

IVAN TURGENEV'S LETTERS ON TRANSLATION

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ABSTRACT

Ivan Turgenev's surviving correspondence of more than seven thousand published letters which covers over fifty years may serve as yet more convincing evidence of close ties between literary translation and Russian attempts at cultural self-definition in the second half of the nineteenth century. It registers Turgenev's opinion of various major contemporary literary events and in particular his views on the mechanisms of literary exchanges between Russia and Western Europe via translations. Directly or indirectly his letters reflect the attitudes towards the art of translation and the accepted criteria for evaluating translated literary work in Russia and in Western Europe in the second half of the 19th century. Viewed in a broad cultural context, Turgenev's letters on translation not only emphasize the efforts of the nineteenth century Russian elite to promote the importance of an all-inclusive cultural model for Russia but also reflect a more nuanced understanding of the European response to Russian literature.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, letters as an independent literary genre occupied an important place on the Russian literary scene. Following the European tradition, they not only became an important step in the development of the novelistic genre, but also acquired a growing role as political manifestoes, pamphlets, proclamations, and mechanisms of literary and philosophical exchanges among Russian intellectuals.

In this respect, Turgenev's letters were no exception. Covering more than fifty years, from 1831 until his death in 1883, his surviving correspondence, including more than seven thousand published letters, reflects his views on many major political and cultural events of the nineteenth century. Due to Turgenev's ties to most influential literary figures in Russia, France, England, and Germany, his letters provide additional valuable information about little known facts concerning the cultural exchange between Russia and Western Europe, and in particular about the specific mechanisms of literary exchanges via translation.

The importance of Turgenev's correspondence was recognized already during his lifetime, when occasional, mostly unsuccessful attempts to publish several of his letters were made. Some of these letters appeared in print soon after his death, and in 1884 the first collection of 488 of his letters was published in Russia. This first publication seemed controversial to many of his friends and contemporaries. The editors of the volume were criticized for their selection of letters, for the breach of

privacy, and for inadequate editorial work.¹ Despite this criticism, the first collection of Turgenev's letters attracted several foreign publishers, and in 1886, it was translated into German (Turgeniew 1886). An attempt at collecting Turgenev's letters to French writers was undertaken several years later by Ely Halpérin-Kaminsky who published his *Ivan Tourguéneff d'après sa correspondance avec ses amis français* in 1901. Parts of this collection had appeared previously in several journal publications and were then translated into Russian (Galperin-Kaminskii 1900) and into English (Halpérine-Kaminsky 1898). Several important studies devoted to Turgenev's correspondence with major German writers appeared in print in the first half of the twentieth century (Petzet 1924).²

By the middle of the twentieth century, most of the people who could have been personally affected by the publication of Turgenev's letters were gone, and additional archival information was open for researchers. Together with general advances in the study of Turgenev's works, this was a major factor which made it possible for most of his surviving letters to appear as part of the twenty eight volumes of Turgenev's *Complete Works and Correspondence* published in the Soviet Union between 1961 and 1968.³ Thirteen volumes in this edition were devoted to his correspondence; they were later used by several scholars who prepared annotated publications of selections from Turgenev's letters translated into English (Lowe 1983; Knowles 1983; Beaumont 1985). Previously unknown letters continued to appear in the second half of the twentieth century (Zviguilsky 1971, 1972),⁴ although the interest in Turgenev's correspondence seems to have dwindled. For example, Joe Andrew comments on the "apparent decline" in Turgenev's studies in Europe during the last decade, finding it surprising, especially when compared to "Turgenev's status during and immediately after his life" (2008: 7–8).

Written in four languages, Russian, French, German and English, Turgenev's letters deal with arrangements and business negotiations with writers, publishers and translators, they show his efforts in promoting the translation of literary works by beginning or well-established writers, and they often contain advice to writers and translators about the quality of their work. Directly or indirectly, his correspondence reflects attitude towards the art of translation and the accepted criteria for evaluating translated literary work in Russia and in Western Europe.

TURGENEV ON RUSSIAN LITERATURE IN WESTERN EUROPE

Registering Turgenev's opinion of various major contemporary literary events, his letters may serve as yet more convincing evidence of close ties between literary

¹ For a discussion of the history of this publication and its reception, see: Alekseev 1961: 81–125.

² For a detailed list of publications of Turgenev's letters in the first half of the twentieth century, see: Levin 1958: 203–4.

³ All quotations, unless otherwise stated, are from this edition with the date followed by the volume and page number. All translations are mine.

