

# Poetic License, Textual Fidelity and the Liturgical Impulse in Aleksandr Sumarokov's Early Spiritual Verse<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** The present essay considers the paraphrases of Psalms and other biblical and liturgical texts that Sumarokov composed between 1744 and 1769. He initially treated his paraphrases primarily as literary exercises: while taking care not to distort the Church Slavic and *ipso facto* Greek (Septuagint) source texts, he had no qualms about both expanding and abridging the original texts within the confines of traditional metrical and stanzaic structures. Subsequently in the 1760s, he began to experiment with variable iambic and trochaic lines in spiritual verse, though such forms are typically associated with less lofty genres such as fables and epigrams. His experiments in turn allowed him to achieve greater fidelity to the Church Slavic texts targeted for paraphrasis, and to bring his texts stylistically closer to the liturgical norms associated with the Church Slavic originals. At the same time, he strove to improve the fidelity of his own paraphrases of the Psalms by consulting German translations of the Hebrew (Masoretic) originals. Thus, Sumarokov paradoxically brings to his new translations of the 1660s the philological Protestant sensibility of German translations of the Psalter, and an Orthodox sensibility that favors the traditional Church Slavic register associated with the Psalter as a liturgical text. These new translations in free and frequently unrhymed iambs set the stage for the final, more radical experiments undertaken in 1773–1774.

Keywords: Sumarokov, Trediakovsky, spiritual verse, Psalter, variable iambs, Masoretic text, Septuagint

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My goal in this brief study is to explore what I call evolving prosodic fields in Aleksandr Sumarokov's *dukhovnye stikhi* – his spiritual or religious verse – generated by three goals or principles that he adopted over the course of some thirty years, from 1744 to 1774. These are: 1) poetic license, that is to say, the desire to explore various prosodic and stylistic means in the transmission of the Psalter and, to a lesser extent, other biblical, liturgical and religiously oriented texts; 2) textual fidelity in translations, that is, maintaining faithfulness to the targeted source texts, whether the Church Slavic originals or the ur-texts, the Greek Septuagint or Hebrew (probably Masoretic) bible; and 3) the liturgical impulse, that is to say, the desire to accommodate or raise his own paraphrases and translations to the more sublime level associated with Orthodoxy's church books.

1. This task has, to some extent, been simplified by the research conducted by Nadezhda Jur'evna Alekseeva (2014), who authored a substantial study of the Psalms translated or paraphrased by Sumarokov between 1771 and 1774, close to the end of his life. She explores both the form and style of these works, identifying for the first time one of the most important German source texts that Sumarokov consulted in composing his translations,<sup>2</sup> and explaining why and how Sumarokov could claim that ten of these were, in his words, “točno kak na evrejskom” (“exactly as in the Hebrew” – see Sumarokov 1774, section 3: 8, 11, 15, 17, 27, 29, 35, 37, 39, 41)<sup>3</sup> – though he did not himself know Hebrew. In the afterward to the 1774 edition of his spiritual verse, Sumarokov explains:

Желалъ бы я увидѣти нашу псалтырь переведенну, толь хорошимъ переводчикомъ со еврейскаго языка, коль худымъ переводчикомъ она съ греческаго переведенна. А я не зная еврейскаго языка здѣлалъ то все, что могъ; ибо я держался лутчихъ переводовъ. И такъ предаю я всю псалтырь любопытнымъ читателямъ, препоручая трудъ мой угодному пріятію.  
(Sumarokov 1774: 51–52 – section 3 pagination; see footnote 3)

<sup>2</sup> A more general overview of Sumarokov's translation and paraphrases of the Psalter may be found in Gus'kov 2009 and Lutsevich 2002: 318–373.

<sup>3</sup> The pagination of the collection in which this phrase appears is twofold: the first two sections, “Stikhotvorenija dukhovnyja” and “Někotoryja dukhovnyja sochinenija”, are paginated consecutively 1–259. The third section, in which this explanatory note is affixed to 10 Psalms (Alekseeva 2014: 11), is “Dopolnenie k dukhovnym stikhotvorenijam” and separately paginated. For an overview of the composition of the entire *Stikhotvorenija dukhovnyja*, see Alekseeva's detailed analysis (Alekseeva 2014: 8–11).

[= I would like to see our Psalter translated from the Hebrew by as good a translator as it has been translated from the Greek by a poor translator. But not knowing Hebrew, I did all that I could; for I adhered to the best translations. And so, I proffer my entire Psalter to the curious reader, trusting in a welcome reception of my work.]

In order to achieve the greatest possible accuracy and to avoid all possible distortion, Sumarokov sometimes abandoned metricality altogether, so that the affected poems read like unrhymed free verse.

2. Paradoxically, as Alekseeva notes, these same texts, though far more accurate representations of the original Hebrew thanks to Sumarokov's consultation of one or more German intermediaries, were closer lexically and stylistically to the Church Slavic prototypes (Alekseeva 2014: 15). Indeed, there are certain grammatical forms, such as the aorist or past perfect, that appear only in these translations, though they were generally eschewed by Russia's major post-Petrine poets as excessively archaic. Ironically, Sumarokov's last translations of the Psalms – the ten which we have already noted above (see Alekseeva 2014: 11) – while more accurate than any that preceded them, are also more difficult to comprehend because they abound in archaisms (*ibid.*). Stylistically, therefore, they are elevated to the same *performative* level as liturgical texts. The result is an extraordinary symbiosis of scholarly accuracy in the Protestant tradition and Orthodox liturgical sensibility. How did Sumarokov reach this radical point in his treatment of the Psalms? Here I attempt to sketch out an answer to this question by looking at Sumarokov's spiritual verse from its origins through the 1760s, before he embarked on the radical course just described.

3.1. The history of Sumarokov's spiritual verse published during his lifetime can conveniently be divided into three periods. The first runs from 1744, when he produced a poetic paraphrase of Psalm 143<sup>4</sup> as part of a literary contest (we will return to this text in a moment) and extending for twenty years, through 1763, a period during which he published spiritual verse in several journals: *Ezheměsjachnyja sochinenija*, *Trudoljubivaja pchela*, *Prazdnoe vremja* and *Svobodnyja chasy*. This body of work includes ten Psalms, two of them (Ps. 51 and Ps. 143) published twice in different versions and venues; an excerpt from the third chapter of Sirach, another from the fifth chapter, a rendition

<sup>4</sup> In referencing individual Psalms or clusters of Psalms we have adopted the numbering of the Septuagint text, which is normative in the Eastern Orthodox tradition.

of the Lord's Prayer, two hymns from the Orthodox funeral service, and three hymns (*stichera*), constituting a single poem, from the Vigil service (Great Vespers) for the Feast of the Annunciation. One should add to this list ten other poems that are not really translations or paraphrases, but simply verse of religious content sometimes but not always imitating the style of liturgical texts. We have counted these as "spiritual verse" because in later republications they are so classified by the poet.

