

The Language of Praise in Russian 18th Century Ode

The genre of panegyric ode goes back to funeral lamentations praising the dead, in which any kind of criticism or irreverence was inconceivable (cf. the Latin aphorism ‘*de mortuis aut bene aut nihil*’). Pindar’s *epinikia*, odes commemorating athletic victories, addressed to an aristocratic Doric audience (Geldern, 927) bear a close affinity to lamentations (*threnoi*). Pindar’s odes are characterised by a highly elevated vocabulary, references to mythology, complicated, cryptic syntax and an absence of structural unity, perceived in later epochs as a deliberate lyrical disorder resulting from poetic rapture (*furor poeticus*).¹ The odic genre was transformed by Horace, who widened the subject of his panegyrics, introducing anacreontic motifs (love, feasts, dances), addressing his works to named individuals, giving up the traditional elevated style and assuming a light secular tone coloured by irony.² The tradition of panegyric poetry was revived in the Renaissance by the French poets Pierre de Ronsard³ and François de Malherbe,⁴ who drew on both the Pindaric and the Horatian anacreontic traditions.

In the 17th and 18th centuries the odic genre was taken up in Russia by Simeon Polotsky (who composed ‘привества’), Antioch Kantemir and Vasily Trediakovsky. However, the title of ‘father of the Russian ode’ belongs to Mikhail Vasilievich Lomonosov, a true genius of the Enlightenment, a poet, scientist and the founder of the Moscow University, who endowed the ode with metrical and stanzaic forms and defined its themes and stylistic features. The theme of his odes was the glorification of the monarchs and leaders of the 18th century (‘the subject of the ode was the one addressed’, Geldern, 933); their main sentiments were delight and awe; the style was highly elevated, replete with archaic poetic words and the rhythm was four-foot iambic, deemed by Lomonosov to ‘ennoble poetic matter, increasing the nobility, splendour and status of his verse’.⁵ Although Lomonosov was proclaimed a Russian Pindar and Malherbe, his panegyrics elicited a negative reaction from Alexandr Sumarokov, who attempted to introduce low, personal, intimate, even satirical elements into his own odes (‘издевкой править нрав, смешить и пользоваться прямой её устав’⁶). The rivalry between the two styles of composing odes, each acquiring its own adepts and defenders, continued for

¹ For an analysis of the style of Pindar’s *epinikia* see: Fearn, 2017, Clay, 25–34.

² For a study of the transformation of the odic genre by Horace see: Commager 1995; Lowrie, 2009; Wilkinson, 495–499.

³ On the adaptation of the Horatian ode to rhyme see: Graves, 1967.

⁴ On Malherbe innovations into the odic tradition see: Winegarten, 1954; Rubin, 1972

⁵ Lomonosov expressed his views on poetic art in 1739 in his ‘Letter on the rules of Russian versification’ (‘Письмо о правилах российского стихотворства’).

⁶ Alexandr Sumarokov dedicated his Epistle to Ancient and contemporary European versification (Сумароков Александр, ‘Эпистола II. О стихотворстве’).

several decades: Vasilii Petrov kept to Lomonosov's tradition of high odic poetry, whereas Mikhail Kheraskov, in his philosophical odes, followed Sumarokov's style.

By the time Derzhavin entered the Russian poetic stage, Lomonosov's tradition was prevalent. Although Derzhavin based his theoretical work on lyrical poetry and his ode 'Рассуждение о лирической поэзии или об оде' (1811-1815) on the poetic principles of Lomonosov's high poetry, in practice he transgressed the canons of the classical ode. On the model of the Horatian rather than the Pindaric ode he created a kind of mixed ironic panegyric, uniting the glorification of monarchy (as embodied in Catherine the Great) with subtle criticism of royal favourites and courtiers. Transforming Lomonosov's tradition of elevated panegyric, Derzhavin created his own highly individual ('mixed') style of ode, using both upper and lower registers (Geldern 938), mixing the high and the low.

The differences and similarities between Derzhavin's and Lomonosov's odic styles become manifest through the comparison of their panegyrics to royal women: Lomonosov's Odes to Elisabeth (1746, 1747, 1748) and Derzhavin's Ode to Catherine II ('Ode to the Wisest Kirgiz-Kaisatskii Tzarevna Felitsa, Written by a Certain Mirza, Long a Resident of Moscow, but now Living in St. Petersburg because of his Affairs, Translated from Arabic in 1782'). Both Lomonosov's and Derzhavin's odes were composed in the traditional odic meter, iambic stanzas consisting of ten lines with the canonical rhyme scheme: ababccdeed. Both fashion idealised images of queens: Lomonosov employs mythological allusion (comparing himself to Pindar, referring to Parnassus, Olympic gods, e.g. Neptune, Minerva, Mars and the Muses, e.g. Urania), whereas Derzhavin structures his ode on references to Catherine's 'Tale of Prince Khlor', glorifying the object of his praise through skillful allusions to literary characters borrowed from her own composition (Машевский, 198, Ram, 100).

In his ode Lomonosov creates the image of a majestic empress, not only more beautiful than Paradise ('Душа ее зефира тише, И зрак прекраснее рая'), but also a powerful peacemaker ('Мне полно тех побед, сказала, Для коих крови льется ток') whose only concern is the prosperity and happiness of her people ('Я россов счастьем услаждаюсь, / Я их спокойством не меняюсь / На целый запад и восток'), and whose mission in life is to continue the glorious reforms of her great father ('Воздвигни нам Петрово племя / Утешь, утешь твоих людей'). The image of the Empress is idealised to the point of depriving her of any human characteristics and turning her into a symbol of the state ('О коль, Россия, ты счастлива / Елисаветиною рукой!'), which happily thrives under Elisabeth's rule.