⁴ For a detailed list of the publications from the 1970s, see: Zaborov 1977: 5–24.

translation and Russian efforts at cultural self-definition in the second half of the nineteenth century. These efforts were obviously important at a time when translated Russian literature was just beginning to gain popularity in Western Europe, trying to break through the barriers of a general lack of interest in literature in translation. This is how Turgenev describes the attitude of the French to translated literature in a letter to a friend, the writer Mikhail Avdeev:

Translations from foreign languages are not popular with publishers in Paris because they do not sell. Even none of Dickens's novels has seen a second edition (and we cannot be compared with him), meanwhile *Monsieur, Madame et Bébé* (*Mister, Misses, and a Baby*) by G[ustave] Droz has seen twenty. My books have been translated, but I personally never got any money out of it, while the translator, as a special favour, occasionally received 300 or 400 francs. [...] (N. B. Even *Fumée* (*Smoke*), my most successful novel from the point of view of sales in Paris, did not bring me any money.) (18 April 1868. *Pis'ma*, 7: 130–131).

Turgenev's comments make it clear that the majority of the French general public preferred popular French literature to translated novels, which resulted in the unwillingness of publishers to undertake unprofitable enterprises. Neither the authors nor the translators were properly remunerated, and consequently undertaking a translation was either a charitable act, or a leisurely occupation of untrained and unskilful amateurs. This often impeded the quality of translations, creating a new obstacle for Russian literature on its way to the French readers. Originated in Moscow and St. Petersburg salons, translations were often done by Russians whose French was inadequate. Turgenev writes to Avdeev:

Your novels were translated by a Russian (I know Madame Chekunova), and they are probably written in this Moscow French language which the French find absolutely deplorable. Everything will have to be re-written, if it is the case, since we Russians have no idea of what purists the French are (18 April 1868. *Pis'ma*, 7: 130–131).

The usual poor quality of translations from Russian into French is mentioned in Turgenev's letters on more than one occasion. According to his personal experience, both Russian and French translators were equally responsible for results of poor quality. This is how he describes the French translation of *Zapiski Okhotnika* (*Notes of a Hunter*) in his letter to a well known writer and personal friend, Sergei Aksakov:

I have received finally the French translation of *Zapiski*, and I wish I had never seen them! This Mr. Charriere has made God knows what out of me; he has added whole pages, invented things, thrown away some parts, it is unbelievable. Here is a sample of his style: for example, I write 'I fled', and he translates these two words with the following: 'I fled in a mad rush, alarmed, my hair standing on end, as if I had on my heels a whole legion of vipers commanded by a sorcerer'. And everything

is like that. What a shameless Frenchman! Now thanks to him, I have been turned into a clown (7 August 1854. *Pis'ma*, 2: 224–5).

Similar techniques were often practiced by German and English translators of Turgenev's works. In his letter to the Austrian poet, journalist and publicist Moritz Hartmann, Turgenev complains about a "pathetic translation" of his novel into German, and requests Hartmann's advice on the possibility of publishing his letter of protest against this translation: "Whole pages have been crossed out by the translator. The novel has undergone a thorough cleansing of everything that is not vulgar or obviously banal. [...] I have not had much luck with my works in Germany", he concludes (27 May 1868. *Pis'ma*, 7: 141). He also wrote a protest to the publisher of the *Pall Mall Gazette* against the poor quality of the English translation of his novella *Dym* (*Smoke*) (1 December 1868. *Pis'ma*, 7: 246–7).

Meanwhile, Turgenev was well aware that no legal action could ever be brought against those who published poor translations without the writer's permission since there was no legal agreement between Russia and Germany or England about the protection of the author's rights. In 1868, he writes to the editor Julius Rodenberg: "Unfortunately, I cannot assign to you the ownership rights since they do not exist: there is no convention between Germany and Russia, and anyone can translate anything and then publish it" (23 December 1868. *Pis'ma*, 7: 255–6). And even though an agreement did exist between Russia and France, it could be and often was, violated. "The convention between France and Russia is so craftily written that anyone has the right to translate, abridge, or in any other way mutilate any work he chooses. Consequently, you should not even try to sue anyone, you must succumb to your Fate", writes Turgenev to the beginning Russian writer Adelaida Lukanina whose story *The Hen-House Keeper* was poorly translated and then appeared in the French journal *Réforme* without her permission. He suggests that Lukanina contact the journal and offer to translate or "authorize" the translation of her stories, "for any journal will prefer a translation by the author" (31 July 1880. *Pis'ma*, 12 (2): 294).

Translations into German and English were usually done from French, which also had an impact on the quality of the re-translated versions. It was standard practice for the German and English translations of Russian literature to appear after the French versions, and it was no secret that in most cases French translations were used as the source text, instead of the Russian original. Turgenev understood well the inevitability of this wide-spread common practice, and in his letter to Julius Rodenberg, who represented the editorial board of the journal *Salon* interested in publishing Turgenev's works in German, he recommends some titles with detailed references to their translations into French. He writes:

I willingly accept the offer of the editorial board of the *Salon*, and could suggest several of my shorter works, such as *The Jew* (*Le Juif*, which appeared in the *Revue Nationale*), or *The Brigadier* (translated in the *Journal des Débates*) or *Asya* (a longer novella, published under the title of *Annouchka* in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*) (23 December 1868. *Pis'ma*, 7: 255–6).

