



## CROSS-CULTURAL RESPONSES

### ВОСПРИЯТИЕ ЗА РУБЕЖОМ

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## The Poems of A. Pushkin in the *Antologia della Poesia Russa* Edited by S. Garzonio e G. Carpi (2004): The Choice of Texts, the Choice of Translators

Anna Vl. Jampolskaja 

*Maxim Gorky Institute of Literature and Creative Writing, Moscow, Russian Federation*  
✉ [khomkins@mail.ru](mailto:khomkins@mail.ru)

**Abstract.** The goal is translation strategies used in authoritative translations of A.S. Pushkin's works into Italian. Using three translations of Pushkin's works – the poems *The Prophet*, *I Loved you...*, and an excerpt from *The Bronze Horseman* – included in the bilingual *Anthology of Russian Poetry* (*Antologia della Poesia Russa*) edited by S. Garzonio and G. Carpi (2004), three translation strategies are analyzed. It is argued that while Pushkin's contemporary and his first Italian translator M. Ricci strives for precision and stylistic fidelity to the original, his younger contemporary A. Canini significantly reworks the text, bringing it closer to the song tradition and, in fact, creating a variation on the theme; M. Colucci's translation reflects an approach based on a philological study of the text and illustrates the principles adhered to by most modern Italian translators from Slavic languages. The article touches upon the problems of conveying poetic form, language and style, the appropriateness of archaization and its methods, taking into account the potential readership and the need to provide the text with commentary. A comparison of the three translations allows us to conclude that this anthology is a valuable source of information not only about the history of Russian poetry, but also about the history of its translation in Italy, about the practice of poetic translation in general and about the most talented translators; it can be used within the framework of a course in the history and theory of literary translation.

**Keywords:** A.S. Pushkin, literary translation, poetical translation, free translation, history of literary translation, poetical anthology

**Conflicts of interest.** The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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## **Стихотворения Пушкина в «Антологии русской поэзии» под редакцией С. Гардзонио и Г. Карпи (2004): выбор текстов, выбор переводчиков**

**А.В. Ямпольская** 

*Литературный институт имени А.М. Горького, Москва, Россия*

✉ [khomkins@mail.ru](mailto:khomkins@mail.ru)

**Аннотация.** Цель – сопоставительное описание переводческих стратегий, использованных в авторитетных переводах произведений А.С. Пушкина на итальянский язык. На материале трех переводов поэтических произведений – стихотворения «Пророк», «Я вас любил...» и отрывка из поэмы «Медный всадник», вошедших в двуязычную «Антологию русской поэзии» под редакцией С. Гардзонио и Г. Карпи (2004), – анализируются три переводческие стратегии. Доказывается, что в то время как современник Пушкина и его первый итальянский переводчик М. Риччи стремится к точности и стилистической верности оригиналу, живший чуть позже А. Канини существенно перерабатывает текст, приближая его к песенной традиции и, по сути, создавая вариацию на тему; перевод же М. Колуччи отражает филологически обоснованный подход и иллюстрирует принципы, которых придерживается большинство современных итальянских переводчиков-славистов. В статье затронуты проблемы передачи поэтической формы, языка и стиля, уместности архаизации и ее способов, учета потенциальной читательской аудитории и необходимости снабжения текста комментарием. В результате исследования сделаны следующие выводы: данная антология является ценным источником сведений не только о русской поэзии в ее историческом развитии, но и об истории ее перевода в Италии, о практике поэтического перевода в целом, о наиболее талантливых переводчиках; рассмотренная книга может использоваться в рамках курса истории и теории художественного перевода.

**Ключевые слова:** А.С. Пушкин, художественный перевод, поэтический перевод, вольный перевод, история художественного перевода, поэтическая антология

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## Introduction

The publication, prepared by renowned slavists Stefano Garzonio and Guido Carpi, is to date the most complete and authoritative anthology of Russian poetry published in Italy (*Antologia della poesia russa*, 2004)<sup>1</sup>. The book with parallel texts, in Russian and in Italian, was published in the “Biblioteca della Repubblica” series, intended for a wide range of readers, but it is equipped with a solid critical apparatus: a detailed introductory article introducing the history of Russian poetry (the anthology is divided into chapters – the pre-Petrine era, the 18th century, the Romantic era, etc., right up to the chapter devoted to modern poetry). Each chapter of the anthology, as well as the sections illustrating the work of individual poets, are preceded by introductions with information about the lives of the authors, their affiliation with schools and movements, and the artistic features of their works.