The main aim of Lomonosov's odes was not only to glorify the queen but also council her on how to continue her rule,⁷ suggesting a programme for the development of the state and potential co-operation with other countries, for the growth of science, art and scholarship, and for the enlightenment of the people (an abundance of imperatives, e.g. *Воздвигни, Утешь, утешь* and subjunctives, e.g. *Да узрят, да возрастет* creates a tone of invocation and exhortation). Lomonosov's chief concern is not so much Elisabeth's merits, which are shown in a highly formulaic, clichéd rhetorical style (Алексеева, 344), as the future of Russia, which he loves and hopes would prosper. His ode cannot be viewed as personal poetry but rather as official state poetry of an enlightened autocracy ('просвещенный абсолютизм'); his tone is majestically triumphant, reflecting a feeling of national pride; his themes are the glorious past of Russia, its present and future, the famous victories of the Russian army, its great heroes and leaders.

In keeping with Lomonosov's treatment of the odic tradition, Derzhavin sees the monarch as a figure entrusted with the vital duty of safe-guarding the well-being of their citizens (Derzhavin offers a powerful metaphor of a helmsman, who must catch the roaring wind in his ship's sails and steer it in the right direction). Like Lomonosov, Derzhavin provides a positive programme for an ideal ruler, praising Catherine, who stops wars ('Который брани усмирил'), heals the sick ('Больных покоит, исцеляет'), enlightens all subjects without distinction ('Равно всех смертных просвещает'), opens up their minds and discovers their talents, making them love science and crafts and actively participate in trade ('Велит любить торги, науки... / Велит и ткать, и прясть, и шить; / Развязывая ум и руки'). Catherine gives her people permission to make use of the natural resources of their land ('Позволил своему народу / Сребра и золота искать; / Который воду разрешает, / И лес рубить не запрещает'), grants them freedom ('Который даровал свободу'), including the freedom to travel abroad (В чужие области скакать), whilst simultaneously teaching them to love their homeland ('И счастье дома находить'). Unlike Lomonosov, who urged Elisabeth to continue the glorious deeds of her father, Derzhavin gives Catherine a concrete, rather than an abstract programme, praising her as the most enlightened ruler in Russian history. He praises her for past and attempted deeds, exaggerating his praises in the hope that she would do more in the areas suggested in his poem.

In keeping with Lomonosov's tradition, Derzhavin creates a largely idealised portrait of the Empress ('Тебе единой лишь пристойно, Царевна! свет из тьмы творить'). However, unlike Lomonosov's representation of Catherine as a majestic, earthly goddess, a creature from Paradise and the embodiment of the state, Derzhavin's ode portrays the Empress both as a ruler and as a private person, offering a witty cascade of secular

⁷ In Lomonosov's odes monarchs were given a political instruction, concerning not only specific details but also general programmes (Гуковский, 97).

compliments addressed to a real, intelligent and refined woman (Песков, 17). In a rather intimate, familiar tone inconceivable in traditional odes, Derzhavin praises her, albeit not for what rulers were usually praised in traditional odic poetry. Catherine is shown as a modest, friendly person, highly intelligent and hard-working.

Unlike Lomonosov, who is not interested in Queen Elisabeth's way of life and behaviour (an unthinkable degradation of her image in his ode), Derzhavin tries to reveal her inner character, showing Catherine's everyday habits and manners: she spends her time writing and reading, is not fond of carnivals, does not go to clubs or free-mason meetings, does not waste time playing cards and does not try her hand at composing poetry ('Коня парнаска не седлаешь'). The rather irreverent allusion to Catherine's lack of poetic talent (Derzhavin is perhaps travestyng the majestic beginning to Lomonosov's Ode of 1746: 'На верх Парнасских гор прекрасный / Стремится мысленный мой взор') enables the poet to fashion a witty description of Catherine's attitude to poetry, full of subtle irony: 'Поэзия тебе любезна, / Приятна, сладостна, полезна, / Как летом вкусный лимонад'. Derzhavin's stanza contains a subtle allusion to Horace's famous lines 'Omne tulit punctum *qui miscuit utile dulci*, 'He who mixes the pleasant with the useful gains everyone's approval' (*Ars Poetica*, 343). Derzhavin is not afraid to state that his poetic vocation is nothing more than lemonade to Catherine, stressing her failure not only to compose poetry but also to appreciate it (Derzhavin's poetry before 'Felitsa' remained totally unnoticed by the powerful queen and her mighty courtiers). Comparison of high poetry to lemonade would have been an unpardonable debasement of poetic idiom in traditional odes with their *furor poeticus*.

In contrast to Lomonosov, who uses only positive forms of verbs (there are no negatives in his Ode of 1746, and only one in his Ode of 1748) in his praises of monarchs, Derzhavin prefers negative forms, glorifying Catherine 'from the opposite': 'как волк овец, людей не давишь'; 'стыдишься слыть ты тем великой, чтоб страшной, нелюдимой быть; медведице прилично дикой животных рвать и кровь их пить'. The poet's tone becomes more and more irreverent and witty in his comparisons of the queen to a wolf and she-bear, i.e. wild animals torturing innocent sheep. However the sheep, i.e. the subjects, obey not only the will of monarchs, but more importantly God who is manifested in law: 'Царей они подвластны воле, Но Богу правосудну боле, Живущему в законах их'. Derzhavin reminds Catherine that any monarch should obey God's law, which is the same for both the ruler and his subjects, thus edifying her, as well as her courtiers (Западов, 191). Catherine is contrasted to her predecessors, who abused their power; although their names are not given, they are easily guessable through references to famous episodes from their reigns (such as Анна Иоанновна and her 'House of Ice': 'там свадеб шутовских не парят, / в ледовых банях их не жарят'). These 'negative' examples would have been as inconceivable in

traditional classical odes, even under poetic licence (cf. Lomonosov's frequent allusions to the glorious deeds of Peter the Great), as comparisons of a monarch with bloodthirsty wild beasts.