In another letter, Turgenev asks the German writer Ludwig Pietsch to rework the poor German translation of his *Fathers and Sons* for a publication in Riga, and to compare the existing inadequate German version to the “impeccable” French translation on which it had been based (15 January 1869. *Pis'ma*, 7: 273–4).

On more than one occasion, Turgenev complained about “the limited knowledge of the Russian language in England” and its negative impact on translation. He also tended to be sceptical when the English translators claimed to have used the Russian source text. “It would be easy to discover the truth since the Russian edition has some passages which have been omitted in French”, he suggested to the English writer and critic William Ralston on the occasion of a new translation of *Dym (Smoke)* (8 October 1868. *Pis'ma*, 7: 218–9).

The omission of potentially “boring” parts from the original and the introduction of “exciting” new details into the target texts were practiced by many translators as a selling point in their effort to adjust translated Russian literature to the tastes of the receiving culture, or rather to the expectations of the mass readership. These efforts, disappointing as they were for the authors, were in part justifiable, considering differences in literary traditions, in publishing practices, and in literary tastes even within Western Europe. For example, William Ralston described Turgenev’s sketch *Son (The Dream)* as unfit for an English translation, although this story, referred to by Turgenev as “a psychological riddle”, had already appeared in France in the *Temps* (22 January 1877. *Pis'ma*, 7: 62–3).⁵

THE EMISSAR OF RUSSIAN WRITERS

It is difficult to overestimate Turgenev’s personal role in promoting Russian literature in Europe. His correspondence with the literary critic William Ralston, one of the few pioneers in the translation of Russian literature into English, is a good example of his efforts. Many of the forty-four surviving letters to Ralston contain recommendations on what to translate, Turgenev’s opinion on contemporary Russian writers, and also his praise of Ralston’s activities in introducing Russian literature in England. From early on, Turgenev supported Ralston’s idea to translate Ivan Krylov’s fables into English. He writes:

Your idea of translating Krylov is wonderful: he is certainly one of the most original of our writers, and the only one whose works do not lose their brilliance if placed next to Lafontaine’s. He possesses a mischievous good nature and an absolutely remarkable sense of correct and honest judgment. It is Russian humour at its best (8 October 1868. *Pis'ma*, 7: 218–9).

A year later, on receiving a copy of Krylov’s fables translated by Ralston, Turgenev praised the excellent quality of the volume and suggested sending it to a friend in

⁵ Compare this comment to Flaubert’s remark about “too much philosophy” in the third volume of Tolstói’s *War and Peace* (12 January 1880. *Pis'ma*, 12 (2): 205–6).

St. Petersburg, “so he could review it for the *Vestnik Evropy*” (3 February 1869. *Pis'ma*, 7: 289).

In an earlier letter, commenting on Ralston’s “excellent article” on Aleksei Koltzov’s poetry, Turgenev draws a comparison between Koltzov, the Russian poet of the people, and Burns, he then further elaborates on parallels between the English and Russian literatures and on the popularity of English writers in Russia. Turgenev applauds Ralston’s intentions to spread the knowledge of Russian literature in England and then suggests that “in addition to Gogol, the works of Count Leo Tolstoy, Ostrovsky, Pisemsky and Goncharov could be of interest since they show a new approach to understanding and creating literature” (7 October 1866. *Pis'ma*, 6: 111–114). This letter is typical of Turgenev’s efforts to expand the knowledge of the Europeans about Russian literature through spreading the word about those of his contemporaries who were, in his opinion, the most talented,⁶ and above all, about Lev Tolstoi, who was then little-known outside Russia.

Turgenev was instrumental in promoting Tolstoi’s works in Western Europe ever since their first meeting in 1855. Forty two of Turgenev’s letters to Tolstoi have survived, and several of them discuss directly the translation of Tolstoi’s works into European languages. One of these letters, written in very formal French during the years of the estrangement between the two writers that followed their quarrel in 1861, discusses the French translations of Tolstoi’s works:

Upon receipt of this letter, we kindly request Count L. N. Tolstoi to inform Pavel Vasilievich Zhukovskii about it, at 11 Place Pigalle, Paris. Mr. Charles Rollinat has already finished *The Raid (Nabeg)* and *Three Deaths (Tri Smerti)*. His translations are being revised by I. S. Turgenev. Mr. Viardot and Mr. Turgenev will translate *The Cossacks (Kozaki)* this summer. By winter, these four novels will be published as a separate book in Paris by Hetzel (29 January 1875. *Pis'ma*, 11: 27).

