

TRANSLATIONS OF ROBERT BURNS IN THE RUSSIAN BOOK MARKET: THE OLD AND THE NEW AGE

I. Introduction

It might be hard to believe that Robert Burns is one of the most famous foreign poets in Russia, a country which shares neither language nor cultural background with Scotland. He is admired and beloved by Russian readers; his poems have been republished and have sold millions of copies, while Russian versions of his songs can be heard in famous films, on TV and on radio. Hence, until recently, Russian readers have been familiar with only one Burns, the one created by his most famous Soviet translator, Samuil Marshak, who translated more than two hundred of Burns' poems and epigrams and who is often referred to as Burns' "Russian father." Although Marshak was undoubtedly one of the most brilliant Soviet translators, and although it was due to his translations that Burns achieved such extraordinary cultural dominance in Russian literary consciousness, in Marshak's interpretations Burns' poetry suffered from severe ideologically influenced transformations.¹ Yet in spite of this he remained the only official translator of Burns for more than forty years. Because the entire publishing process in the Soviet Union was strictly centralized and subordinate to the state, no other translations² appeared in the Soviet public discourse until the early 1990s. The authorities presumably considered any new versions unnecessary.

This paper seeks to describe briefly the history of translations of Burns at the "break of the dawn" after the fall of the Soviet Union in the 1990s and in the early 2000s. The first part of the research briefly summarizes the crucial data about Marshak's translations published in the Soviet Union (the year, the title and the print run); this is followed by an overview and by an analysis of publications of Burns in contemporary Russia. The main aim is to seek out patterns which can shed light on the curious fact that Marshak's translations are still the ones most frequently republished, although he was a part of the repressive, centralized state machinery of Soviet publishing and distribution which allowed manipulation of all areas of public discourse. Surprisingly, even twenty years after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Marshak's translations of Burns still dominate the literary market, almost completely overshadowing contemporary translations. As a result, millions of Russian readers are still familiar with only a "polished" and ideologically-adapted Burns – that is, with a Burns whose poetry underwent serious deformations in Marshak's translations.

In this analysis I will consider the translator, the year, the publishing house and the average print run; the last is included for the sake of completion and in order to allow a better perspective on the number of publications. Unfortunately, in several cases the average print run is either not recorded or not published.

II. Robert Burns and Samuil Marshak

The prevalence of Marshak's translations in the Soviet Union is not surprising considering the fact that the whole translation and publication process was strictly controlled and only officially distilled translations could find their way into print. The number of printings and reprintings of Marshak's translations of Burns from the 1940s until the 1980s is astonishing and illustrates the importance of Burns as one of a few canonized foreign poets in the official Soviet discourse. The first anthology,³ *Роберт Бернс в переводах С. Маршака. Избранное* (Robert Burns in Marshak's Translations. Selected), was published in 1947⁴ with several reprints in 1950⁵ (twenty thousand copies), two in 1952 (twenty-five thousand copies⁶ and one hundred and twenty thousand copies⁷), in 1954 (twenty-five thousand copies),⁸ in 1957⁹ (?), and in 1959 (fifty thousand copies).¹⁰ In 1963 a new edition, *Роберт Бернс в переводах С. Маршака: Избранное* (Robert Burns in S. Marshak's Translations: Selected),¹¹ was published in twenty-five thousand copies. The first posthumous edition, the two-volume *В горах мое сердце. Песни, баллады, эпиграммы в переводах С. Маршака* (My Heart's in the Highlands. Songs. Ballads, Epigrams in S. Marshak's Translations; seventy-five thousand copies),¹² followed in 1971, and in the same year the pocket-edition *Лирика* (Lyrics)¹³ appeared. In 1976 the most extensive posthumous edition, *Стихотворения. Поэмы. Шотландские баллады* (Poems. Long poems. Scottish ballads),¹⁴ which contained two hundred and fifteen poems, was published, and three years later, in 1979, *Роберт Бернс в переводах С. Маршака* (Robert Burns in S. Marshak's Translations)¹⁵ was offered to Soviet readers in four hundred thirty-five thousand copies.

A number of publications also appeared in the 1980s: in 1980 *Стихи в переводах С. Маршака* (Poems in S. Marshak's Translations);¹⁶ in 1981 *Стихотворения* (Poems);¹⁷ in 1982 two publications, *Роберт Бёрнс. Стихотворения* (Robert Burns. Poems)¹⁸ – which, as will be discussed later, contained both the originals and translations – and *Избранное* (Selected), which included both Marshak's and Fedotov's translations.¹⁹ Finally, in 1984, another edition, *Избранное* (Selected),²⁰ was published in Kemerovo in one hundred thousand copies.²¹

III. Breaking away from Marshak's tradition

The anthology *Роберт Бернс. Стихотворения* (Robert Burns. Poems), published in 1982, should be considered revolutionary in the Soviet history of translations of Burns, as it acknowledged that Marshak was not the only Russian-speaking translator to have translated the famous Scottish poet. Breaking the Marshak monopoly, the editor Yuri Levin included translations of Burns done by other poets in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Though Marshak's translations triumphed, for the first time after the publication of T. Shchepkina-Kupernik's translations (1936) and Fedotov's translations (1963),²² the Russian readers were also offered non-Marshak versions of Burns.