When Derzhavin compares Catherine with previous monarchs, he shows her merits as an enlightened ruler; when he contrasts her with her courtiers, he reveals her *personal* virtues as a queen. The main opposition in Derzhavin's ode is not so much diachronic (with historical rulers) as synchronic: contrasts between the queen and her lazy, corrupt courtiers are used to reveal and ridicule several unnamed, but easily recognisable individuals. The Empress is shown as a virtuous person (stanzas 3-4), while her courtiers are represented as carefree, gluttonous and preferring self-indulgence to useful activities benefitting the state (stanza 5). The effect of this contrast is to set up an ethical juxtaposition between Felitsa (Catherine = virtue) and her courtiers (Mirza = vice), who are seen her antagonists and therefore obstacles to her reforms. The overall image of a courtier is split into individuals embodied in the figure of a lazy and corrupt mirza, providing clues to the readers allowing them to identify the specific objects of ridicule.

The poetic device of contrast underlies all levels of the ode, compositional, semantic, lexical and syntactic. The main structural contrast is of stanzas 3-4, mostly dedicated to the image of the Empress, against stanzas 5-10 which reveal the vices of her courtiers. The carefully planned composition of each stanza also embodies the principle of contrast: in both the third and the fourth stanzas the first part is contrasted with the conclusion. In both stanzaic items, the first four lines form semantic, syntactic and metrical units, separated from the second four lines by a semi-colon; these form distinct units, while the contrasting final lines summarise the meaning of both. The first eight lines of each stanza enumerate particular everyday actions of the Empress, and the concluding two (three in stanza 4) are contrasted with them both syntactically (through the contrasting conjunction 'но' in the fourth stanza, and a preposition in the third, followed by the negation: 'подобно ... не', turning it into its antonym 'unlike') and semantically, since they introduce a new theme (in the third stanza the concluding couplet introduces a contrast with the first person narrator; in the fourth stanza the conclusion summarises the character of the Empress, her general disposition and her present way of life).

The central semantic contrast of the whole ode is set up in the very first line of the stanza ('Мурзам твоим не подражая') with the help of an extremely daring comparison of the Empress to her mirzas (in all circumstances a queen is a figure incomparable to her courtiers). The word 'mirzas', borrowed from the oriental tale and providing an Oriental literary mask for the narrator, constitutes the key image of the whole poem, endowed with inherent ambiguity (it simultaneously refers to the collective image of the Empress' courtiers and the individual image of the lyrical hero, the poet himself). The contrast between the

mirzas and the Empress (the indirect reference to her is concealed by the possessive pronoun 'твоим'; the informal variant of the second person pronoun was often used as the most reverent when addressing monarchs, e.g. 'Ты, царь-батюшка' and in prayers, e.g. 'Да святится Имя Твое') is expressed through the syntactically inverted word combination 'Мурзам твоим', which is put at the absolute beginning of the third stanza. The function of this slightly affected opening style is to contrast it with the initial denotations of the Empress in the first stanza, 'Богopodobная цареvна', and the second stanza, 'Подай, Фелица!', which directly correlate with the highly idealised epithet, 'Godlike'.

Whereas the first two stanzas contain references to Catherine's 'Tale of Prince Khlor' and an invocation asking her, in the hypostasis of Felitsa, to instruct the lyrical hero (and poet) on how to combine the uncombinable – how to be both wealthy and truthful ('как пышно и правдиво жить') – in the third and the fourth stanzas the Empress is shown in the hypostasis of a private person. In contrast to her courtiers, she is described as a modest and unspoilt woman: 'Мурзам твоим не *подражая*, / *Почасту* ходишь ты *пешком*, / И *пища* самая *простая* / Бывает за твоим столом'. Lowering the traditional image of the object of the panegyric, Derzhavin tries to show the Empress's everyday habits and manners: she likes walking and eats simple food. The lines are closely connected by alliteration, emphasising the pivotal word 'простая', referring explicitly to food and implicitly to the queen herself. The vocabulary used to represent the Empress as a simple person is also extremely plain ('ходишь пешком', 'пища', 'простая', 'бывает', 'стол'), the syntactical organisation is straightforward (despite the fact that three expressive inversions are used: 'мурзам твоим', 'почасту ходишь', 'ходишь ты') and the grammar is neutral (present tense).

Simple syntax and grammar likewise pervade subsequent lines, which describe the queen as wise and studious monarch. The structure of these lines mirrors the composition of the preceding lines: both start with gerundial constructions ('не подражая', 'не дорожа') and continue with a series of syntactical parallelisms ('ходишь', 'читаешь', 'пишешь', 'проливаешь'): 'Не дорожа твоим покоем, / Читаешь, пишешь пред налоем / И всем из твоего пера / Блаженство смертным проливаешь'. These lines most likely contain a reference to Catherine's legislative activity, namely to her 'Nakaz' (Наказ императрицы Екатерины II о сочинении проекта нового Уложения, 1767), which was written to promote reforms in Russia.⁸ Credence can be lent to this hypothesis by comparing the articles of Catherine's 'Nakaz' to the stanzas of Derzhavin's poem which enumerate her actions, showing her as an enlightened ruler (17-24).

