

# Russian Binary Meters

## Part Two. Chapter 9

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### Editors' Note

Part I of *Russian Binary Meters*, the English translation of Kiril Taranovsky's classic study *Ruski dvodelni ritmovi* (Taranovsky 1953), appeared in volume 7.2 (2020) of *Studia Metrica et Poetica*. Part I bears the title "Theoretical Bases for the Study of Russian Binary Meters", and consists of the first four of the book's nineteen chapters. Part II of *Russian Binary Meters* is entitled "Historical Development of the Rhythmic Drive of Russian Binary Meters". Its first four chapters (numbered 5 to 8), devoted to trochaic tetrameter (four-foot trochee) and iambic tetrameter, trimeter and hexameter (four-, three- and six-foot iamb), were published in volumes 8.2 (2021) and 10.1 (2023). The next series of chapters (9 to 13) focuses on various types of iambic pentameter (five-foot iamb). Here we publish the introductory chapter of this series. The reader should bear in mind that the numbering of sections and footnotes is continuous with the earlier installments, beginning here with Chapter 9 and footnote 175.

### 9. The Basic Types of Iambic Pentameter in Russian Poetry

We distinguish three basic varieties of iambic pentameter in Russian poetry: lines characterized by the presence of a caesura (a constant word-boundary before the fifth syllable), or by its absence, and lines with a free caesura.<sup>175</sup>

The five-foot iamb is primarily a nineteenth-century meter. In isometric verse compositions of the eighteenth century, it appears in only one shape, viz. with a constant caesura, and even then it is altogether rare.<sup>176</sup> It is true that five-foot iambic lines figure in so-called free iambic verse of the eighteenth century, where they occur primarily in combination with lines of three, four, and six feet, e.g.:

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I ést' u nás

Ukáz:

Vo vrémja xóloda tepléj ukryt'sja,

I nikogdá | pred stúžej ne bodrít'sja...\*

In free iambic verse, five-foot lines may have a caesura before the fifth syllable, as in the last line above, or they may dispense with one, as in the next-to-last line. However, as we shall see at the end of this chapter, five-foot iambic lines are quite rare even in eighteenth-century free iambic verse.

The caesural iambic pentameter, as will be shown in the following chapter, appears in eighteenth-century Russian poetry as an adaptation of the French decasyllable, which is similarly characterized by a caesura before the fifth syllable. This meter acquires wide usage only in the second decade of the nineteenth century, in the verse of Žukovskij, Vjazemskij and Puškin. As late as 1817, the verse theoretician Vostokov can speak of the five-foot iamb as a rare meter: “Although Sumarokov (*Works*, part VIII, p. 158), Kniažnin (‘Poslanie k trem Gracijam’), Karabanov (*Works*, part II, p. 159 ff.), and Bobrov (in several minor poems) have composed in this meter, it has still found few admirers up to the present time. Žukovskij has recently revived the iambic pentameter, composing several of his latest poems in this meter; perhaps his talent is destined to win for the pentameter the prestige now enjoyed by the hexameter; in time, perhaps, it may even supersede the latter in epic and dramatic works, for it has potentially greater variety and movement than the six-foot iamb – provided the caesura does not stay bound to the fourth syllable:  $\cup - \cup - \cup - | \cup - \cup - \cup -$ , but shifts occasionally onto the sixth and other syllables, as one observes in Bobrov, Karabanov, and the author of ‘Opyty liričeskie’<sup>177</sup> (i.e., Vostokov himself). To quote Tomaševskij: “While Vostokov’s list is not complete, his general assessment of the situation is nevertheless historically correct”.<sup>178</sup> Vostokov was perceptive enough to realize that the iambic pentameter would eventually take the place of the Alexandrine in dramatic verse. He likewise foresaw the role which Žukovskij was to play in the introduction of iambic pentameter into Russian poetry. It was indeed Žukovskij, along with Puškin, who made this meter popular in Russia.

In the 1820s the caesural iambic pentameter finds particular favor as a lyric meter, being used as such by Puškin, Vjazemskij, Baratynskij, Del’vig, Pletněv, Jazykov, Ševyrėv, Kozlov, and others; it begins to appear in dramatic works as well (as blank, i.e. unrhymed verse), e.g., Katenin’s *Pir Ioanna Bezzemel’nogo*

\* From Aleksandr Sumarokov’s fable “Feb i Borej” (“Phoebus and Boreas”, 1762; book I, fable 1).