When in 1878 Tolstoi apologized to Turgenev for his role in the years of hostilities, their renewed correspondence again became friendly, and the exchange of ideas grew much more open.⁷ In a 1878 letter to Tolstoi, Turgenev praises Tolstoi’s *The Cossacks*, and informs Tolstoi about the appearance of the English and the French translations expressing regret that his intention to translate this work into French had not materialized (1 October 1878. *Pis'ma*, 12 (1): 361–362). Later, Turgenev

⁶ Turgenev’s efforts to make Russian literature known in France also caused some unfortunate misunderstandings. According to Turgenev, he was accused by Ivan Goncharov of passing ideas from his *Oblomov* (1859) and *Obryv (The Precipice)* (1869) to French writers who then allegedly imitated Goncharov’s novels, thus preventing them from being translated into French. See Turgenev’s letter to P. Annenkov (12 June 1874. *Pis'ma*, 10: 250). Indeed, Goncharov not only accused Turgenev of plagiarism, but also held him responsible for passing on his ideas to Auerbach and Flaubert.

⁷ Edmund Wilson comments on the striking stylistic difference between the formal letters written in French or German and the expressiveness and openness of letters written in Russian: “We are struck by the piquant contrast between these two faces of Turgenev when we compare his letters to foreigners – rather formal, in perfect taste, always respectful to the recipient and his country – with the letters to his Russian friends” (1957: 41).

criticized the English translation by Eugene Schuyler which came out in London and New York that year, as “wry and matter of fact” (15 November 1878. *Pis'ma*, 12 (1): 383). Turgenev also expresses his mistrust of the quality of the French translation by Baroness Y. I. Mengden: “I haven’t seen the French translation, but I am afraid that it is not very good, since I know how our Russian ladies translate novels”. This last remark could be interpreted as “sexist” today, especially if judged in combination with Turgenev’s letter to Flaubert in which he highly recommends Tolstoi’s *War and Peace*, but again doubts the quality of its translation into French:

I will soon send to you the three volumes of the novel by count Lev Tolstoi, whom I consider to be the best contemporary writer. [...] Unfortunately the translation is by a Russian lady, and I usually do not trust these lady translators, especially when they approach writers as powerful as Tolstoi (15 December 1879. *Pis'ma*, 12 (2): 193).

Yet, it was obviously the quality of the work, rather than the sex of the translator that mattered to Turgenev, many of whose letters contain similarly harsh critical remarks about translations by men. It is also a well-known fact that Turgenev was very active in promoting the careers of several talented beginning women-writers and translators. Indeed, when Turgenev later received ten copies of the French version of *War and Peace* from its translator Princess Irina Ivanovna Paskevich, he reiterated his initial opinion of its inadequate quality in a letter to Tolstoi (29 December 1879. *Pis'ma*, 12 (2): 197).

Turgenev’s letters provide valuable information about the distribution and circulation of translated Russian literature in Western Europe. For example, it was not uncommon for a Russian work to be translated and published in Russia, and then to be shipped to Europe in search of potential new readers. This is evident from Turgenev’s description to Tolstoi of his own activities in popularizing *War and Peace* in France:

Princess P[askevich] who translated your *War and Peace* has finally delivered here five hundred copies, out of which I got ten. I have distributed them among the most influential writers including [Hippolyte] Taine, [Edmond] About, and some others. I hope that they will appreciate the power and beauty of your epic. The translation does not do it justice, but it was done with love and care. With a sense of great pleasure, I have recently re-read for the fifth or sixth time this truly great work of yours. Its whole structure is far from what the French would normally appreciate or expect from their books, but in the end, the truth always wins. I hope for a steady, albeit slow conquest, if not for an immediate brilliant victory (29 December 1879. *Pis'ma*, 12: 197).

One of the ten copies was sent to Anatole France whom Turgenev had known since the seventies. Turgenev also asks Anatole France to review Tolstoi’s epic for the readers of the journal *Temps*. Other copies were sent to Alphonse Daudet, Emile Zola, and,

of course, to Gustave Flaubert.⁸ Turgenev also wrote an “open” letter to the editor of the French newspaper *Le XIX-e siècle* suggesting that French readers could benefit from a different translation. The letter was published on 23 December 1880. (*Pis'ma*, 12 (2): 523). In another letter to Tolstoi, Turgenev again describes the translation as “colourless” and adds: “I delivered your *War and Peace* to all the major critics. There has not been an article devoted to it yet, but four hundred copies have already been sold (out of the five hundred received)” (12 January 1880. *Pis'ma*, 12 (2): 205–6).

An enthusiastic supporter of Alexander Ostrovskii, Turgenev was instrumental in the appearance of the first French translation of Ostrovskii's play *Groza* (*The Storm*), as well as the first article about Ostrovskii's plays in England. In one of his letters to the Russian play-writer, Turgenev characterizes the translator, French writer Emile Durand, as someone “who is reasonably fluent in Russian”.⁹ He continues:

He does various translations, and I have recommended your plays to him, starting with *The Storm*, as it seems to be most accessible and understandable for the French. He subsequently translated it, and fairly well, I must say. We then carefully proof-read it together and corrected all the mistakes. With your permission, we will definitely publish it this winter and even try to get it staged in one of the best theaters in Paris (6 June 1874. *Pis'ma*, 10: 246).