⁸ Catherine wrote herself, that having noticed contradictions between certain Russian laws, she began to read the works of Montesquieu and Cesare Beccaria and then wrote the 'Nakaz', a philosophical and legal codex, which consisted of 655 articles, addressed to the deputies of a commission (Наказ императрицы Екатерины II).

The simplicity of vocabulary is suddenly overthrown by the use of an obsolete word (in its colloquial form *налой*, derived from *аналой*), usually reserved for Church use only (it denotes a high table, where the Bible, prayer-books or icons are placed during services). This word is further emphasised by its use in a bathetic rhyme (*налом : покоем*), establishing a semantic correlation between a stylistically neutral word and an archaic poetic word in order to lower the representation of the Empress in the hypostasis of an earthly goddess, who ‘pours bliss on all mortals’ with her pen. The elevated style, manifested in the quasi-religious lexicon of ‘*Блаженство смертным проливаешь*’, ironically contradicts the simplicity of vocabulary in the preceding lines, while keeping to the elevated style of the word ‘*налой*’. Derzhavin’s play on the motif of a substance pouring from the nib of a pen, be it ink on paper or bliss on mortals, conveys a subtle irony on the part of the poet towards his Empress.

The action of ‘pouring bliss’ (performed by the Empress and expressed through high lexicon) is contrasted with the action of playing cards (referring to the lyrical hero or the mirza and expressed with the help of a stylistically neutral or even low lexicon) and enhanced by syntactical parallelism and rhyme (*проливаешь – не играешь*). The appearance of the lyrical ‘I’ of the poet in the final line of the third stanza reflects the ambivalence of the image of the mirza. As against the first line of the stanza, where the word ‘mirzas’ is used in the plural, there is a highly meaningful shift in the main contrast underlying the ode: the juxtaposition in the last line is no longer between the corrupt courtier and the Empress but between the lyrical hero/poet and the Empress.

In the concluding lines the lyrical hero states that, unlike himself, Catherine does not play cards from morning till night, albeit the conjunction he uses does not express the idea of contrast, which is only established with the help of negation (*не играешь*). The very idea of comparing the Empress to the lyrical ‘I’ is extremely audacious, even irreverent. However the main question lies in whether the poet, accusing himself of spending too long playing cards, was unaware of how passionately Catherine herself loved playing cards (Сахаров, 1995). A clue is provided by the temporal adverbial modifier ‘from morning to morning’, creating an effect of subtle irony in the juxtaposition of the lyrical ‘I’ to the Empress: the only difference between them becomes the length of time each is prepared to devote to the addictive but unelevated game.

The beginning of the fourth line contains a similar statement contradicting the historical image of Catherine II (‘*не слишком любишь маскарады*’), who was very fond of masquerades (like the poet himself who uses the literary masks of her Oriental masquerade in ‘The Tale of Prince Khlor’). The word ‘masquerades’ could be interpreted metaphorically as meaning empty false pretenses (cf. Nina’s words in Lermontov’s ‘Masquerade’: ‘*Сейчас отдать я рада / Всю эту ветошь маскарада, / Весь этот блеск, и шум, и чад / За полку*

книг, за дикий сад'), had it not been for the fact that the first phrase of the stanza ('не слишком') which rules out such an interpretation. With this phrase as a clue to the meaning of the line, it is possible to counter any accusation that the poet was ignorant of the Empress's habits and to interpret it as meaning that Catherine displayed self-restraint in her fondness of masquerades.

The tentativeness of the reference to masquerades contrasts with the tone of almost imperative certainty in the second line ('А в клуб не ступишь и ногой') enhanced by the use of the idiomatic phraseology ('ступить ногой'). The contrast between the two lines is underlined by the use of the conjunction 'А': masquerades which Catherine possibly likes, but not too much, are opposed to a club, which she never enters. It is likely that Derzhavin was referring to the English Club, which first appeared in St Petersburg in 1770. In the first years of Catherine's reign, foreigners, especially English merchants, held meetings in a Dutch inn; at the beginning of 1770 its owner, Cornelius Gardiner, proposed to close it, but one of its patrons, Francis Gardner, suggested setting up a club. The club, whose motto was *Concordia et laetitia*, initially had fifty members, but within a year this increased to two-hundred and sixty, and the number of members was subsequently restricted to three-hundred. In 1772 an English Club was set up in Moscow and became more famous than its forerunner in St Petersburg. Since women were not allowed to enter either club, Derzhavin could safely write that Catherine would not set foot in it.

Two kinds of entertainment associated with foreign customs (masquerades and clubs), which form the subject of the first lines of the second stanza, are contrasted with the next two lines, glorifying Catherine for following indigenous traditions and customs: 'Храня обычаи, обряды, / Не донкишотствуешь собой'. The semantic opposition of foreign and native is enhanced with the help of a highly meaningful rhyme (on the contextual antonyms маскарады : обряды), syntax (a syntactically complete sentence, starting like two sentences of the second stanza with a gerundial construction) and punctuation (the use of a semi-colon to separate the couplet from both the preceding and the following lines). Praising the Empress for respecting and maintaining native traditions is highly original and unexpected, not only because of her German origin but also because, in the minds of contemporaries, Russian Classicism was perceived as lacking genuine interest in native customs and folklore. Normally opponents of the Enlightenment were the ones to shun innovations and retained customs which had been confirmed and sanctified by tradition (Лютман, 366). There was a commonplace antithesis between a traditionalist on the one hand, opposed to the ideas of Enlightenment and maintaining native customs, and on the other hand a theorist associated with an abstract noun formed by Derzhavin from Cervantes' proper name Don Quixote (донкишотство covers a whole cluster of linked meanings: fantasising, fighting with

imagined evil, not taking into account one's own strength and resources, as well as constructing unrealistic political theories).⁹ Derzhavin breaks the cliché by praising Catherine for her interest in native customs and traditions, simultaneously contrasting her to those who construct empty, unrealistic theories (Не донкишотствуешь собой). His praise was based on firm grounds: it is a well-known fact that after composing her 'Nakaz' she gave it to a committee for revision, asking them to cut out any points which were not applicable to the realities of Russian life and the committee excised more than half of her articles.