There are several reasons why this book should be considered seminal in establishing a new tradition of translating Burns in the Russian-speaking milieu. Firstly, the readers were offered the more scholarly approach of publishing translations alongside originals, which allowed those who understood English well to make a comparative analysis and thus notice the drastic changes made by Marshak.²³ Secondly, apart from Marshak's translations, the book also included those of V. Rogov, M. Mihailov, V. Fedotov, N. Novich, T. Shchepkina-Kupernik, I. Kozlov (the first translator of Burns into Russian), O. Chimuina-Mihailova, D. Minaev, D. Bayanov, T. Sokorskaya, I. Ivanovsky, V. Kostomarov, and P. Veinberg. Several poems, i.e. "John Barleycorn," "I hae a wife o' my ain," "The Twa Dogs," "My Heart's in the Highlands," were published in different translations.

Thirdly, the afterword, about the history of Burns translations in Russia, was written by Yuri Levin, a famous specialist in English literature who broke the well-established interpretation that portrayed Burns as a revolutionist and a democrat – a reputation fostered in the Soviet discourse by A. Anikst, M. Gutner, M. Morozov and other Soviet critics who discovered revolutionary sub-tones in Burns' poems (even though the poems were free of any such context) and who added fabricated claims to Burns' biography. Apart from offering a brief, though historically correct, biographical note free of standard Soviet ideologemes, Levin criticized Marshak's translations by mentioning that "Marshak's translations were far from being adequate to the originals"²⁴ and that Marshak never considered a faithful or a mechanical translation a true work of art.²⁵ Though Levin's criticism was carefully framed in language acceptable to Soviet critics, it was an unprecedented case, as Marshak's translation methods had always been highly praised. Yet this absolutely correct observation was immediately softened by the acknowledgement that changes were inevitable in any poetic translations, especially when translating from English into Russian, and that Marshak's frequent deviations from the

originals allowed him to recreate “the poetic wholeness, not only verbally but also stylistically; in short those poetic features which make the translations as charming as if they were the originals.”²⁶ Levin also emphasized that Marshak paid special attention to Burns’ political poems in which the poet revealed the hypocrisy and greediness of the English society and stated that “Marshak is different from Burns. [...] He often softens Burns’ sharp rhetoric and rudeness, as the poet often used words and expressions which would have sounded vulgar if translated directly into Russian.”²⁷

It remains unclear why Levin also briefly referred to other translators of Burns in the Soviet Union, since he did not mention names but mainly stated that alternative translations existed. In fact, apart from Marshak, the only translator whose translations of Burns appeared in the Soviet Union was V. Fedotov. Others, such as S. Petrov, whose translation of *The Jolly Beggars*, which was close to the original and expressed the sharpness and vulgarity of the Beggars’ speech, had to wait until the edition of 1982 to reach the readers.²⁸

Another precious addition to the publication of 1982 were extensive comments by L. Arinshtain, a professional philologist whose comments contained historical and biographical facts as well as numerous allusions that allowed the reader to place Burns’ poetry in the context of European literature. Contrary to Soviet critics, Arinshtain emphasized Burns’ education and mental outlook and presented him from a completely different point of view: as a broad-minded, intellectual and educated person with a substantial knowledge of history, geography and philosophy. Analyzing one hundred and eighteen poems, Arinshtain pointed out more than three hundred allusions and paraphrases of literary works. For instance, in the poem “The Cotter’s Saturday Night” the critic found five concrete references to Pope, Goldsmith, Thomson, Grey and Fergusson.

Arinshtain also discovered that Marshak had misinterpreted some of Burns’ original references, especially those related to religion. Among other things, Arinshtain exposed an interesting example from the beginning of the poem “Tam o’Shanter,” when Tam’s wife Kattie mentions that “That at the L-d’s house, even on Sunday, / Thou drank wi’ Kirkton Jean till Monday” (Burns: ll.27–28). In Arinshtain’s comment we read that Kirkton Jean was the owner of a little tavern which had a shady reputation, and the peasants sarcastically called it “Laddies’ House.” Presumably, Burns used an ironic wordplay and shortened “Laddies’ House” to “L-d’s house,” which may be mistaken for “Lord’s House.” This interpretation seems logical, as it is hard to imagine that anybody can “drink till Monday” in a church. Ignoring the obvious logic, Marshak translated “The L-d’s house” as “the House of the Lord” and introduced the images of the priest and the sexton absent from the original who get drunk with Tam: “Ты в праздник ходишь в

божий дом / Чтобы потом за полной кружкой / Ночь просидеть с церковным служкой / Или нарезать с дьячком” (Marshak: ll. 26-29) (You go to the House of the Lord at holiday / To sit there with a full glass / To spend the night with a church sexton / Or to get drunk with the priest).