A similar strategy was used to advertise the translation of works by less known writers. Occasionally, in his support of young writers, Turgenev would even volunteer to translate their works, realizing that the appearance of his name as translator was already a significant sign of the high quality of the original and could bring weight to the publication. For example, when addressing the French publisher and writer Pierre Jules Hetzel, who published almost all of Turgenev's works translated into French after 1862, Turgenev mentions one of his recent protégés Adelaida Lukanina, whose stories had appeared in the *Vestnik Evropy* (the *Messenger of Europe*), and offers to translate one of them for Hetzel since “it is only fifty pages” (19 December 1878. *Pis'ma*, 12 (1): 406). Turgenev first met Lukanina in Paris in 1877, subsequently helping to further her literary career. Ten years later, she published her reminiscences of Turgenev, and also translated into French his semi-biographical story *A Fire at Sea*.

Another possibility was to approach better-known French experts in Russian literature with requests to translate works of promising young Russian writers, and

⁸ Flaubert, with whom Turgenev exchanged several letters on Tolstoi's novels, liked *War and Peace* and agreed that Tolstoi was a brilliant writer and a great psychologist, although he found certain chapters in the novel's third part to be repetitive and overburdened with too much philosophy: “One can see too much of a man and of a Russian, while before it was just Nature and Humanity in front of us. At times, he reminds me of Shakespeare”. Turgenev later copied for Tolstoi excerpts from Flaubert's letter (12 January 1880. *Pis'ma*, 12 (2): 205–206).

⁹ In a letter to Dostoevskii, Emile Durand who had received a commission from the editor of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* to write a biographical and literary-critical study on famous Russian writers is described by Turgenev as “a well-known writer and expert on the Russian language”, “a person of highest integrity, education, and intelligence”. Turgenev requests Dostoevskii to assist Durand in gathering relevant information during his trip to Russia. (28 March 1877. *Pis'ma*, 12 (1): 129)

Turgenev often acted in this capacity. In his letter to Emile Durand, Turgenev asks him to translate Vsevolod Garshin's story *Night* for the *Revue politique et littéraire*. Recommending Garshin as a young writer, whose "talent shows great promise", Turgenev offers his help in proofreading the translation: "If you think it necessary to show me your translation before submitting it to M. Yung, I am at your complete disposal", he writes (12 August 1882).

Turgenev's efforts to advance the careers of talented young writers through translation often went hand in hand with his promotion of less known national literatures. When in 1859, a minor Ukrainian writer Varvara Kartashevskaya introduced him to a group of Ukrainian intellectuals in Paris, Turgenev developed personal ties with them and expressed sincere interest in their work. He volunteered to translate into Russian a novella *Institutka* by Maria Markovich, which appeared in 1860.¹⁰ He also recommended this young Ukrainian writer to several of his friends, writers and publishers, including Pierre Jules Hetzel who later published several translations of her stories, including that of *Maroussia*, which appeared in 1878.¹¹ At the time Markovich's works were already gaining popularity in Ukraine under the pen name of Marko Vovchok, and soon after, she became one of the most influential Ukrainian writers and translators. Turgenev's correspondence with Markovich is represented by more than forty letters, which in addition to personal information contain his questions and comments on the life and work of several prominent Ukrainian writers.¹²

TURGENEV ON HIS WORKS IN TRANSLATION

Many of Turgenev's letters stress the importance of faithfulness to the source text and the stylistic adequacy of the target text as criteria for evaluating translation. He also mentions translators' linguistic and cultural competencies as important factors in improving the attitude toward translated literature in Europe. His personal attempts at securing qualified translators for his own works became a significant factor in changing the accepted standards for the translation of Russian literature.

In 1869, in a letter to the Russian bibliographer Vasil'ev and at his request, Turgenev compiled a list of all the translations of his works (23 June 1869. *Pis'ma*, 8: 55). The list included all the translations of which Turgenev was aware, irrespective of their quality and his personal opinion about them, and it is obvious that early on he was fortunate to have attracted some first-class translators. Already in the late fifties Turgenev's stories were translated into French by Hippolyte Delaveau, a French writer, literary critic and a successful translator of Nekrasov, Ostrovskii, Pisemskii and Tolstoi. Having spent several years in Russia, Delaveau became instrumental in introducing Russian

¹⁰ For more information on Turgenev's activity as translator, see: Zhekulin 2009.

¹¹ Hetzel sent a copy of the translated story with Turgenev's preface to it. See Turgenev's letter from Paris (19 December 1878. *Pis'ma*, 12 (1): 406).