Although Catherine composed not only 'Nakaz' but other literary works, including 'The Tale of Prince Khlor', she could not compose poetry; the arias and poems for her works were composed by her secretaries (Elagin, Khrapovitsky et al.). This lack of poetic talent is formulated in an extremely poetic, yet ironic line, containing one of the few references to Classical mythology in Derzhavin's ode 'Коня парнаска не седлаешь'. The horse of Parnassus, mentioned by Derzhavin, is Pegasus, the snow-white winged horse of Bellerophon, friend of the Muses, who, according to Hesiod's *Theogony*, created the poetic fountain of Hippocrene ('horse-spring'), which became a symbol of poetry and poetic inspiration. Mount Parnassus, home to the Muses and Orpheus, son of Caliope, a site associated with the poetic spring of Castalia and the Oracle of Delphi, sacred to Apollo, was a traditional motif in the odic genre. In his reference to Parnassus Derzhavin is perhaps travesty the majestic beginning of traditional panegyric odes from Pindar (Olympian Ode 13) to Lomonosov (Ode, 1746: На верх Парнасских гор прекрасный / Стремится мысленный мой взор), which enables him to create an ironic clash with the witty account of Catherine's view of poetry as lemonade in stanza 15.

The image of the Empress riding a horse is pursued in the subsequent lines, following the description of Catherine not attempting to saddle Pegasus: 'Коня парнаска не седлаешь / К духам в собранье не въезжаешь, / Не ходишь с трона на Восток'. The syntactical parallelism supported by rhyme 'не седлаешь: не въезжаешь', suggests the image of the Empress riding her horse, as she is frequently shown in equestrian portraits. Catherine is described as not riding to the Free-masons, whom she called 'the sects of the spirits' (К духам в собранье) (Дневник Храповицкого, 31) and whose lodges were called by their members 'the East' (на Восток) (Вернадский, 451). In the 18th century the Free-masons with their mystical-moral theories constituted a powerful opposition not only to Catherine's ideas of Enlightenment but also to her ministers (Западов В., 375). The so-called Moscow Martinists, such as the famous writer N.I. Novikov, were especially hostile to the Empress, considering her a usurper, on whose throne they wished rather to see her son Pavel, the lawful

⁹ 'The identification of 'quixotism' with political doctrinarian theories and armchair revolutionary ideas was included into the usage of the epoch' (Лотман, 367).

descendant of her abdicated husband Peter III (it has been suggested that Pavel himself belonged to the Martinists) (Западов В., 375). Catherine not only never attended Martinist meetings, as Derzhavin says, but also tried to ridicule them in her comedies ('Шаман сибирский', 'Обманщик', 'Обольщенный') and even wrote a parody of the Free-masons' statutes ('Тайна противо-нелепого общества'). In 1789-93 she managed to destroy the Moscow Martinists with the help of police measures (Западов В., 375).

The image of movement (riding, walking) is continued in the concluding lines of the third stanza, in which the verb 'to go' is used twice in neighbouring lines: 'Не **ходишь**... / Но кротости **ходя** стезею...'. This verbal repetition has the function of underlining the contrast between two actions of the Empress, who does not attend Free-masons' meetings and, instead of confronting them, follows a path of meekness: 'Но кротости **ходя** стезею / Благотворящею душою, / **Полезных** дней **проводишь ток**'. Thus Catherine's path is contrasted with that of Free-masons as being not only meek, but also benevolent and beneficent for her people and the state. The alliteration and assonance in the last lines enhances the effect of a high elevated style created by the use of the words 'стезею', 'благотворящею' and 'ток', which belong to obsolete, highly poetic vocabulary.

The Empress is presented in action, emphasised with the help of numerous verbs which prevail in her description: in two ten-line stanzas, from which the lines above were quoted, there are 14 verbal forms, all indicative,¹⁰ as opposed to Lomonosov's subjunctives and imperatives, and mostly finite ('не подражая', 'ходишь', 'бывает', 'читаешь', 'пишешь', 'проливаешь', 'не играешь', 'не любишь', 'не ступишь', 'не донкишотствуешь', 'не седлаешь', 'не въезжаешь', 'не ходишь', 'проводишь'). Most of these verbal forms are used in the negative, which helps the poet glorify Catherine without seeming hyperbolic. By revealing Catherine's inner character through her daily way of life and behaviour, Derzhavin creates a powerful contrast between the virtue of the queen and the corruption of her courtiers, represented in the next stanza with the help of the first person pronoun 'I', included in the image of the 'mirza'. This complex image is used in satirical passages as collocating various vices of the ridiculed courtiers, whereas in the elevated parts of the ode it is applied to the lyrical 'I' of the author, endowed with particular autobiographical features (Derzhavin was a descendant of a Tartar mirza, Bagrim).