**3.2.** The second period in Sumarokov's engagement with spiritual verse runs from 1764 through 1769, when he published a multi-genre collection of his own verse, *Raznyja stikhotvorenija*, that contained a number of newly translated Psalms and previously unpublished spiritual verse. The third period runs from 1770 to 1774, when previously composed and published Psalms were gathered together with newly translated Psalms, culminating in the publication of a full Psalter, *Stikhotvorenija dukhovnyja*, in 1774 (see footnote 3) along with non-Psalmic spiritual verse.

**4.1.** An overview of the spiritual verse published during the first period described above is presented in Table 1.

The first text in our table is a paraphrase of Psalm 143 (see *Tri ody* 1744). Sumarokov, according to Vasily Trediakovsky, proposed a contest to him and to Mikhail Lomonosov to test which of two poetic meters, iambic or trochaic, was most appropriate for metrically paraphrasing such works.<sup>5</sup> Sumarokov and Lomonosov rendered their translation in iambs, and Trediakovsky in trochees. The paraphrases, it goes without saying, had to be faithful to the sense of the original, particularly because it was taken from Holy Scripture; indeed, the brochure containing the translations also reproduced the Church Slavic text against which the paraphrases could be judged. Facing a task that was essentially aesthetic, the authors were probably cognizant of possible errors in the Church Slavic text and therefore consulted intermediary German or French translations to determine the true sense of certain passages (Alekseeva 2014: 4–5).<sup>6</sup> This is almost certainly true of Lomonosov and Trediakovsky, but

<sup>5</sup> Though Trediakovsky indicates that Sumarokov initiated the idea of a poetic competition, scholars are not certain that this is the case. For an overview of the arguments in favor of one or another of the three participants, see Lutsevich 2002: 193; the author contends that the real initiator was Trediakovsky. For a thorough overview of the history of this literary contest, see Shishkin 1983.

<sup>6</sup> Which French and/or German editions were consulted remains to be determined. If a German translation was consulted in the 1740s, the most likely is the version translated by Martin Luther and his cohorts.

Table 1. Sumarokov's spiritual verse, 1744–1763

Abbreviations:

D: dactylic; I: iambic; T: trochaic; VI: variable iambs; VT: variable trochees

ES: *Ezheměšičnaja sočinenija*; PV: *Prazdnoe vremja, v pol'zu upotreblennoe*; RS: *Raznyja*

*stikhotvorenija*; SCh: *Svobodnaja chasy*; TOP: *Tri ody parafraštichesklja*; TP: *Trudoljubivaja pchela*

<b>Text</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Pub. date</b>	<b>Meter</b>	<b>Stanzaic or non-strophic rhyme</b>	<b>No. of Stanzas</b>
Ps. 143 [1st variant] “Oda pervaja iambičeskaja”	TOP	1744	I4	AbAbCC	11
“Izo psal'ma I”	ES	09.1755	I4	AbBA	5
“Izo psal'ma XXXVI”	ES	09.1755	I4	aBaBcc	10
“Izo psal'ma XXXVII”	ES	09.1755	I4	AbAbCCdEEd	6
“Izo psal'ma LI” [1st variant]	ES	09.1755	I4	aaBccB	5
“Izo psal'ma CVI”	ES	09.1755	I4	AAbCCb	12
“Izo glavy III Sirakha”	ES	09.1755	I4	aaBccB	4
“Oda izo psal'ma LXX”	ES	02.1756	I4	AbAb	24
“Epistola, k nepravednym sud'jam”	TP	05.1759	I6	aaBB..., non-strophic, 20 vv.	N/A
“Protiv zloděev”	TP	05.1759	An3	aaaBBBccc..., non-strophic, 21 vv.	N/A
“Molitvy. I”	TP	06.1759	T447447; 4th foot truncated in vv. 3, 6	aaBccB	3
“Molitvy. II”	TP	06.1759	I6	aaBBcDD..., non-strophic, 20 vv.	N/A
“Psalom CXLI”	TP	06.1759	T4488	AAbb	5

Text	Venue	Pub. date	Meter	Stanzaic or non-stanzaic rhyme	No. of Stanzas
"Psalom CXLIII" [2nd variant]	TP	07.1759	I4	AbAbCC	11
"Psalom CL"	TP	07.1759	VI, VT; stanzaic: I6445 I6646 I6246 T3433	aBAB aaBB aBaB aBBa	4
"Molitva"	TP	07.1759	T4	AbAbCC	3
"Otche nash"	TP	08.1759	VT; 3rd foot truncated in vv. 5, 13	aaBccBdEdEffGGhh; non-stanzaic, 16 vv.	N/A
"Psalom XLVII"	TP	08.1759	VI	Variably rhymed strophes of variable length, from 2 to 9 vv.	8 strophes
"Psalom LI" [2nd variant]	TP	08.1759	T4	AAbCCb	5
"Chasy" (retitled "Stishki na suetu mira" in RS)	TP	08.1759	D2	AbAbCdEfFgGhGhIjJj; non-stanzaic; 20 vv.	N/A
"Chas smerti"	TP	10.1759	VI	AbbbAccDDeeffFgFghhIijjKkK; non-stanzaic; 25 vv.	N/A
"Oda" (retitled "Oda o dobrodětel" in RS):	TP	11.1759	T4	AbAbCCdEEd	5
"Zrjashche mja bezglasna"	PV	03.1760	VI	AAbbCCdEEffGGhhIijjKlIkMnNNmOO; non-stanzaic; 30 vv.	N/A

Text	Venue	Pub. date	Meter	Stanzaic or non-strophic rhyme	No. of Stanzas
“Plachu i rydaju”	PV	08.1760	VT	AAbCCdEEdFggf; non-strophic; 14 vv.	N/A
“Gimn solntsu” (retitled “Gimn o premudrosti Bozhiej v solntse” in RS)	PV	09.1760	I6664	AbAb	7
“Protivu zloděv” (“Ty, Jambicheskij stikh...”)	PV	09.1760	I4	AbAbCdEEffGGhhIj;IkLlMmNoNo; non-strophic; 31 vv.	N/A
“Stikhiry iz Akafista sochinnago Presvjatoj Děvě” (retitled “Stikhiry Presvjatoj Děvě” in RS)	PV	10.1760	VI	<i>Strophe 1:</i> AAbCbCdEEffGGfHH; 17 vv. <i>Strophe 2:</i> aaBccBddEEfGGf; 14 vv. <i>Strophe 3:</i> AAbbCddCeeFFggHH; 16 vv.	3 strophes
“Oda k M. M. Kheraskovu” (retitled “Oda na suetu mira” in RS)	SCh	03.1763	I4	AbAbCCdEEd	6
“Iz Sirakha glava V” (retitled “Iz glavy 5 Sirakha” in RS)	SCh	03.1763	VI	A mix of 16 couplets, with alternating masc. and fem. rhymes, 3 quatrains, two with enclosed rhyme and one with alternating rhyme, and two quintains (IkkJ and rrSSr respectively); non- strophic; 54 vv.	N/A

not necessarily of Sumarokov. Trediakovsky accused him later (in 1750) of anachronistically distorting the Psalmic text by using the word *tserkov'* rather than *khram* in his translation.