Finally, the edition also contained a section never included in either of the previous publications: a glossary of some of the commonest Scots words and expressions used by Burns. As Marshak translated Burns’ poetry into a literary Russian, the importance of vernacular was never even mentioned in any of the meta-texts (comments, forewords or reviews); it was as if this fact was intentionally silenced in the Soviet discourse in order not to detract from the quality of Marshak’s translations.

Five years later, in 1987, another edition, *Стихотворения и песни* (Poems and Songs),²⁹ of Marshak’s and Fedotov’s translations was published. It should be mentioned that Fedotov was the only Soviet translator who risked competing with Marshak, translating over two hundred of Burns’ poems, mostly songs, and collecting them in two books. The first book of his translations was published in the Soviet Union in 1959 in three thousand copies and a single reprint in 1963 followed in one hundred copies, which could hardly be noticed among the millions of copies of Marshak’s translations.

Both editions represented a crucial step in re-directing the tradition of translations of Burns which had remained unchanged from 1947, when the first book of Marshak’s translations was published. Even though Marshak’s translation still dominated in libraries, bookstores and private collections, new editions signified a change from the only acceptable and monolith interpretation to a more manifold approach to translating Burns.

IV. At the dawn of the new era

Although following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 the process of re-evaluating the old system’s values, including cultural and literary values, began, Burns’ position did not change much. In the Soviet times, a clear conception of his poetic heritage was formed and remained unchanged for many years. The fact that the editors continued to trust in Marshak’s name as a magnet for the readers is confirmed by two publications of Marshak’s translations in the 1990s: *Стихи* (Poems)³⁰ (ten thousand copies), in 1995,³¹ and *Джон Ячменное Зерно* (John Barleycorn)³² (?), in 1998.

It was not until the turn of the millennium that the process of liberating Burns from Marshak’s seminal translations began. In 1999 three hundred and ninety-two translations were published

in the anthology *Роберт Бернс. Собрание поэтических произведений* (Robert Burns. The collected translations of poetry),³³ edited by Vitkovsky. Along with Marshak's the anthology included pre-revolutionary translations by N. Novich, V. Rogov, and M. Mihailov, the first Soviet translations by T. Shchepkina-Kupernik, the "alternative" translator of the Soviet times V. Fedotov, S. Petrov's translation of *The Jolly Beggars*,³⁴ and, for the first time, contemporary Russian translations done exclusively for Vitkovsky's edition by E. Feldman, S. Aleksandrovsky, G. Zeldovich, I. Bolychev, V. Shirokov, A. Petrov, and M. Freidkin. The anthology also included several translations from R. Fergusson translated by O. Koltsova and G. Zeldovich.

Clearly it was Vitkovsky's intention to offer an alternative to the canonical Soviet translations done by Marshak. An important role in the new interpretation of Burns' poetry was assigned to commentaries, and these contained the sources of Burns' quotations, epigrams and some historical facts compiled by Vitkovsky. He also wrote a prologue and a commentary to the anthology, which revealed the ideologically influenced adaptations in Marshak's translations. The anthology also included a short bibliographical note in which Vitkovsky strongly criticized previous Soviet biographers of Burns who worked according to "social command" and whose main task was to introduce Burns as a hard-working peasant and a victim of the upper classes. He stated that the Soviet interpretation of the main reason for Burns' death as a result of a life-long hard work in fields "was made up by the Soviet censorship and is not worth considering."³⁵ Though Vitkovsky sincerely acknowledged the poetic value of Marshak's translations, he made it clear that Marshak "politicized Burns" by aligning his poetry with prevailing ideological values. According to Vitkovsky, another major problem with Marshak's translations were the facts that not all of them were actually completed, that they were "different and shorter than Burns' poems," and that "Marshak changed the originals as he wished, going as far as even changing the titles of some poems completely."³⁶

Hence, in spite of the sharp criticism of Marshak's translations, Vitkovsky decided to include those Marshak translations which were "not changed to the extent that the original completely vanished behind the translations"³⁷ and in which Marshak followed the original more or less closely. As Marshak was still the only well-known translator of Burns by the time the volume was published, Vitkovsky's decision seemed logical. In Vitkovsky's view, this was the most extensive collection of Burns' poetry in translations ever published in Russian, as it included almost three-quarters of the poet's poetic heritage.