The social image of the courtier embodied in the collective figure of a lazy mirza, who in contrast to the Empress is shown as static (sleeping, smoking, drinking, except in the last line, which introduces the image of riding), is given concrete individual characteristics as appropriate: 'А я, **проспавши** до **полудни**, / **Курю** табак и кофе **нюю**; / **Преображая** в **праздник** будни, / **Кружу** в химерах мысль мою...'). Thus the reader is provided with clues

¹⁰ Derzhavin uses only subjunctives and imperatives in the last three stanzas of 'Felitsa'.

which enable him to identify specific objects of ridicule. The lines quoted above with their insistent alliteration on ‘П’ and ‘К’, creating an image of a snoring and smoking courtier, and appealing to the reader’s senses of smell, hearing and taste, reproduce (through anagram) the sound structure of the name of one of Catherine’s favourites, Grigory Potemkin, who during her reign attained great power and glory (he was given the title Светлейший) and amazed his contemporaries with his luxurious life style. The lines, beginning with the anaphoric particle ‘То’, helping to express the idea of random rushing from one action to another (‘То стрелы к туркам обращаю / То плен от персов похищаю’), are based on historical facts of Potemkin’s biography. In 1769 he became a volunteer and took part in the war against Turkey, took captive Turkish ships (hence, ‘стрелы к туркам обращаю’) and achieved fame for his heroic conduct in the battles of Khotin, Fokshany, Larga and Kabul.

When he became Catherine’s favourite, Potemkin took a special interest in protecting the southern borders of Russia, which were threatened by Turkish and Persian invasions. After he fell out of favour, Potemkin retained his influence over the Empress and exchanged letters with her, in which he outlined his grandiose but not always realistic projects. Some of them, e.g. the project of annexing the Crimea, were very successful, others, e.g. of forming a new Byzantine state, including Turkey (his famous ‘Greek project’) less so. His colonising activities in southern Russia were perhaps the grandest and most daring of all his deeds. He spared neither himself (nor people nor expense), in trying to found new cities, grow woods and vine-yards, establish schools, universities, plants and factories, publishing houses, glass and silk production. Some of his projects however remained unfinished or even only on paper, which prompted Derzhavin to include a line referring to chimeras: ‘Кружу в химерах мысль мою’. The poet’s mythological allusion to a Chimera, a monster with a lion’s head, the body of a goat, a snake’s tail, metaphorically denotes an implausible, wildly imaginative dream.

The poet stresses the inconstancy and wild swings of his character’s moods, floundering between dreams of subordinating Turkey and becoming its ruler (‘То, возмечтав, что я султан’) as well as intimidating the universe with one glance (‘Вселенну устрашаю взглядом’), expressed with the help of an elevated vocabulary (‘возмечтать’, ‘Вселенна’, ‘устрашать’), and mundane actions such as riding to the tailor and ordering clothes (‘То вдруг, прельщаяся нарядом, / Скачу к портному по кафтан’), described through a stylistically low lexicon (‘скакать’, ‘портной’, ‘кафтан’). These mundane activities, expressed in the concluding couplet with the help of syntactical parallelism and bathetic rhyme (султан : кафтан), as if summarise the fruitlessness of all the endeavours enumerated in the previous eight lines: a ruler who seeks to intimidate the universe ends up riding to a tailor for a new kaftan.¹¹ The constant repetition of the anaphoric particle ‘То’, as well as the

¹¹ As was pointed out by I.Serman, the ‘intimidation’ of the universe takes up the same place in Potemkin’s mind, as the new suit (kaftan) (Серман, 57).

use of syntactical parallelism and contrasting vocabulary, debases his great dreams to the level of mundane actions, making them all seem equally petty and undeserving of attention. The use of the gerundial form 'прельщаяся' brings to mind the noun with the same the root 'прелесть', from the Church Slavonic 'лесть', meaning a spiritual delusion, a lie (cf. Derzhavin's reference to Psalm 115 in stanza 11: 'но всякий человек есть ложь'), introducing the theme of spiritual delusion, pride, self-importance. While courtiers are lazily indulging in pride and self-delusion or (in the case of Potemkin) wasting their energy in pursuit of endless chimeras, Catherine is described as active and 'meek', hard-working and modest.

The principle of poetic contrast is picked up in the syntactic structure of the stanzas referring to the Empress and her mirza: the grammatical structure based on gerundial constructions in stanza 5 ('проспавши по полудни, преображая праздник в будни, возмечтав, что я султан, прельщаяся нарядом') mirrors the organisation of stanzas 3-4 ('не подражая, не дорожа покоем, храня обычаи, кротости ходя стезею'). Activities traditionally associated with female images (dreaming, sleeping, being fascinated by clothes, organising feasts and holidays) are contrasted with typically 'male' actions (not imitating, not resting, preserving traditions, reading and writing). Contrast is further pursued in the image of riding (associated with the mirza), re-appearing in the last line of the fifth stanza (скачу) as opposed to walking (associated with the Empress). In the previous stanza (the fourth) the empress was described as not saddling a horse ('коня не седлаешь'), and not riding it ('не въезжаешь'), but as walking along the path of meekness ('ходя'). In the third stanza she was also described as walking ('ходишь ты пешком'), unlike her corrupt mirzas ('Мурзам твоим не подражая'), who like Potemkin preferred riding. The humorous representation of the negative example of the mirza and the introduction of ironic hints related to the Empress's human weaknesses only emphasise the respect elicited by her achievements and make the panegyric all the more effective and credible.

