The making of the 'Russian Orthodox Milton': Fedor Glinka's quest for epic form

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> Поэзия, которой отшибли крылья, потеряв и взгляд и полет орлиный, перестала быть (как говорили древние) языком Богов. Наша поэзия (если только это поэзия) слишком очеловечилась, *оземлянилась*. Имела некогда поэзия силу Самсона, ее сумели обстричь и лишить прозрения, и вот теперь бродит она, слепая и бессильная, *в тесном кругу ощупи.* Все же, что вне этого круга, ей недоступно. … поэма религиозная должна у нас дремать до некоторого времени – до перемены погоды.
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> [Poetry, after its wings were knocked off, lost its eagle's eye and flight and ceased to be the language of the Gods (as the ancients said). Our poetry (if it is indeed poetry) has become too human, *earthbound*. Poetry once had the strength of Samson, they managed to cut its hair and deprive it of vision, and now it wanders, blind and impotent, *in the narrow circle of touch*. Everything which is outside this circle is inaccessible to it… our religious *poema* must take a nap for some time – until the weather changes.]
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> Glinka, Letter to I. N. Shill', 17 August 1853

> Но будет время – выйдет в поле
> *Пророк* и возгласит *костям*:
> По всемогущей Бога воле,
> 'Восстать повелеваю вам!'
> [But there will come a time – out into the field will step
> A *prophet* and call out upon the *bones*:
> By the omnipotent will of God,
> 'I command you to rise!']
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> Glinka, 'The Letter and the Spirit', 1860

No other nineteenth-century writer invested more sustained effort into building up the image of the poet as a prophet than Fedor Glinka (1786-1880). Over six decades, he tirelessly devoted himself to writing and performing the role of moral leader of his generation. Alongside Fedor Tiutchev, he carried the legacy of the Pushkinian era through to the age of Dostoevsky and Vladimir Solov'ev. Because of his remarkable longevity (he lived to the age of ninety-three), he witnessed a series of fundamental cultural changes. By the 1860s, a new generation of radical social reformers, including Alexander Herzen and Nikolai Ogarev, had transformed the original

prophetic image of the 1820s into a largely secular political tool. This article will explore how Glinka validated and preserved his prophetic identity in a fast-changing, sometimes hostile environment. It will address four inter-related questions. What poetic forms did he develop to express his prophetic intuitions? Why did he move from short lyrics to longer experiments in narrative verse, cast in epic form? What problems did he encounter during this process? How was his religious verse received by the Church, tsar and contemporary readers?

The mystic visionary

Before examining the literary manifestations of Glinka's prophetic orientation, we first need to tackle an important preliminary question. From where did he derive his sense of mission? How did he gain – and maintain – confidence in the authenticity of his calling? The deepest answer to these questions lies in the realm of his mystic experience. This dimension of his personal life was essentially private, but nevertheless played a crucial role in shaping his public persona. Unlike many of his contemporaries who adopted the prophetic voice as a literary pose, Glinka's convictions came from within. In this respect, he resembled Vil'gelm Kiukhel'beker.

Glinka attached great importance to his visions and dreams. He kept detailed written records of these revelations, often noting the precise date and time when they happened. His personal archive in Tver contains around thirty folders of such materials.[1] He even compiled a separate booklet, entitled 'Slova Vidiashchego' ['The Words of the One Who Sees'], for particularly significant visions, transcribed from a collection of sixteen notebooks, where they were first recorded at the time of their occurrence. The apparitions often came to him while he was praying and would keep returning until he wrote them down.[2] In some cases, he

[1] The folders carry titles such as 'Zapisi snov i videnii', 'Slova i videniia', 'Zapisi vidiashchego'. See F. N. Glinka, *Opyty allegorii, ili inoskazatel'nykh opisanii, v stikhakh i v prose*, ed. Iu. B. Orlitskii, Moscow: RGGU, 2009, 253-54. For an edition of these materials, see F. N. Glinka, *Religioznaia proza. Sny i videniia*, comp. and ed. S. A. Vasil'eva, Tver: Izd-vo Mariny Batasovoi, 2011. On the contents of the folder 'Slova i videniia', see S. A. Vasil'eva, 'Videniia–prorochestva v tvorchestve F. N. Glinki', in *Budushchee kak siuzhet: Stat'i i materialy*, ed. S. A. Vasil'eva and A. Iu. Sorochan, Tver: Izd-vo Mariny Batasovoi, 2014, 30-36.

[2] Glinka, *Opyty allegorii* (2009), 215. The phrase 'Slova Vidiashchego' recalls Balaam, the prophet of the Gentiles, whose words are introduced as 'the prophecy of one whose eye sees clearly' (Num. 24:3). More generally, it evokes one of the principal Hebrew terms for prophet: *ro'eh* (a seer).

used them as a basis for his mystic verses.[3]

During his visions Glinka would feel transported into a completely different world, transformed into another being. For this reason, he usually noted down his supernatural experiences in the third person as the visions or words of 'He who sees' (*Vidiashchii*). He sometimes attempted to draw what he saw, but described the results as feeble caricatures, imagining how much better the artist Karl Briullov would have succeeded.[4] Scenes of future beatitude were usually accompanied by harmonious sounds, recalling the Psalms, sung to the accompaniment of musical instruments.[5]

Through recurrent patterns of symbols, these visions articulate the fundamental contrast between the present sinful state of mankind and its future redemption. Sin is invariably associated with the West; Europe is portrayed as the source of corrupt ideologies which threaten to contaminate the Russian spirit. By contrast, the light of salvation comes from the East. The passage from sin to redemption requires exposing mankind's possession by the dark forces of evil (hence Glinka's preoccupation with Satan and demonology) and delivering apocalyptic predictions of the final judgement. For example, in the summer of 1825 'He who sees' observes with 'eyes of the mind' (*umstvennymi ochami*) a crowd of monstrously ugly people on a road outside Petersburg carrying away a black 'giant serpent' (*zmei-velikan*), identified as the 'serpent of great corruption' (*zmii velikogo razvrata*).[6] The imminent end of time, represented by a clock face, is a common theme.[7]

The vision chosen by Glinka to open his special notebook was assigned by him to the most important category of 'higher, *world* revelations'. In 1822, alone in his flat in

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[3] See the following examples from *Sochineniia Fedora Nikolaevicha Glinki*, 3 vols., Moscow: Tipografiia gazety 'Russkii', na Devich'em pole, v dome M. P. Pogodina, 1869-1872, vol. 1, *Dukhovnye stikhotvoreniia* (1869): 'Dva sostoianiia', 201-202; 'Inaia zhizn'', 285-86; 'Videnie', 350-52; 'Videnie', 358-59; 'Muzyka mirov', 369-70; 'Snovidenie (istina)', 396-98; 'Iavlenie', 413; 'Videnie', 434; 'Videniia', 442-43; 'Sozertsanie', 439-40; 'Videniia', 442-43; 'Zavetnoe mgnovenie', 460.

[4] Glinka, *Opyty allegorii* (2009), 216. Orlitsky notes that many manuscript records of visions are accompanied by Glinka's *zarisovki* [sketches]. Ibid., 254.

[5] See the references to pictorial colour, musical sound and singing voices in the poem 'I vizhu ia – vo sne i ne vo sne…', in ibid., 227.

[6] Ibid., 218.

[7] On 21 February 1834 he sees a clock face, showing five minutes before twelve, the '*other half of time*' is about to start. On another occasion three clocks show that only a quarter of an hour is left 'until the *Event*'. Ibid., 218, 220.

Petersburg, he felt an urge to pray. From his windows he could look to the right, following the flow of the Neva upstream towards the Nevsky monastery, and to the left, downstream, towards the sea and Kronstadt. In his mind it seemed to him that he was located between East and West. He knelt in prayer and closed his eyes. Immediately a vast picture full of movement appeared to him. From the West came noise and darkness, filled with flying black creatures like squashed dogs with the wings of bats.[8] By contrast, in his next vision he saw Russia in the very distant future – on a summer day in sun-drenched fields, harmonious women's voices sang a 'hymn of spiritual content', glorifying the Lord in gratitude for a good harvest.[9] Glinka, who had taken part in the wars against Napoleon, was privy to visions of the evil forces that still threatened Russia from the West and to a revelation of Russia's future destiny defined by the ideal of collective worship (*sobornost'*).

In the 1840s and 1850s Glinka became more virulent in his assaults on the spread of secular ideologies from the West. Like Tiutchev, he defended the Fatherland from the European threat of revolution, attacking the 'shaggy paw of the communists' (*Kommunistov kosmataia lapa*) and the rise of the proletariat.[10] Understanding contemporary events as signs sent by God to mankind was a task that could only be entrusted to religious leaders in the tradition of Moses – secular writers spread nothing but confusion:

> Наука захотела занять место религии, и профессора задумали стать вождями народов, хотя, не имея жезла Моисеева, они не могли провести их через Чермное море, а только погрузили в море чернил и запутанных писаний.[11]
> [Science wanted to take the place of religion, and professors planned to become the leaders of nations, although, without having Moses's staff, they were unable to lead them through the Red Sea, and only drowned them in a sea of ink and muddled writings.]

