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“The European Plot” in the Russian Literary Tradition at the End of the 17th Century

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The paper analyses the notes of Boris Petrovich Sheremetev, general field marshal, the diplomat of Peter I era, about his travel to Europe. These notes are a monument of the Russian fiction at the turn of the 17th–18th centuries. The composition allows answering the following questions about the process of a fictionalization of documentary books in Russia in a transition period of developing Russian literature; what new subjects, plots, motives define literary process; how the position of those who made a book monument changed. The author pays special attention to the description of the literary methods used by B.P. Sheremetev. They helped to create a new image of Europe in Russian fiction at the end of the 17th century and presented Russian people a bright and interesting world. The paper is aimed at experts in the field of Medieval studies, the historians of literature who are engaged in studying the problem of forming and developing the genre system in a transition period of Russian literature (the second half of the 17th – the beginning of the 18th century).

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The turn of 17th – beginning of the 18th century in Russian history marked the rising interest of Russian people in Western Europe, its traditions, way of life. One consequence of a new vector in state reforms was fostering a diplomatic dialogue between Russia and the European countries, initiated by the Great Embassy in 1697-1698. The example of Peter I, who established a tradition of active learning about the European world, made his colleagues and government officials travel to the West on their own and not only for implement the foreign

policy objectives, but also for opening new cultural space for themselves. One of the events accompanying the journey was the process of writing their descriptions – “travel notes” (Tolstoy, 1992; Matveev, 1972).

The genesis of the genre of literary travel is a separate issue, a subject of scientific research in the Russian literary criticism in various aspects (Kirillin, 2002, 48-54). However, the common issue that characterizes the genre at different stages of its evolution (from Ancient Rus to modern times) is its position between

literature and business literacy. This feature "travel literature" has been pointed out in the works of many researchers (Likhachev, 1954, 319-346; Belobrova, 1972, 257-265; Prokof'ev, 1984, 5-25; Travnikov, 1991; Glushanina, 1992, 41-50; Mikhailov, 1999), which allows us to trace the evolution of philosophical ideas in separate books of the author. The author's worldview found its expression in the reconstruction of travel itinerary.

The tradition of travel essays, which gained acceptance in the transition period in the development of Russian literature (at the verge of the 17th-18th centuries), embraces "The travel notes of count Boris Petrovich Sheremetev to the European countries, to Krakow, Vienna, Venice, Rome, and the Maltese island (hereinafter referred to as "B.P. Sheremetev's notes"). Historical reasons, circumstances, details of the route, the effects of B.P. Sheremetev's travel to Europe, which lasted for almost two years (June 22, 1697 – February 10, 1699), have been discussed in detail and described in the literature; the text of this work itself is available in several editions (Ol'shevskaja, Reshetova, Travnikov, 2013, 337-374).

Such a long pilgrimage of the Russian person in Western Europe in itself is a good example of how the view of the world had changed by the end of the 17th century. It is known that according to medieval cosmography, the western part of the world was assigned the role of hell in the Russian Orthodox perception, which was vividly portrayed in the iconographic tradition of the "Last Judgment". And vice versa, the eastern part of the universe was seen as a center of holiness, heavenly bliss. "And the Lord God planted a garden *toward the east*, in Eden (emphasis added); and there He placed the man whom He had formed", – this is the first mention of the geographical location of Paradise in Scripture (Genesis 2: 8).

The tradition of pilgrimage literature, beginning with "The Journey" by hegumen Daniel (beginning of the 12th century) ("The Journey", 1997, 26-118), successively implanted the idea of the need for the commission of a Christian spiritual feat, associated with a visit to the Holy Land, located in the East, and the worship of Sepulchre. The result of spiritual achievement had to be the restoration of the God image in a person, a spiritual communion with the heavenly world. As a result, the canonical tradition of pilgrimage literature focused attention not on the geographical movement of a person, but on their spiritual ascent and perfection associated with the acquisition of the "lost paradise". T.V. Chumakova in the work "I am a stranger on the earth. A man in search for paradise (based on old Russian books)" writes: "The desire to find the lost paradise forced a medieval man to look for it not only in the "higher world", but also on the earth, where heaven and land converge. And these journeys were not always real, but also the journey through the landscapes of the soul, because in fact the person represented a striking example of this locus for meeting the sky and the earth" (Chumakova, 2003).