¹² For example, see his letter to Markovich from Spasskoie, in which Turgenev characterizes Taras Shevchenko as "a great poet" and also praises the new Ukrainian journal *The Fundamentals*. (22 May 1861. *Pis'ma*, 4: 245).

literature to the French. In 1856, in a letter to his friend, the Russian writer Vasily Botkin,¹³ Turgenev mentions that his story *Faust*, translated by Delaveau, appeared in the December issue of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* and was well received by the critics (25 November 1856. *Pis'ma*, 3: 45–48). A year later, Delaveau published an article on Aksakov's *Chronicle* in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and Turgenev "helped him by explaining certain things". He also praised Delaveau knowledge of Russian in a letter to Aksakov (27 December 1856. *Pis'ma*, 3: 68).

In later years, already an established writer, well known in Western Europe, Turgenev could rely on his vast circle of friends, prominent writers and literary critics to translate his works or at least to edit the existing translations. Prosper Mérimée, who started writing about Russian literature as early as 1852 and was also one of the first translators from Russian into French, wrote a *Foreword* to the French translation of Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* (1863), edited the French version of *Smoke* (1868), and translated several of Turgenev's stories (*The Jew*, *Petushkov*, *The Dog*, *Ghosts*), which were published in 1869 as part of the collection *Nouvelles moscovites*.

In several letters, Turgenev comments on his generally positive experience with the translation and publication of his works in Germany, where he made the personal acquaintance of many intellectuals. Friedrich Bodenstedt, a German poet and a true expert in Russian language and culture, was responsible for several successful translations of Turgenev's stories, including *Mumu*, *Yakov Pasyнков*, *Faust*, *A Trip to the Forest Belt*, and *First Love*. In 1864–65, he published *Erzählungen von Iwan Turgenev*, a two-volume edition of Turgenev's stories in German. In several of his letters to Bodenstedt, Turgenev praises the translator for his excellent knowledge of Russian and for his perfect style. Realizing that "publishers have not at all been well disposed towards anything Russian", Turgenev suggests paying Bodenstedt for his work out of his own pocket, asking him to do some more translations. Turgenev reiterates his appreciation of Bodenstedt's work and the importance of being published and read in Germany (25 October 1862. *Pis'ma*, 5: 65–66). In the sixties, while in Baden-Baden he became close with Ludwig Pietsch, a talented man-of-letters and a devoted friend, who edited many German translations of Turgenev's works, especially those by Bodenstedt.

Another positive German experience, according to Turgenev, was connected with the translations by the Austrian poet Moritz Hartmann, a man with numerous links to Russia. Hartmann who translated many of Turgenev's works, including *Smoke*, *Mumu* and *Three Meetings* was highly praised by Turgenev. He describes Hartmann's translations as "graceful, beautiful, and fluid". "It is a masterpiece! You have made my work sound twenty times better", Turgenev states in one of his letters to the poet (27 May 1886. *Pis'ma*, 7: 141).

And yet, even these generally favourable impressions of his German translators were not without an occasional disappointment. In a letter to his friend Henrich

¹³ A separate volume of the correspondence between Botkin and Turgenev came out in the Soviet Union in 1930 (Brodskii 1930).

Julian Schmidt, Turgenev mentions “an unfortunate misunderstanding” in Claire von Glümer’s translation of his *First Love*, where the old countess was changed into a young one by the translator, “thus turning the whole story upside down. Of course, it is a minor flaw, but these flaws are still quite painful and hurtful to the poor author”, complains Turgenev (6 May 1873. *Pis’ma*, 10: 95–6).

In England, in 1968, William Ralston was working on the translation of *Dvorianskoe Gnezdo* (*A Gentleman’s Nest*). His careful approach to every single detail in the text can be traced through Turgenev’s responses to Ralston’s questions in several letters from 1968. Turgenev explains his use of literary allusions (*Obermann*, Phrynes, Laïses), and the names of cultural realia (“triu-triu”), and he even suggests a minor change in the narrative, with regard to the original. He writes:

May I ask you to accept one minor correction which I have introduced into *Nichée de Gentilshommes*? In the scene of the last encounter of Lavretzkii and Lisa, he asks for her handkerchief. She answers: “Take it”, and drops it on his lap. I think it would be better if she allowed him to take it without saying anything. I do not have a copy of my works here, but tomorrow or the day after I’ll be in Baden-Baden and shall send you this small correction, or rather omission, in Russian (19 November 1868. *Pis’ma*, 7: 246–7).

Ralston also suggested changing the title of the English version to *Liza*, for which he received the author’s approval. “I find the title *Liza* very appropriate, the more so that the name *Dvorianskoe gnezdo*, which is not really accurate, was chosen not by me but by my publisher”, writes Turgenev (26 November 1868. *Pis’ma*, 7: 250).