Glinka, the self-styled poet-prophet, clearly longed to take up the staff of Moses. His mystic experiences, communicated through visual and aural signs, gave him the inner confidence and authority to take up this role. In his many poems about the biblical prophets, he therefore put a special emphasis on the original moment of vision. In his records of his

[8] Ibid., 216-17.

[9] Ibid., 217-18.

[10] F. N. Glinka, *Stikhotvoreniia,* ed. M. V. Stroganov and L. L. Erokhina, Tver: Liliia Print 2006, 39-40.

[11] Glinka, *Opyty allegorii* (2009), 229.

own revelations, recurrent Jewish motifs culled from masonic symbolism helped him to build a bridge between private insights and the public role of the prophet. On several occasions, visions are linked to the Hebrew names of God: *Adonai* [Lord], the Tetragrammaton *YHWH*, *Sabaoth* [Lord of hosts].[12] In one instance, as the Lord passes judgement in the heavens, angels full of joy fly to meet the poet: 'Я слышу голос в небесах: «Саваоф! Саваоф! Саваоф!» Я слышу явственнее только одни гласные буквы: «ААО... ААО'.[13] ['I hear a voice in the heavens: "Sabaoth! Sabaoth! Sabaoth!" I hear more distinctly only the vowels: "AAO… AAO"'].The significance of being able to hear the vowels more clearly than the consonants is revealed in a separate entry:

> Судьба человечества (как некогда ветхий закон у Евреев) написана одними согласными буквами. Поэтому немногие только (как чтецы у древних Евреев) читали и могут читать в книге судеб и воля Божия темна для всех. Бог поставит гласные по местам, и вдруг все прояснится и всякий узнает прямую Волю Божию и царствие его на земле.[14]
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> [The fate of mankind (as formerly the old law of the Jews) is written only in vowels. As a result, only a few people (like the public readers for the ancient Jews) could read and can read from the book of fates, and God's will is obscure to all others. God will put the vowels in their places, and suddenly all will be clarified, and each person will recognize God's Will and his kingdom on earth.]

The juxtaposition of these two entries suggests that Glinka saw himself as one of the chosen few in tune with Hebrew tradition and able to 'read the vowels', in other words to grasp how the will of God shapes the fate of humanity. This radical idea was later taken up by the aspiring poet-prophets of the Silver Age. Andrei Bely and Velimir Khlebnikov attempted to read the laws of fate out of the sounds of the Russian language, while Aleksei Kruchenykh wrote an experimental poem, 'Vysoty (vselenskii iazyk)' ['Heights (Universal Language')], 1913], consisting only of vowels.[15]

The psalmist and biblical prophet: *Experiments in Sacred Verse*

[12] Ibid., 219, 220, 224-25.

[13] Ibid., 231.

[14] Ibid., 224-25.

[15] The link between Glinka and Kruchenykh's poem (Part II of 'Mir konchilsia. Umerli truby…') is pointed out by Orlitsky, in ibid., 257.

These mystic visions validated and sustained Glinka's sense of prophetic mission throughout his life. In seeking appropriate forms of literary expression for his inner intuitions, he first turned to the psalter. The choice of King David as the main model for his ideal of the poet-prophet was not original. Glinka was latching on to a well-established tradition, initiated by Russia's first professional court poet, Simeon Polotsky, whose versified Psalter of 1680 was immensely influential.[16] In the course of the eighteenth century, Trediakovsky, Lomonosov and Derzhavin built up this tradition by composing versions of the psalms and spiritual odes as well as codifying these practices in elaborate treatises on poetics. By the 1820s, the convention of representing the poet as a modern-day psalmist and biblical prophet had reached a peak of popularity. Glinka was one of its most prolific and single-minded devotees. His remarkable *Opyty Sviashchennoi Poezii* [*Experiments in Sacred Verse,* 1826] was the earliest single-authored book of literary verses based on the psalms and prophets to appear in Russia – well before Pushkin's 'Prorok' ['The Prophet', 1826] was first published in 1828. His principal innovation was to introduce a personal, emotional tone into his adaptations of sacred texts. Pushkin coined the apt term 'elegiac psalm' to differentiate Glinka's unique voice from his predecessors and contemporaries.[17] As I have argued elsewhere, by embedding the trope of Russia as a new Israel in his collection, Glinka effectively established his role as the nation's moral leader.[18]

Although Glinka soon moved on to experiment with new forms of prophetic verse, he remained faithful to the psalmodic tradition through to the end of his life. He signalled this continuity by choosing to position his early poem '*Kifaru* vzial David – Prorok venchannyi…' ['David – the crowned Prophet – took up the *kithara*…', 1831] at the very beginning of his late collection *Dukhovnye stikhotvoreniia* [*Spiritual Verses*, 1869].[19] This poem presents a picture of David the Prophet, surrounded by angels and heavenly music, singing of his longing for God

[16] On the impact of Simeon Polotsky's *Psaltir' tsaria i proroka Davida*, see Pamela Davidson, 'Simeon Polotskii and the Origins of the Russian Tradition of the Writer as Prophet', *Modern Language Review,* vol. 112, no. 4, October 2017, 917-52.

[17] A. S. Pushkin, *Sobranie sochinenii,* ed. D. D. Blagoi, 10 vols., Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1974-1978, 6:47-48.

[18] See Pamela Davidson, 'Leading Russia as the New Israel: Authorship and Authority in Fedor Glinka's *Letters of a Russian Officer* and *Experiments in Sacred Verse*', *The Russian Review,* vol. 77, no. 2, April 2018, 219-40.

[19] Glinka, *Dukhovnye stikhotvoreniia*, i-ii.

and praying that his chant will reach the heavens and survive through the centuries to inspire and teach people. It ends with the assurance that the psalms have endured over the centuries and remain unsurpassed; whoever sings a psalm from the heart will always hear a response in the heavens.

As the author of the collection of poems that followed, Glinka was clearly placing himself in direct succession to the model of David the poet, psalmist and prophet. Like David, the poet-prophet was a divinely inspired conduit, linking heaven and earth, God and man, past and future generations. Lyrics based on the model of the psalms were an effective means of revealing the inner world of the poet-prophet and confirming his connection with God. They did not, however, provide much scope for delivering a message of national import. For this purpose, new forms were needed. Glinka's quest for significance led him to create four long narrative poems, conceived on an increasingly epic scale.

The voice of the suffering exile: *Job*

Glinka's first step in this direction took him to another part of the Hebrew Bible. In 1826 or 1827, soon after his post-Decembrist exile to Petrozavodsk, he began work on a poetic imitation of the Book of Job, completed in 1834. Harnessing the power of scriptures to explore the suffering individual's relation to God was clearly an act of existential defiance. Despite his political disgrace, he managed to print a few extracts in the periodical press in 1827, 1831 and 1835. His persistent efforts to publish the full imitation were thwarted by the ecclesiastical censor until 1859.[20] Although he took considerable liberties with the original in his poetic version, the genre of scriptural imitation inevitably limited his range. He therefore moved on to create three long visionary poems, addressing issues relevant to his own era through the prism of different epochs.

The prophet of Russian history: *Karelia, or the Incarceration of Marfa Ioannovna Romanova*

Glinka composed and published his first experiment in the genre of the historical narrative poem while still engaged on his imitation of Job. *Kareliia, ili Zatochenie Marfy Ioannovny Romanovoi* [*Karelia, or the Incarceration of Marfa Ioannovna Romanova*, 1828-1830**,** published in 1830]

[20] For a discussion of the protracted saga surrounding this work, see Pamela Davidson, 'Rewriting the Bible: Fedor Glinka and his Long-suffering *Job*', *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 95, no. 4 October 2017, 601-24.

gave him the opportunity to project his well-honed prophetic voice on to a turbulent period in Russian history.[21] The narrative features a Greek hermit-monk, originally from Smyrna, now settled in the Karelian woods. He makes three appearances to Marfa Romanova, the mother of the future tsar Mikhail Fedorovich, forced into nunhood by Boris Godunov during the Time of Troubles. By the fourth and final part of the poem, the monk has attained a high level of spiritual insight and delivers a series of seventeen prophecies, couched in the language of the Hebrew Bible. The third prophecy, as Glinka explains in a note, is based on Psalm 76 (77), a cry to God in times of trouble. The fifteenth one, 'Gospod' povel menia iz grada…' ['The Lord led me out of the city…'] closely echoes Ezekiel's famous prophecy in the valley of dry bones. Once more, Glinka specifies the source in a note: 'Здесь, в этом монологе монаха, находим крайне близкое подражание 37 главе Иезикииля. Вероятно, в пустынном своем уединении, питая ум священными книгами, он усвоил себе многие места из оных'.[22] ['Here, in this monologue of the monk, we find an extremely close imitation of chapter 37 of Ezekiel. No doubt, isolated in the wilderness, nourishing his mind with sacred books, he had absorbed many passages from them'.]. This somewhat unnecessary explanation was no doubt intended to evoke a parallel with Glinka's immersion in reading the psalms and prophets during his years of exile in the 'wilderness' of Karelia. Glinka uses Ezekiel's resurrection of the dead bones as a metaphor for the anticipated spiritual rebirth of the Russian people, ostensibly related to the Time of Troubles, but clearly also aimed at his contemporary readers. In the following extract God communicates his message to the prophet:

Жильцы исчезнувшего века, <...>
Теперь иссохли и хладеют...
Но Я велю – и оживут!
Друг друга кости их сзовут,
Наденут плоть и омладеют...
Прорцы же им, да имут слух:
«Исстлевшие, готовьтесь к жизни
И к новой, радостной Отчизне:

[21] For an account of the poem's history, see V. P. Zverev, *Fedor Glinka – russkii dukhovnyi pisatel'*, Moscow: Pashkov dom, 2002, 344-81.

