

Disavowing any claim to be a parallel history, *Stuarts and Romanovs* nevertheless (as the Preface concedes) ‘encourages comparisons’ (ix) which sometimes strike the reader with their appositeness: the vicissitudes of Charles I in 1648, for example, had some parallel in the real danger of a popular uprising that confronted Aleksei Mikhailovich in the same year. Four decades later, while William III was defending his position from the legitimist backlash, Peter I had to deal with the threat to his authority posed by the *streltsy* and Sophia. And although it is more (or less) than the history of two families, the book contrives to end, as it began, on a note of dynastic intrigue, the project to find an English bride for Ivan IV finding its reflection in an even less likely putative plan for a marriage between the Empress Elizabeth and Bonnie Prince Charlie.

Joint authorship inevitably presents challenges and problems in an undertaking such as this. The solution adopted was to assign to each author a particular area of responsibility: commerce to Kotilaine, diplomacy to Herd and war to Dukes, who also assumed the task of overall editorship. The result is a lucid, coherent and stylistically harmonious whole, although different readers will no doubt find some parts more readable than the rest, and others may regret the necessity of the frequent recapitulations as the different strands in the narrative are woven together. The volume is handsomely produced, with twenty-one monochrome illustrations, including some rare contemporary views of Arkhangelsk, Vologda and Narva.

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Eternity Can Wait: Alec Derwent Hope and Other Poets = Vechnost' podozhdet: Alek Derwent Xoup i drugie poety, translated by Galina Lazareva (Moscow: Rudomino, 2011), 159 pp.

Galina Lazareva was the winner of the 2010 prize for poetry translation awarded by the Pushkin in Britain Festival of Russian Poetry and Culture which has been held in London annually since 2003. In publishing this volume, she has chosen to focus on the work of the Australian poet A. D. Hope, which is here presented to a Russophone audience for the first time.

Australian poetry is not well known in Russia, but Hope is the sort of poet likely to appeal to readers brought up on the classic Russian poetic tradition. Hope himself felt a strong affinity for Russian language and culture. He learned to read and speak Russian from members of the Sydney émigré community in the 1930s and, particularly after his retirement from the English Department of the Australian National University in 1967, engaged in several translation and writing projects in Russian literature. Specifically, he was drawn to the Acmeist ‘semantic’ tradition of Mandelstam and Akhmatova, on both of whom he published critical articles. Hope’s own work, indeed, can be placed in a similar context of international, ‘tempered’ modernism (see K. Blythe Painter, *Blythe Painter, Flint on a Bright Stone: A Revolution of Precision and Restraint in American, Russian, and German Modernism*, Stanford, 2006; D. Wells, ‘A. D. Hope and the Poetics of Acmeism’, *Southerly*, 2008, no. 3, Long Paddock). While rejecting Symbolist abstraction and mysticism, ‘tempered’ modernist writers preserved the Symbolist belief in the importance of poets as continuators of the cultural heritage, but within a framework of representational expression privileging exactness of expression and the existence of objects in their own right. In Hope’s poetry this approach translates to an extensive use of mythological subjects as types of human emotion, a deep-rooted concern with the physicality of being alongside the ambiguities of communion through love, a constant awareness of the poetic tradition, and a belief in the regenerative power of art. Hope also has a strongly developed sense of poetic form, which emphasizes clarity of expression and insists on metre and rhyme as the essential building blocks of poetic creation – he notoriously defined free verse as ‘a very cheap and popular substitute for poetry’ (*The Cave and the Spring*, 2nd edn, Sydney, 1974, 38).

In her introduction Lazareva notes that although she was not previously familiar with Hope’s work, on first encountering it on the Web she felt an instant sympathy and attraction. Some of Hope’s best known poems – ‘Australia’ and ‘Imperial Adam’, for example – are not included among the twenty-five poems which she translates, but Lazareva’s selection, given here with English and Russian texts on facing pages, does provide a good overview of the themes and sensibilities of his work. ‘The End of a Journey’, which imagines Odysseus’ sense of anti-climax following his final homecoming to Ithaca, illustrates Hope’s favoured device of looking at mythological scenes from a de-centred point of view. ‘Observation Car’ and ‘The Death of the Bird’ are characteristic meditations on the passing

of time and the growth of wisdom. ‘The Female Principle’ and ‘The Gateway’ illustrate his interest in the complex rhythms of sexuality and love. Lazareva also includes two of Hope’s responses to other poets from *A Book of Answers* – one addressed to Marvell and the other to Hope’s friend and fellow poet David Campbell – showing himself in a lighter vein, playing with poetic conventions and delighting in the power of language and cultural repetition.