The unquestionable expertise of the translator, supported by his constant close collaboration with the author brought about very good results,¹⁴ and yet even Ralston’s high-quality work had a hard time to find a publisher. Several years later, Turgenev writes to Ralston: “I very much regret that so far you have been unable to find a publisher for your translation of *Dvorianskoe Gnezdo*. It would pain me to think that all your time and effort have been wasted” (3 February 1869. *Pis’ma*, 7: 289).

A general lack of British interest in Russian literature has often been attributed to strained political relations between Britain and Russia at the time.¹⁵ According to May, in the second half of the eighteenth century and until the early 1880s, “political and economic competition renewed British mistrust of Russia, and trade in Russian translations was slow” (1994: 17). By 1886, due to a noticeable increase in the interest in Russian literature in Britain, the attitude of publishers started to change, and Turgenev soon became the most often translated Russian writer (May 1994: 13–27; Freeborn 2000: 1423–1433).

¹⁴ For more on Ralston’s translation, see: Tove 1966: 133–43.

¹⁵ A very different reaction to translated Russian literature has been observed in America. As Gettman notes, in the 1870s there were at least three times as many American as British translations published. *Dmitrii Roudine*, *Fathers and Sons*, and *Smoke* appeared in New York at least a decade before they came out in London. The quality of translations was also generally superior, often followed by very positive reviews in the press (Gettman 1941).

PROMOTING TRANSLATED LITERATURE IN RUSSIA

The nineteenth century is often referred to as the golden age of Russian translation (Komissarov 1998: 544). Translation was considered equal in its creativity to original writing, it was viewed as an important tool for perfecting a writer's style, and the most prominent poets and prose writers tried their hand at translation. Taking liberties with the source text was not uncommon among translators, and yet towards the second half of the nineteenth century free translations were gradually replaced by versions more faithful to the original.

There was also more interest in translated literature than in Western Europe, and as a result, much more willingness on the part of Russian publishers to fund translations from French, German, and English. Both translators and European writers were also generously remunerated, especially if their works first appeared in Russian translations before the publication of the original. This uncommon practice was introduced, at Turgenev's suggestion, by Mikhail Stasiulevich, the editor of the journal *Vestnik Evropy*. Translated works of prominent French writers made them accessible to a broad group of readers in Russia.¹⁶

Thus, prior to its publication in France, the Russian version of Zola's *La Curée* appeared in 1874 under the title *Dobycha, broshennaia sobakam* (*The Spoils Thrown to the Dogs*), with many parts censored on moral grounds. Informing Zola about the publication of *La Curée*, Turgenev mentioned that Stasiulevich hesitated to order a translation of Zola's *Conquête de Plassans* (*The Conquest of Plassans*) without an assurance that the translation would come out before the original publication in France. Turgenev also explained the financial terms suggested by the editor, according to which the author and the translator were each offered thirty roubles (105 francs) per sheet, a reasonable amount of money from Turgenev's point of view (5 June 1874. *Pis'ma*, 10: 243), and definitely much more generous than what European publishers were willing to pay. Turgenev was also instrumental in securing for Zola the position of Paris correspondent for the *Vestnik Evropy* from 1875 to 1880.

The translation and promotion of his works in Russia was a very important financial incentive for Flaubert. When in 1873 Turgenev came up with the idea of publishing the translation of Flaubert's *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* in the *Vestnik Evropy*, he negotiated the price of 125 francs per sheet for its author and also stressed the importance of finding a qualified translator: "Please let the translator be of the first rank. Flaubert's style is as if chiselled in marble. Let us Russians honour it" (19 January 1874. *Pis'ma*, 10: 190). More than once, potential problems with censorship come up in Turgenev's negotiations (25 January 1874. *Pis'ma*, 10: 192; 27 January 1874. *Pis'ma*, 10: 194), and the plan for the Russian translation was finally abandoned,

¹⁶ By the second half of the nineteenth century the use and knowledge of French in Russia dwindled even among its educated elite. For example, the leading Russian critic Vissarion Belinskii had a very limited knowledge of foreign languages, and Turgenev often translated for him works by European writers (Turgenev 1958: 109).

followed by Turgenev's similarly unsuccessful attempts on Turgenev's part to have it translated into German. (21 March 1874. *Pis'ma*, 10: 216–7).

Later, to make Flaubert known in Russia and also to improve Flaubert's financial situation, Turgenev translated his *Hérodias* and *La Légende de Saint Julien l'Hospitalier*. To Flaubert's disappointment, it took Turgenev much longer to translate these stories than he initially had promised. They appeared in the *Vestnik Evropy* in the spring of 1877 with Turgenev's preface in the form of a letter to the editor. Turgenev refused payment for these translations asking for the fee to go directly to the author. Several of his letters written to Flaubert and Stasiulevich between 1876 and 1877 describe the negotiations between the author, the translator, and the editor.¹⁷