Vitkovsky's anthology was a daring yet important step in establishing a new tradition of Burns' poetry in a turbulent post-Soviet era when the old system of canonical values was destroyed,

while the new one had yet to be established. In spite of the sharp and often chaotic criticism of everything “Soviet,” including translations, that became a common practice after 1991, Vitkovsky established a bridge between the old and the new by including Marshak’s translations, making it clear that, regardless of their being pure ideological formations, translations done in the Soviet Union were of a high literary value and still deserved the readers’ and the critics’ attention. Vitkovsky’s main achievement was that he did not underestimate the fact that Marshak’s translations were enormously popular among Soviet readers, which signified Marshak’s success as a translator. On the other hand, the absolute monopoly of Marshak over Burns’ poetry was finally broken.

In the same year, in 1999, *Роберт Бёрнс. Стихи* (Robert Burns. The poems),³⁸ translated by E. Feldman, went to press, unfortunately only in five hundred copies. This was the first anthology of translations of Burns done by one translator since 1963.

In 2000, Vitkovsky edited another volume of translations, *Видение* (Vision), published in five thousand copies. This time Vitkovsky excluded Marshak’s translations. A striking difference may be noticed in the first translation included in the volume, namely, “Tam o’Shanter” in E. Feldman’s new translation (the previous publication used Marshak’s translation). In general, the anthology included mostly translations by Feldman, but also one by S. Petrov (*The Jolly Beggars*), two by Petrova, one by Zeldovich, one by Aleksandrovsky, ten by T. Shchepkina-Kupernik (songs), nine by Borodicky (songs) and one by Mihailov (“John Barleycorn,” done in the nineteenth centuries). This publication also included a foreword by E. Vitkovsky from 1999 and comments by E. Vitkovsky and E. Feldman.

V. Norms and translations: the contemporary Russian literary market

Both Chesterman (1993)³⁹ and Hermans (1999)⁴⁰ argue that translation norms are not a matter of right or wrong but of collective community approval, of *who* does the translation and *for whom*. Each of these questions was easy to answer in the time of the Soviet regime, when the general choice of books and particularly of translations was systematic, programmatic and based on objectives which were primarily non-literary. Normally two main causes directed the selection of works for translation: the author’s background and his/her sympathy for the ideological constraints, such as democracy, freedom, etc. In addition to the limitations, a careful choice of official translators, neither of which was independent, the overall size of the Soviet literary market and strictly centralized publication machinery meant that the available paths for understanding foreign literature were open to Soviet readers only to the extent defined by the

authorities. As a consequence, deliberate institutional decisions guided the choice of literary works. This is in stark contrast to the sporadic individual choices that seem to define the contemporary Russian literary market after the sudden change from state-owned publishing houses and distribution networks to (for the most part) private presses that are increasingly client-driven. After the fall of the Soviet Union the infrastructure supporting distribution and retailing collapsed and the literary market became a free arena.

Generally speaking, Russia makes for an interesting market for books on account of several inherent features. Firstly, as a nation of some one hundred and forty million, Russia has high purchasing power compared to most other countries. Secondly, though Russia's remote location and long distances within its own borders entail elevated import and distribution costs, these are not the only factors that make books expensive, as the price in bookstores is two or three times higher than what publishing houses charge stores. On the other hand, Russians have a reputation for being enthusiastic readers.

According to Tan, the instant transition to a market economy has resulted in several other characteristics unique to the Russian market. For instance, one will find huge publishing conglomerates producing a staggering number of publications in a single day. Tan points to Eksmo and AST, the two conglomerates that control nearly forty-five percent of the market and that have published more than six hundred titles per month in recent years – something that is unheard of in the rest of the world. On the other hand, the Russian publishing industry is suffering from poor distribution – in fact, some distributors even got into financial difficulties – as well as from high production costs and low retail prices. Tan sees the main problem with local publishing houses in their inability to compete with big companies in terms of advances and royalties. As such, they are forced to resort mostly to publishing titles that reside in the public domain or those written by lesser known local authors. Moreover, because their distribution is limited to restricted geographical areas, provincial publishers do not desire exclusive rights to foreign works.⁴¹

Grigorjev, the Deputy Head for the Federal Agency of Press and Mass Communication, agrees that a handful of very active publishers take a large chunk of the market and that what Russia needs is a fairer and more equal market distribution between players big and small. Another problem is that, structurally, it is common to find publishing houses operating as family businesses and their owners functioning as chief executives. In order to grow and foster new ideas, these businesses should prepare for professional managers to take over. Grigorjev also commented on the “centralized distribution system, which collapsed along with the Soviet Union and has not been restored to anywhere near its previous state,” noting that the number of

bookshops in Russia is dismal and the decline in reading – so reminiscent of the U.S. and U.K. in the 1990s – is worrying.⁴²