(1820), and Puškin's *Boris Godunov* (1825), in which the iambic pentameter with caesura reaches its zenith as a dramatic meter.

The caesural iambic pentameter was a short-lived experiment in Russian poetry. Starting in the 1830s, one observes a gradual decline in its use. As we shall see presently, such poets as Žukovskij, Puškin, Del'vig, Ševyřev, Jazykov, even Vjazemskij, lean increasingly toward the non-caesural iamb or the line with a free caesura. In the 1830s, the caesural iamb can still be found in the lyric poetry of Poležaev, Podolinskij, and Odoevskij; all three poets, however, use the five-foot iamb relatively seldom and at times allow violations of the caesura.<sup>179</sup> Vjazemskij also retains the caesura for some time, but the five-foot iamb becomes quite rare in his poetry after 1831 (only 190 lines for the period 1831–1838). Returning to this meter after a lapse of ten years (1848), he employs a free caesura. Just how outmoded the caesural iamb had become by the 1830s can be clearly seen in the instance of Lermontov: out of thousands of lines composed in iambic pentameter, there are only five shorter poems in which the caesura before the fifth syllable is constant and its use clearly deliberate.<sup>180</sup> Only Baratynskij, who maintained the caesural iambic pentameter to the end of his life (1844), protested its abandonment. Toward the end of the 1820s, on the occasion of the first edition of Del'vig's dialogue "Ostavnoj soldat," Baratynskij wrote to the author: "These lines close the work somewhat awkwardly; compose at least the last line with the caesura and delight my classical ear."<sup>181</sup> The iambic pentameter with caesura is even rarer in the 1840s. In A. Majkov it is found only at the beginning of his career (in his 1842 lyric poetry); later, he goes over to the non-caesural pentameter (in his epic poetry) or the pentameter with a free caesura (in his lyrics). Similarly, a pure caesural iamb occurs only in the earlier lyrics (1843–1846) of Karolina Pavlova; after 1850, she allows violations of the caesura (in 4% of her lines), still later (1856–1861) switching entirely to the non-caesural line, even in her lyric poetry.<sup>182</sup> Benediktov's line shows a development diametrically opposite to that of Majkov and Pavlova. In his earliest poetry (before 1836) he uses the pentameter with a free caesura, 92.1% of his lines showing a caesura before the fifth syllable. However, this percentage rises to 97.7% in his lyrics composed from 1837 to 1850, reaching 99.1% in the period 1851–1860. This development undoubtedly indicates a return to the tradition of the Russian lyric meter before 1830. A practically isolated phenomenon is the lyric verse of Nikitin (1849–1853), with its mandatory caesura before the fifth syllable. The case of Nekrasov is also curious. He begins composing iambic pentameter without the caesura or with a free caesura (1844–1845), but in his later verse, the caesura occurs with ever greater frequency, becoming a constant toward the end of his life (1874–1877).<sup>183</sup> In Nekrasov, as in Benediktov, this obviously represents a

return to the tradition of Žukovskij and the Puškin school prior to 1830. The caesural pentameter can also be found in isolated lyrics of the second half of the nineteenth century (e.g., in Fet and Tjutčev),<sup>184</sup> and still later in Symbolist and other poetry of the twentieth century, but in each instance, we are dealing with a conscious or unconscious return to the tradition of the iambic pentameter before 1830. Apart from this, the dominant type of iambic pentameter from the 1840s on is clearly the line without the caesura or with a very free one.

Almost simultaneously with the development of the caesural meter, there are attempts to create a non-caesural five-foot iamb; these can be found as early as the second decade of the nineteenth century. The popularizer of this new meter is again Žukovskij. From 1812 to 1819, he adheres strictly in his own lyrics to a constant caesura before the fifth syllable; in 1816, however, he twice attempts to dispense with the caesura: in the monologue “Derevenskij storož” and the dialogue “Tlennost’”, both translations from Hebel. These are our first instances of non-caesural iambic pentameter; only 65% of the lines in the monologue and 58% in the dialogue maintain the caesura before the fifth syllable. Žukovskij continues his experimentation with the new meter in the period 1817–1821, using it to translate Schiller’s *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*. Here Žukovskij takes fewer liberties with the caesura than in his two earlier efforts; in the Prologue and the first four acts the percentage for the caesura exceeds 80%; only in the fifth act does it fall below 70.5%. It is worth noting that all three works are composed in blank verse. If the caesural iambic pentameter developed in Russian poetry under the influence of the French decasyllable, the non-caesural line was brought in under the influence of the German poets, who in turn had taken it over from Shakespeare and Milton, primarily as a dramatic and epic verse form.

