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## THE IMAGE OF VENICE IN RUSSIAN POETRY OF THE 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

### *Abstract*

This article examines the features of the image of Venice in the Russian poetry of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, based on the work of romantic poets and realist poets. The purpose of the article is to identify the specifics of the individual author's interpretation of the image of the city in comparison with its interpretation in the European classics. The article is based on the material of the poems «Venetian Night», «To Italy», «Venice» (M. Lermontov), «Venice» (F. Tyutchev), «A Night in Venice» and «Venice» (P. Vyazemsky), and an excerpt from the novel «Eugene Onegin» (A. Pushkin).

**Keywords:** Venice, Russian poetry, romanticism, realism, the image of the city

**Introduction.** (*Statement of the problem*). An important part of the article is the creative dialogue of Russian poets of the first and second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the context of the «Venetian» text. The poems of the first half of the century are very different from the poems of the second half of the century, which is the problem of creative communication.

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(*Analysis of the literature*). In this article, scientific articles of philologists were analyzed, including the scientific dissertation of N. Mednis. These works contain detailed analyses of the «Venetian» texts we need, information about the poets, as well as the images they use.

(*Purpose of the article*). The purpose of the article is to identify the main images and symbols characteristic of the image of Venice in the poetry of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is important to trace how the attitude towards the city changed throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**1. Venice in the image of the ancestor of the Russian «Venetiana».** Cultural ties between Russia and Italy have a long history, manifested in the visual arts, theater, music, architecture and literature. Italy has always attracted the attention of Russian poets and writers, which is explained by the unique artistic heritage of the country. The Italian theme has organically entered the works of Russian creators of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The image of Venice has become a popular Italian image in Russian poetry. It is worth noting that the first Russian Venetian texts were created without empirical reference to the locality. Poets who created the romantic image of the city on the water had never seen it, and therefore at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Venice appeared in Russian poetry as a kind of romantic ideal. The first «Venetian» Russian text is considered to be I. Kozlov's fantasy «The Venetian Night» (1825).

The first Venetian Russian text is considered to be I. Kozlov's fantasy «The Venetian Night» (1825). In creating the image of the legendary city, the Russian poet was greatly influenced by J. G. Byron, or rather his «Ode to Venice» and the fourth canto of «Childe Harold's Pilgrimage» [3, 57]. In the poem «To Italy» (1825), I. Kozlov points out as his forerunner not only Byron, but also other «ghosts» of world culture:

Tam Bajron pel; tam brodit mezh grobami  
Ten' groznaya svobody dnei bylyh;  
Tam v tishine kak budto slyshny stony  
Plenitel'noj, nevinnoj Dezdemony.

I. Kozlov presents the image of Venice as the «queen of the sea waves» [9, 13]. Romantic images of the moon and a water mirror, which later became popular in the image of Venice, are already indicated in this poem: «tiho Brenta protekala, / serebrimaya lunoj», «otrazhen volnoj ognistoj / blesk prozrachnyh oblakov» [1, 22].

The plot of the poem is quite typical of romanticism. Under the influence of the beauties of nature, sweet sounds of music, against the background of universal fun, the lyrical heroine, gloomy and tormented by longing, leaving the «feast of the night», falls into a different reality.

She «snitsya divnyj mir», illuminated by the «lyubovnym svetom luny»  
The finale of the poem is not so rosy. In it, «yasnyj svod odelsya mgloyu» /  
t'ma vnezapnaya strashna». Like a dream or a memory, the shadow  
of the deceased poet appears to her:

<...> unylo molodaya  
Ten' znakomaya sidit,  
Podle arfa zolotaya,  
Mech pod fakelom blestit [1, 22].

The poet considers musicality to be the main feature of the legendary city. Numerous epithets («tomnyj ropot», «chut' drobimyya volny», «nezhnaya barkarola», «arfa zolotaya», and ect.) and metaphors («pomrancev, mirtov shepot», «more burnoe revyot») create the illusion of a «sounding» city [1, 22].