The conditions of a market economy are similar to those which define other markets.⁴³ According to Y. Dobrovolskaya, CEO of Elkost Literary Agency, “when it comes to major foreign bestsellers, there is hardly any gap between their release in Russia and in the rest of Europe. However, this sometimes occurs at the expense of translation quality.”⁴⁴ As for the preferences of Russian readers Dobrovolskaya outlines,

Russians are indifferent to Middle Eastern or African authors – often regarded as fashionable by European readers – because they are not interested to know the situation and problems of these regions. Neither are they interested in books on politics except for biographies and memoirs of popular or scandalous political or business leaders. Russian trade publishers tend to shy away from titles on social conflicts and categorically refuse to buy those on medical issues such as Alzheimer’s, AIDS, or Gulf War syndrome.⁴⁵

Books that are positive in tone are preferred, especially those presenting a rich and bountiful life outside of Russia. The same goes for travelogues. Meanwhile, “crime and detective stories must be intellectual, while pure action stories sell poorly.”⁴⁶

VI. Burns in the new Russian literary market

As Gürçağlar explains, there are two primary reasons for publishing retranslations; the first is that the publisher wishes to publish a different translation of a desired book (say, a classic novel whose copyright has expired already) that has been translated and published by another publisher. The second is that the publisher expects that a retranslation may introduce a new interpretation of the source text or address a different readership.⁴⁷

Given that the choice of books on the contemporary Russian literary market – particularly the choice of translations – is neither systematic or programmatic nor even based on knowledge, it is difficult to trace the underlying reasons for any editorial policy. Given both Marshak’s immense popularity and the fact that his name has been closely associated with that of Burns for decades, it is presumably more attractive and lucrative to reprint Marshak’s older translations. Also, in light of the fact that poetry is not among the most economically vibrant genres in Russia, investing in new translations probably seems economically non-viable.

It should be noted that one of the most striking differences between the older and the more contemporary publications of Marshak’s translations is that new editions do not include forewords or comments – with the notable exception of those anthologies edited by Vitkovsky.

Otherwise this practice, so crucial in the Soviet Union, has almost completely vanished in contemporary publications.

Marshak's translations of Burns still continue to dominate the market even after the start of the twenty-first century. Thus, in the 2000s several translations were published by one of the major Russian publishing houses, AST: in 2000, *Бернс Р. Лирика: стихотворения в переводах С. Маршака* (Burns R. Lirika: poems in translations of S. Marshak),⁴⁸ in 2003, *Баллады. Поэмы. Эпиграммы* (four thousand copies),⁴⁹ which was later re-published ten times by same publishing house with the most recent edition in 2011; in 2005, *Собрание сочинений в 4 томах Том 3 Переводы английский и шотландских поэтов* (Collected works in 4 volumes. Volume 3. Translations from English and Scottish poets); in 2006, *Роберт Бернс Стихотворения Поэмы Эпиграммы* (Robert Burns. Poems. Long Poems. Epigrams; three thousand copies);⁵⁰ in 2010, *Роберт Бернс. Стихотворения* (five thousand copies),⁵¹ and, in 2011, *Стихотворения. Поэмы. Эпиграммы* (Poems. Long Poems. Epigrams).⁵²

Two editions of Marshak's translations were also published in 2009 by Harvest *Лирика* (Lirika)⁵³ and in 2010 by Azbuka *В горах мое сердце* (My heart's in the Highlands) in five thousand copies.⁵⁴

Hence, two new names somehow succeeded in breaking through Marshak's tradition: Jury Kniazev and Evgeny Feldman, whose translations were already published in Vitkovsky's editions of 1999 and 2000. Soon after the publication of *Видение* (Vision), which included one hundred and two of Feldman's translations, the collection *Роберт Бёрнс. Избранные стихотворения* (Robert Burns. Selected poems),⁵⁵ translated by Feldman, was published by APKOP in Omsk in one thousand copies. Unfortunately, because of the lower status of regional publishing houses and the limited number of copies, this publication could not reach a vast number of readers. Hence, in 2001 Feldman's translations were included in the volume *Избранное: Стихи, поэмы, эпиграммы* (Selected. Poems, Long Poems, Epigrams),⁵⁶ edited by E. Vitkovsky and published in Moscow by one of the major publishing houses, EKSMO, in four thousand copies as part of the Golden Age of Poetry literary series. In 2003 Feldman's translations were included in another of Vitkovsky's anthologies, *Роберт Бёрнс. Баллады. Поэмы. Стихотворения* (Robert Burns. Ballads. Long poems. Poems) (four thousand copies), and in 2007 Vitkovsky edited *Бёрнс Р. Стихотворения. Песни. Баллады* (Burns R. Poems. Songs. Ballads), which was published in nine thousand copies as a part of Library of Poetry series. The anthology included various translations, with almost half of them done by Feldman. In 2009 translations of Feldman were also published by the Russian-language Ukrainian publishing house Folio in two thousand copies,⁵⁷ and in 2012 Feldman's and Rumyantseva's

translations *Джон Ячменное Зерно: стихотворения, поэмы, песни, баллады* (John Berleycorn: Poems, Long Poems, Songs, Ballads)⁵⁸ were published in sixty-one thousand copies as a part of the Great Poets series. Significantly, this was the first edition of a Burns translation to explicitly outline that the translations were done “from both Scots and English.” All other editions ignored this fact.