Derzhavin's ode includes hints relating to another of Catherine's favourites, Alexey Orlov, who is alluded to in the funny but highly irreverent image of a promiscuous man, fond of young girls ('На бархатном диване лежа, / Младой девицы чувства нежа'), drinking ('В шинки пить меду заезжаю') and horses ('Лечу на резвом бегуне'). At least three more of Catherine's courtiers are recognisable as objects of ridicule in Derzhavin's poem: Petr Panin, preoccupied with hunting rather than affairs of state ('Или, о всех делах заботу / Оставя, езжу на охоту'); Semen Naryshkin, fond of music (organs and bag-pipes), singing and dancing ('музыкой и певцами, / Органом и волынкой вдруг'); and Alexandr Vyazemsky, a senator and prosecutor-general ('Полкана и Бову читаю / За библией, зевая, сплю'). Critical references to specific individuals (Машевский, 200) and vivid details of their

everyday lives can be regarded as Derzhavin's daring innovations into the odic genre, unimaginable in Lomonosov's panegyrics.

The ambiguity of the collective social image of the 'mirza', contrasted with the individual image of Catherine, is the most striking innovation introduced by Derzhavin into his ode. In passages bordering on satire, similar to those quoted above, a collective image, including various vices of the ridiculed courtiers, is presented.¹² To some extent, using self-irony, Derzhavin includes himself into this humorous image ('Таков, Фелица, я развратен!'). However, in the elevated parts of the ode, a lyrical 'I' of the author emerges, endowed with concrete autobiographical features.

The emergence of an authorial 'I' in the ode, a concrete image of the poet himself, was a fact of great literary importance. Although Lomonosov's odes also start with addresses in the first person: 'Я духом зрю минувшее время' (1746), his 'I' does not refer to the individual personality of the author, but rather to the abstract, highly conventional figure of a poet, which is an indispensable poetic image in the odic genre. The conventional odic 'I' is akin to the satirical 'I', the only difference being a note of elevated glorification in the former and a note of indignant condemnation in the latter. In Derzhavin's poem, the borders between the two genres (ode and satire) are broken down: praise is united with libel, irony permeates praise. This mixture of ode and satire accounts for the fact that Derzhavin's contemporaries 'heard a conspicuously sincere voice in his poetry' (Goldberg, 225). As was pointed out by scholars, Derzhavin was earnest in his praises of Catherine, wanting to appear as sincere before his audience (Гуковский, 422; Западов, 190).

Instead of the conventional poetic 'I', there appears an individual 'I', the living personality of the poet himself, combining genuine personal respect and admiration for the object of his praise with contempt for the objects of blame (a fusion going back to the ideas of the Enlightenment, whose representatives saw life as a constant struggle between truth and delusion). The poet not only glorifies the former in a tone which reveals his individual feeling (Алексеева, 334) but also expresses a whole variety of other feelings for the latter: anger, blame, subtle irony, self-pity, using language appropriate to each feeling and situation. He talks about his worries and concerns, his friends and enemies, creating living images in poetry and thus taking a step towards the emergence of Russian realistic poetry.¹³

The personality of the author is not hidden in Derzhavin's ode but becomes a major subject of poetic representation, no less important than the object of praise. Derzhavin created his own image of the poet in his ode, the image of a brave, truthful person, who is not afraid to tell the truth to those in power (as he proudly proclaims in his 'Памятник': 'Истину царям

¹² A.L. Crone points out that the lyrical hero of the ode mirrors the vices of Catherine's courtiers, which facilitates the introduction of humour (Crone, 2001, 129-130).

¹³ As was noted by Khodasevich: 'Не должно, однако, смотреть на 'Фелицу' как на преобразование оды. На самом деле то было не преобразование, а разрушение' (Ходасевич, 105).

с улыбкой говорить'), who talks with them in a tone of intimate irreverence (which he calls a great merit in his 'Памятник': 'первый я дерзнул в забавном русском слогe / O добродетелях Фелицы возгласить') about everyday 'petty' things, which are of interest to him and which he therefore expects to be equally important to them. Insisting on his right to remain himself, he creates a new role for the poet as a private, unofficial but well-informed individual (Песков, 16), able to talk about high subjects in an ironic familiarising style and to introduce low subjects into high poetry.

Derzhavin makes a discovery of the highest importance: nothing is too low a subject for poetry (Машевский, 199). Poetry can serve as a faithful tool in descriptions of everyday enjoyments of a lyrical hero, including climbing a dovecot with his wife or searching for lice in her hair; it reveals his failings but also expresses his tastes, his views, his ability to enjoy life and admire it. Concrete pictures of everyday life, described with the help of colloquial, low language, had never before Derzhavin become the subject of high panegyric poetry.

The main stylistic innovation of Derzhavin's ode consists in breaking the linguistic hierarchy of Classicism, mixing high and low vocabulary¹⁴ (even in rhyme, e.g. зоилам: крокодилам, невежды: вежды, лирный лад : лимонад, вельмож : рож), using an ironic light style diametrically opposite to Lomonosov's elevated style. Derzhavin called his style 'amusing Russian speech' ('забавный русский слог'), perhaps implying that Lomonosov's theory of three styles had become too confined for him. As noted by critics, Derzhavin's introduction of colloquial language into poetry contributed to the strengthening of the national-democratic basis of the Russian language (Западов, 282).