While the caesural iambic pentameter was a fully canonized form by the 1820s, and enjoyed considerable popularity as a lyric meter, the line without caesura was still in the experimental stage. As a dramatic meter, it is found in Kjušel’beker’s play *Argivjane* (excerpts from which appeared in 1824 and 1825) and in Žandr’s translation of Rotrou’s tragedy *Venceslas* (Act I published in 1825).<sup>185</sup> From 1825 to 1827, Xomjakov wrote his *Ermak* (staged in 1827, published in 1832) in non-caesural iambic pentameter. Also composed in this meter were Del’vig’s dialogue “Odstavnoj soldat” (1829) and Odoevskij’s *Vasil’ko*, written between 1827 and 1830. Finally, one should mention Ševyrëv’s attempt at adapting the Russian five-foot iamb to the Italian hendecasyllable in his translation of the seventh canto of *Gerusalemme Liberata*, on which he was working in 1830–1831.<sup>186</sup>

In all the foregoing works of the 1820s, the constant caesura has been eliminated. Kjušel’beker and Del’vig are the most radical in this respect: for

the first, the percentage for the caesura before the fifth syllable is 49.2% (in the play *Argivjane*), and for the second, 50.8%. However, Žandr's meter might be considered iambic pentameter with a free caesura since 80% of his lines still have a caesura before the fifth syllable. Of special interest is the development of the non-caesural meter in Odoevskij: the percentage for the caesura declines steadily from canto to canto (in the first it is 97%, in the second 88.4%, and in the fourth 77%). Odoevskij, then, adapted himself to the non-caesural line in a manner similar to Žukovskij in *Orleanskaja deva*. With regard to the percentage for the caesura before the fifth syllable, the meter of Xomjakov (68.3%) and Ševyrëv (61.8%) stands somewhere in between that of Žandr and Del'vig.

The year 1830 marks a turning point in the development of the non-caesural iambic pentameter. In that year Puškin abandons the constant caesura before the fifth syllable,<sup>187</sup> though in his first work composed in the new meter (*Domik v Kolomne*) he takes leave of the caesura with some regret:

Priznaťsja vam, ja v pjatistopnoj stročke  
 Ljublju cezuru na vtoroj stope.  
 Inače stix to v jame, to na kočke,  
 I xoť ležu teper' na kanape,  
 Vse kažetsja mne, budto v trjaskom bege  
 Po merzloj pašne mčus' ja na telege.\*

Only in a single poem, composed on the occasion of the Lycee anniversary ("19 oktjabrja 1836 g."), does Puškin, recalling his youth, return to the earlier meter, repeating in fact the form of his earlier poem "19 oktjabrja 1825 g."

In 1830 Puškin experiments with the non-caesural pentameter as an epic and dramatic meter (the comic narrative poem *Domik v Kolomne*, the Little Tragedies) and also as a lyric meter (the terza rima "V načale žizni školu pomnju ja..."). The non-caesural iamb will recur as a dramatic meter in *Rusalka* (1832) and as a blank verse form in the lyric monologues "On meždu nami žil..." (1834) and "Vnov' ja posetil..." (1835). Puškin's masterpieces of dramatic, epic, and lyric verse considerably enhanced the status of this new meter in Russian poetry.

Following Žukovskij, Del'vig, Puškin, and Ševyrëv, Jazykov also begins to compose in the non-caesural meter, although he uses it primarily as a dramatic line (1835–1836 and later). The young Lermontov, in the period 1830–1832,

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\* I must confess: in pentameter, / I like the caesura after the second foot. / Otherwise verse rolls over bumps and potholes, / And even though I am now lying on a settee, / I still feel as if, in a shaky run, / I am racing in a cart across a frozen ploughed field.

makes ample use of this meter both in his romantic poems and in lyrics from that period, e.g., the humorous poem *Saška* (1836) and *Skazka dlja detej* (1839).