Jury Kniازهv translated two hundred and forty-five poems; these were published in 2008 by Profizdat *Роберт Бернс. Стихотворения* (Robert Burns. Poems)⁵⁹ in five thousand copies and were republished in 2013 in five thousand copies.⁶⁰

Conclusion

In order to trace the “destiny” of Robert Burns in contemporary Russia, I outlined the explicit causes and ideologies which defined the translation process in the former Soviet Union as well as the current processes which underlie the contemporary Russian booking market. The good news is that after the collapse of the Soviet Union Burns was not forgotten, in spite of the fact that the print runs can hardly be compared to those in the Soviet Union. Hence, whatever we say about ideological constraints in Marshak’s translations, and whatever we say about his obvious preference for a free translation style, even if it entails numerous deviations from the original, his translations are of an undoubtedly high literary quality. The fact that Marshak’s translations are still available for a new generation of Russian readers, who would hardly be interested in searching for older editions in archives, personal libraries and antiquarian bookstores, contributes to the establishing of Burns’ recognition among younger readers.

On the other hand, it is a pity that the first two attempts to provide a broader perspective on translations of Burns into Russian in 1982 and in the late 1990s remained the only ones, with no reprints following.⁶¹ It makes Vitkovsky’s systematic editions, which introduced the palette of contemporary Russian translations of Burns into Russian, unique. Leaving aside the question of literary quality, the intentional limiting of Burns translations to those of Marshak can hardly contribute to the development of the Burns tradition in Russia.

While it is not hard to trace the reasons why Marshak’s translations became so popular in the Soviet Union, it is harder – given the systematic and strictly organized approach to literary production and distribution – to answer the question of why Marshak’s translations still remain the most commonly reprinted. The situation is unique, since Marshak had remained the only translator of Burns and his name is still inseparable from Burns’. Not only are his translations

reprinted, but his translations of Burns' songs can still be heard in popular Russian films, a powerful medium. We may assume the publishing houses did not see any point in introducing new translations, not to mention the costs and the quality of new translations. Perhaps it seemed more logical, also from the perspective of marketing, to offer a familiar name which would definitely attract the readers' attention. In fact, when approaching the question of why Marshak's translations were chosen for reprint – apart from the obvious reason of ready recognition by readers – I was unable to trace any deliberate economic or political strategy. Hence, it is inspiring that the new names of Feldman and Kniazev are associated with Burns, even though it is too soon to talk about any immediate effect of their translations, since the efforts of individual translators are no longer institutionally constrained and since their products significantly depend on the market. Hopefully we will witness a further increasing interest among contemporary Russian translators Burns' poetry – a poetry which has become so popular and loved by Soviet and Russian readers.

¹ The influence of the Soviet ideology on Marshak's translations is thoroughly researched in Kaloh Vid *Ideological translations of Robert Burns' poetry in Russia and in the Soviet Union* (2011).

² There was only one exception. Translations by V. Fedotov were published in 1963.

³ The analysis does not include editions of Marshak's translations which included translations of other Scottish and English poets.

⁴ Burns, R [trans. S. Marshak]. Berns. R. Poeziya v perevodakh S. Marshaka [Burns. R. Poetry in S. Marshak's Translations]. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1947.

⁵ Burns, R [trans. S. Marshak]. Berns. R. Poeziya v perevodakh S. Marshaka [Burns. R. Poetry in S. Marshak's Translations]. 2nd edition. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1950.

⁶ Burns, R [trans. S. Marshak]. Berns. R. Poeziya v perevodakh S. Marshaka [Burns. R. Poetry in S. Marshak's Translations]. Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1952

⁷ Burns, R [trans. S. Marshak]. Berns. R. Poeziya v perevodakh S. Marshaka [Burns. R. Poetry in S. Marshak's Translations]. Moscow: Pravda, 1952

⁸ Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak]. Berns. R. Poeziya v perevodakh S. Marshaka [Burns. R. Poetry in S. Marshak's Translations]. 3rd edition. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1954.

⁹ Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak]. Berns. R. v perevodakh S. Marshaka [Burns. R. Poetry in S. Marshak's Translations]. 4th edition. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1957.