Thus, the Russian people throughout the long history in the knowledge and comprehension of the laws of being were mostly directed to the east rather than the west, which was consistently associated with the death of the soul. It is for this reason that the act of a number of historical figures of ancient Russia, who under different circumstances and reasons fled to the West (to Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania), always received a negative evaluation by contemporaries. An example is the famous correspondence of Ivan the Terrible with Andrei Kurbsky (Kalugin, 1998), who fled to Lithuania and received the patronage of the Polish King Sigismund II Augustus.

However, since the 17th century the situation in the perception and evaluation of Western

Europe began to change gradually (Chernaia, 2000, 31-46). Historical events (the era of the Troubles, the Russian-Polish war of 1654-1667 and other events) could not but changed the attitude of Russian people to that part of the world, which had long been associated with the threat of the soul death. The European plot began to penetrate actively in the daily lives of the Russian people and in the space of literary culture. "Since His Majesty (Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich – author's note) went to Poland, saw the way of life there and began to imitate the Polish King, the circle of his concepts expanded: he started to transform the courtyard, build more beautiful buildings than the old ones, decorate apartments with wallpaper and encouraged creating places of entertainment" ("The establishment of the dynasty", 1997, 207). Interest in the west, its traditions, way of life, enthralled the representatives of the younger generation of Moscow boyars; in the vicissitudes of boyars' life it is possible to discern allusions to the Gospel parable of the prodigal son (Shunkov, 2015, 93-99).

Let me remind you that Russia's war with Poland (1654-1667) largely defined both the further political course of the country and its new cultural vector of development, focused on the adoption and assimilation of the European model of the world order, which was subsequently extended in the era of Peter I. The European space in the first quarter of the 18th century became close to the Russian people and was firmly rooted in their mindset, which can be proved by one of the anonymous fictional stories of Peter's time "History about Vasily Koriotsky..." ("History about Vasily Koriotsky...", 1970, 50-58), the introduction of which used the "European" component of the official name of the state on an equal footing with already existing: "In Russian *Europeas* (emphasis added) some living gentleman..." ("History about Vasily Koriotsky...", 1970, 50).

Travel notes (the lists of Russian ambassadors), having great popularity in the transition period, also contributed to the revival of interest in the Western world and at the same time formed new insights of Russian reader concerning the people of another culture, which led to the adoption and assimilation of certain customs and fun of European royal houses. One such innovation, entrenched at the court of Tsar Alexis I (Alexei Mikhailovich), was theater (Demin, Derzhavina, Robinson, 1972, 7-101). However, the ambassadors' notes, composed during their trips to Europe and containing a detailed description of what they saw, are on their own unique monuments of literature in the transition time.

The nature of the genre of travel notes, combining features of the document and literature, let the writer-compiler feel free in plot construction, using fiction techniques to express their author individuality. As the researchers note: "the beginning of the author's originality is manifested not only in the selection, but also in the systematization of the facts: the will of the writer determines the place of the culture-specific concept in a number of other previously selected phenomena of reality" (Ol'shevskaia, Travnikov, 2013, 308). These observations can be extended by instantiating it with further more precise judgments. The important part in the author's manifestation regarding the travel notes should be the peculiarity of the author's portrayal of the seen culture-specific items and how they are incorporated into the overall storyline of the whole work.

"B.P. Sheremetev's notes" as an example of travel essays fits in the tradition of the genre of notes about the journey of his time. In studies dedicated to this book we can find almost all the features typical of the tradition of the genre, being "on the border of two genre systems, i.e. documentary and fiction" (Ol'shevskaia,

Travnikov, 2013, 306). At the same time, along with the traditional genre characteristics of the travel notes "B.P. Sheremetev's notes" have distinct and defined novelty, related to the Baroque influence on Russian culture.

One of these Baroque elements, giving a special flavor to the poetics of "B.P. Sheremetev's notes", is encyclopedic narrative that allows the reader to enter the Russian geographical, historical and cultural space of Europe. A lot of attention is given in "B.P. Sheremetev's notes" to the culture-specific items of the European man daily life and the situations of holiday and celebration. In the long wanderings through Europe B.P. Sheremetev on the basis on his observations and experiences created a mosaic of Europe, composed of the city descriptions, court ceremonies, manners, customs, entertainment, landscape sketches of the terrain through which his road passed, and many others factual details of European reality, which came into his sight: "About the places and the cities in the power of Our Great Sovereign, and other countries and states, through which our way will pass, and where I will feel some behavior, – all these will be written in this my journal ("B.P. Sheremetev's notes", 2013, 10).