Despite the fact that Puškin and Lermontov used the non-caesural pentameter in their lyric poetry, this meter enjoyed only a brief tenure as a lyric form. An exception is the lyric poetry of Karolina Pavlova from 1856 to 1861, in which the percentage for the caesura before the fifth syllable is 70%. The pentameter without caesura did, however, establish itself in epic and dramatic poetry – as blank verse in the latter and blank or rhymed verse in the former. In the middle and late nineteenth century the non-caesural pentameter is represented as an epic meter in a number of Žukovskij's poems (from 1842 to 1852) and in poems and shorter epic compositions by Mej, Fet, A. Majkov, Polonskij and others. Still, it functions most importantly as a dramatic meter, having superseded the Alexandrine in this capacity. In the 1840s this meter is found in Kroneberg's translations of Shakespeare (*Dvenadcataja noč* – 1841, *Gamlet* – 1844, *Makbet* – 1846, *Mnogo šumu iz ničego* – 1847) and in translations from Schiller by F. Miller (*Vil'gel'm Tell'* – 1843) and M. Dostoevskij (*Don Karlos* – 1848). Among the original theatrical works composed in this meter are Mej's dramas (*Carskaja nevesta* – 1849, *Servilija* – 1854, *Pskovitjanka* – 1850–1860), Ostrovskij's *Minin* (1862), and A. K. Tolstoj's *Don-Žuan* (1861) and *Smert' Ioanna Groznogo* (1865). The non-caesural pentameter found its widest application, however, in translations of dramatic works, primarily those of Shakespeare and Schiller.<sup>188</sup> We observe a quite distinctive line without caesura in later translations from Shakespeare by Družinin (1856–1864), V. Miller and F. Miller (1868), P. Kozlov (1889), and others. In sum, the non-caesural iambic pentameter established itself as a dramatic-epic meter in nineteenth-century Russian literature.

In the course of our discussion, we have already cited instances of the iambic pentameter with a free caesura. The first examples of this meter occur in Žukovskij (*Orleanskaja deva*), Žandr (*Venceslav*), and Odoevskij (*Vasil'ko*). At this stage, however, the meter is only an experimental form, transitional from the caesural pentameter to the meter without caesura; and it is limited to dramatic and epic verse.

The pentameter with a free caesura evolved as a lyric meter quite independently of the above experiments. We noted earlier that violations of the caesura occur in lyrics by Puškin composed between 1826 and 1830; they may likewise be found in Ševyrëv's poetry from 1827 to 1830 and in the verse of Poležaev, Podolinskij, and Odoevskij during the next decade. We may speak of a genuine free caesura in the case of Benediktov, in whose lyrics prior to 1836 the percentage of lines with the caesura drops to 92.1%. In the middle

and second half of the nineteenth century, this meter becomes typical of lyric verse. In Grigor'ev (1845–1856) and Nekrasov (1845–1868) the new meter is not yet clearly developed; for the former, the percentage for the caesura is 75.8%, and for the latter, 74.8%. On the other hand, the pentameter of Tjutčev (1828–1873), Majkov (1844–1889), A. K. Tolstoj and Fet (1840–1892) can be considered typical lyric verse with a free caesura; in their poetry the caesura shows the following percentages: Tjutčev – 77.8%, Majkov – 79.1%, Tolstoj – 85.7%, Fet – 86.8%. It is true that for each of these poets, one can find a short poem in which the caesura before the fifth syllable is constant, but this must be viewed as a random rather than systematic occurrence; clearly, none of the poets mentioned considers the caesura indispensable to the metric structure of their line. Nekrasov is a case apart. His lyric output for the period 1874–1877 shows a rise in the frequency of the caesura to 100%. And this constant, as we noted earlier, marks a return to the tradition of the 1820s.

The iambic pentameter with a free caesura is much rarer in epic than in lyric poetry, e.g., in Nekrasov (*Činovnik*, 1844 – 86.8%, and *Mat'*, 1877 – 97.7%) and the last poems of Tolstoj (*Drakon*, 1875 – 80.7%, and *Portret* – 82.5%). Such high percentages indicate a tendency on the part of these poets to bring their epic meter more closely in line with their lyric meter.