¹⁰ Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak]. Berns. R. v perevodakh Marshaka [Burns. R. Poetry in S. Marshak's Translations]. 5th edition. Moscow: GIHL, 1959г.

¹¹ Burns. R. [trans. S. Marshak] Izbrannoe v 2 knigakh. [Selected in 2 Books] Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1963.

¹² Burns R. [trans. S. Marshak] V gorakh moe sertse. Pesni, ballady, epigramy. [My Heart's in the Highlands. Poems, Ballads, Epigramms]. Moscow: Detskaya literatura, 1971

¹³ Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak] Lirika. [Poems]. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1971

¹⁴ Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak]. Stikhotvoreniya, Poemy. Shotlandskie ballady [Poems. Long Poems. Scottish Ballads]. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1976.

¹⁵ Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak, ed. R. Rait]. Berns. R. Stikhi v perevodakh Marshaka [Burns. R. Poems in S. Marshak's Translations]. Moscow: Pravda, 1979.

¹⁶ Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak]. Berns. R. Stikhi v perevodakh Marshaka [Burns. R. Poems in S. Marshak's Translations] Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1980.

¹⁷ Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak]. Stikhotvoreniya. [Poems]. Jeningrad: Lenizdat, 1981.

¹⁸ Burns, R. [Ed. I. Levidova]. Stikhotvoreniya. Sbornik. Na angliyskom in russkom iazykakh. [Poems. Collection. In the English and the Russian languages]. Comments and glossary by L. Arinshtain. Moscow: Raduga, 1982.

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- ¹⁹ Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak and V. Fedotov] *Izbranoe* [Selected] Moscow: Moskovskiy rabochiy, 1982
- ²⁰ Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak] *Izbranoe* [Selected]. Kemerovo: Kemerovskoe knizhnoe izdanie, 1984.
- ²¹ It is interesting that the poems in all the above-mentioned editions were not arranged in chronological order, thus preventing the readers from following the development of the poet's creative process.
- ²² Burns, R. [trans. V. Fedotov] *Pesni i stikhi* [Songs and Poems]. Moscow: Sovetskaya Rossiya, 1963.
- ²³ Burns' original had never been published in the Soviet Union before; such was also the case with most other foreign authors
- ²⁴ Burns, R. [afterword. Y. Levin]. *Stikhotvoreniya. Sbornik. Na angliyskom in russkom iazykakh*. [Poems. Collection. In the English and the Russian languages]. Moscow: Raduga, 1982; 535-558, 540.
- ²⁵ Marshak summarized his translation approaches in *Портрет или копия? Искусство перевода* (A portrait or a copy. An art of a translation), 1957.
- ²⁶ Burns, R. [afterword. Y. Levin]. *Stikhotvoreniya. Sbornik. Na angliyskom in russkom iazykakh*. [Poems. Collection. In the English and the Russian languages]. Moscow: Raduga, 1982; 535-558, 541.
- ²⁷ Burns, R. [afterword. Y. Levin]. *Stikhotvoreniya. Sbornik. Na angliyskom in russkom iazykakh*. [Poems. Collection. In the English and the Russian languages]. Moscow: Raduga, 1982; 535-558, 545.
- ²⁸ Even in this anthology only a short insert from *The Jolly Beggars* in Petrov's translation was published.
- ²⁹ Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak and V. Fedotov] *Stikhotvoreniya i pesni*. [Songs and Poems]. Moscow: Detskaya literatura, 1987.
- ³⁰ Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak]. *Stikhi*. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1995.
- ³¹ In 1992 Marshak's translations were also published in Chuvashia *Песни. Баллады. Стихи*.
- ³² Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak and A. Pyatkovskaya]. *Dzhon Yachmennoe zerno*. [John Barleycorn]. Moscow: Zerkalo, 1998.
- ³³ Burns, R. [Ed. E. Vitkovskiy]. *Sobranie poeticheskikh proizvedeniy*. [The Collection of Poetic Works]. Moscow: RIPOL KLASSIK, 1999.
- ³⁴ S. Petrov's translation of *The Jolly Beggars* (*Голь Гулящая*), in which the translator used numerous vulgarisms, was published for the first time. Though a comparative analysis is not the subject of the current research, it should be mentioned that contemporary translations of Burns differ from Marshak's above all through the use of dialect, vulgarisms and argotisms in their attempts to create a spontaneous, neo-literal, "unpolished" style. It is hard to say whether these decisions seemed appealing to the Russian readers, yet considering the fact that the use of vulgarisms was a taboo in a proletarian literature, we may assume that the readers were more shocked at the use of such expressions in print.
- ³⁵ Burns, R. [Ed. E. Vitkovskiy]. *Sobranie poeticheskikh proizvedeniy*. [The Collection of Poetic Works]. Moscow: RIPOL KLASSIK, 1999, 12
- ³⁶ Burns, R. [Ed. E. Vitkovskiy]. *Sobranie poeticheskikh proizvedeniy*. [The Collection of Poetic Works]. Moscow: RIPOL KLASSIK, 1999, 14
- ³⁷ Burns, R. [Ed. E. Vitkovskiy]. *Sobranie poeticheskikh proizvedeniy*. [The Collection of Poetic Works]. Moscow: RIPOL KLASSIK, 1999, 16
- ³⁸ Burns, R. [trans. E. Feldman]. *Robert Burns. Stikhi*. [Robert Burns. Poems]. Omsk: Dialog Nasledie-Sibir, 1999.
- ³⁹ Chesterman, A. "From 'Is' to 'Ought': Laws, Norms and Strategies in Translation Studies." *Target* 5 (1), 1993: 1-20.
- ⁴⁰ Hermans, T. (1999b) "Translation and Normativity." In C. Schäffner (Ed), *Translation and Norms*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd. pp. 50-71
- ⁴¹ Tan, T. "The Dynamic Russian Book Market: Broadening its presence abroad while transforming its domestic infrastructure," 2011. <http://www.publishersweekly.com/>
- ⁴² Grigoriev, V. Publishing in Russia 2012: Vladimir Grigoriev on the Russian Book Market, 2012. <http://www.publishersweekly.com>
- ⁴³ Economic reasons are also important for translators as, according to Gerasimov, "the notorious economic crisis of 1998 in Russia, provoked by Russian financial tycoons, put an end to this happy period. The book market suffered a dramatic decline. Even now, a book is considered successful in Russia if its print run exceeds 5000 copies. The best literary translators are paid a ridiculous rate of US\$ 1.00 per page."
- ⁴⁴ Qtd. in Tan, T. Publishing in Russia 2012: The Rights Side of Business. <http://www.publishersweekly.com/>
- ⁴⁵ Qtd. in Tan, T. Publishing in Russia 2012: The Rights Side of Business. <http://www.publishersweekly.com/>
- ⁴⁶ Qtd. in Tan, T. Publishing in Russia 2012: The Rights Side of Business. <http://www.publishersweekly.com/>
- ⁴⁷ Gürçağlar, Ş.T. 2009. Retranslation. In M. Baker and G. Saldana (eds.) *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies*. pp. 232-235, 235.
- ⁴⁸ Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak]. *Sikhotvoreniya v perevodakh S. Y. Marshaka*. [Poems in translations of S. Y. Marshak]. Moscow: AST, Astrel, Olimp, 2000
- ⁴⁹ Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak]. *Ballady, Poemy, Stikhotovreniya*. [Ballada. Long Poems. Poems]. Moscow: Eksmo, 2003.