It is important to note that the compilers not only sought to introduce the Italian reader to the canon of Russian poetry, but also to present as fully as possible Italian translators of the past and present. Thus, many translations were made by famous slavists (E. Lo Gatto, A.-M. Ripellino, M. Colucci, etc.), since translation from Russian in Italy is traditionally closely connected with scientific research. At the same time, translations by Italian poets and writers (V. Monti, I. Nievo, T. Landolfi, G. Ungaretti, etc.) are presented, some of whom translated not from Russian, knowledge of which was rare, but from French translations. In a number of cases, the compilers of the anthology gave preference not to modern, but to old translations, reflecting the literary taste of the era.

The section dedicated to A.S. Pushkin (pp. 254–287) opens with an introduction by G. Carpi. The selection includes ten poems (*Prorok* (The Prophet), *Ya pomnyu chudnoe mgnovenie...* (I remember a wonderful moment...), *Zimnii vecher* (A winter evening), *Na kholmakh Gruzii lezhit nochnaya mgla...* (The night mist lies on the hills of Georgia...), etc.), as well as excerpts from poems *Evgenyi Onegin* (Eugene Onegin) and *Mednyi vsadnik* (The Bronze Horseman). The translations are by M. Ricci, A. Canini, E. Lo Gatto, T. Landolfi, S. Morski and M. Colucci. We will dwell in detail on the translations of three texts that illustrate different translation strategies.

## Results and Discussion

The poem *Prorok* is given in the translation of Count Miniato Ricci (1792–1860/1877), an original poet, married to E.P. Lunina; Ricci was Pushkin's acquaintance in St. Petersburg and his first Italian translator. It is known that Ricci has translated two of Pushkin's poems – *Demon* and *Prorok*, and was also going to

<sup>1</sup> The texts of the poems in the original and in translation are given according to (2004). *Antologia della poesia russa*. A cura di Stefano Garzonio e Guido Carpi. Roma: La Repubblica.

translate scenes from *Boris Godunov* and other works. In 1828, he approached G.P. Vieisseux, the editor of the authoritative Florentine magazine *L'Antologia*, with a request to publish his notes on Russian literature and translations of poems by Derzhavin, Venevitinov, Zhukovsky and Pushkin, but was refused and soon abandoned his work as a translator, although S.P. Shevyrev spoke positively of his abilities. Ricci's translations, like other early translations of Pushkin in Italy, have been studied in detail by Claudia Lasorsa, whose work we will rely on (Lasorsa, 1970; 2009). Here are the first lines of the poem and the translation:

Dukhovnoi zhazhdoyu tomim,  
I pustyne mrachnoi ya vlachilsya, –  
I shestikrylyi serafim  
Na pereput'e mne yavilsya.  
Perstami legkimi kak son  
Moikh zenits kosnulsya on.  
Otverzlis' veshchie zenitsy,  
Kak u ispugannoi orlitsy.  
<...>

Da spiritual sete tormentato  
l' mi traeva in un triste deserto:  
Allor che un Serafin sei volte alato  
D'innanzi al guardo mio si fu offerto.  
Lievi qual sogno, a fior de gli occhi miei  
Pass sue dita, e, nel futur veggenti,  
Spalancaronsi gli occhi, uguali a quei  
D'aquila che sul nido si spaventi.  
<...>

Ricci renders iambic tetrameter in eleven-syllable verse (endecasillabo) with cross rhymes, without preserving the rhyme scheme or the alternation of masculine and feminine endings. The eleven-syllable meter is the most popular meter of Italian poetry, quite flexible and rhythmically diverse, suitable for poems of the most varied styles and themes. As for rhyme, at that time Italian poetry was already beginning to abandon it, in any case, it was not assumed that the translator was obliged to reproduce it exactly. Characterizing the vocabulary and style, Lasorsa notes: "Ricci's translation is free and at the same time faithful in every verse. <...> In his literary tastes, Ricci probably adhered to the neoclassicism of the second half of the 18th century with an admixture of some lyricism in the romantic spirit. <...> the solemn "high style" corresponds to the Italian latinized syllable. Since archaization relies simultaneously on syntax and latinized vocabulary, the translator managed to achieve great expressiveness" (Lasorsa, 1970, p. 96).

Ricci makes abundant use of lexical and grammatical archaisms (*mi traeva, sei volte alato, tanger, il gir, et, vide et audi, da tue verba* и др.), separated forms of prepositions and definite articles (*de gli* instead of *degli*), enclitic verb forms characteristic of the high style (*spalancaronsi, riempielle, fèsi, fendèmi*), inversion of the definition of a noun, archaic form of the imperfect (*mi traeva*), which at that time was already gradually falling out of use, truncated forms of words (*allor, Serafin*) and outdated variants (*guardo* instead of *sguardo*, *veggenti* instead of *vedenti*). Pushkin's verse is conveyed in the language of solemn, noticeably archaic high Italian poetry<sup>2</sup>. As Lasorsa notes, Ricci produces a precise and concise transla-