Hope was a translator himself and held particular views on poetic translation. He held the position that the purpose of translating poetry is not to create a ‘simulacrum of the original in another language’, but rather to reproduce ‘the original process of composition’ and ‘let the world and the language of the original poem take over and speak through’ the translator (Hope, ‘Anna Akhmatova: The Secrets of The Craft’, *Quadrant*, Sept. 1977, 8). Lazareva takes a similar view. In recreating Hope’s poetry for a Russian reader she often departs significantly from his actual words, to reproduce, in Russian, within a relatively conservative prosody, the sentiments behind them.

For example, the first stanza of ‘Observation Car’ reads:

To be put on the train and kissed and given my ticket,
Then the station slid backward, the shops and the neon lighting,
Reeling off in a drunken blur, with a whole pound note in my pocket
And the holiday packed with Perhaps. It used to be very exciting.

Lazareva renders this as:

Полусумрак вагонный, билет, поцелуй на прощанье,
Оживленный перрон, в темноту отплывающий плавно,
Хоровод привокзальных огней; я один, с целым фунтом в кармане,
И колеса стучат: «может быть, может быть»... Это было так славно...

Some detail is inevitably lost: the explicit mention of ‘holiday’, for instance, and the reference to shops and to neon. The darkness of the station, while arguably implied in the original, is disproportionately emphasised, and ‘хоровод привокзальных огней’ produces a much more stately impression than the perceptual disruption implied by ‘reeling off in a drunken blur’. The broken anapaests of Hope’s original, representing the lurching motion of the train, are replaced by a much smoother anapaestic rhythm, requiring the message of the train’s progress to be spelled out: ‘И колеса кричат: «может быть, может быть»...’ But the

overall impression of the stanza remains remarkably close to Hope's intention – a series of vivid images conveying the sense of expectation in a boy's long train journey alone – and the poem as a whole retains the combination of clear reasoned argument and startling image or comparison so characteristic of Hope's writing. When Hope's poetry is informed by the circumstances of Australian life it generally looks through these circumstances to a broader human reality, and this means that the sentiment, if not the exact words, can be translated with some confidence. In Lazareva, Hope has found a sympathetic and attentive interpreter with a fine ear for Hope's and her own language – a translator, indeed, of whom he would have been proud.

Lazareva's volume also contains a small selection of translations from other English-language poets (and one Spanish), including her entries for the 2010 and 2011 Pushkin in Britain Festivals, ranging chronologically from John Aubrey in the seventeenth century to the young Melbourne-based poet Emilie Zoey Baker. Lazareva uses the same techniques here as when translating Hope, and shows great versatility in breathing a new Russian life into the original texts.

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Dominic Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon: The True Story of the Campaigns of War and Peace* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2010), 618 pp.

Few events in modern history have captured the popular imagination as strongly as the fate of Napoleon's *Grande Armée* in Russia. Artistic tributes have been many and varied, from Tchaikovsky's rousing '1812 Overture' to the paintings depicting French soldiers frozen in the snow. Probably no one has done more to shape the modern understanding of Russia's war against Napoleon than Leo Tolstoy. Indeed, for many, Russia's war against the French *is* the war as depicted in the writer's magnum opus *War and Peace*. The publication of Dominic Lieven's *Russia against Napoleon: The True Story of the Campaigns of War and Peace* is likely going to change that. In the introduction Lieven admits his long-standing desire to set the record straight: 'I am an old-fashioned historian who likes his stories to be true, or at least as close to the truth as an honest, knowledgeable and meticulous study of the available evidence allows.... Hearing an untrue tale