[22] Fedor Glinka, *Sochineniia*, comp. and ed. V. I. Karpets, Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1986, 189 (note 41).

Всемощный вводит в вас Свой Дух!» [23]

[The inhabitants of a vanished era, <…>
Have now withered and are turning cold…
But I command – and they will come to life!
Their bones will call out to each other,
They will put on flesh and regain their youth …
Prophesy upon them, and they will hear:
'Ye who have dried out, prepare for life
And for a new, joyous Fatherland:
The Almighty implants in you His Spirit!']

The bones are clothed in flesh and the poem ends with a direct address to the faithful of Russia as the new Israel:

Израиль! В вечности есть час,
Когда и ты услышишь глас
Святой, живящей благодати!..[24]
[O Israel! In eternity there is an hour
When you too will hear the voice
Of holy life-restoring grace!..]

As we shall see below, Glinka later returned to this prophecy of Ezekiel's in a sharp lyric of 1860 addressed to his contemporaries.

Kareliia was favourably reviewed by several writers, including Nadezhdin and Pushkin (to whom Glinka had sent an inscribed copy).[25] Most critics praised the vivid descriptions of nature and ethnographic detail, but failed to comment on the religious dimension, which its author regarded as central and consistently highlighted in his later letters to Pogodin.[26] Only one

[23] Ibid., 177.

[24] Ibid.

[25] <N. I. Nadezhdin>, '<Review of> *Kareliia, ili Zatochenie Marfy Ioannovny Romanovoi*', *Moskovskii vestnik*, 1830, ch. II, no. 5, 57-68. For Pushkin's anonymous review, first published in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 15 February 1830, see Pushkin, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 6:47-48. For a survey of other responses, see Zverev, *Fedor Glinka*, 365-74. For details of the copy of *Kareliia* in Pushkin's library with Glinka's inscription, see item no. 94, in B. L. Modzalevskii, *Biblioteka A. S. Pushkina (Bibliograficheskoe opisanie)*, St Petersburg: Tipografiiia Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1910, 28.

[26] See Glinka's letters to Pogodin of 14 April 1868, 10 September 1868, 21 November 1870, cited in

reviewer, writing for the journal *Galateia*, observed that Glinka had learned how to write elevated verse from the Prophets and Apostles; drawing attention to the numerous biblical echoes in part four, he compared his style to Derzhavin's and Lomonosov's. After noting the need for the poet to *lead* rather than follow society, he emphasised the uplifting transformative effect of the biblical passages on the reader.[27] Glinka's aspiration to be seen as a poet-prophet rooted in scriptural tradition had at last met with recognition. To underline the connection between his verse and the Bible, he insisted that *Kareliia* should be published alongside his imitation of Job in the late edition of his works.[28]

The apocalyptic seer: 'The Vision of Macarius the Great'

For his next experiment with the form of the religious *poema*, Glinka turned his attention to a curious episode from the life of Macarius, a fourth-century Desert Father of Egypt, involving his encounter with a devil. Stepping back in time enabled him to create an authoritative 'early Christian' prophecy of the demonic forces that he saw as threatening the spiritual future of Russia and Europe. He completed the first version of 'Videnie Makariia Velikogo' ['The Vision of Macarius the Great'] in 1840 and revised it in 1847 and 1848, adding a series of prose clarifications.[29] Based on Macarius's reference to a time when devils will come to people to learn from them the ways of evil, the poem offers a fantastic, apocalyptic picture of the deterioration of humanity, led astray by pride, loss of faith and the delusions of the mind . Like *Job*, on which Glinka continued to work while composing the vision, it deals with man's temptation by the devil and his ability to resist through faith. Unlike *Job*, however, the emphasis is almost entirely on the dark side. Most of the poem's 1,103 lines (comprising a prologue,

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Zverev, *Fedor Glinka,* 374.

[27] See the review in S. E. Raich's journal *Galateia* 1830, ch. XII, no. 9 and no.10, cited in ibid., 372-74.

[28] See Glinka's letter to Pogodin of 21 November 1870, cited in ibid., 382.

[29] For the complete text and accompanying materials, see V. L. Korovin, '"Videnie Makariia Velikogo" – neopublikovannaia poema Fedora Glinki', in *A. M. P. Sbornik pamiati A. M. Peskova*, Moscow: RGGU, 2013, 463-505. The publication comprises Korovin's introductory essay (463-68), Glinka's preface 'Ot sochinitelia' (469-77), 'Pribavlenie' (477-78), 'Pozdneishee pribavlenie' (478-80), the text of poem (480-504) and editorial notes (504-5). The dates are established by Korovin in ibid., 464-65, 468, and by Zverev in *Fedor Glinka*, 321-22. On the poem, see Zverev, *Fedor Glinka*, 327-31, 436-60 and V. P. Zverev, 'Dukhovnye sviazi F. I. Tiutcheva i F. N. Glinka', in *Fedor Ivanovich Tiutchev: Problemy tvorchestva i esteticheskoi zhizni naslediia. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, ed. V. N. Anoshkina and V. P. Zverev, Moscow: Pashkov dom, 2006, 322-30.

thirty-nine sections, and a coda) consists of the devil's meandering speech to the ascetic saint, revealing from the secret books of Satan the technological, scientific, literary and moral perils that will afflict all spheres of human life. Like C. S. Lewis's senior demon Screwtape, Glinka's wily devil is an experienced old hand, comfortably at home in the world of humans and adept at ensnaring them. However, as an unreliable narrator, his predictions, all the way through to his closing words 'И у людей учиться станут бесы!!!...' ['And devils will start to learn from humans!!!...'] are laced with ambiguity.[30] In many ways, this highly original work anticipates later classics of the Russian demonic tradition, such as Dostoevsky's *Besy* [*The Devils*, 1872], Sologub's *Melkii bes* [*The Petty Demon*, 1907] and Remizov's modernist *Besnovatye* [*Demoniacs*, 1951].

Glinka's notebooks of the time were packed with dire predictions in prose and verse about the threat of revolution coming from Europe. Communists and proletarians were attacked for destroying the fabric of society. Faithless France was fomenting revolution, while Germany had allowed anarchy to creep into its literature; they summoned devils, expecting just one *besik* [little devil] like Faust's Mephistopheles to come forth, and were besieged instead by a million devils. The message was sharp – 'Бойтесь лукавства *западных людей*…' ['Fear the cunning of *Western people*'], for they will try to 'обезверить верных' ['strip the faithful of their faith']. Russians must avoid the trap set for them, summed up in the clever pun 'Западня нам Запад! Все нам плетет он сети'. ['The West is a trap for us! It keeps weaving nets to ensnare us'].[31]

Although anti-Western rhetoric of this kind played a significant role in the poem, the main thrust of Glinka's eschatological vision concerned his fears about the fate of humanity. In 1841 he offered his 'somewhat Old Believer-like, but original work' to Pogodin for publication in *Moskvitianin*, but nothing came of this proposal – perhaps the vision was too dark.[32] A few years later, in 1847 and 1848, he wrote out a revised copy of the poem and appended a preface and two postscripts to spell out its purpose. In the preface he explained that Macarius's prediction of a time when devils would learn from humans had now come true.

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[30] Section 39 in Korovin, 'Videnie Makariia Velikogo', 502.

[31] See the archival sources collected by L. L. Erokhina and M. V. Stroganov, in Glinka, *Stikhotvoreniia*, 26-29.

[32] Glinka's undated letter to Pogodin, written between late January and early February 1841, cited in Korovin, 'Videnie Makariia Velikogo', 464. Zverev speculates that Pogodin may have been put off by the extreme nature of Glinka's vision; Zverev, *Fedor Glinka*, 321, 444.