Thus, the linguistic canons of the classical ode (e.g. highly elevated style, the use of archaic vocabulary) were transgressed by Derzhavin, who created, on the model of Horatian rather than Pindaric odes, a language of ironic panegyric, uniting the praise of monarchy, as embodied in Empress Catherine the Great, with subtle criticism of her favourites and courtiers. Moving away from Lomonosov's tradition of elevated panegyric propaganda, Derzhavin created his own highly individual style of ode, using both upper and lower registers of language. A list of the main principles of Derzhavin's poetics gives a summary insight into the nature of his innovations in the traditional form of the ode: the destruction of genre hierarchy through the mixing of the high and the low, of praise and irony, glorification and satire, which traditionally was only acceptable in low genres (such as comedy and fable); the substitution of mythological motifs with literary allusions; a new interpretation of the image of a ruler; a new type of praise mingled with irony; a new mode of indirect praise (contrasting the main subject to corrupt courtiers and alluding to literary characters); a new attitude to the object of praise, incorporating some irreverent familiarity (cf. Lomonosov's

¹⁴ As was noted by critics, Derzhavin's ode contains around 35 % low style vocabulary (Crone, 18)

signature всеподданнейший раб); the emergence of the lyrical 'I', endowed with personal feeling; the inclusion of elements of autobiography and concrete pictures of everyday life; the creation of a new poetic language, combining colloquial and elevated, everyday and majestic, serving to achieve political, social and ethical aims. The result of these innovations is a poem only loosely connected with the traditional form of ode, stretching the conventions of panegyric poetry to breaking point, violating rather than following the odic canon.

Primary Sources:

1. Ломоносов, М.В. (2011). Полное собрание сочинений в 10 томах. Ред. Ю.С.Осипов. Москва: Наука.
2. Державин, Г.Р. (2014-2019). Собрание сочинений в 10 томах. Ред. АА.Замостьянов. Москва: Народное образование.
3. Г.Р. Державин (1957). Стихотворения. Вступительная статья, подготовка и общая редакция Д.Д. Благого, примечания В.А. Запедова. Ленинград: Советский писатель, Библиотека поэта; Большая серия.

Secondary Literature:

4. Clay, J.St. (1999). Pindar's Symptotic 'Epinicia.' *Quaderni Urbinati Di Cultura Classica*, vol. 62, no. 2, pp. 25–34.
5. Commager St. (1995). *The Odes of Horace: A Critical Study*. University of Oklahoma Press.
6. Crone A.L. (1998). 'Derzhavin's 'Na Schastie' as the Undoing of 'Felica': Reflections on Derzhavin's Anti-Ode. *Russian Literature*, 44, 1998, 1, p. 17–40.
7. Crone A.L. (2001). *The Daring of Derzhavin: The Moral and Aesthetic Independence of the Poet in Russia*, Indiana University Bloomington: Slavica Publishers.
8. Fearn, D. (2017). *Pindar's Eyes: Visual and Material Culture in Epinician Poetry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
9. Goldberg, S.H. (2017). The Poetic Device and the Problem of Sincerity in Gavrila Derzhavin's Verse. *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 95, No. 2, p. 221-251.
10. Geldern, J. von. (1991). The Ode as a Performative Genre. In: *Slavic Review*. Vol. 50. No. 4, p. 927-939.
11. Graves, C. (1967). *Lyrics of Ronsard*. London: Oliver and Boyd.
12. Lowrie, M. (2009). *Horace: Odes and Epodes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
13. Ram, H. (2006). *The Imperial Sublime: A Russian Poetics of Empire*. Publications of the Wisconsin Center for Pushkin Studies. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.
14. Rubin, D.L. (1972). *Higher, Hidden Order: Design and Meaning in the Odes of Malherbe*. University of North Carolina Press.
15. Wilkinson, L.P. (1956). The Earliest Odes of Horace. *Hermes*, vol. 84, no. 4, pp. 495–499.

16. Winegarten, R. (1954). *French Lyric Poetry in the Age of Malherbe*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
17. Алексеева, Н.Ю. (2005). *Русская ода. Развитие одической формы в XVII-XVIII веках*. Санкт-Петербург: Наука.
18. Барсуков, Н. (ред.) (1902). *Дневник Храповицкого с 18 января 1782 по 17 сентября 1793*. Москва: Университетская типография.
19. Гуковский, Г.А. (2003). *Русская литература XVIII века*. Москва: Классический учебник.
20. Западов, А.В. (1968). *Николай Иванович Новиков*. Москва: Молодая Гвардия.
21. Западов, А.В. (1979). *Поэты XVIII века. М.В.Ломоносов, Г.Р.Державин*. Литературные очерки. Москва: Издательство МГУ.
22. Западов В.А. (1957). Примечания. In: Г.Р. Державин Стихотворения. Общая редакция Д.Д. Благого, Ленинград: Советский писатель, Библиотека поэта; Большая серия.
23. Вернадский, Г.В. (1917). *Русское масонство в царствование Екатерины II*. Петроград: Тип. АО тип. дела в Петрограде.
24. Лотман, Ю.М. (1996). *О поэтах и поэзии: анализ поэтического текста*. СПб: Искусство.
25. Машевский, А.Г. (2000). «Поддай, Фелица, наставленье...». *Вопросы литературы*, 2. С. 198-215.
26. Песков, А.М. (1984). О поэзии Ломоносова и о поэзии Державина. В: *М.В.Ломоносов. Г.Р.Державин. Избранное*. Москва: Правда.
27. Сахаров, А.Н. (1995). *Екатерина Великая*. Том 2. Москва: Армада.
28. Серман, И.З. (1967). *Гаврила Романович Державин*. Ленинград: Издательство Просвещение.
29. Ходасевич, В.Ф. (1988). *Державин*. Москва: Книга.
30. Чечулин, Н.Д. (ред.) (1907). *Наказ императрицы Екатерины II, данный Комиссии о сочинении проекта нового Уложения*. Санкт-Петербург: типография Академии наук.