Sound recording plays an equally important role in the poem. Musical fantasy is supported by alliteration and assonance. In all stanzas, the sound of P is repeated, as well as N, L and M in combination with other consonants, which resembles the sounds of murmuring water [2, 88].

It should be noted that when writing the «Venetian Night» the poet was ill and blind, and therefore the chances of seeing Venice with his own eyes were minimal. It is all the more paradoxical that the description of the city is dominated by silver, «fiery», gold, green, emerald, azure colors. The poet, as if in reality, sees both «the shine of transparent clouds», and how «sparks splash», and «the sword glitters under the torch».

In the poem «To Italy» (1825) Venice appears to be a small part of the vast Italian world that the poet is in love with. The familiar images used earlier in the «Venetian Night» reappear: the queen of the sea waves, the sound of octaves, Brenta, the feast, the moon. The image of the «Venetian mirror» also reappears, but its reflecting function remains beyond the boundaries of the text [3, p. 98]: «pod rizoyu nochnoyu / zaliv gorit, oserebren lunoyu». The lyrical hero understands that he will never see Italy («Ty ne byla, ne budesh' mnoyu zrima»), and therefore can only imagine it, see it in a dream, wish to see it after death.

According to L. V. Losev, in the Venetian poetry of I. Kozlov, one can find only «conventional signs of Italy, known since the time of Goethe's Minion ...» [3, 130]. It is impossible to fully agree with this opinion. Conventionality in the image of the city was inevitable. As mentioned above, during the writing of the Venetian texts, the poet was seriously ill, he could only imagine distant lands, see them through the eyes of friends. Therefore, the images that would later become patterns [5, 140] were inspired and expressed by I. Kozlov. Painted with «utopian motifs, they were contrasted with gray reality» [1, 25].

**2. The image of Venice created by the romantic poets.** Following the example of I. Kozlov, many poets turned to the image of the «legendary city on the water» [3, 44].

The image of Venice is given in the first chapter of the novel «Eugene Onegin». Like I. Kozlov, A. Pushkin hears «the melody of the Torquat octaves», «floating in a mysterious gondola», admires the Brenta. Pushkin's romantic plot often develops against the backdrop of the Venetian night: «Nochej Italii zlatoj / YA nego j naslazhus' na vole». However, the poet introduces other geographical and cultural signs associated with Italy into his work: the sound of the waves of the Adriatic Sea, images of Apollo, the patron saint of the arts, and the poet Petrarch. Like the lyrical hero of I. Kozlov, the hero of «Eugene Onegin» is inspired by Byron's poetry (see references to the fourth canto of «Childe Harold's Pilgrimage» and to «Ode to Venice»). Russian poet A. Pushkin also refers to the image of Venice in the unfinished verse fragment «The night is quiet, in the heavenly field ...», thanks to which the image of Vesper enters the Russian Venice (from now on it will become the «star sign of Venice» and a significant code of the Venetian text of Russian lyrics [3, 100]).

M. Lermontov in the poem «Venice» creates the appearance of the city and conveys its sound. «Nochi ston» «edva shumit pod veslami gondoly / i povtoryaet zvuki barkaroly». The lyrical hero hears «pesn' i <...> gitary zvon!». The traditional images of lovers sailing in a gondola to the music of a barcarole are complemented by a mention of the «crafty chichibey» (the gentleman accompanying the lady). There is an echo of another reality – the lyrical hero «chudyatsya» «serdca tyomnye mechtan'ya» [3, 100].

**3. The image of Venice in the lyrics of poets of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.** Another archetypal plot is connected with the motif of love and death in the Russian poetic Venice, a plot based on the traditions of the cultural life of the legendary city. We are talking about the annual betrothal of the Doge to the Adriatic as a sign of love and loyalty. This amazing rite can be found in F. Tyutchev's «Venice» and in P. Vyazemsky's «Nights in Venice». F. Tyutchev was the first to address this topic. In addition to the beauty and symbolism of this ritual, the poet emphasizes its other side. In the last stanza of the poem, eschatological motifs appear, foreshadowing the death of the city in the depths of the waters:

Eti kol'ca obruchen'ya,  
Eti kol'ca stali zven'ya  
Tyazhkoj cepi nakonec!.. [3, 173]

Although the episode of the betrothal of F. Tyutchev acts as a symbol of the affirmation of life and power, associations with the tragic fate of St. Petersburg and other great cities arise in the text, namely, the motif of hopelessness, which was previously almost not found in Russian Venice.