Quoting Victor Hugo's description of the godless late eighteenth century as a 'Monde, aveugle pour Christ, que Satan illumine!' he decried the present age's complete confusion of opposites, sown by writers' misuse of language. The argument is illustrated with an extensive range of references to Western rather than Russian thinkers. Mankind has called down upon itself 'this apocalyptic *verbal plague of locusts*', bent on the destruction of everything planted by previous generations. These doom-laden warnings are countered with the hope that humanity, after living through the experiences of Egyptian slavery and Babylonian exile, will eventually, like the prodigal son, return to the golden age of faith. Glinka concluded with the sober recognition that he was swimming against the tide of popular opinion, correctly predicting that his message and its somber form would meet with resistance.[33]

After the French revolution of February 1848, Glinka became even more convinced that his own poetic prophecy had now been fulfilled. Once more, historical events served as a catalyst, validating earlier literary prophecies (the same pattern was repeated after 1917). In the first postscript of 1848, he fleshed out the ideological and political contexts of his vision. Through recent events in Europe, providence had now unmasked its secrets to the world. The collapse of the old order is evoked in images echoing the Book of Revelation. The foundations of society have been undermined by the stealthy spread of communism, infiltrating Europe like a diligent spider.[34] In his second postscript, written after August 1848, he described recent atrocities in Europe; the horrors of cannibalism, torture and murder that had taken place in France, Hungary and Germany proved once more that the time had indeed come when humans would teach devils the ways of evil.[35]

Although these revisions and additions suggest that Glinka was still hoping to publish his poem in the late 1840s, his energies were evidently diverted into the protracted struggle to publish *Job* and his next major religious poem. 'Videnie Makariia Velikogo' only saw the light of day in 2013. Despite its lack of impact at the time of writing, it deserves attention as marking a radical new stage in the poet's development of an active and engaged prophetic stance. His existing religious views were now reinforced by strident eschatological warnings, applied to the current political situation in Europe and Russia, and extended more broadly to the fate of

[33] 'Ot sochinitelia', in Korovin, 'Videnie Makariia Velikogo', 469, 470, 476, 477. The line from Victor Hugo is from section VI of 'Regard jeté dans une mansarde', published in *Les Rayons et les Ombres* (1840), the collection that marked his début as a poet-prophet.

[34] 'Pribavlenie', in Korovin, 'Videnie Makariia Velikogo', 477-78.

[35] 'Pozdneishee pribavlenie', in ibid., 478-80.

humanity. The poem has been called 'astonishingly prophetic' for its era by the scholar Vitaly Zverev.[36] In his accompanying commentary to its first publication, Vladimir Korovin underlined the relevance of its message to twenty-first century Russian readers.[37]

The 'Russian Orthodox Milton': *The Mysterious Drop: A Folk Legend*

From the late 1830s and throughout the 1840s Glinka elaborated these apocalyptic ideas in his longest and most ambitious religious poem to date, tracing them back to the origins of Christianity.[38] His epic tale of redemption, *Tainstvennaia Kaplia: Narodnoe predanie* [*The Mysterious Drop: A Folk Legend*, Berlin, 1861; Moscow, 1871], narrates the life of Christ through a series of loosely linked episodes, blending scriptural sources with apocryphal folk legends. The 'mysterious drop' refers to the popular tale of the Virgin Mary giving her milk to an ill baby who later became the repentant robber crucified next to Christ. Although largely forgotten today, the poem merits close consideration as one of the most significant Russian attempts to create a national epic of religious content. Glinka was determined to give his country a 'religious poem' like Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Klopstock's

[36] Zverev, *Fedor Glinka*, 327.

[37] V. L. Korovin, 'Nravoucheniia Fedora Glinki', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 39 (6527), 7 October 2015.

[38] For a detailed account of the poem's history, see Zverev, *Fedor Glinka*, 460-502, and Vladimir Korovin, '"Zamechaniia pedanta": poema F. N. Glinki "Tainstvennaia kaplia" i ee chitatel' M. A. Dmitriev', *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, no. 97 (2009), 178-94. The poem may well have been started as early as 1837, since Glinka was most likely referring to it when he invited Pogodin on 1 April 1837 to come around to hear a new work 'even more elevated than Job'. F. N. Glinka, *Pis'ma k drugu*, ed. V. P. Zverev, Moscow: Sovremennik, 1990, 495-96. In the early 1840s, Glinka compiled a list of his publications and noted that two long poems – *Job* and one in the same religious spirit as the poems of Klopstock and Milton (i.e. *Tainstvennaia Kaplia*) – were ready for publication. The poetic part of *Tainstvennaia Kaplia* was finished by end of the 1840s, but Glinka continued to work on the prose clarifications after this date. See Zverev, *Fedor Glinka*, 399, 461, 477.

Messiah.[39] His library contained copies of all three works in various languages.[40] In its conception, structure and language, his poem is deeply prophetic, juxtaposing biblical predictions of Christ's appearance with messianic expectations of the second coming, addressed to the Russian people.

The dramatic narrative includes a long section entitled 'Proroki' ['Prophets'], in which the patriarchs and several Hebrew prophets (including Isaiah, Micah, Malachi, Jeremiah, David, Zechariah, Ezekiel, and Daniel) discuss when the Messiah will come and what they know of him. Initially, the prophets, enclosed in a holy city, are described as 'cold' and deprived of hope. While the surrounding flames of hell advance upon them, David takes up his lyre, sings of his faith, and then pronounces the name of God. As in *Opyty Sviashchennoi Poezii*, the psalmist's voice paves the way for the prophets. After his intercession, the prophets are once more surrounded by a protective fence and begin to speak. Their predictions are expressed in a series of poems and followed by extensive notes, listing all the Old Testament allusions to the coming of Christ and Christ's own prophecies.[41]

Significantly, scattered among the voices of the Hebrew prophets, readers also encounter a 'prophet without a name' (*prorok bez"imiannyi*) and an 'unrecognized prophet' (*neuznannyi prorok*).[42] These unidentified visionaries relate their experience of revelation and the failure of their contemporaries to grasp their message. The similarity between their words and the language, images and even rhymes of Glinka's earlier verse suggests that they may well represent the poet and his Slavophile contemporaries (perhaps Tiutchev or Khomiakov), waiting

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[39] 'Proshenie v Tsenzurnyi komitet po povodu poemy "Tainstvennaia kaplia"' (RGALI, f. 141, op. 1, ed. khr. 50), in Zverev, *Fedor Glinka*, 469. In his later autobiography of 1858, Glinka described *Tainstvennaia Kaplia* as a 'long (at 30,000 lines) religious poem' similar to the epic poems of Milton and Klopstock. F. N. Glinka, 'Avtobiografiia', in R. V. Iezuitova, Ia. L. Levkovich, I. V. Mushina, eds., *Pisateli-dekabristy v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov*, 2 vols., Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1980, 1:318. Glinka does not mention the more recent example of Adam Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz* (Paris, 1834), commonly regarded as the last great epic poem in European literature, but controversial in Russia.

[40] An incomplete description of Glinka's library preserved after his death and published in 1899 includes a copy of Dante's *Divina Commedia* in Italian; French translations of Dante's *Inferno* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*; a Russian translation of Klopstock's *Der Messias*. Zverev, *Fedor Glinka*, 314.

[41] *Sochineniia Fedora Nikolaevicha Glinki*, vol. 2, *Tainstvennaia Kaplia: narodnoe predanie. Chast' II* (1871), 482-513 ('Proroki'), 660-68 (notes on 'Proroki'), 669-73 ('Prorok').

[42] Ibid., 492-93 and 501-2.

for their voices to be heard and understood alongside their Hebrew predecessors.

The close association between prophets and poets is explicitly highlighted in an earlier section of the poem recounting the conversation of two angels. The heavenly angel wishes to tell humanity all about God. The earthly angel warns him that 'Могучие в словах своих пророки, / И просветленные душой поэты' ['Prophets with powerful voices, / And spiritually enlightened poets'] have tried before but not been heeded. He presents the prophet and the poet alongside each other as two messengers from God, sharing a common purpose (to soften hardened souls) and a common fate (rejection by humans):

Идут два посла от Бога:
Тот пророк, а тот поэт....
Тот несет с собой ургозы,
Этот – звуков сладкий строй,
<...>
Оба идут с той же целью
На смягченье жестких душ:
Этот – юноша с свирелью;
Тот – с трубою – Божий муж! –[43]

[Two messengers from God are coming:
One a prophet, and the other a poet…
That one brings with him threats,
This one – the sweet harmony of sounds,
<…>
They both come with the same goal
To soften hardened souls:
This one is a youth with reed-pipe;
That one – with trumpet – is a man of God! –

The prophet delivers harsh rebukes, striking at sin, while the poet's 'pure voice', mixed with the 'holy gold of wisdom', sounds a gentler note. In the end, however, both are rejected by the people, who stone the prophet and ignore the alien poet.[44]

Still embroiled in the struggle to publish his 'long-suffering *Job*', Glinka saw himself in

[43] Ibid., 392 (in the section entitled 'Vstrechi, besedy, i pesni angelov').

[44] Ibid., 393.

this light as a rejected poet-prophet and anticipated similar problems over the publication of *Tainstvennaia Kaplia*. When he submitted his magnum opus to the censorship committee (before early October 1848), he added a carefully worded petition to the censor. After establishing that his work was based on a Christian legend well known in Russia since the time of the Romanovs, he described his artistic method as the creation of verbal pictures, compared to icons. Citing the models of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Milton's *Paradise Lost* (up to its twelfth Russian edition) and Klopstock's *Messiah*, he reminded the committee that poetic licence was accepted practice in these great religious epics, which went beyond the narrow confines of church dogma and even included some pagan elements.[45] As in the case of *Job*, he emphasised that his *poema* was not a theological work but the creation of a 'lay writer' (*svetskii pisatel'*). He rounded off by asking the 'enlightened' censors to accept his work 'in the spirit of Christian love' and patriotism, so that 'our Russia' could also have its own religious *poema*, following the examples of Italy, England and Germany – thereby implying a strong link between epic works of literature and national pride.[46]

On 8 October 1848, after handing in his work, Glinka penned a frank letter to Prince Viazemsky, sending him an outline of his poem and confessing his worries about its fate. He told him that it was about to reach or had already reached the Petersburg ecclesiastical censorship committee. Full of foreboding, he described the forthcoming process in Dantesque images, referring to the difficulty of getting through the thick, thorny wood and comparing his poem to a poor soul entering Purgatory. Noting that the censor only forbade speaking out against God and the tsar, and that his poem was clearly for Christ and against Satan, he wondered darkly what side the censorship committee would be on if it rejected his poem. He added bitterly that the censors, unfamiliar with the conventions of secular literature, would rip entire pages out of Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Klopstock's *Messiah*.[47] Clearly, he envisaged the battle in

[45] This strategic point was later repeated by Pogodin in his preface to *Tainstvennaia Kaplia. Chast' I* (1871), ii.