<sup>2</sup> The specific language of Italian poetry, its grammatical and lexical features, as well as its historical evolution are described in the monograph by L. Serianni: Serianni, L. (2001). *Introduzione alla Lingua Poetica Italiana*. Roma: Carocci.

tion, in which the division into semantic segments coincides with Pushkin's. The following detail also speaks to the translator's skill: to emphasize the feminine gender of the word *orlitsa* (eagle) (in Italian the word *acquila* also denotes the male), he adds *sul nido* (sitting on the nest) (Lasorsa, 2009, p. 256). The merits of Ricci's translation are obvious when compared with the translation of the same poem by L. De Manzini, published in 1844: in the second case, the translator did not at all strive to convey the high biblical style, but resorted to the most banal linguistic solutions, to hackneyed rhymes, the result being a very mediocre text, stuffed with poetic clichés (Lasorsa, 2009, pp. 243–244).

The poem *Ya vas lyubil...* (I loved you...) is presented in the anthology in the translation of Antonio Canini (1822–1891). Little is known about him: due to his political views, Canini who was Garibaldi's follower, had to leave Italy, he lived in the Balkans, in Romania, in Paris; he was a correspondent for the Turin newspaper *Opinione* during the Crimean War; he read in several Slavic languages; he is the compiler and translator of an anthology of love poetry (*Il libro dell'amore, poesie italiane e straniere raccolte*, Venezia, 1885), however he is not famous as translator of the Russian poetry.

Ya vas lyubil: lyubov' eshche, byt' mozhet,  
V dushe moei ugasla ne sovsem;  
No pust' ona vas bol'she ne trevozhit;  
Ya ne khochu pechalit' vas nichem.  
Ya vas lyubil bezmolvno, beznadezhno,  
To robst'yu, to revnost'yu tomim;  
Ya vas lyubil tak iskrenno, tak nezhno,  
Kak dai vam Bog lyubimoi byt' drugim.

Io ti ho amata e forse spento  
Non ancora questo amor.  
Ma t'accheta pure: noia  
Non vo darti, o donna, ancor.  
Io ti ho amata senza speme,  
Non osando di parlar;  
E solean timidezza  
Gelosia me tormentar.  
Io ti ho amata, amor pi tenero  
Pi sincer del mio non v'ha.  
Dio lo voglia, ma nessuno  
Cos forte t'amer.

This is an example of a free translation, typical of the 19th century; this is noticeable to the eye due to the difference in the number of verses. Iambic pentameter with cross rhyme and alternating masculine and feminine endings is rendered in Italian in lines of varying length, mostly in heptasyllabics (*settenario*), with only individual words rhymed (*amor – ancor, parlar – tormentar, non v'ha – t'amerà*). If you write the poem differently, merging the lines, you can get the rhyme scheme AABBC, which still does not correspond to Pushkin's ABABCD scheme. Like in the Ricci's translation, the language of the translation contains elements characteristic of the Italian poetic language of that period. For example, truncated forms of words (*solean, parlar, sincer*), archaic lexical and grammatical variants (*speme* instead of *speranza*, *vo* instead of *voglio*). But the main thing is that Pushkin's poem essentially turns into a song, a love romance, even the formal address to the lady *vy* is replaced by a more intimate address *tu*, in addition, a direct address to the addressee *o donna* appears. In the translation, the semantic accents are shifted,

the folkloric coloring is noticeable, the author seems to reformulate Pushkin's thoughts, banalizing them, reducing them to a song template (for example, in the last lines: *Dio lo voglia, ma nessuno / Così forte t'amerà* means literally God's will be done, but no one will love you as much; *To robost'yu, to revnost'yu tomim* in translated as *E solean timidezza / Gelosia me tormentar*, lit. Shyness and jealousy often tormented me). The charm of Pushkin's poem, the halftones, the shades of feelings, the enchanting softness disappear.

An excerpt from the poem *Mednyi Vsadnik* is given in the translation by Michele Colucci (1937–2002), an outstanding slavist, author of fundamental scientific works, a prolific translator, including the translations of the poetry by A. Akhmatova and E. Baratynsky. His translations are a brilliant example of the combination of a conscious, philological approach, combined with literary talent.

Na beregu pustynnykh voln  
Stoyal on, dum velikikh poln,  
I vdal' glyadel. Pred nim shiroko  
Reka neslasya; bednyi cheln  
Po nei stremilsya odinoko.  
Po mshistym, topkim beregam  
Cherneli izby zdes' i tam,  
Priyut ubogogo chukhontsa;  
I les, nevedomyi lucham  
V tumane spryatannogo solntsa,  
Krugom shumel.

