professor at the Imperial Moscow University, he had to write a dissertation entitled *Dante and his century*. He held university lectures on many topics, including the history of Neo-Latin languages and literatures, with an emphasis on Italian studies and Dante. After that, the study offers for the reader the poems (with the publication of unpublished works and unpublished author versions) that were created in Italy, primarily in Rome, or as results of the experience gained there (pp. 50–101). The author of the study also highlights Shevyrev's Italian-themed translations. His effort to renew the versification is shown in the Russian translation of the seventh canto of Torquato Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* and the translation of some parts from the third canto of Dante's *Inferno*. He diluted the syllabotonic poetry with the unique elements of the syllable, which he borrowed from classical Italian poetry. For example, he introduced the quasi-syllabic ottava rima.

Ludmila Pravoverova's study (*Understanding Italy. Nikolai Ulyanov and others*) (pp. 102–128) aims to examine the painter Nikolai Ulyanov's affection for Italy. Ulyanov visited the country twice. He set out for the first time in 1907 accompanied by the art critic Pavel Muratov. In Florence, they met the writers Boris Zaitsev and Mikhail Osorgin. Each of them dedicated some works to the memory of their stay in Italy, the best known of which is Muratov's *Images of Italy* (1911–1912). Most of Ulyanov's paintings were inspired by Venice, Ravenna, and their surroundings. The reader can see examples of these by the reproduction in colour of some paintings attached to the study. He visited Italy for the second time in 1912, the main aim of this journey was to visit Naples and Rome. All this served as the subject of many of Ulyanov's paintings. Pravoverova's study concludes with an overview of Ulyanov's relationship with the Futurists. The painter was one of the first to correspond with the Italian Futurists, which is also illustrated in the appendix. It contains Ulyanov's reply to the Futurist Manifesto written by Tommaso Marinetti, who had previously sent it to him.

During that period, the island of Capri was one of the important centres of Russian émigré writers and artists. The study by Tatyana Krasovitskaya and Yuliya Filina (*Nikolai Adrianovich Prakhov's memoirs about life on the island of Capri*) (pp. 144–167) analyzes certain aspects of the life of the painter Nikolai Adrianovich Prakhov through previously unpublished details of his memoirs. In these writings, Prakhov points out why Capri, where he himself lived for a while, played an important role at that time. He mentions important people who lived on the island or visited it: for instance, Gorky, Lunacharsky, L. Andreev, I. Bunin, etc. Many of them were members of the Capri school. The first part of the cited memoirs is about saying goodbye to Capri before the painter and his family returned to Kiev. An important episode of this first part is the description of his farewell to Gorky. The second part contains letters written to family members.

Andrei Shishkin's study (*From Lidia Vyacheslavovna Ivanova's correspondence with Vyacheslav Ivanov*) (pp. 168–214) reveals the relationship between Vyacheslav Ivanov and his daughter Lidia Ivanova by illustrating some parts of their correspondence in 1927. This is a remarkable commemoration of early 20th-century correspondence culture. Lidia's letters written up to 1917 are preserved in the Russian State Library in Moscow, and those written after 1925 are held in the Roman Archive named after Vyacheslav Ivanov. 1927 can be said to be significant in Lidia's life because in this year, she graduated from the Roman Conservatory, where she studied composition with Ottorino



Respighi. In the summer of that year, she travelled to Paris, where she met well-known people such as Sergei Prokofiev, Nikolai Berdyaev's family, Boris Zaitsev, etc. In the Solesmes Abbey, he met André Mocquereau, who was considered one of the great experts in Gregorian music at the time. By reading the story of Lidia's life in Italy and France, we get an idea of how the Russian exiles of the time lived and what kind of relationship they had with each other, and moreover, what difficulties they encountered during their integration into Western life. The language of the letters is characterized by Italian, French, and English expressions and shorter sentences mixed into the Russian text. What is particularly interesting about the correspondence is that it also mentions Lidia's Hungarian acquaintances, including Edit Alexay, who was baptized in Rome because she converted from Lutheranism to Catholicism. The study is accompanied by numerous contemporary photographs.

Elda Garetto and Andrei Shishkin's study (*"I have to obtain the love of Italy". Correspondence between Ivan Shmelev and Yelena Grigorovich*) (pp. 215–235) analyzes the correspondence between Ivan Shmelev and his translator Yelena Grigorovich. Reading these letters, we can learn about the difficulties the writer had to face on the Apennine Peninsula. It should be noted that they wrote to each other not only in Russian but also in French. Their exchange of letters began with a discussion of the conditions regarding the publication of the story entitled *The Inexhaustible Cup* and the possible changes to be made in the text. However, in his following letter dated 12 November 1930, the writer expressed his opinion about Ilya, the protagonist of his work. Among the letters attached to the study, the last one can be said to be the most significant, as it was written by Shmelev from Paris while escaping from the bombings. In this letter, he expressed his joy that some of his works could already become part of the universal heritage but regrets that his work *The Sun of the Dead* has not yet been translated into Italian.