The offending verses read:

Какъ, гроздь росю напоенный,  
Сыны ихъ въ юности своей;  
И дщери ихъ преукрашенны,  
Подобьемъ красоты церквей:  
Богаты, славны, благородны;  
Стада овецъ ихъ многоплодны.  
(Trediakovskij 1989: 435)<sup>7</sup>

[= Like a cluster of grapes watered with dew  
Are their sons in their youth,  
And their daughters are made up  
In a manner resembling the beauty of churches,  
Rich, glorious, noble  
Are their prolific flocks of sheep.]

The foundational Church Slavic text reproduced in the same volume (see Trediakovskij 1989: 431) reads as follows. It is virtually identical to the text later adopted as “canonical” in the Elizabethan Bible, published in 1751:

*Ихже сынове ихъ яко новосажденія водруженная въ юности своей: Дщери ихъ удобрены, преукрашены, яко подобіе храма. Хранилища ихъ исполнена; отрыгающая отъ сего въ сіе. Овцы ихъ многоплодны, множащяся во исходищахъ своихъ.*

(Trediakovskij 1989: 431; our regular script)

[= Their sons are like new plants, firmly embedded in their youth; their daughters are beautified, adorned *like a temple*. Their garners are full, bursting with various stores. Their sheep are prolific, multiplying in their byways.]<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> This edition of Trediakovsky's *Psalter* also contains an appendix reproducing the full contents of *Three Paraphrastic Odes*.

<sup>8</sup> Our translation slightly modifies the one in *Psalter* 1974: 252.



Trediakovsky writes:

[...] въ семь же стихѣ употребилъ онъ слово *Церквей*. О! страннаго незнанія: увидѣвъ, что въ Нѣмецкомъ переводѣ сего Псалма стоить *Кирхе*; а нынѣ у насъ тожъ самое называется *Церковь*; то и угодно ему тотчасъ стало слово употребительное нынѣ. Но, Государь мой; помнилъ ли онъ, что онъ Давидовъ Псаломъ расцвѣчаетъ? Буде помнилъ, то надобно ему было знать, что мы Иудейскаго Храма не называемъ Церковію, такъ какъ Языческія капища называются иногда у насъ Храмамижъ, а не Церквами. Слово Церков[ь], есть Христіанскаго стилиа: а хотя въ простомъ языкѣ и называется зданіе святое Церковію; однако Церковь въ точномъ своемъ знаменованіи не прие́млетъ за зданіе, но за собраніе вѣрующихъ во Христа.  
(Trediakovskij 1865 [1755]: 450)

[= ...in this verse he used the word *tserkvej* ('of churches'). Oh, what puzzling ignorance: having seen that in a German translation of this Psalm the word *Kirche* [*church*] is used, what we all now call a *tser'kov'* (*church*), he was pleased to immediately employ the word as currently in use. But, my Lord, did he not remember that he was beautifying a Psalm of David? Should he not have recalled, as he must have known, that we do not call the Jewish temple a church, just as Pagan places of worship (*kapishcha*) we sometimes call *temples* (*khramy*) but not *churches* (*tser'kvi*). The word *church* (*tser'kov'*) is in the Christian spirit, and though in simple speech a sacred building is called a *church* (*tser'kov'*), a Church in the exact sense is not taken to be a building, but a community of believers in Christ.]

But Trediakovsky may have been mistaken. First, the word *Kirche* is not present in Luther's translation of this Psalm, the most accessible German text that might have been consulted by participants in this literary competition.<sup>9</sup> Second, the word *tser'kov'* occurs in one of several printed pre-Elizabethan editions of the Psalms that Sumarokov may have consulted, among them the 1581 Ostrog Bible, where the offending passage reads:

Ихъ же сынове ихъ яко новосаждена, въдружена въ юности своей.  
Дщеря ихъ удобрены, преукрашены яко подобіе церкви. Хранилища ихъ

<sup>9</sup> If there was another German translation accessible at the time that does use the word *Kirche* in the offending verse, it has yet to be identified (see Alekseeva's note in Trediakovskij 2013: 506). See also Bulich 1911: 40.

исполнь, отрыгающа от сея въ ону Овца ихъ многоплодны, множащяся въ  
исходищыхъ своихъ.

(Biblija ostrozhskaja 1581 – our italics)

[= Their sons are like young plants, fortified in their youth; their daughters are beautified, decorated *like a church*. Their garners are full, bursting with various stores. Their sheep are prolific, multiplying in their byways.]<sup>10</sup>

The Ostrog version of the Bible republished in Moscow in 1663 (reproduced without alterations in our transcription above) may have been known to Sumarokov and also reads “jako podobie tserkve”. In short, Trediakovsky’s accusation to the effect that Sumarokov was also consulting a German translation, thus evidencing concern about textual fidelity, is not particularly compelling. Indeed, in some cases, like certain passages in his rendition of Psalm 106, the original text is not recognizable as a biblical text, but the author’s own (see below).

4.2. Thus, it is clear that early on (through the mid-1750s at least) Sumarokov was *not* preoccupied with textual fidelity, and later he justified his somewhat cavalier attitude by noting that he had deliberately titled his periphrases to indicate that he was not translating whole Psalms but lines and themes from the designated Psalm. In 1773 he wrote a postface to “Dopolnenie k dukhovnym stikhotvorenijam” [“Supplement to Spiritual Verses”], the third (and separately paginated) section of *Stikhotvorenija dukhovnyja*, with the following caveat:

Нѣкоторыя мои стихотворныя преложенія псалмовъ только из части  
содержанія псаломнаго состоятъ, или часть только псалма взята, и по  
тому надписи надъ ними я такъ и положилъ, что они не псалмы, но изо  
псалмовъ, не взирая на то что точность во многихъ, и по большей части  
противъ еврейскаго подлинника крайне наблюдаена. А нѣкоторое малое  
число псалмовъ строками только переведено. (Sumarokov 1744: 50).