Much more significant is the use of the iambic pentameter with a free caesura in dramatic literature. We note its use as a dramatic meter in Xomjakov (*Dmitrij Samozvanec*, 1834), Satin (in translations from 1840 and 1851), Vejnberg (translations from 1864 to 1868), Ostrovskij (dramas from 1865 to 1873), and A. K. Tolstoj (*Car' Boris*, 1870, and the unfinished play *Posadnik*). As we shall see in Chapter 13, the use of this meter in dramatic works actually marks a return to the tradition of Puškin's *Boris Godunov*. On the basis of the material studied, it is possible to speak of the 1860s and 1870s as the decades during which the pentameter with a free caesura comes into its own, attaining near-equality with the non-caesural meter.

Some poets distinguish functionally between the meter with a free caesura and the meter without caesura. This is true primarily of Majkov and Fet. Thus, in the former's epic verse the percentage for the caesura before the fifth syllable varies from 59.5% to 73.6%. In his lyric poetry, however, Majkov begins with a constant caesura (1842), switching after 1844 to a free caesura; the overall percentage here comes to 79.1%. This functional distinction is even more typical of Fet: in his epic lines (1840–1883), the percentage for the caesura before the fifth syllable ranges from 56.4% to 71.2%, while his lyric poetry (1840–1892) shows a range of 84.9%–87.8%. Similarly, the lyric verse of A. Grigor'ev shows a much higher frequency for the caesura (75.8%) than do his dramatic and epic-lyric meters (50.5%–56.5%).

There are several poets who begin composing in non-caesural pentameter only to abandon it later for the meter with a free caesura. Xomjakov offers our first instance of such a transition. While in his *Ermak* (1825–1827) the percentage for the caesura before the fifth syllable amounts to 68.3%, in *Dmitrij Samozvanec* (1834) it rises to 91.8%. Quite probably, it was the influence of *Boris Godunov*, published only shortly before (1831), which inclined the poet toward the use of the caesura in his second drama. We have already noted the case of Nekrasov, who began writing iambic pentameter with a free caesura (1844) or without caesura (1845) and concluded with a constant caesura (1874–1877). Ostrovskij and A. K. Tolstoj show a similar development. In Ostrovskij the non-caesural pentameter is found in his first historical chronicle *Minin* (1862) and in the first and second acts of *Voevoda* (1865); in the third and fourth acts of the latter work, Ostrovskij abruptly changes his meter, going over to a line with a patently free caesura. Ostrovskij's dramas show the following percentages for the caesura:

1. <i>Minin</i> (1862)	48.3%
2. <i>Voevoda</i> (1865), Acts I and II	61.7%
3. <i>Voevoda</i> , Acts III and IV	88.8%
4. <i>Voevoda</i> , Prologue	95.5%
5. Dramas, 1867–1868	82.5%–95.8%
6. <i>Komik XVII stoletija</i> (1871)	98.0%
7. <i>Sneguročka</i> (1873)	99.7%

As these figures reveal, Ostrovskij, having begun with a patently non-caesural meter, shifted abruptly to a free caesura, and by gradually increasing its percentage, approached the pure caesural iamb of *Boris Godunov* in his last drama.

The development of the caesura before the fifth syllable in the dramas of A. K. Tolstoj likewise gives an interesting picture:

1. <i>Don-Žuan</i> (1861)	59.4%
2. <i>Smert' Ioanna Groznogo</i> (1865)	65.9%
3. <i>Car' Fedor Ioannovič</i> (1868)	74.1%
4. <i>Car' Boris</i> (1870)	79.9%
5. <i>Posadnik</i> (posthumous publication)	82.6%

Tolstoj's epic meter shows a similar evolution:

1. <i>Son Popova</i> (1874)	72.9%
2. <i>Drakon</i> (1875)	80.7%
3. <i>Portret</i> [1873]	82.5%*

Tolstoj's dramatic and epic meters, as the above figures make plain, show a steady development in the direction of his lyric meter, in which the percentage for the caesura before the fifth syllable is 85.7%. While Ostrovskij abruptly ceased composing in the non-caesural meter, Tolstoj abandoned this meter by stages, gradually increasing the percentage for the caesura before the fifth syllable.