Author's intention to describe in detail all what he would meet on the route, brought a special touch to the image of Europe, which in the minds of the Russian people had given rise to a steady associative array associated with sin. "B.P. Sheremetev's notes" on the contrary carried a lot of new things that might be of interest not only for the author-compiler, but for the potential reader as well. This feature of the travel diary notes was registered by modern scientists: "... a diplomat, talking about a country where he had been, acted as the investigator trying to identify general trends, to explain the incomprehensible, to fix typical. Research beginning in the travel notes of Peter's time was so strong that the experts

of that time in the fields of history, economics, geography, and other exact disciplines used these works as the documentary material, without questioning the authenticity of descriptions" (Ol'shevskaia, Travnikov, 2013, 312).

However, the composition of "B.P. Sheremetev's notes" is not just a documentary account of his journey. Russian traveler was curious and eager to learn about "strange" phenomena of European life, which received a detailed description with elements of fictionalization. Such are, for example, fragments of notes which describe as if mythological volcanic eruption on the island of Stromboli, inspiring fear and terror to local residents: "... And at the top of the mountain there is constant fire in two mile range. And they say that here the devil dwells. And as they were confident in the fact so that to tell us. And many were the reasons for many feluccas with people were taken by the devil to the mountain and drowned in the sea. And now one who goes past that mountain, puts many crosses around a felucca to escape" ("B.P. Sheremetev's notes", 2013, 67).

Descriptions of a number of miracles associated with the worship of saints fit perfectly into the hagiographic tradition of the genre thanks to their style and the functioning of the wonder as the composite element of the legend. The possible examples here are, for instance, the description of the miracle of San Gennaro (when his blood stored in a glass container boiled) in one of the churches of Naples during the liturgy, attended by B.P. Sheremetev with his companions: "For many times during the holy liturgy this very holy blood is shown boiling miraculously, as if the saint would still be alive. ... The Boyar and those with him were the witnesses of the wonder" ("B.P. Sheremetev's notes", 2013, 90–91).

One should mention that in the writings of B.P. Sheremetev, episodes, which presented the

story of his visit to European Catholic churches and Christian shrines of worship stored in them, occupy a special place. They form a separate thematic group in the notes. Among the most interesting there are episodes, which told the story of the worship of the relics of St. Nicholas in Bari, visiting places in Italy related to apostles Peter and Paul, the excursions to and worship of shrines that are stored in the cathedrals of Florence, Venice, Naples, Rome and etc. The very author-compiler accounted so much attention to the shrines, which manifested itself in the detailed description, for one the purpose of travel, as he went on pilgrimage to Europe (Rome) to worship the Apostles Peter and Paul, heavenly patron of him as the commander in the war with the Turks and Crimean Tatars: "Then sometimes the victories I had for patrons and highly reliable God helpers – supreme apostles Peter and Paul, and made a promise to go to Rome and to worship their honest relics" ("B.P. Sheremetev's notes", 2013, 30–32).

The researchers thought that "this phrase was treated in Vatican as the start of negotiations about the unification of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches" (Ol'shevskaja, Travnikov, 2013, 240). Naturally, diplomat B.P. Sheremetev did not and could not receive these instructions from Peter I. But what is interesting is that a Russian person went on pilgrimage to worship the shrines not in the Holy Land (Jerusalem), but those that are in the West, on the territory of the Rome Pope power.

One of these shrines, which impressed the Russian diplomat, was the house of the Virgin of Loreto. For seeing Loreto Russian travelers specially delayed for a day and primarily for visiting the house of the Virgin miraculously transferred from Nazareth by angels: "They say that house was one that had been in Nazareth, where the Blessed Virgin Mary saw the angel Gabriel with the Annunciation and where

raised her son, our Lord Jesus Christ..." ("B.P. Sheremetev's notes", 2013, 51).

The Shrine in "B.P. Sheremetev's notes" got a detailed description: the narrator mentioned items found in the house ("vessels, a cup and saucers, from which the very Holy Mother of God and Her Son, our God ate, made of clay"). This fragment is intriguing in the sense that it simultaneously demonstrates the features the traveler's perception of the sacred object: on the one hand, he was under the influence of awe before the shrine, knowing the scale of events connected to it, and on the other hand, the traveler show purely human interest and curiosity about what he saw.