[= A few of my verse renditions of the Psalms consist only of a part of the Psalmic contents, or only a part of the Psalm is rendered, and therefore what I inscribed over them, that they are not Psalms, but from the Psalms, notwithstanding that exactitude in many has been rigorously observed, for the most part checked against the Hebrew original. And a small number of Psalms are translated only by line.]

<sup>10</sup> This translation is largely a conflation of Brenton’s 1855 rendering of the Septuagint (Brenton, n. d. [1851]: 784) and an anonymous translation of the Septuagint Psalter of the Holy Transfiguration Monastery of Boston (Psalter 1974: 252).

Clearly Sumarokov was referring here, at least in part – and 20 years *post factum* – to the biblical paraphrases he had published in the September 1755 and February 1756 issues of *Ezheměsjachnyja sochinenija*, all seven of which preface the name of the targeted biblical text with some variant of *Izo* (‘from’): “From Psalm 51,” “From Sirach, Ch. 3,” “Ode from Psalm 70”; see Table 1).

**4.3.** In later poems of the first period – specifically, in 1759 – we begin to find evidence that Sumarokov has begun to move away from more traditional prosodic metrifications of his spiritual verse and is simultaneously turning to the Masoretic text of the Lutheran or other German Psalter when he cannot make good sense of the Greco-Slavic text.

**4.4.** But let us return to the general picture mapped in Table 1. As we can see, the vast majority of the poems are written in iambic tetrameter, and in strophic form. But beginning with the sixth issue (June) of *Trudoljubivaja pchela* we see a departure from this practice. This issue of the journal contains two original prayers in Psalmic style: in the first, trochaic replaces iambic and in the other strophic structure disappears altogether. In the same issue Sumarokov publishes a trochaic rendering of Psalm 141. In the following (July) issue he publishes a slightly revised and unremarkable variant of Psalm 143 and, even more importantly, a metrical paraphrase of Psalm 150, which could be of symbolic significance. The shift from iambs to trochees is imbedded within a single poem:

Хвалите господа во святости его,  
 Великой власти въ силахъ равныхъ,  
 И обладателя сего,  
 Въ величествѣ отъ дѣлъ его преславныхъ;

Хвалите господа на разныхъ голосахъ,  
 Хвалите хорами, хвалите на трубахъ,  
 Псалтирю, гусями, въ тимпанѣ;  
 Хвалите господа на струнахъ и органѣ.

Хвалите господа небеснаго царя,  
 Въ кимвалѣхъ ясныхъ,  
 И въ умиленіи горя,  
 Хвалите господа въ кимвалѣхъ доброгласныхъ.

Господа отца,  
 Всякое хвали дыханье:  
 Прославляй созданье,  
 Бога и творца.  
 (Sumarokov 1759c: 387–388)

[= Praise the Lord in His holiness,  
 Praise Him in the powers of His great might,  
 And the One who possesses them,  
 In the greatness of His most glorious deeds.

Praise the Lord in different voices,  
 Praise Him with choruses, praise Him with trumpets,  
 With psaltery, harp, timbrel.  
 Praise the Lord on strings and pipe.

Praise the Lord, the Heavenly King  
 On clear-sounding cymbals,  
 And burning with emotion,  
 Praise the Lord on sweet-sounding cymbals.

Let every breath praise  
 The Lord, the Father,  
 Glorify the work  
 Of [our] God and Creator.]

Here something very strange occurs: the poet shifts for the first time to variable iambs<sup>11</sup> in a Psalmic text and – even more striking – shifts from variable iambs to variable trochees in the final stanza. This is so unexpected that initially one suspects a printing error of some sort. But such is not the case: a version revised for publication in 1774 maintains the poem’s polymetrical structure, though the final stanza shifts away from variable trochees to a regularized T4343:

<sup>11</sup> In his overview of Russian prosody Barry Scherr prefers the term “variable” rather than “free” for meters having lines with a varying number of feet in a single poem (Scherr 1986: 103–104). His intent is to avoid the ambiguity of the common Russian term for this phenomenon, *vol’nyi*, usually translated as *free* and therefore potentially confused with *free* as in “free verse”, usually translated into Russian as *svobodnyi stikh*. We have chosen to follow the same terminological practice here. For an overview of variable verse in Russian see Scherr 1986: 103–109.

Воспрославимъ обще тако,  
 Господа, отца,  
 И хвали дыханье всяко  
 Бога и творца!  
 (Sumarokov 1744: 163; first pagination)

[= Let us thus together glorify  
 The Lord, the Father,  
 And let every breath praise  
 [Our] God and creator!]

Of course, it is possible that Sumarokov wrote the poem to conform metrically to a musical setting composed by Hermann Raupach (the poem's epigraph reads, "Na sej psalom muzyka G: Raupakha" – "For this psalm the music of H[ermann] Raupach"<sup>12</sup>), but it seems implausible that the music would have preceded the "libretto". Another answer suggests itself when we juxtapose the Church Slavic original and the poem (see Table 2a).<sup>13</sup>

A side-by-side comparison shows that by the time Sumarokov reached the last stanza, only a single short verse remained to be converted to verse: "Vsjaekoe dykhanie da khvalit Gospoda" ("Let every breath praise the Lord"). How could one fill an entire four-line stanza with the contents of this short utterance? The problem was particularly ticklish because this exclamation is among the best known in the Orthodox liturgy, repeated four times in succession at Sunday Matins preceding the reading of the Gospel. Sumarokov chose to shorten the lines as much as possible and to switch to trochees. Remarkably, this is the very meter we see in the original Church Slavic source text. Indeed, both Sumarokov's poem and the Church Slavic version begin respectively in an iambic cadence ("Khvalíte [G]óspoda vo svjátosti egó," "Khvalíte Bóga vo svjatýkh Egó") and ends in a trochaic cadence. In other words, he is striving now toward formal means that allow him to echo the scriptural text with a minimum of distortion. That we have reached a moment of crisis is confirmed when we examine the poems published in July

<sup>12</sup> Hermann Raupach was a German harpsichordist and composer who also wrote an opera, *Alceste*, the libretto for which was written by Sumarokov. Raupach moved to St. Petersburg in 1755 and was engaged in the Imperial court orchestra (Findejzen 1928: 47–48). There is evidence that in the late 1750s he wrote several musical settings for translations of Psalms by Sumarokov and Lomonosov (Porfir'eva 1999: 13).

<sup>13</sup> The Church Slavic text here and below has been transcribed in the post-reform orthography adopted by the Publishing House of the Moscow Patriarchate (see Psaltir' 1973).