[46] 'Proshenie v Tsenzurnyi komitet po povodu poemy "Tainstvennaia kaplia"' (RGALI, f. 141, op. 1, ed. khr. 50), in Zverev, *Fedor Glinka*, 468-69.

[47] See Glinka's letter to P. A. Viazemsky of 8 Oct 1848, in Zverev, *Fedor Glinka*, 478-79. On Glinka's interest in Dante, see S. R. Serkov, 'Poema F. Glinki "Ad". K istorii "russkogo Dante"', in *Dantovskie chteniia. 1985*, ed. Igor' Belza, Moscow: Nauka, 1985, 120-32. In publishing this manuscript as a new discovery (RGALI, f. 141, op. 1, ed. khr. 1), Serkov unfortunately failed to recognize that it was part of the published poem, *Tainstvennaia Kaplia*. See Zverev, *Fedor Glinka*, 47-48.

apocalyptic terms, as a struggle between Christ and Satan.

A few weeks later, on 22 October, he gave a well-received public reading of his poem at the Petersburg home of Prince Viazemsky. According to P. A. Pletnev's enthusiastic report on its 'very lively' verses, it was already clear by this point that the censor had refused to pass the work.[48] Other members of the audience included K. S. Serbinovich, a high-ranking official in the Synod, and Tiutchev, both of whom subsequently facilitated the poem's publication and distribution.[49] As the editor of *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia,* Serbinovich included extracts from Glinka's poem in two issues of the journal in 1849 and 1850.[50]

Although the whole work was not approved for publication in Russia until 1871, it became quite well known and even acquired a certain celebrity status during the 1850s. It circulated in *samizdat* handwritten copies and attracted attention through a series of private readings, conducted by 'Apostle Fedor' and his wife, Avdot'ia Pavlovna (who also wrote spiritual verse) in an atmosphere of enticing secrecy in front of select audiences of initiates.[51]

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[48] P. A. Pletnev's letter to Ia. K. Grot of 23 October 1848, in Zverev, *Fedor Glinka*, 332.

[49] See Glinka's letter to P. A. Viazemsky of 23 October 1848, in Zverev, *Fedor Glinka*, 479-80. Glinka noted that he was pleased with the audience's responses after the reading held on the previous day. If further readings could be held, he would do them together with his wife and lead Viazemsky to Paradise and through all the sections of Hell. He asked Viazemsky to mention some key arguments to Serbinovich, which the latter could use to persuade the ecclesiastical censor to publish the poem. These included the strictly literary, not theological nature of the work, and the fact that it was not a translation of gospels (much feared by the censors), but a series of *kartiny* [pictures], comparable to an artist's icons, painted on paper with words and framed in rhymes.

[50] Three extracts were published in the literary appendix to *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia*, 1849, no. 1, 1-8, and a section of the poem, 'Predanie i sobytie', in ibid., 1850, no. 1, 1-13. To avoid problems with the censor, Serbinovich made certain cuts, which upset the author. See his apologetic letter to Glinka of 31 March 1850, in Zverev, Fedor Glinka, 481-82.

[51] Glinka read his verse at the literary-musical evenings he hosted with his wife (he held regular Monday salons in Moscow, Tver and Petersburg). See V. F. Shubin, 'Fedor Glinka i ego peterburgskii salon v 1850-e gody', *Russkaia literatura*, 1980, no. 2, 159-63. On his readings, see the memoirs of N. V. Berg, 'Iz "Zapisok"', in R. V. Iezuitova, Ia. L. Levkovich, I. V. Mushina, eds., *Pisateli-dekabristy v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov*, 2 vols., Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1980, 1:330-33 (332). The translator and writer N. V. Berg (1823-1884) was the only member of the younger generation who attended Glinka's salon, drawn by his passion 'to examine closely all sorts of ruins…' (ibid., 1:331). He noted that Glinka did not read anything new, only his past works. His memoir conveys the sense that

Glinka's prophetic image was considerably enhanced by the mystery surrounding these performances. This is evident from the many enthusiastic responses he received: letters, poetic tributes, comments in his albums and valuable gifts, including a silver goblet and a bust of Christ.[52] After attending a reading in 1851, Countess Evdokiia Rostopchina wrote to Glinka and his wife describing the feelings she experienced as a poet, woman and Christian believer while listening to this 'wonderful, biblical epic, so close to every Christian soul'. She felt transported out of the present age of spiritual poverty and false prophets into a different era of faith and warmth. Glinka should give as many readings of his poem as possible to believers for whom it would have meaning, like the images of an iconostasis for believers. She ended by advising him to publish the poem in order to bring the blind wandering in darkness back into the light of faith. The printing of her letter in Pogodin's journal *Moskvitianin* in June 1851 gave it the status of a public declaration and set the tone for the reception of Glinka's poem as a prophetic work of Christian revelation, capable of returning lost souls to belief.[53]

In July 1854 A. Chirkov wrote at length about his excitement upon hearing the poet's 'divine word', composed under the influence of the Holy Ghost. He sensed that he was in the presence of a council of great teachers of the Orthodox faith, and saw Glinka as 'God's Chosen One, like the Golden-Tongued Chrysostomos of faith' (*Bozhestvennogo Izbrannika, kak very Zlatousta*). His soul was elevated, and he understood Christianity more clearly after witnessing Glinka read his poem.[54]

Glinka was a curious and touching relic of the past, stranded in a new era to which he did not belong. Ol'ga Engel'gardt observed in her memoirs, published in 1887, that Glinka's wife called him 'Apostle Fedor'. Korovin, 'Zamechaniia pedanta', 179. Another memoirist recalled a series of evening readings at the homes of F. P. Tolstoi and Glinka, shrouded in secrecy, attended by a small group of invited initiates. See the memoir of E. A. Shtakenshneider, first published in 1934, cited in Korovin, 'Zamechaniia pedanta', 180.

[52] Written responses, including comments in Glinka's albums, are preserved in RGALI, f. 141, op. 1, ed. khr. 46. The silver goblet, made by P. I. Sazikov, a well-known sculptor and silversmith, carried an inscription from friends thanking him for his readings of the inspired 'Kaplia'. The bust of Christ was made by Count F. P. Tolstoi. Zverev, *Fedor Glinka,* 473-74.

[53] 'Pis'mo grafini E. P. Rostopchinoi k F. N. Glinke', *Moskvitianin*, June 1851, no. 11, kn. 1, 240-42. In the published version of the letter, to avoid problems with the censor, *Tainstvennaia Kaplia* was referred to simply as the 'poem', without mention of its title. For extracts from the original letter of 24 April 1851, see Zverev, *Fedor Glinka*, 475-77.

[54] A. Chirkov, Letter to Glinka of 15 July 1854 (RGALI, f. 141, op. 1, ed. khr. 444), cited in Zverev,

Equally effusive reactions were expressed in verse. In 1852 the writer A. Tsurikov extolled Glinka in a long poem entitled 'Pravoslavnomu Milton'u' ['To the Russian Orthodox Milton'].[55] In 1858 the Petersburg poet Vladimir Benediktov (1807-1873) hailed 'the author of the "Drop"' as a divinely inspired psalmist who wields the harp of David and heals the problems of his age through his poem. The following lines confirmed the poet's status as a biblical prophet of revelation:

> Ты ж провещал нам, библейский певец,
> Слово бессмертья, глагол откровенья,[56]
> [You did prophesy to us, biblical poet,
> The word of immortality, the word of revelation,]

However encouraging these tributes may have been on a personal level, they did little to resolve Glinka's concerns over the long-term fate of his poem. In May 1851 he took the precaution of asking Pogodin to accept a copy for preservation in his newly founded national archive of significant works.[57] In January 1852 a helpful relation suggested various schemes to get the poem into the hands of the tsar or heir to the throne.[58] Nothing came of these attempts, however. In a disheartened letter of August 1853 to one of his admirers, the poet seemed ready to give up the struggle for publication, arguing that 'in our prosaic era, the *poema* should remain in the author's study'. Poetry no longer spoke the 'language of the gods', it had been reduced to a human, earthly level. Deprived of insight (*prozrenie*), like Samson it had lost all its former strength and now wandered aimlessly, blind and impotent. He concluded that the genre of the religious *poema* should hibernate until the weather changed. His friend remonstrated that the voices of lone writers such as Plato, Augustine, Dante and Tasso had been heard, even though they stood apart from their contemporaries. Appealing to Glinka's military past, he tried to stir him into action and encouraged him to publish his poem: 'Тогда Вы были воином отчизны, теперь Вы воин Христа; значение ваше возвысилось... Почему же не *действовать* Вам теперь?' ['Then you were a warrior of the fatherland, now you are a warrior of Christ; your

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Fedor Glinka, 472-73.