The evolution of the five-foot iamb in Nekrasov, Tolstoj and Ostrovskij points clearly to a new tendency, much in evidence in the 1860s and 1870s, toward the gradual abandonment of the pentameter without caesura and a partial return to the tradition of the five-foot iamb in the 1820s. This return, chiefly in dramatic works, to the tradition of the 1820s evidences a certain archaizing spirit.

With regard to the development of the caesura before the fifth syllable, we have organized the material studied as follows: 1) the iambic pentameter with a constant caesura; 2) the first attempts to introduce a non-caesural iambic pentameter; 3) the iambic pentameter without caesura; 4) the iambic pentameter with a free caesura. While all three types of iambic pentameter are to be found in nineteenth-century Russian poetry, it can nonetheless be said that prior to 1830 the dominant type is the line with a constant caesura; in the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s the line without caesura; and in the 1860s and 1870s the line with a free caesura. In the following chapters (10 to 13), we shall study the development of the rhythmic drive in these three types of iambic pentameter.

However, before turning to the question of rhythmic drive in the five-foot iamb, we shall deal briefly with the use of this meter in so-called free iambic verse. In this matter, as Timofeev and Štokmar have shown, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries differ substantially. According to Timofeev's calculations, lines of different length show the following percentages in eighteenth-century free iambic verse:<sup>189</sup>

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\* *Portret* was written in 1873 and published in early January 1874. *Son Popova* was also written in 1873. – *Editors*.

1. 6-foot	40.0%	to	84.4%
2. 3-foot	6.3%	to	32.3%
3. 4-foot	3.3%	to	34.7%
4. 5-foot	0%	to	9.0%
5. 2-foot	0%	to	7.9%
6. 1-foot	0%	to	3.8%

In free iambic verse of the eighteenth century the six-foot line always occupies first place (its percentage usually falls around 50%), in the second place are the three-foot and four-foot lines (their percentages vary most often from 20% to 30%), while the five-foot line is very rare. In two of the thirteen poets studied by Timofeev, the pentameter is altogether lacking; in nine its frequency ranges from 0.2% to 6.2%, and in one (Sumarokov) it reaches 9%. In Kniažnin we observe a phenomenon exceptional for the eighteenth century: the percentage of the five-foot lines in his free iambic verse rises to 22%, while the percentage of six-foot lines falls to 27.3%. This can be explained by the fact, noted earlier, that Kniažnin also composed in isometric iambic pentameter. This is likewise true to some extent of Sumarokov.

While five-foot lines are quite rare in free iambic verse of the eighteenth century, they occur rather frequently in nineteenth-century verse of this kind. “It is significant,” Štokmar observes, “that at a time when the isometric iambic hexameter and trimeter were undergoing intensive development quite independently of free iambic verse, it was precisely these meters that were basic to the latter... Finally, it was in the nineteenth century, with its conclusive mastery of the iambic pentameter, that this meter became prominent in the free iambic verse of Krylov, Griboedov and Lermontov, whereas in the eighteenth century it could decline in frequency to insignificant fractions of a percent (Bogdanovič).”<sup>190</sup> Here is additional confirmation that the iambic pentameter is primarily a nineteenth-century meter.

## Notes

<sup>175</sup> We use the designation *five-foot iamb with caesura* in those cases where the percentage for the word boundary before the fifth syllable is 100% or very close to that figure. This is not to say that the caesura always coincides with a break in the phrase melody; on the contrary, the shift of this break away from the caesura to another position in the line is a fairly common occurrence in the given meter. Since the five-foot iamb with caesura gave rise to the non-caesural

meter, here, too, the word boundary before the fifth syllable is usually the strongest: its percentage, as we shall see, quite seldom falls below 50%, most commonly ranging from 50% to 70%. The designation *five-foot iamb with a free caesura* is used in those cases where the percentage for the word boundary before the fifth syllable ranges from 80% to 95%. Clearly, it is impossible to fix a precise limit between the meter without caesura and the meter with a free caesura, since there are quite a few cases where the percentage for the given word boundary varies from 70% to 80%: for purposes of statistical analysis we have arbitrarily chosen 75% as the cut-off point. Neither is there any clear-cut division between the meter with a free and with a constant caesura: if in a given work we come across exceptional violations of the caesura, we are not thereby justified in speaking of verse with a free caesura. That the five-foot iamb with a free caesura shows a transition to the non-caesural meter on the one hand, and to the meter with a constant caesura on the other is actually quite natural: as we shall see, this meter arose primarily as a special transitional form.