Table 2b. Lord's Prayer in Church Slavic and Sumarokov's paraphrasis

**"Otche nash" (Church Slavic original)**

Отче наш,  
Иже еси на небесех!

Да святится имя Твое,  
да приидет Царствие Твое,  
да будет воля Твоя,  
яко на небеси и на земли.

Хлеб наш насущный даждь нам днесь;  
и остави нам долги наша,  
якоже и мы оставляем должником нашим;  
и не введи нас во искушение,  
но избави нас от лукаваго.

**The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, Who art in heaven,

hallowed be Thy name,  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread  
and forgive us our debts  
as we forgive our debtors

and lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.

**Sumarokov's "Otche nash"**

Отче нашъ, небесный Царь,  
Коему подвластна вся на свѣтѣ тварь,  
Коему послушна суша, море, рѣки,  
Горы и лѣса,

Солнце и Луна, звѣзды, небеса,  
Да твое святится Боже имя въ вѣки;  
Да приидетъ царствіе твое

И въ твоей да будетъ волѣ,  
Все селеніе сіе,

И тебя увидитъ на твоёмъ престолѣ.

Хлѣбъ насущный дай намъ днесь

И оставь намъ долги здѣсь,

Яко мы своихъ должниковъ прощаемъ,  
И не отомщаемъ:

Отъ искуса охраняй всякъ часъ,

И отъ зла избави насъ!

(Sumarokov 1759d: 451)

**Sumarokov's "Otche nash"**

Our Father, heavenly King  
To Whom all the world's creation is subject,  
To Whom are obedient land, sea, rivers,

Mountains and woods,  
Sun and moon, the stars, the heavens.

May Thy name, O God, be hallowed to the ages,

May Thy kingdom come,

May this whole world

Rest in Thy will

And see Thee on Thy throne:

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our debts here

As we forgive our debtors

And not avenge ourselves on them.

Preserve us from temptation at every hour

And deliver us from evil.

The choice of trochees appears to derive from the manifestly trochaic cadence of the Church Slavic original; indeed, seven of the sixteen lines are wholly or in part derived from lines in the prayer that lend themselves to a trochaic reading. This coincidence of words and rhythm makes the text clearly echo and evoke the prosaic Church Slavic original. On the other hand, the need or desire to rhyme the line forces the poet to deviate from the original text by inserting words and images that are wholly his own. The rhyme scheme is artful: between opening and closing couplets, both with masculine rhymes, are three quatrains with, respectively enclosed, alternating and adjacent rhymes, with the third quatrain deploying both masculine and feminine rhyming pairs. The end product is thus a hybridization, a bridge from the traditionally aestheticized texts of the early spiritual verse and the deformalized, more manifestly liturgical (and accurate) paraphrases of the 1770s.

4.5. The impulse toward greater fidelity in translating these liturgically significant texts is equally well born out in the Psalmic contribution to the August issue of *Trudoljubivaja pchela*: Psalms 47 and 51. In the case of Ps. 47 there is clear evidence that he is relying on the German translation of the Hebrew Masoretic text, based on his rendering of verse 7, as the following comparison demonstrates:

**Church Slavic translation of Septuagint text (from Elizabethan Bible):**

Духом бурным сокрушиши корабли Фарсийския.

(Psaltir' 1973: 49; cf. Biblija 1997 [1900]: 712)

= Thou wilt break the ships of Tharsis with a vehement wind.

(Brenton [1851]: 726)

**Masoretic text: English** (Ps. 48:7):

[...] as when an east wind shatters the ships of Tarshish.

(HarperCollins Study Bible 1993: 843)

**Masoretic text: German variant** (Ps. 48:7):

Du zerbrichst die Schiffe im Meer durch den Ostwind.

(Lutherbibel 1912 [1534]: [59])

[= Thou dost break up the ships on the sea with an east wind.]

**Sumarokov:**

Тобою корабли губить восточный вѣтръ.

(Sumarokov 1759d: 452)

[= Through Thee an east wind destroys the ships.]



By referencing an “east wind” in his paraphrasis Sumarokov is clearly demonstrating his preference for the Masoretic version of the Psalms rather than the Greek Septuagint.

**4.6.** In the case of Psalm 51 several factors are of significance. One is the very choice of this Psalm for paraphrasis, given that one version by Sumarokov had already been published fewer than four years earlier in *Ezheměsjachnyja sochinenija*. This ostensible duplication in turn begs the reader to compare the two versions to determine what might have motivated a new rendition of this text.

Tables 3a and 3b show the two versions, followed by a replication of the Church Slavic text on which both are ostensibly based: along with the Septuagint original (in English translation).

Two things stand out in the *Trudoljubivaja pchela* version of Psalm 51, one related to prosody and the other to translation. Prosodically, the 1759 version is a mirror of the one published in 1755, which was written in iambic tetrameter with six-line stanzas. In the 1759 *Trudoljubivaja pchela* version Sumarokov uses trochaic tetrameter while maintaining the six-line stanzas with the identical rhyme-scheme, except that it inverts the order of masculine and feminine rhymes, i.e., T4 AAbCCb rather than I4 aaBccB. In doing so Sumarokov may have been signaling that he agreed with Trediakovsky's view that iambs and trochees were not stylistically marked, but could both be put to use with equal effect in varying genres, that in the case of spiritual verse both meters could be of equal merit in conveying the majesty of Scripture, and that the only variables were the “izobrazhenija, kotoryja Stikhotvoretz upotrebljaet v svoe sochinenie” (‘images, which the poet uses in his composition’ – Trediakovskij 1989: 427). The second thing we immediately note about the *Trudoljubivaja pchela* variant of the poem is that it is much closer to the prose Church Slavic text that was being metricized. This is true not only of its use of words and phrases, but also its reproduction of the development of the whole Psalmic text. The first version in *Ezheměsjachnyja sochinenija* was far freer, far more cavalier in reproducing the basic pathos of the text. Indeed, the closing, fifth stanza in this earliest version is simply the author's own invention. This has a powerful impact on the composition of the whole, which constitutes a series of warnings to the wealthy evildoer whom God will punish and whose wealth proves useless when he dies. The second version resurrects the structure of the original Psalm, wherein the warning to the evildoer is juxtaposed to the status of the lyrical subject, who presents himself in the concluding stanza, as does the author of the original Psalm, as a fruitful olive tree growing in the courts of God's house, one who anticipates God's reward for his faithfulness

Table 3a. Sumarokov's renditions of Psalm 51 (1755 and 1759)