[55] GATO, f. 103, op. 1, ed. khr. 994, l. 37-38 ob., cited in Zverev, *Fedor Glinka*, 334.

[56] 'Avtoru 'Kapli' (Otvet na privet)', cited from the manuscript in RGALI, in Zverev, *Fedor Glinka*, 471. Zverev also cites Benediktov's earlier letter to Glinka of 14 May 1854, apologising for missing two readings of Glinka's 'bozhestvennaia poema'. Ibid.

[57] Ibid., 477-78.

[58] Zhukovsky would have been asked, had he not been abroad at the time. Ibid., 478.

importance has risen… Why should you not *act* now?'].[59]

A few years later Glinka did take action. He paid for a two-volume edition of his poem to be printed in Berlin in 1861.[60] He remained desperate, however, for the prophetic message of his work to be spread in his native land. In October 1862 he sent Pogodin one of his first copies (after receiving half a dozen with great difficulty). Lamenting the fact that his poem was being read and praised in Paris, Berlin and Wiesbaden, but not in Russia, he quoted scripture to compare its fate to Christ's reception in Palestine: 'He came unto his own, and his own received him not' (John 1:11). This analogy implied that the prophetic message of his poem would eventually be accepted. To expedite this outcome, he wanted to dispatch free copies to all Slavonic universities and to his contacts in Russia.[61]

At the end of December, Glinka sent Tiutchev a copy of the Berlin edition, begging him in his capacity of censor of foreign books to facilitate its distribution in Russia. Some years earlier, Glinka had addressed an admiring poem to him, portraying him as an isolated prophetic visionary, able to discern the coming redemption.[62] Now he appealed to him as a kindred spirit. After reminding him of his positive comments at the reading of the poem in Prince Viazemsky's home, he lodged his heartfelt plea with a judicious mix of pathos and flattery:

> Теперь посылаю Русскую поэму, напечатанную в чужой стороне. От Вас зависит открыть ей дверь в отечество; ибо Вам дано право решить и вязать судьбу заграничных книг. Я рад, что это право досталось в благородные руки и поэта в душе, и человека с лучами европейского просвещения. Пропустите же сиротку на родину![63]
>
> [I am sending you now a Russian *poema*, printed in a foreign land. It depends on you

[59] See Glinka's letter to the young scholar, historian and statistician I. N. Shill' of 17 August 1853 and Shill''s reply of 2 September 1853, in ibid., 484-86.

[60] *Tainstvennaia Kaplia. Narodnoe predanie*, 2 vols., Berlin: Tip. K. Shul'tse, 1861. *Chast' I*, xvi, 448 pp.; *Chast' II*, iv, 504 pp. Although the author's name does not appear on the title-page, the preface is signed 'Fedor Glinka'.

[61] Letter to Pogodin of 18 October 1862, in Glinka, *Pis'ma k drugu*, 503-4.

[62] See Glinka's poem of 1849, 'F. I. Tiutchevu' ('Kak stranno nyne videt' *zriashchemu*…'), first published in his *Dukhovnye stikhotvoreniia* (1869), 482-83.

[63] Glinka's letter to Tiutchev of 24 December 1862 is published in the appendix to Zverev, 'Dukhovnye sviazi F. I. Tiutcheva i F. N. Glinka', 346. Tiutchev was appointed censor of foreign books in April 1858.

whether to open for it a door into the fatherland; for you have been given the power to determine and spin the fate of books published abroad. I am happy that this power has fallen into the noble hands of a poet at heart, a person <gifted> with the rays of European enlightenment. Please let this little orphan come home!]

Glinka astutely combined an emphasis on the 'Russianness' of his poem and its rightful place in their common fatherland with an appeal to the spirit of European enlightenment. After he received permission to distribute the book in Russia, he gave away many copies to friends who had attended the readings or read the poem in manuscript.[64] At this point a bizarre episode took place, which reveals the extent of Glinka's sense of prophetic mission, fueled by his mystic beliefs. His friend and admirer, the writer Mariia Bode, had recently moved from Petersburg to Vitebsk to direct a new seminary for daughters of the clergy. The baroness conducted regular séances, at which the spirits of the departed were summoned to answer questions. Glinka sent her his poem and asked her to invite various deceased writers to comment on its contents. Bode obligingly sent back congratulatory messages transmitted by Zhukovsky, Pushkin, Aksakov, Shishkov, general Miloradovich and Innokentii, Archbishop of Kherson and the Crimea (I. A. Borisov, 1800-1857, the learned theologian and skilled orator who used to advise Glinka on his religious works). Encouraging communications were also received from Schiller and Klopstock (in German), Tasso (in Italian), the Portuguese Renaissance poet, Luís de Camões (in French), and Milton (in English, translated into Russian). Milton's response was particularly gratifying; he confessed that Glinka's magnificent creation surpassed *Paradise Lost* and that redemption was a far greater subject than the fall of man. Glinka clearly attached importance to these responses, which he carefully transcribed into a dedicated notebook.[65]

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[64] Zverev, *Fedor Glinka*, 492-93.

[65] Ibid., 461-62, 493. Glinka's archive in Tver contains 'Voprosy i otvety na spiriticheskikh seansakh, pis'ma o knige F. N. Glinki "Tainstvennaia Kaplia"' (GATO, f. 103, op. 1, ed. khr. 1075, 1862-1864, 1870), in ibid., 511. It also contains a notebook of 1856-1866 (ed. khr. 1038) with Glinka's transcriptions of the records of the most significant spiritualist séances that he attended. See Glinka, *Stikhotvoreniia*, 40. According to Orlitsky, Glinka's transcriptions (including words uttered by Napoleon) were recorded 'with stenographic accuracy'. Glinka, *Opyty allegorii*, 257-58. When Glinka asked the deceased Decembrist poet A. A. Bestuzhev (1797-1837) whether his description of the heavenly realm in the 'Podnebesnaia' section of his poem bore any resemblance to heaven, Bestuzhev answered that Glinka's picture was weaker than the ineffable beauty of true heaven, but was good enough for man on earth. Glinka, *Stikhotvoreniia*, 88.

Leaving aside these otherworldly communications – fascinating as they are – we should note that Glinka's poem also received endorsements at the highest level from church figures and the imperial family. In 1863 Bishop Kirill of Melitopol, the Deputy of the Russian Ecclesiastical mission in Jerusalem, received a copy from his friend V. N. Zhadovsky. A literature enthusiast with otherworldly inclinations, Zhadovsky had enjoyed attending Glinka's poetry readings at his Petersburg salon in the 1850s.[66] He travelled regularly to the near east, and had already written to Glinka, praising his work and its descriptions of places in the Holy Land. Bishop Kirill eagerly devoured the poem, hailing it as a 'miracle, music, healing medicine' which should pour like a river over thirsting souls.[67]

In August 1866**,** Empress Mariia Aleksandrovna sent Glinka a snuffbox as a sign of her appreciation of the gift of the Berlin edition of the poem. Prince Viazemsky recited over twenty sections to her and she planned to keep the book on her table for regular readings in front of other people. Together with the tsar's gift of a diamond ring to the poet for his version of *Job* in 1859, this constituted exceptional evidence of the imperial couple's high regard for Glinka's religious verse, based on long-standing familiarity with his two principal works.[68]

These marks of ecclesiastical and tsarist approval contrasted starkly with the disparaging tone of an anonymous literary review that appeared in 1866 on the pages of *Sovremennik*. The article, written by Nekrasov, the journal's editor, surveyed a motley collection of verse publications, including the unsigned Berlin edition of *Tainstvennaia Kaplia* and works by two of its most fervent admirers, M. A. Dmitriev and Evdokiia Rostopchina. Nekrasov described Glinka and Dmitriev as honourable old men sitting by the side of the road, long since unable to walk; everything living and forward-thinking had overtaken these 'fragments of the past'. With its surfeit of legends and sub-plots, *Tainstvennaia Kaplia* suffered from an 'excess of poetic ardour', reflected in absurd images such as the description of the Virgin Mary's attire tailored out of the dawn and a piece of the

[66] See G. N. Gennadi's description of the regular guests at Glinka's salon in the winter of 1856, cited in Shubin, 'Fedor Glinka i ego peterburgskii salon v 1850-e gody', 161.

[67] For V. N. Zhadovsky's letter to Glinka of 1863 and Kirill's reply to him from Jerusalem of 23 August 1863 (forwarded to Glinka in Tver), see Zverev, *Fedor Glinka,* 334-35. Zhadovsky described the poem to Glinka as a work of 'poeticized Theology, philosophy, psychology and even Demonology'.

[68] This information was later reported by Glinka in a letter to Pogodin of 17 January 1870, cited in ibid., 335-36.

heavens.[69]

The negative reactions of the radical critics and ecclesiastical censor, set against the imperial family's unstinting support, allowed Glinka to cultivate two distinct versions of his self-image: the prophet as persecuted outsider and the prophet as loyal adviser to the throne.