<sup>176</sup> There is no connection between this eighteenth-century meter and that used in a poem by Lomonosov (a translation of Horace's "Exegi monumentum" composed in 1747), which has a caesura after the sixth syllable and a tonic constant on the eighth as well as the tenth syllable:

Ja znák bessmértija | sebé vozdvígnul  
 Prevýše piramíd | i krépče médi,  
 Čto búrnjy Akvilón | sotréť ne móžet,  
 Ni mnóžestvo vekóv | ni édka drévnost'...

This meter found no imitators in Russian poetry, and Lomonosov himself did not return to it.

<sup>177</sup> Vostokov: *Opyt o russkom stixosloženíi* (1817), p. 35; quoted from Tomaševskij, "Pjatistopnyj jamb Puškina," *O stixe*, pp. 150–151, fn.

<sup>178</sup> For example, Vostokov neglects to mention Krylov, whose five-foot iambic work *Poslanie o pol'ze strastej* had appeared in 1808.

<sup>179</sup> In Podolinskij's 1837 five-foot iamb (*Pereezd čerez Jajlu*) 97% of the lines show the word boundary before the fifth syllable; in the remaining 3% a boundary occurs before the sixth syllable, i.e. the caesura is shifted one syllable forward. In Poležaev, the percentage for the caesura before the fifth syllable is also 97%, and in Odoevskij – 99%. Actually, similar percentages are to be

found even earlier: 96.8% in Puškin's lyrics from 1826 to 1830, and 97.3% in Ševyrëv's lyrics (1827–1830).

<sup>180</sup> E.g., in his first poem "Posvjaščenie N. N." (1829) and in the posthumous "Son" and "Net, ne tebja tak pylko ja ljubju".

<sup>181</sup> *Sočinenija Baratynskogo* (Izd. Akademii nauk), vol. II, p. 268.

<sup>182</sup> In her lyrics from 1856 to 1861 the percentage for the caesura is 70.1%; the non-caesural meter is used even earlier in her epic and dramatic poetry (1840–1855).

<sup>183</sup> The percentage for the caesura increases in his works as follows: *Činovnik* (1844) – 86.8%; *Novosti* (1845) – 60.4%; lyrics, 1845–1868 – 74.8%; *Mat'* (1877) – 97.7%; lyrics, 1874–1877 – 100%.

<sup>184</sup> Among Tjutčev's lyrics composed between 1828 and 1873 there are only six (fifty-six lines) with a constant caesura, versus approximately fifty with a free caesura; the question arises whether the caesura might not be accidental in these six lyrics.

<sup>185</sup> True, Žandr's translation is composed in free iambs; however, the great majority of lines consist of five feet.

<sup>186</sup> Earlier (Chapter III) we saw how Ševyrëv attempted to introduce into this work certain features of Italian versification (elision and the shift of stress from a strong to a weak syllable). It is interesting, however, that in his translation Ševyrëv did not retain the exclusively feminine endings of the Italian hendecasyllable, but used masculine endings as well. In his lyric poetry Ševyrëv used the caesural five-foot iamb (1827–1830), although he occasionally allowed a violation of the caesura.

<sup>187</sup> It is true that occasional violations of the caesura occur in Puškin even earlier, starting in 1825: in *Boris Godunov* the percentage for the caesura is 99.9%, and in his 1826–1830 lyrics – 96.8%. After 1830, however, we obtain the following percentages: *Domik v Kolomne* (1830) – 53.6%; *Little Tragedies* (1830) – 52.8%–61%; lyrics, 1830–1835 – 62.6%; *Rusalka* (1832) – 67.5%.

<sup>188</sup> This survey is far from complete, especially as regards translations. Thus, we were unable to study the very first translations of Schiller's dramatic works,

which go back to the late 1820s (appearing in *Moskovskij Vestnik* and other periodicals), nor could we include translated works from the 1830s; regrettably, this literature was unavailable to us.

<sup>189</sup> See Timofeev's table for thirteen poets (*Problemy stixovedenija*, p. 178, fn.).

<sup>190</sup> Štokmar, "Vol'nyj stix XIX veka," p. 123.

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