<b>Sumarokov, “ИЗО ПСАЛЬМА LI” (1755)</b>	<b>Sumarokov, “ПСАЛОМЪ LI” (1759)</b>
<p>Что сильный хвалиш[ь]ся злодѣй,          Предъ всѣми злобою своей,          Языкъ имѣя яко бритву?          Ты сердце яростію рвеш[ь],          И люту душу предаеш[ь],          Мученью вѣчному въ ловитву.</p>	<p>Смертный ядъ нося въ утробѣ,          Не хвались Тирань во злобѣ,          Беззаконствуя всегда.          Ты невинности въ ловитву,          Изостриль языкъ какъ бритву,          Ради общаго вреда.</p>
<p>Гнѣви всемогнутаго творца:          Онъ сокрушитъ тя до конца,          Исторгнетъ гнусный духъ изъ тѣла,          Развѣтъ оскверненный прахъ,          Явитъ тебѣ подобнымъ страхъ;          Чтобъ гордость чувствіе имѣла.</p>	<p>Злобу только въ сердцѣ видишь,          Благодѣлю ненавидишь:          Ты неправду возростишь,          Добродѣтель отмечаешь:          Рѣчи лживо соплетаешь:          Тщетенъ твой языкъ и льстивъ.</p>
<p>Сразить ударомъ силъ своихъ,          Восторгнетъ отъ земли живыхъ,          И ввержетъ въ мрачну бездну Ада.          Туда не входитъ сладкій сонъ,          Тамъ позденъ беззаконныхъ стонъ,          Безвѣстна страждущимъ отрада.</p>	<p>Лъстець и истинный предатель!          За сіе тебя создатель,          Отлучить отъ селъ твоихъ:          За безчеловѣчно дѣло,          Разрушить, восторгнетъ тѣло,          Свержетъ отъ земли живыхъ.</p>
<p>И кто тогда твой прахъ попретъ,          Смѣясь о тебѣ речетъ:          Се мужъ который живъ богато,          На Господа не уповаль,          Надежду въ злато полагаль:          Гдѣ дѣлося ево днесъ злато!</p>	<p>Станутъ видя то бояться,          А боясь тебѣ смѣяться,          И рекутъ между себя:          Сей среди богатства многа,          На него а не на Бога,          Уповаль людей губя.</p>
<p>Се той который всѣхъ тѣснилъ,          Какъ лютый тигръ ужасенъ былъ.          Изчезъ: смерть злость его разшибла.          Довольно Богъ тебѣ терпѣлъ;          Ты жилъ на свѣтѣ какъ хотѣлъ.          Днесъ мертвъ: душа твоя погибла.</p>	<p>Я жъ какъ маслины зелены,          И не жду себѣ премѣны,          Въ Божіемъ дому цвѣтя.          Съ преподобными твоими,          Всѣми мыслями моими,          Боже, чту надеждой тя.</p>
(Sumarokov 1755a: 258–259)	(Sumarokov 1759d: 453–454)

**Sumarokov, "From Psalm 51" (1755)**

Why, O mighty evildoer, do you boast  
Of your evildoing before all,  
Possessing a tongue like a razor?  
You rend the heart with your anger,  
And give your cruel soul over  
To ensnarement in eternal torment?

Enrage the almighty Creator:  
He will utterly shatter you,  
He will wrest your vile soul from your body,  
He will scatter your defiled dust,  
Instill fear in the likes of you;  
That pride might be tempered by wisdom.

With a blow from his forces  
He will pluck you from the land of the living,  
And cast you into the dark abyss of Hades,  
Where sweet sleep does not enter,  
Where the groan of the lawless is too late  
And relief for the suffering is unknown.

And whoever then tramples on your dust,  
Laughing, will say about you:  
This man, who, having lived wealthily,  
Did not put his hope in the Lord,  
But put his hope in gold.  
Where is his gold today?

This man, who oppressed everyone,  
Was terrible as a cruel tiger.  
Has disappeared; death crushed his malice.  
God put up with you long enough,  
You lived in the world as you wished,  
Today you are dead; your soul has perished.

**Sumarokov, "Psalm 51" (1759)**

Bearing a fatal poison in your belly,  
Do not boast, O Tyrant, of your malice,  
Always transgressing the law.  
You sharpened your tongue like a razor  
To prey on innocence  
To the detriment of all.

You see only malice in the heart,  
You hate kindness,  
You cultivate falsehood,  
Having swept aside virtue  
Construct utterances deceitfully,  
Your speech is vain and flattering.

Flatterer and betrayer of truth!  
For this the Creator  
Will exile you from your settlements  
For your inhumane activity  
He will destroy, uproot your body,  
Cast you out of the land of the living,

Those who see this will start to be afraid,  
And fearing, will laugh at you,  
And say among themselves,  
This man, in the midst of his great wealth,  
Put his hope in it and not on God  
While destroying his fellows.

But I am like olive trees  
And I anticipate no vicissitudes,  
Flourishing in God's house.  
In all my thoughts  
O God, I regard You with hope.  
Together with your saints,

Table 3b. Psalm 51: Septuagint text (in English) and Church Slavic translation

## Psalm 51: Septuagint text

- <sup>1</sup> Why dost thou, O mighty man, boast of iniquity in *thy* mischief? All the day
- <sup>2</sup> thy tongue has devised unrighteousness; like a sharpened razor thou hast wrought deceit.
- <sup>3</sup> Thou hast loved wickedness more than goodness; unrighteousness better than to speak righteousness. Pause.
- <sup>4</sup> Thou hast loved all words of destruction, and a deceitful tongue.
- <sup>5</sup> Therefore may God destroy thee forever, may he pluck thee up and utterly remove thee from *thy* dwelling, and thy root from the land of the living. Pause.
- <sup>6</sup> And the righteous shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him, and say,
- <sup>7</sup> Behold the man who made not God his help; but trusted in the abundance of his wealth, and strengthened himself in his vanity.
- <sup>8</sup> But I am as a fruitful olive in the house of God: I have trusted in the mercy of God forever, even for evermore.
- <sup>9</sup> I will give thanks to thee for ever, for thou hast done *it*: and I will wait on thy name; for *it* is good before thy saints.