In riva ad onde spopolate, pieno  
di alti pensieri egli stava, e guardava  
lontano. Innanzi a lui largo correva  
Il fiume; solitaria vi arrancava  
una povera imbarcazione. Lungo  
muschiose, putride sponde, qua e l  
si stagliavano nere capannucce,  
asilo miserabile di finni,  
e la foresta, sconosciuta ai raggi  
di un sole avvolto nella caligine,  
tutto intorno stormiva.

The iambic tetrameter is rendered, as in the first case, by an eleven-syllable meter. In an article devoted to the problems of translating Russian poetry and understanding his own translation experience, Colucci emphasizes that Italians are forced to lengthen the line due to differences in the grammatical structure of the two languages – synthetic and analytical (in Italian there is an article, there are auxiliary verbs, and instead of participles and adverbial participles, subordinate clauses are usually used) (Colucci, 1993, p. 115). Moreover, unlike, for example, R. Poggioli, who preserved rhyme in his translations of Russian poetry, Colucci, like the overwhelming majority of modern translators, believed that rhyme should not be preserved, since it disappeared in Italian poetry back in the era of romanticism and is now found mainly in poems for children (see about Poggioli's translations and their reception (Niero, 2019, pp. 107–183). It should be noted that in Colucci's translation, as in Pushkin's original text, enjambment is quite common: the text seems to flow from line to line, obeying the impulse of the narrative, while the close semantic connection can be broken (for example, *pieno / di alti pensieri, guardava/lontano*).

Unlike the previous examples, this translation lacks obvious archaisms, the choice was made in favor of a neutral literary language, however, far from colloquial. For example, the personal pronoun *on* is rendered by the pronoun *egli* (but not *lui*), characteristic of written speech. The choice of lexis indicates an attempt to avoid comments and make the text as clear as possible for the reader. For example,



the word *izby*, which in Italian is most often rendered as *izbe*, is translated here as *cappannucce* (lit. huts, poor little houses). *Priyut ubogogo chukhontsa* is translated as *asilo miserabile di finni*: the translator changes the name of the people to the Finns known to the Italian reader, and also applies the word *miserabile* (lit. poor, primitive) to the dwelling, and not to its inhabitant. In general, it can be said that Colucci consciously refuses to try to archaize the text, to stylize it as if it were from the 19th century, to write “like Manzoni” or “like Leopardi”, because, in his opinion, in that case the translation would turn out lifeless, like a dummy (Colucci, 1993, p. 113). It should be taken into account that in Italy modern poetry is mainly written in free verse, so the presence of a clear metric organization in combination with a refined literary language in itself creates an effect of archaization.

In his article on translating Russian poetry, Colucci also speaks of the need to convey the sound of a poem, its timbre, admitting that due to the difference between languages this is almost impossible. Nevertheless, the desire to solve this problem is also noticeable in the passage under analysis: see, for example, the description of the rustling forest in the last three lines, which is replete with consonant sounds (s, ch, sh), as well as the energetic “r” (*krugom shumel – tutto intorno stormiva*).

The texts examined illustrate three fundamentally different approaches to translating Pushkin’s poetry. In the past and in our days, the great Russian classic has been translated a lot in Italy: it is enough to recall the recent translations of *Evgenii Onegin* by G. Giudici, P. Pera and G. Ghini, which have aroused great interest among readers and literary scholars. The difficulties of translating Pushkin’s poem and, in general, poetic texts that can be classified as “cult” (all three poems considered above rightfully belong to this category) are the subject of L. Salmon Kovarski’s article (Kovarski, 2001); *Evgenii Onegin* is also the subject of a chapter from A. Niero’s monograph, where old and new translations of the poem are examined in detail, especially the issues of versification (Niero, 2019, pp. 245–278). As Niero notes, the difficulty of reproducing Pushkin’s poetry in Italian is largely due to the fact that there is no Italian poet analogous to Pushkin, whose style translators could use as a reference. For example, the poems of Joseph Brodsky were translated in the style of Eugenio Montale, an outstanding poet of the 20th century. This not only simplified the task for the translators, but also partly determined Brodsky’s success with the Italian reader.

## Conclusion

Thus, the anthology compiled by Garzonio and Carpi represents the most useful tool not only for the Italian reader who wants to get acquainted with Russian poetry in its historical development, but also for the researcher of translation. The texts collected in it reflect various stages in the history of poetic translation from Russian into Italian, illustrate different, often opposing approaches, and allow us to evaluate the contribution of the most talented translators.

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## Bio note:

*Anna Vl. Jampolskaja*, PhD in Philology, Associate Professor at the Department of Literary Translation, Maxim Gorky Institute of Literature and Creative Writing, 25 Tverskoy Blvd, Moscow, 123104, Russian Federation. ORCID: 0000-0001-9900-9256; SPIN-code: 4873-9740. E-mail: khomkins@mail.ru