Turgenev also arranged to have the then unknown Maupassant translated into Russian, and several of Maupassant's works appeared in leading Russian literary journals. He writes to Maupassant: "Your name is causing quite a stir in Russia, and they are translating everything translatable; I've brought back with me a long, very well-written complimentary article about you published by the *Golos (The Voice)*" (26 September 1881. *Pis'ma*, 13 (1): 121).¹⁸ A year after the success of the Russian version of *La Maison Tellier*, Turgenev tries to convince Mikhail Stasiulevich to buy Maupassant's *Une Vie* for translation and publication in the *Messenger of Europe*. Turgenev assures the editor that he has read the manuscript and "it is not at all improper, unlike several of his other works", an important comment considering the censorial practices then current in Russia and Stasiulevich's previous unfortunate experiences with publishing Zola in Russian. Turgenev then adds: "I know I have earned the reputation of being too kind as a critic, but either I understand nothing about such matters, or Maupassant's book is really remarkable and absolutely first-class" (12 November 1882. *Pis'ma*, 13 (2): 99–100).

Turgenev's literary preferences, but also his personal biases, come through not only in his recommendations as to which works by French writers to publish but also in his choices of the works he would potentially agree to translate. For example, when approached by the Russian poet and translator Pyotr Veinberg with a request to translate Balzac's works for a journal of translations of the best writers outside Russia, Turgenev explains that he is not in a position to promise any translations because he has to finish his own work, but even if he had time, he would "prefer to do a few pages of Maupassant or Rabelais, and certainly not Balzac". He finds Balzac "disagreeable and foreign" to his tastes (3 November 1882. *Pis'ma*. 13 (2): 76).

At the same time, he was tireless in promoting the works that could develop the taste of Russian readers and the skills of Russian writers as translators. In his letter to the Russian poet Nikolai Nekrasov, the editor of the literary journal *Sovremennik (The Contemporary)*, where many of Turgenev's own works were published, he suggests that Nekrasov translates Robert Burns, promising to select the best of Burns for him.

¹⁷ For more information on these translations which became "a bone of contention between the two writers", see: Beaumont 1985: 8–11.

¹⁸ According to Knowles, the article by G.A. Larosh appeared in the *Novaia Gazeta (The New Newspaper)*, not in the *Voice*. (1983: 272).

He quotes Burns' *To a Mountain Daisy* in Ivan Kozlov's translation, and comments on Burns' "favourite meter" as "suitable for elegiac and pensive subjects". He assures Nekrasov that he "will enjoy Burns and will derive immense pleasure from translating him" (10 July 1855. *Pis'ma*, 2: 295–97).

It was also, in part, thanks to Turgenev that William Ralston's efforts in translating and promoting Russian literature in England were acknowledged in Russia, where he was elected a corresponding member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences.¹⁹

CONCLUSIONS

In one of his essays, described by Turgenev as "an autobiographical fragment", he speaks about his loyalty to Western ideas: "I never admitted the existence of that impregnable line which some solicitous and even zealous, though ignorant, patriots are so anxious to draw between Russia and Western Europe, that Europe to which we are so closely bound by race, language and creed" (1958: 93–94). Turgenev's letters are an important reminder of the writer's ceaseless efforts to cross this line and to make it less visible through promoting literary exchanges via translation. Viewed in a broad cultural context, they not only emphasize the attempts of the nineteenth-century Russian elite to promote an all-inclusive cultural model for Russia but they also reflect a more nuanced understanding of the European response to Russian literature.

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of a new canon of translated Russian literature in Europe, and Turgenev was instrumental in shaping it. His deep knowledge of European culture and his personal understanding of the importance of the adjustment of translations to the literary norms and to the conventional forms and themes of the receiving cultures shaped future patterns of selecting texts for translation. Crossing the gap between the elite foreign literature and the demands of the popular audiences in the receiving cultures was based on finding a balance between a direct way of communicating information about foreign cultures and preserving the aesthetic integrity of the source literary text. A clearer concept began to emerge concerning translation and its function in communicating the foreignness of the text while adopting it to the norms of the receiving culture. The appropriation of foreign literature through translation was soon to become an important component in cultural politics both in Western Europe and in Russia.

Turgenev's letters show how over fifty years his activities were of vital importance for changing attitudes towards literary translation. His thought-provoking critical analyses of the work of European translators, his insistence on loyalty to the source text and on the equivalence of literary styles in the original and the translation stressed the aesthetic aspect of Russian literature at a time when the "informational" approach to translated literature prevailed in Europe. His correspondence shows how his attempts to address the legal and aesthetic aspects of translation practices contributed to raising

¹⁹ Insufficient appreciation in Britain of William Ralston's work as translator and critic of Russian literature compared to his recognition in Russia has been described by Alekseev (1966: 83–93).

the prestige of translators' work and elevated the art of translation in Europe to a new level. His selectivity in recommending works for translation, his own translations, and his constructive criticism of other translators' work helped to bring about a balanced equilibrium between free translation and a strong re-emerging tendency towards extreme literalism in Russia.

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