When the question of publishing *Tainstvennaia Kaplia* in Russia came up again (for Pogodin's new edition of his works), Glinka took various strategic precautions. His experience with the censors over *Job* had taught him a few lessons. He systematized all the commentaries and explanations which had accumulated in the Berlin edition and moved them into a long scholarly afterword of nearly sixty pages at the end of Part II. As he explained to Pogodin in December 1862, the point of this extended commentary was to demonstrate the fundamental unity and structure that underpinned his wide-ranging work.[70] He also prepared a second document for the censor, designed to refute concerns raised about the Berlin edition of 1861. His poem had been accused of fostering mysticism (seen as a threat to the church) and promoting heretical beliefs linked to the Skoptsy sect.[71] He pointed out that it had been endorsed by prominent church figures (including Filaret, metropolitan of Moscow) and embraced in the most aristocratic Petersburg circles, as reflected in a scene from Turgenev's novel *Dym* [*Smoke,* 1867] where the poem is discussed.[72] He later asked Pogodin to emphasize that he had served as Chair

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[69] Anonymous review, in N. A. Nekrasov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v piatnadtsati tomakh,* vol. 11:2, Leningrad: Nauka, 1990, 259-60. First published in *Sovremennik*, 1866, no. 3, otd. II, 119-30.

[70] See Glinka's letter to Pogodin of 26 December 1862, in Zverev, *Fedor Glinka,* 487. The 1871 edition included a few prefaces, 'Soderzhanie legendy: Tainstvennaia Kaplia. Narodnoe predanie', 'Legenda palestinskaia', 'Ob"iasnenie epigrafa' (*Chast' I,* iii-xii) and a long afterword divided into several sections, 'Soderzhanie i osnovnye mysli legendy: "Tainstvennaia Kaplia"' (*Chast' I,* 619-78).

[71] Pogodin's archive contains Glinka's 'Ob"iasnitel'nye ukazaniia na nekotorye mesta poemy *T<..aia> Kaplia*', evidently prepared as a response to the censor's 'Otzyv po voprosu o knige: *Tainstvennaia Kaplia*, Berlin, 1861'. P. S. Kazansky, the ecclesiastical censor who eventually signed off the poem on 16 February 1870, secretly passed to Pogodin a copy of an earlier censor's report on the poem 'po skopicheskomu delu'. See Kazansky's letter to Pogodin of 28 April 1870, in Zverev, *Fedor Glinka,* 336.

[72] Ibid., 336. Glinka also mentions other church figures, who read and admired his poem (Innokentii of Petersburg and Makarii Altaiskii). In chapter 28 of *Dym* describing the salon of a leading Petersburg hostess, the poem is discussed in tones of hushed reverence alongside other religious and patriotic subjects.

of a secret commission investigating the Skoptsy for a year under Alexander I.[73] He defended his use of 'modern' verse forms on the grounds that it would be absurd to continue to write in the archaic style of Trediakovsky.[74]

Glinka was in fact trapped in an impossible catch-22 situation. On the one hand, a literary work was not allowed to reproduce or translate a sacred text (that was the job of church literature); on the other hand, it was not given any license to depart from canonical books of scripture. His aspiration to create a new 'gospel' was frustrated by these rules. He found it hard to believe that his poem was denied publication because of the fear that readers might prefer to read this 'pure Gospel' (*chistoe Evangelie*) instead of the biblical gospels.[75] As he pointed out in an indignant letter of November 1870 to Pogodin:

> Я от души желал, чтоб Капля была Евангелие, поколику, разумеется, это возможно; от души старался напитать, насытить земную букву небесным эфиром, святостью и духовностью Евангелия; и вдруг, отмахиваясь руками, говорю: 'Это не Евангелие!' – А кто виноват? – Угадайте![76]
>
> [With all my soul I wanted the Drop to be a Gospel, to the extent, of course, that this is possible; with all my soul I tried to fill, to saturate earthly letters with the atmosphere of heaven, with the sacred and religious quality of the Gospels; and suddenly, throwing up my hands, I say: 'It is not a Gospel!' – And who is to blame? – Guess!]

Despite all these difficulties, the poem eventually appeared in 1871 as the second volume of Pogodin's edition of Glinka's works.[77] The preface (unsigned, but evidently written by Pogodin) emphasised the moral value of the poem's appearance in the current age of egoism and self-interest, devoted to the worship of the golden calf (a characterisation that implied a link between the book's purpose and Moses's prophetic mission).[78] Glinka, however, remained

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[73] In a letter to Pogodin of 17 January 1871, in ibid., 337.

[74] Ibid., 338.

[75] Letter to Pogodin of 29 November 1870, in ibid., 339.

[76] Ibid., 338.

[77] The censor's permission was dated 16 February 1870, but the publication of the book was delayed by Glinka's refusal to make changes to the Berlin edition of 1861. Zverev, *Fedor Glinka*, 46-47.

[78] The postscript to the preface defended the work against the charge that it encouraged sectarian heretical views and repeated Glinka's point (originally made in his letter to the censor of 1848) about the right of poets to exercise artistic licence, as shown by the models of Dante, Milton and Klopstock. *Tainstvennaia*

doubtful about its reception. He warned Pogodin in October 1871 that times had changed; the present generation no longer no longer had an ear for Schubert's symphonies and serenades.[79]

The unrecognized prophet: Ezekiel

As indicated by the above comment, Glinka was well aware that aesthetic tastes had changed. In the interval between completing *Tainstvennaia Kaplia* (1849) and seeing it through to its final publication in Russia (1871), he came to feel more and more out of tune with his age. To express his sense of prophetic isolation, he abandoned his experiments with epic forms and went back to the more private genre of the short lyric. In a barbed address to his contemporaries, 'Bukva i dukh' ['The Letter and the Spirit', 1860], he returned to the model of Ezekiel, the exiled prophet of the destruction of Jerusalem, whose predictions were ignored by his contemporaries but fulfilled in his lifetime. The poem's narrator regrets that the diseased eyes of the 'sons of the earth' cannot see the light of God. When the 'light-prophesying poet' (*svetoveshchaiushchii poet*) (evidently Glinka) sings to them of the coming redemption, the crazed *narod* responds by throwing mud at him. The 'contemporary genius' is too lazy to deal with the spirit of allegory or mystery, it can only cope with the naked 'letter'. Divine intervention is at hand, however. As the poet predicts:

> Но будет время – выйдет в поле
> *Пророк* и возгласит *костям*:
> По всемогущей Бога воле,
> 'Восстать повелеваю вам!' –
>
> И сбудется... Я вижу пору,
> Когда трубой пронзится слух
> И эту плоть пробьет как кору
> Животрепещущийся Дух.[80]
>
> [But there will come a time – out into the field will step
> A *prophet* and call out upon the *bones*:

Kaplia. *Chast' I*, i-ii.

[79] Letter to Pogodin of 20 October 1871, in Zverev, *Fedor Glinka*, 340.

[80] Glinka, *Sochineniia* (1986), 120 (the first publication of the manuscript of the poem, held in RGALI). It is significant that Glinka did not include this revealing poem in his *Dukhovnye stikhotvoreniia*.

By the omnipotent will of God,
'I command you to rise!'

And it will come to pass… I see a time
When hearing will be transfixed by a trumpet
And this flesh will be pierced through like a crust
By the living trembling Spirit.]

In these lines, Glinka the poet is not just transmitting Ezekiel's call to his generation, his voice is actually merging with the prophet's. Glinka clearly believed that – like the prophet Ezekiel before him – he could reignite the 'dead souls' of his contemporaries through the strength of his poetic word.

After the death of his loyal wife and collaborator in August 1863, Glinka felt a sense of 'complete orphanhood', as he reported in a distraught letter to Pogodin.[81] He printed a hundred copies of her religious poems for distribution to friends and assembled the verses he had written over his lifetime for the first volume of Pogodin's edition of his works.[82] *Dukhovnye stikhotvoreniia* (1869**)** is the largest collection of spiritual verses by any one author in Russian literature. At nearly five hundred pages, it comprises over two hundred and fifty poems, composed between 1815 and 1867. The tone is set by the opening poem in praise of David the psalmist, followed by the fifty poems first published in *Opyty Sviashchennoi Poezii*. The remaining verses include many further adaptations of the psalms and prophets, interspersed with personal meditations and mystic visions. Despite its magnitude, the book's appearance went virtually unnoticed. As regretfully noted by Glinka's obituarist, most of Glinka's peers were already in the grave, and few members of the new generation had a taste for poetry of this type.[83]

Legacy

As this article has demonstrated, throughout his long life Glinka strove to develop his mystic

[81] Letter to Pogodin of 23 September 1863, in Glinka, *Pis'ma k drugu,* 504-5.

[82] *Zadushevnye dumy Avdot'i Pavlovny Glinki*, Moscow: V tipografii F. B. Millera, 1869.