Fyodor Polyakov's study (*Reunification as renunciation. To the story of Lev Kobylinsky-Ellis's conversion to Catholicism*) (pp. 236–249) deals with Ellis's relationship with Catholicism, which endeavour was evident in the early period of the author's career. All of this determined the motifs and names he used in his poetry: Western European cultural and historical reminiscences served as the background. But for Andrei Bely, the Latinized symbolism represented by Ellis was alien. From the 1920s, Ellis devoted a lot of time to develop his theological and religious-philosophical views. He tried to reconcile the church tradition with the ideas of Vladimir Solovyov and those of Johanna van der Meulen (*Intermediarius*). In order to understand Catholicism, he had many conversations with theologians, priests, monks, and literary historians. The previously unknown details of his religious life reveal that he was preoccupied with the idea of the reunification with the Catholic Church, which is connected to Vladimir Solovyov's confessional experience. Vyacheslav Ivanov was also interested in this issue. The study is based on a huge amount of archival materials, including a letter written to the Prague painter Nikolai Zarecky and documents from the Archivium Sacrae Congregationis Ecclesiarum Orientalium in Vatican City. Moving to Locarno, Ellis collaborated with the priest Bertram Schmitt and the poet Richard Knies, who operated the Matthias-Grünwald Verlag in Mainz. With their help, he published the German translation of Vladimir Solovyov's writings. The work *Monarchia Sancti Petri* played an important role in Ellis's conversion to the Catholic faith. He met a prominent representative of the Catholic Church, namely Johann Peter Kirsch, who was close to Pope Pius XI and worked as a professor of Christian archaeology and was the founder of the Pontifical Institute of Christian Archaeology. Kirsch not only visited Ellis in Locarno but also presented Ellis's books published in Germany to the Pope, who blessed them as well as Ellis's further activities. The Pope also proposed the foundation of a community of Russian intellectuals linked to the Catholic Church. At the end of the study,



we can read Emilio Cattori's letter in Italian, in which he describes that Ellis was found eligible to become a member of the Catholic Church.

The following one is the only study in English in the volume (Powell Atlas: *The Painter and the Visionary. Ivanoff and Ivanov*) (pp. 250–260). It presents the oeuvre of the painter Sergei Petrovich Ivanov, emphasizing his relationship with Vyacheslav Ivanov. First, we learn about his life in Russia, one of the important moments of which was his visit to Samara in 1922. The city was then hit by famine, and Sergei Ivanov recorded his experience in his diary. He immortalized what he saw during the trip in 253 paintings: for instance, the moral and physical condition of the people. Then, he went to Paris, following his wife and children. In 1923, he managed to publish some of his works in the French and English press. From 1929, he collaborated with the French journal *L'Illustration*, which sent Sergei Ivanov to Rome in 1937 to paint a portrait of Pope Pius XI, whose health deteriorated at the time. In the end, the artist painted the Pope at two Masses and created portraits of four cardinals. All this was published in the journal in 1939. His friendship with Vyacheslav Ivanov and his family is evidenced by the portraits made of them, the recollection of Vyacheslav Ivanov's son (Dmitry Vyacheslavovich) of his own visit to Sergei Ivanov, and the letters written to Vyacheslav Ivanov (see Andrei Shishkin's selection of letters after the study, pp. 261–267).

The literary historian Pavel Aleksandrovich Sokolov (1892–1964) played an important role in Italian Slavic studies, as it can be seen from his biography (Marco Caratozzolo: *“He spoke in a tone like an abbot to a novice”*. *Pavel Sokolov's letters to Vyacheslav Ivanov and his family, 1947–1961*) (pp. 268–284). Like many other Russian émigré artists living in Italy, he had a good relationship with Vyacheslav Ivanov, and we can learn about this from his ten surviving letters. They only met twice: in 1947 and 1961 but their correspondence makes it clear how much Sokolov respected Ivanov's advice. Although Pavel Sokolov's name has been forgotten in recent years, those who are interested can learn more about Sokolov's work from his correspondence with the writer and politician Tommaso Fiore. Before he settled in Milan with the help of the Vatican, Sokolov wandered in Europe for five years. He began his university career at the University of Bergamo, where he taught English. He then moved to Molfetta in Puglia, where he also taught English in a high school. Here he met Tommaso Fiore, who helped Sokolov to get a permanent position as a university professor at the University of Bari, where he taught Russian. His friend Leonid Ganchikov introduced him to Ettore Lo Gatto, who at the time headed the Department of Slavic Studies at the University of Rome. Before his death, he and his wife moved to Australia with their daughter, where he taught Italian at the University of Sydney.

The study that closes the volume (Mikhail Talalay: *Father Vladimir Levitsky. The chronology of summer stays and others*) (pp. 285–292) is short but important, as it gives an insight into the life of Father Vladimir Levitsky, a very respectable figure of the Russian community who emigrated to Italy at that time. He is credited with the construction of the first Russian Orthodox church in Italy, in Florence. He talks about all this in his diary. In addition, the reader can learn from the chronology about family stories and the trips of Vladimir Levitsky.

The volume is a contribution to a deeper understanding of Russian–Italian literary and cultural relations and can be of value for both scholars and PhD students.

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