(Brenton 1982: 728–729)

## Psalm 51: Church Slavic translation

- <sup>[1]</sup> Что хвалишися во злобе, сильне? Беззаконие весь день.
- <sup>[2]</sup> Неправду умысли язык твой, яко бритву изошрену сотворил еси леть.
- <sup>[3]</sup> Возлюбил еси злобу паче благостыни, неправду неже глаголати правду.
- <sup>[4]</sup> Возлюбил еси вся глаголы потопныя, язык льстив.
- <sup>[5]</sup> Сего ради Бог разрушит тя до конца, восторгнет тя, и преселит тя от селения твоего и корень твой от земли живых.
- <sup>[6]</sup> Узрят праведнии и убоятся, и о нем возсмеются и рекут:
- <sup>[7]</sup> се человек, иже не положи Бога Помощника себе, но упова на множество богатства своего, и возможе суетою своею.
- <sup>[8]</sup> Аз же яко маслина плодовита в дому Божию, уповах на милость Божию во век и в век века.
- <sup>[9]</sup> Исповемя Тебе во век, яко сотворил еси, и терплю имя Твое, яко благо пред преподобными твоими.

(Psaltir' 1973: 53; cf. Biblija 1997 [1900]: 714–715)

and dependence on God rather than on personal wealth. This striking return to textual fidelity is singularly important in tracing further developments in Sumarokov's evolution as poet and prosodist.

4.7. The two Psalms in the August issue of *Trudoljubivaja pchela* are the last known paraphrastic Psalms published by Sumarokov before the appearance of his hybrid collection of poems in 1769, to which we will shortly turn. However, he continued to write his own spiritual verse and to translate other Biblical passages: thus, the last text in our list of early spiritual verse by Sumarokov (Table 1) is a rendition, in variable iambs, of Chapter 5 of the book of Sirach, published in March 1763. Five of the ten spiritual poems published after Psalms 47 and 51 are in variable lines: four in iambs and one in trochees. This suggests that Sumarokov was intent on exploring how such variable lines could be used for verse other than fables or epigrams, their principle earlier domains.

5.1. After the March 1663 publication of the metricized Sirach V, new paraphrases of the Psalms, along with other varieties of spiritual verse, appeared insofar as we know only in 1769, when Sumarokov published a collection titled *Raznyja stikhotvorenija*, containing works in several genres. The book opens with "Stikhotvorenija dukhovnyja"; this section includes the 28 works (both Psalms and other religious texts) he had already published in various journals (we are excluding the variant of Psalm 143 published in *Tri ody parafraščeskija* in 1744, but including the two variants of Psalm 51 mentioned above); 11 new Psalms; a paraphrase of three liturgical hymns from the All Night Vigil service to St. Aleksandr Nevsky; and four original religious pieces: "O strashnom sudě", "O ljublenii dobroděteli", "Sonet na otchajanie" and "Oda o veličestvě Bozhiem". Actually, "Oda o veličestvě Bozhiem" was extracted from the previously published Psalm 106 and given a separate title. In 1755, Trediakovskij had lodged a complaint with the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church a month after Sumarokov had published his version of the Psalm in *Ezheměsjachnyja sočinenija*. There Sumarokov had inserted several stanzas (8–12) of his own composition which appeared to support Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle's theory about the plurality of worlds, regarded at the time as heretical (see Pekarskij 1873: 187; Iosad 2017: 246). Sumarokov's response to Trediakovskij's denunciation was to excise this passage, but he openly thumbed his nose at his colleague by simply shifting it elsewhere in the section of spiritual verse and titling it "Oda o veličestvě Bozhiem".

5.2. In examining all these pieces, I would pose the following three questions: how do the republished texts differ from the first publication; how do the

eleven new metrical paraphrases of the Psalms differ as a group from the earlier ones; and finally, how do the new texts differ with relation to their source texts, the Church Slavic Psalter?

**5.3.** The answer to the first question is fairly straightforward: Sumarokov made only minimal changes in the reprinted texts, and these are mostly of a purely stylistic nature. Thus, for example, in “From Psalm 1” the line “He does not sit with a lawless man” (“*On s bezzakonnym ne saditsja*” – Sumarokov 1755a: 259) becomes “With the lawless man [he] does not sit” (“*So bezzakonnym ne saditsja*” – Sumarokov 1769: 3). Similarly, the line from Ps. 37 “I drown in sins” (Sumarokov “*Ia v sogreshen’jakh utopaju*” (Sumarokov 1755: 251) becomes “In sins I drown” (“*Vo sogreshen’jakh utopaju*” – Sumarokov 1769: 9). In Psalm 51:23 we find the following three lines in the 1755 version “Enrage the almighty Creator: / He will utterly shatter you, / He will wrest your vile soul from your body” (“*Gněvi vsemoshchnago tvortsa: / On sokrushit tja do kontsa, / Istorgnet gnusnyj dukh iz těla*” – Sumarokov 1755: 258). In 1769 these lines are rewritten as follows: “Enrage the almighty Creator / And you will be utterly crushed: / [God] will wrest your vile soul from your body” (“*Gněvi vsemoshchnago Tvortsa: / I sokrushish’sja do kontsa, / Istorgnet gnusnyj dukh iz těla*” (Sumarokov 1769, 13; see above, Table 3a).

**5.4.** Only in three cases does Sumarokov make major changes. In Psalm 1 he adds a strophe corresponding to the last two verses of the Psalm, which he had previously left out of his periphrasis. In Psalm 47 he does just the opposite, removing a strophe – the one we mentioned earlier – with the image of the east wind drawn from the German translation. The most striking change comes in Psalm 106, the one in which, as we have noted, he had removed an entire section of his own composition describing the plurality of worlds as championed by Fontenelle, shifting this passage to another part of the collection and retitling it “*Oda o velichestvě Bozhiem*” (Sumarokov 1769: 68–69).

**5.5.** In answer to our second question, how Sumarokov’s new metrical Psalms differ from the old ones, we need only look at a table of texts Table 4.

Table 4. Sumarokov's *Raznyja stikhotvorenija*: texts unpublished prior to 1769 or published in unidentified venues

Title	Prosodic features
“Iz 7 psalma”	VI, rhymed
“Iz 55 psalma ”	VI, unrhymed
“Iz 71 psalma”	VI, rhymed
“Iz 75 psalma”	VI, unrhymed
“Iz 78 psalma”	VI, rhymed
“Iz 96 psalma”	VI, unrhymed
“Iz 98 psalma”	VI, unrhymed
“Iz 100 psalma”	VI, unrhymed
“Iz 108 psalma”	VI, rhymed
“Iz 136 psalma”	VI, unrhymed
“Iz [151] psalma” <sup>14</sup>	VI, rhymed
“O strashnom sudě”	VI, unrhymed
“O ljublenii dobroděteli”	VI, rhymed
“Sonet na otchajanie”	I6, aBBa aBBa CCd EEd
“Stikhery S. Aleksandru Nevskomu”	I4, unrhymed. Three 10-line strophes

All eleven Psalms are written in variable iambs, facilitating a closer correspondence to the content and language of the Church Slavonic original.<sup>15</sup> One new development here is particularly striking: six of the eleven psalms are unrhymed, thus removing yet one more formal constraint that might interfere with an accurate rendering of the original. A typical example is Psalm 55:9:

**Church Slavonic translation of Septuagint text (the Elizabethan Bible):**

Боже, живот мой возвестих Тебе, положил еси слезы моя пред Тобою, яко и во обетовании Твоем.