The theme of Venice's unfreedom is also raised by P. Vyazemsky in the poems «A Night in Venice» and «Venice» [4, 16]. Despite the beauty and strangeness of the city, as P. Vyazemsky describes it, the city is not free:

No odno zdes' sporit rezko  
S krasotoyu zdeshnih mest:  
Nalozhil lihoj tedesko  
Na Veneciyu arrest. [3, 44]

The unenviable fate of Venice is represented in the image of the Venetian winged lion, which now sits on a chain: «Tut pyatoj Gorshkovskij davit / Cep'yu skovannogo l'va». However, the chained lion also scares its oppressor: «On i skovannyj satrapu / Strashen. Vsyo v ispuge zhdet: / Ne podymet li on lapu? / Grivoj grozno l' ne tryahnet?» P. Vyazemsky also refers to the plot of the doge's betrothal to Venice. However, now this conflict is connected with the motif of the withering of the city: «Krasavicy, nyne pechal'noj, / Ne vspyhnet vostorgom lico; / Zavetnyj zalog obruchal'nyj, / Davno raspayalos' kol'co». P. Vyazemsky's traditional image of singing and sounding Venice is contrasted with a gloomy picture: a lion «perezhil vek svoj velikij», «umolkli i gromy i kliki!», «zabyty oktavy Torkvato, umolknul narodnyj napev», «gondola skol'zit molchalivo», palaty «iz mraka <...> gordelivo, curovo i molcha glyadyat».

**Conclusion.** The Russian poetry of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was characterized by the typologization of the image of Venice. Despite the fact that I. Kozlov, A. Pushkin, M. Lermontov were not lucky enough to see the Italian city, it seemed to the poets an ideal topos. In the literature of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the attitude of artists to Venice is changing. F. Tyutchev and P. Vyazemsky introduce motifs and images into their poems that are characteristic not only of Italy, «where the appearance of each architectural ensemble, square, palace has acquired immutability and completeness, resisting the reality of the outside world with the static of eternity» [15, p.196], but also of the country with its problems and contradictions.

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## ОБРАЗ ВЕНЕЦИИ В РУССКОЙ ПОЭЗИИ XIX ВЕКА

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В статье исследуются уникальные аспекты представления Венеции в творчестве русских поэтов XIX века, основное внимание акцентируется на особенностях авторских интерпретаций, рассмотренных в контексте романтизма и реализма. Венеция как городской символ становится многогранным объектом поэтического осмысления, каждый поэт, обращаясь к образу Венеции, привносит в его описании в своих произведениях особые эмоциональные и философские оттенки. Работа делится на несколько разделов, в которых рассматриваются стихотворения различных авторов: И. И. Козлова (проанализированы стихотворения «Венецианская ночь, «К Италии»), М. Ю. Лермонтова (изучено произведение «Венеция»), Ф. И. Тютчева (основное внимание сфокусировано на тексте «Венеция»), П. А. Вяземского (исследованы «Ночь в Венеции» и «Венеция») и отрывок из романа в стихах «Евгений Онегин» А. С. Пушкина.

Цель статьи заключается в выявлении того, как особенности личного восприятия поэтами города Венеции формируют образ этого города в поэзии и как этот образ соотносится с традициями европейской литературы. В процессе анализа выбранных произведений, выявляются особенности взаимодействия европейской и русской культур, выявляется роль образа Венеции в русской художественной мысли XIX века.

**Ключевые слова:** Венеция, русская поэзия, романтизм, реализм, образ города.

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