[83] F. M., 'Fedor Nikolaevich Glinka (Nekrolog)', *Tverskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti,* 15 March 1880, no. 6, 98-101 (100). F. M. was almost certainly the poet, novelist and translator, Fedor Bogdanovich Miller (1818-1881), who printed the posthumous collection of poems by Glinka's wife (hence his knowledge of the print-run of a hundred copies, mentioned in his obituary).

sense of prophetic identity by creating new poetic forms. After adopting the voices of the psalmist and prophets in the short lyrics of *Opyty Sviashchennoi Poezii*, he embarked on a series of increasingly ambitious religious poems. Starting with the imitation of the entire Book of Job, he moved on to the representation of three distinct historical periods, moving back in time from seventeenth-century Russia through fourth-century apocalyptic visions in the Egyptian desert to the messianic origins of Christianity in ancient Israel. The gradually widening scope of these works culminated in an epic work of universal content and Russian orientation.

Glinka was not alone in his desire to embrace the role of national prophet. Many of his contemporaries entertained similar aspirations and tried out different genres for the expression of their prophetic insights. In the turbulent late 1840s, Tiutchev composed a series of grandiloquent historico-political essays on Russia and revolution for the attention of the tsar. Gogol modelled his epic prose *poema, Mertvye dushi* [*Dead Souls*, 1842] on Dante's *Divine Comedy*, but only managed to complete the first part describing unredeemed Russia. As a vehicle for preaching a more positive message to his readers, he developed the intimate genre of epistolary essays. One of the essays in *Vybrannye mesta iz perepiski s druz'iami* [*Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends*, 1847] concerns his friend, the painter Alexander Ivanov, who spent a quarter of a century working on his grand canvas, 'Iavlenie Khrista narodu' ['The Appearance of Christ to the People', 1833-1857]. This graphic representation of the path to redemption includes the artist's self-portrait (as the 'wanderer', next to John the Baptist) and a portrait of Gogol (the 'closest to Christ'). After completion, it was brought back to Russia, unveiled before the tsar in the Winter Palace, and purchased by the imperial family as a national trophy.[84]

Glinka opted for the religious *poema* as his preferred epic genre. Throughout the 1830s and 1840s, he built up a prophetic vision of Russia's destiny in narrative verse, and persisted in his attempts to publish these works well into the second half of the century. In this respect, his achievement was unique. Although Kiukhel'beker toiled away on a monumental poem about the psalmist and prophet King David from 1826 to 1830 while incarcerated in a succession of different fortresses, his work never saw the light of day.[85]

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[84] Pamela Davidson, 'Aleksandr Ivanov and Nikolai Gogol': The Image and the Word in the Russian Tradition of Art as Prophecy', *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 91, no. 2, April 2013, 157-209 (178-80, 200-3).

[85] As the most substantial tribute to the psalmist ever composed in Russian (over 8,000 lines of verse, divided into ten books and an epilogue), Kiukhel'beker's 'David' represents a high point in the traditional

Glinka's chosen path was fraught with difficulties. In his search for new poetic forms to embody his prophetic intuitions, he encountered numerous problems. First, on an institutional level. His mystic inclinations and involvement in freemasonry already complicated his relations with the Russian Orthodox Church. His protracted negotiations with the ecclesiastical censor were symptomatic of the ongoing power struggle between writers and Church authorities over the right to 'own' the voice of scriptural tradition – ever since Simeon Polotsky printed his versified Psalter, the fuzzy boundaries between sacred texts and literary adaptations had generated much controversy.

The second area of difficulty concerned the reception of Glinka's work by his readers. The poet's dogged dedication to his cause led some contemporaries to make fun of him behind his back. In a letter of 1831 to Pletnev, Pushkin remarked: 'Бедный Глинка работает как батрак, а проку все нет.'[86] ['Poor Glinka works like a farm-labourer, but no good ever comes of it.']. The perception that Glinka was out of step with his times took root in the early 1840s and gathered strength in the ensuing decades. At first this view was expressed in private. In letters of 1842 to various friends, the influential critic Belinsky dropped withering references to Glinka as Allah's prophet or a decaying saint: 'Что, не явились ли в Москве мощи Ф. Н. Глинки или он по-прежнему гниет заживо, а Петромихали с Шевыркою пропитывают свой пакостный журнал запахом его смердящего тела?'[87] ['What, have the holy relics of F. N. Glinka not yet turned up in Moscow, or is he rotting alive as before, while Petromikhali <Mikhail Petrovich Pogodin> and Shevyrka <Shevyrev> saturate their filthy journal with the smell of his putrefying body?']. By the mid-1860s, he was openly characterised as a living

association of the psalms with prophecy. The number of lines of the manuscript text is given by Tynianov in V. K. Kiukhel'beker, *Lirika i poemy*, ed. Iu. Tynianov, Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1939, liv. For twenty extracts, see '<Otryvki iz poemy "David">', in ibid., 240-64. A much fuller but still far from complete text (around 4,500 lines), reproducing with significant cuts the full manuscript text with hand-written corrections by I. I. Pushchin, held in IRLI, appeared in 1967: 'David: Epicheskoe stikhotvorenie, vziatoe iz "Sviashchennogo pisaniia"', in V. K. Kiukhel'beker, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia v dvukh tomakh*, ed. N. V. Koroleva, Moscow and Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1967, 1:350-474.

[86] Letter to P. A. Pletnev of 7 January 1831, in V. E. Vatsuro, ed., *Perepiska A. S. Pushkina*, 2 vols., Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1982, 2:134.

[87] See Belinsky's letters to I. I. Khanenko of 8 February 1842 and to M. S. Shchepkin of 14 April 1842, in V. G. Belinskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 12, Moscow: Izd-vo Akademii nauk SSSR: 1956, 79, 104. On the use of Petromikhali (the name of the money-lender in the first version of Gogol's 'Portrait') as a nickname for Pogodin, see his letter to V. P. Botkin of 4 April 1842, in ibid., 12:94.

anachronism or outmoded remnant of the past, as shown by Nekrasov's review of *Tainstvennaia Kaplia*. After he passed away, a handful of respectful obituaries introduced him as a figure from the past, using phrases like 'the last representative of the Pushkin period of our literature'.[88] While lauding his patriotism, noble character, deep religiosity and biblical verse, they conveyed a sense that all these attributes belonged to a vanished era.

Soon after his death, Glinka's name slipped into oblivion. One may well wonder why this should have been the case. Was it connected with the fact that he spent the last two decades of his life in Tver, isolated from the main centres of literary activity? Or was it due to the shift in literary tastes? He continued writing verse at a time when it was no longer in vogue and died before the fin de siècle poetic revival took place. Was his emphasis on the spiritual realm too abstract and detached for a reading public focused on political and social reform? Or perhaps the problem lay in his unrelenting dedication to moral ideals? This was the view taken by Belinsky in 1834. While recognizing that Glinka's poetic talent was genuine and rooted in religious inspiration, he observed that it was 'far too one-sided' and that nothing but 'morality' grew boring.[89]

For other readers, however, the poet's constant focus on moral goals was a strength, not a weakness. In his extended obituary, A. P. Miliukov singled out Glinka's popular 'Plach plenennykh Iudeev' ['Lament of the Captive Jews', 1822], based on Psalm 137 (136), as the best poem in *Opyty Sviashchennoi Poezii*. He could only identify three works of comparable quality: Derzhavin's 'Vlastiteliam i sudiiam' ['To Rulers and Judges'**,** 1780-1787], based on Psalm 81 (82), Pushkin's 'Prorok' ['The Prophet', 1826], based on Isaiah 6, and Iazykov's imitations of the psalms.[90] Juxtaposing Glinka's poem with these particular works was clearly designed to

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[88] <A. P. Miliukov>, 'Fedor Nikolaevich Glinka', *Istoricheskii vestnik: Istoriko-literaturnyi zhurnal*, vol. 1, March 1880, 658-59 (658). Miliukov wrote a second, extended obituary for a later issue of this journal, prefaced with a portrait of Glinka: A. Miliukov, 'Fedor Nikolaevich Glinka', *Istoricheskii vestnik: Istoriko-literaturnyi zhurnal*, vol. 2, July 1880, 472-81. For other obituaries, see: 'Nekrolog', <F. N. Glinka>, *Tverskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, 15 February 1880, no. 4, 71; F. M. <Fedor Bogdanovich Miller>, 'Fedor Nikolaevich Glinka (Nekrolog)', *Tverskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, 15 March 1880, no. 6, 98-101; <F. B. Miller >, 'F. N. Glinka', *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia*, CCVIII, March 1880, 88-91 (largely based on his previous obituary).

[89] 'Literaturnye mechtaniia', in V. G. Belinskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, Moscow: Izd-vo Akademii nauk SSSR: 1953, 75-76.

[90] A. Miliukov, 'Fedor Nikolaevich Glinka', *Istoricheskii vestnik: Istoriko-literaturnyi zhurnal*, vol. 2, July 1880, 476.

establish his place in a national tradition of poet-prophets rooted in the psalms. And yet, although Glinka was in many ways the obvious model for aspiring prophets of the next generation to invoke as a precursor, this did not happen. Instead, Dostoevsky, Solov'ev and the Symbolists cited less obvious candidates, such as Tiutchev, Polonsky or even Fet, reaching back to Pushkin and Lermontov, but invariably bypassing Glinka. Ironically, the 'Russian Orthodox Milton' failed to gain a place in posterity's version of the very tradition to which he had dedicated his life's work.