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- ⁵⁰ Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak]. Stikhotvoreniya. Poemy. Epigrammy. [Poems. Long Poems. Epigrams] Moscow: AST, Astrel, Olimp, 2006
- ⁵¹ Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak]. Stikhotvoreniya. Moscow: Profizdat, 2010
- ⁵² Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak]. Stikhotvoreniya. Poemy. Epigrammy. [Poems. Long Poems. Epigrams] Moscow: AST, Astrel, Olimp, 2011
- ⁵³ Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak]. Lirika. [Poems]. Moscow: Harvest, 2009.
- ⁵⁴ Burns, R. [trans. S. Marshak]. V gorakh moyo sertse. [My Heart's in the Highlands]. Moscow: Azbuka, 2011.
- ⁵⁵ Burns, R. [trans. E. Feldman]. Izbrannye stikhotvoreniya. [Selected Poems]. Omsk: APKOP, 2000.
- ⁵⁶ Burns, R. [ed. Vitkovsky]. Izbrannoye. Stikhi, Poemy, epigrammy. [Selected. Poems, Long Poems, Epigrams]. Moscow: EKSMO, 2001
- ⁵⁷ Burns, R. [trans. E. Feldman] Robert Burns. Bylye vremena. [Robert Burns. Past times]. Kharkov: Folio, 2009
- ⁵⁸ Burns, R. [trans. E. Feldman and E. Rumyantseva]. Dzhon Yachemennos zerno: stikhotvoreniya, poemy, pesni, ballady. Saint-Petersburg, Moscow: Amfora, 2012.
- ⁵⁹ Burns, R. [trans. Y. Kniazev]. Robert Burns. Stikhotvorenia. [Robert Burns. Poems]. Moscow: Profizdat, 2008
- ⁶⁰ Burns, R. [trans. Y. Kniazev]. Robert Burns. Stikhotvorenia. [Robert Burns. Poems]. 2nd edition. Moscow: Profizdat, 2013
- ⁶¹ I could not trace any reprints of T. Shchepkina-Kupernik's translations either.