From the inner experience of events of the gospel history, caused by the contemplation of the shrine, the author-compiler notes turned to the description of its outer form: the material from which the house was made, as it was equipped and saved so far, and so on: "That house was stone, staying without any foundation for 400 years and being now in the great church. Around that house there is a marble circle from the outside, with cut Gospel parable across and other very rich and elaborate ornament. And belongings in the church of Holy Mother of God for Her house were sent from all monarchs and from the great nobles, ranging from jewels: diamonds, rubies, emeralds and other, also of gold, silver and endless and enormous pearls, tea, amounting to several millions" ("B.P. Sheremetev's notes", 2013, 51).

Having officially announced his intention to worship shrines, B.P. Sheremetev could not but meet with the Catholic clergy and directly with Pope Innocent XII. This is a separate issue, which got its development in the story of "B.P. Sheremetev's notes". What makes it interesting? For historians it is the material for the study of the political situation in Europe at the end of the 17th century, and the participation of the Russian state in the European processes. From

historical and literary points of view these story episodes provide with additional opportunities for expanding research topic "the European plot and motive" in Russian literature of the transition period.

Above we have already noted that the European space (Rome) in the perception of Russian people was associated with a threat to Orthodoxy, an attack on the national interests and their violation. However, since the second half of the 17th century, the situation is slowly beginning to change, especially "after the reign of Peter I the 'Latins' noticed that the traditional Russian opposition to the Catholic world was giving way to cautious interest" (Ol'shevskaja, Travnikov, 2013, 260). "B.P. Sheremetev's notes" can reveal as the attitude of the Russian to what had seemed so dangerous the previous day changed. The meeting of B.P. Sheremetev with the pontifex is an independent story in "B.P. Sheremetev's notes", which demonstrated the novelty of the relationship between the two worlds. Leaving out examining in detail the expectations of Rome from meeting with the Russian diplomat, let us focus on the description of B.P. Sheremetev's behavior in this story.

The official meeting of the Russian diplomat and the Pope took place on March 27, 1698, as can be read in detail in the notes compiled by the Boyar. Description of the audience is given according to the book tradition, order, implying the compliance with certain requirements of the genre, one of which was mandatory inclusion of speeches made by the participants at ceremony. Another obligatory requirement of the genre canon of "officials"¹ was a detailed description of the behavior of the participants of the ceremony: their location, gestures, general behavior throughout the ceremony, etc. (Shunkov, 2013, 139-144). Due to this "B.P. Sheremetev's notes" look very interesting and allow us to consider them in the context of the tradition of ceremonial

book-learning, being far from the last place in the court culture during the second half of the 17th century, the era of the reign of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich.

Following the general scheme of a diplomatic ceremony at a meeting with Pope Innocent XII, at the same time B.P. Sheremetev allowed himself to get away from the rules of behavior of the Russian people and acted at the meeting with the Pope, breaking the Russian ceremonial, yet observing the rules for European etiquette, he kissed the foot of the Pope, as the ceremony prescribed, although the text of "B.P. Sheremetev's notes" has no such descriptions. The author-compiler described the occasion in a completely different way. Met by Pope Innocent XII B.P. Sheremetev kissed his hand, as can be read in the "B.P. Sheremetev's notes": "And the Boyar, after listening to the speech, kissed the Pope's hand, and the Pope, embracing him, kissed him on the head and took exceedingly kindly and merrily" ("B.P. Sheremetev's notes", 2013, 59).

"B.P. Sheremetev obeyed the court etiquette of the Vatican, demanding "kissing the pontifex's foot". All European Catholic kings complied with this ceremonial and did not see anything wrong in it. <...> B.P. Sheremetev was one of the first Russian diplomats who agreed "to kneel to the foot" of Pope, which the Moscow State ambassadors had flatly refused to do before" (Ol'shevskaja, Travnikov, 2013, 265). Thus, "B.P. Sheremetev's notes" as a book, belonging to the era of the transition period, shows a new model of behavior of the public official, accepting ceremonial tradition of Catholic Europe, no longer associated with the ruin of the soul.

Entering the different cultural space of Europe, which started to appeal to the Russian people more and more, is noticeable not only at a high diplomatic level, but also in the ordinary, everyday life. The traveler may be tempted by the world where he moves to, following his internal

will. This world turned out to be quite natural for the Russian people, the possible examples here is the European vestment, which B.P. Sheremetev constantly wore before appearing in front of the monarchs.