(Psaltir' 1973: 56; cf. Biblija 1997 [1900]: 716)

= O God, I have declared my life to thee; thou hast set my tears before thee, even according to thy promise.

(Brenton [1851]: 730; cf. Psalter 1974: 107)

<sup>14</sup> Unnumbered in the Septuagint and follows Ps. 150.

<sup>15</sup> Svetlana Alekseevna Matjash (2011: 235–240) explores the psychological and stylistic dimension of variable iambs in the Psalmic paraphrases.

**German (Luther) translation of Masoretic text:**

Zähle die Wege meiner Flucht; fasse meine Tränen in deinen Krug. Ohne Zweifel, du zählst sie.

(Lutherbibel 1912 [1534]: 59)

[= Count the paths of my flight; gather my tears in Thy vessel; doubtless Thou countest them.]

**Sumarokov:**

Отъ нихъ бѣгущаго стопы исчислилъ ты:

Исчислилъ ты мои и слезы:

Исчисленно тобою все.

(Sumarokov 1769: 17)

[= Thou hast counted the steps of the one (myself – RV) running away from them (my enemies – RV). Thou hast also counted my tears. Everything hath been counted by Thee.]

It is clear that for these lines Sumarokov has chosen the German as his base text, though he simplifies it to some extent. If we were to look at a larger excerpt from the Psalm we would see that at several critical junctures Sumarokov relies on the German text, even to the point of omitting a whole line present in the Church Slavic variant. At the same time, however, he tries to maintain fidelity to both the style and even the syntax of the Slavonic text. In Table 5 below we have juxtaposed the last six verses of the Church Slavic Septuagint and the Lutherbibel translation of the Hebrew text in German, boldfacing obvious transpositions from the Church Slavic and italicizing borrowings from the German. In several cases the transpositions from the Church Slavic (Septuagint) translation correspond with the German (Masoretic) translation. In one exceptional case – verse 11 – Sumarokov inserts a transcription of the tetragrammaton, the Hebrew name for God, in the text, which is not done either in the Church Slavic (which replaces it with *Gospod'* ('Lord') or the Lutherbibel equivalent, *Herr*, suggesting that Sumarokov may have been familiar even before the 1770s with elements of the Hebrew Bible – perhaps the printed Hebrew text annotated by Johann Heinrich Michaelis in 1720 (*Biblia Hebraica ex Aliqvot Manuscriptis*).



Table 5. Psalm 55: Sumarokov's version in comparison with Church Slavlic (Septuagint) and German (Masoretic) texts

Sumarokov: "Изъ 55 псалма"	Church Slavlic (Septuagint) text	German (Masoretic) text
<p>Отъ нихъ бѣзущаго стопы исчислишь ты;  Исчислишь ты мои и слезы:  Исчисленно тобою все.</p>	<p><sup>9</sup> Боже, живот мой возвестих Тебе,  положил еси слезы моя пред Тобою, яко  и во обетовании Твоем.</p>	<p><sup>8</sup> <i>Zähle die Wege meiner Flucht; fasse meine Tränen in deinen Krug. Ohne Zweifel, du zählst sie.</i></p>
<p>Да возвратятся вспять мои враги,  Въ день той, когда взову:  Се знаю Бога моего:  Я въ Богѣ слово восхваляю:  Я слово восхваляю  Во Еговѣ:  На Бога уповаю,  И не страшуся;  Не можетъ человекъ мнѣ здѣлать ни чего.</p>	<p><sup>10</sup> <b>Да возвратятся врази мои вспять, вонъже еще день призову Тя</b>  се познах, яко Бог мой еси Ты.  <sup>11</sup> <b>О Боже похвалю глаголю,</b>  о Господѣ  <b>похвалю слово.</b>  <sup>12</sup> <b>На Бога уповах,</b>  не убоюся.  что сотворитъ мне человек?</p>	<p><sup>9</sup> Dann werden sich meine Feinde müssen zurückkehren, wenn ich rufe;  so werde ich inne, daß du mein Gott bist.  <sup>10</sup> Ich will rühmen Gottes Wort; ich will rühmen des HERRN Wort.  <sup>11</sup> Auf Gott hoffe ich und fürchte mich nicht;  was können mir die Menschen tun?</p>
<p>Тобою, Боже, я хвалюся:  Тебя благодарити буду;</p>	<p><sup>13</sup> Во мне, Боже, молитвы, яже воздам хвалы Твояе,</p>	<p><sup>12</sup> Ich habe dir, Gott, gelobt, daß ich dir danken will;</p>
<p>Избавиль душу ты мою отъ смерти,    И отъ поползновенья ноги;  Да шествую предъ Богомъ,  Во свѣтъ я живыхъ.</p>	<p><sup>14</sup> <b>яко избавил еси душу мою от смерти,</b>  очи мои отъ слезъ  <b>и нозе мои от поползновения,</b>  благоугожду пред Господем  <b>во свете живых.</b></p>	<p><sup>13</sup> denn du hast meine Seele vom Tode errettet,    meine Füße vom Gleiten,  <i>daß ich wandle vor Gott</i>  im Licht der Lebendigen.</p>
<p>(Sumarokov 1769: 17)</p>	<p>(Psaltir' 1973: 56;  cf. Biblija 1997 [1900]: 716–717)</p>	<p>(Lutherbibel 1912 [1534]: 59)</p>

5.6. And here we find the answer to our third question, how these new texts differ in relation to their source texts. Clearly, Sumarokov is more and more deeply and frequently engaged with the question of fidelity to the original, leading him to consult German translations and/or scholarly studies, through which he could, with some assurance, ascertain the meaning of the original Hebrew text.

5.7. The only formal constraint that remained in reprocessing scriptural texts for poetic consumption was meter, and it is precisely this constraint that was removed in some of the very last renditions of the Psalms that Sumarokov undertook in the 1770s, the third and final period of his engagement with the genre of spiritual verse. These are the texts that Nadezhda Alekseeva has studied, noting that in abandoning all traditional prosodic constraints Sumarokov was able to secure the greatest fidelity to the original Hebrew text and at the same time partially to restore these texts the performative status that they have in the Church Slavic but that had been seriously undermined in the classicist experiments of the 1750s and 60s. Achieving this goal was, as we have seen, a process that took place over the course of three decades.

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