B.P. Sheremetev did not leave the entertainment events unattended; they brought Russian travelers a lot of positive emotions: "And his place they ate and had banquets, and with his daughter and with other panis, who came from the castle of pany Podskarbina, danced until the ninth hour of the night ("B.P. Sheremetev's notes", 2013, 16). "And then they called to the table in the other room, and sat round the round table, satisfaction with the meal was fair. And they drank Hungarian wine, < ... > and the pleasure with everything was great ("B.P. Sheremetev's notes", 2013, 17). And each other was dancing, then we ate together, and in dishes and in everything there was a lot of splendor ("B.P. Sheremetev's notes", 2013, 36-37).

Having fun also resonated with B.P. Sheremetev; he took part in some entertaining activities: "On November 14 the Boyar deigned to travel from Krakow to the field and amused himself with shooting arrows from bows with acquaintances and with the people that were with him, with many Poles and Germans looking at the shooting ("B.P. Sheremetev's notes", 2013, 14). "In the same row there is a visit to the zoo in Naples, about which the author leaves the following record: "Then we were in the zoo and saw the big lions and lionesses, and the young half-year-old lions, and leopards, bears, wolves, foxes, Arctic foxes, seals and great eagles ("B.P. Sheremetev's notes", 2013, 98).

In Naples, for example, the education system in Jesuit Theological Academy drew B.P. Sheremetev's attention. Here, in the academy, B.P. Sheremetev was demonstrated training fights with cold weapon and the art of dance: "Then they showed as former warriors used to fight with

spears and swords, dressing six men in armor. Next many children of the noble fathers fought with rapiers. < ... > Then, having put the horse made of wood, any voltige showed, sitting on the horse and jumping over, and finally they danced the different dances and menuets. All these were taught by special masters, the laic people, not the Jesuits ("B.P. Sheremetev's notes", 2013, 94).

It can easily be seen that this method of teaching in two decades was presented and described in the famous essay "Honest Mirror Youth, or Course of Worldly Manners" ("Iunosti chestnoe zertsalo", 1717). The first textbook of good manners, which appeared in Russia as a result of the cultural reforms of Peter I, was aimed at "the education in the way of European culture of daily behavior, characteristic of the nobility". It contained a list of sciences, required for mastering: "foreign languages, horse-riding, fencing, dancing, small talk, all the inherent features of educated nobleman, drawn from the European court life" (Lebedeva, 2000, 21). On this occasion, we can assume that at the turn of 17th-18th centuries the traveling Russian diplomats could not but lay the foundations for future education activities of Peter I, whereas their detailed descriptions of what they had seen became as if the prototypes of Russian many innovations.

Thus, "B.P. Sheremetev's notes" as a documentary and literary monument has the features that fit well in the literary tradition of the transitional period, which boasts the literary monuments of dual nature. One of these most notable features is the image of the author and editor, who showed the type of creative personality, not bound by the traditions of medieval literature. Emancipation of the author's consciousness allowed him writing freely about what he had seen himself. The emphasis was on those travel times that were interesting from the author's point of view.

As a result, the entire narrative space of "B.P. Sheremetev's notes" became the sum of the individual fragments of the European image, appearing in a variety of peoples' manners, political and cultural traditions, historical realities of the past and the present. We can conclude that the travel notes at the verge of the 17th-18th centuries due to their genre nature were one of the mechanisms of cultural changes

in Russia, which were transient in nature. "Travelogs" of that kind could not but perform the function assigned to it by the very nature of the genre; that was to plunge a reader through words in a completely different cultural space, to open a new world, the traditions of which will be taken by Russia in the first quarter of the 18th century, thus turning the country into "Russian Europeas".

¹ "Officials" is a special book genre, which stipulates a detailed description of the various ceremonies.

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«Европейский сюжет»

в русской книжной традиции конца XVII века

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В статье представлен анализ памятника русской книжности рубежа XVII–XVIII веков – записки о путешествии в Европу, составленные Борисом Петровичем Шереметевым, фельдмаршалом, дипломатом эпохи Петра I. Произведение позволяет ответить на вопросы, как происходил процесс беллетризации документальной книжности в России в переходный период развития русской литературы, какие новые темы, сюжеты, мотивы определяли литературный процесс, как менялась позиция автора-составителя книжного памятника. Особое внимание уделено описанию художественных приемов, использованных автором, при помощи которых в русской книжности конца XVII века создается новый образ Европы, несущий в себе черты яркого и интересного для русского человека мира. Статья ориентирована на аудиторию специалистов в области медиевистики, историков литературы, занимающихся изучением проблемы становления и развития жанровой системы в переходный период русской литературы (вторая половина XVII – начало XVIII века).

Ключевые слова: русская литература, жанр путешествия, поэтика русской литературы.

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