

“Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam” and the typology of the Russian dolnik (following Osip Brik’s, Boris Jarcho’s and Andrei Fedorov’s remarks on the Russian translations from Heine)

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Abstract. This paper develops some of the ideas that were expressed at the meeting of the Translators’ Section of the Soviet Writers’ Union (28 December 1934) where Osip Brik’s talk on new Russian translations from Heinrich Heine was presented and discussed. Brik argued for *equirhythmical* translations of Heine’s dolniks and maintained that *equimetrical* translations are impossible due to the differences between the Russian and the German systems of verse. His opponents, on the contrary, argued for *equimetrical* translations and maintained that *equirhythmical* translations are impossible due to the differences between the accentual systems of the Russian and the German languages. Boris Jarcho, who presided the meeting, developed a theory, according to which every versification system is characterised by primary and secondary features. The primary features represent a determinist norm and should be reproduced in translation to the full extent, while the secondary features represent a statistical norm: they may be reproduced in a proportion that the language and the poetic tradition can afford and that is at the same time similar to the proportion found in the original text. The authors of the present paper discuss three Russian poetic translations of Heine’s celebrated “Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam...” from the point of view of their equimetricity/equirhythmicity, and compare their metrical and rhythmical structures with various rhythmic types of the Russian dolnik.

Keywords: dolnik, equimetricity, equirhythmicity, poetic translation

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[Brik] used to say that rhythm is, first and foremost, a property, an attribute of motion.

I know that people in Europe and America, who are now creating a new theory of rhythm, forget to fix the name of the man who gave them an idea how to revise the approach to this topic.

(Shklovsky 1978)

This paper develops some of the ideas that were expressed at the meeting of the Translators’ Section of the Soviet Writers’ Union (28 December 1934) where the ex-formalist leftist critic Osip Brik’s (1888–1945) talk on new Russian translations of Heinrich Heine’s *Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen* was presented and discussed (see Brik et. al. 2012). At the beginning of the 1930s, this poem was translated into Russian by several translators, including a prominent translator, writer and literary theorist, Yurii Tynianov (1894–1943), one of the leaders of the Petrograd association of the formalists – Opoyaz (the Society for the Study of Poetic Language). The prominent literary theorist Boris Jarcho (1889–1942), a former member of the Moscow association of the formalists, the Moscow Linguistic Circle, presided over the meeting, which was attended by the leading Russian translators – in particular, Dmitri Usov (1896–1943) and Lev Penkovsky (1894–1971).

Brik’s talk was focused on the rhythm of Heine’s dolnik verse and its Russian equivalents. As we shall see further, Brik argued for equirhythmical translations of Heine’s dolniks and maintained that equimetrical translations are impossible due to the differences between the Russian and the German systems of verse. Usov and Penkovsky, on the contrary, argued for equimetrical translations and maintained that equirhythmical translations are impossible due to the differences between the accentual systems of the Russian and the German languages. Their practice was supported by the theory developed by Andrei Fedorov (1906–1999), a disciple of Tynianov at the Institute of the History of Arts and later a classic figure in Soviet translation studies (the Petersburg State University Centre for translation studies is named after him). He was not present at the discussion, but published a few articles on the same topic (see Fedorov 1928; 1935).

‘Dolnik’ (дольник) is the Russian term that describes various forms of non-syllabo-tonic metrics. Its definition, which was proposed in the 1960s by a prominent Russian verse theorist, Mikhail Gasparov (1935–2005), differs from earlier descriptions of similar forms in Russian verse theory, including those discussed in the present article. We will, however, attempt to combine the existing

approaches and use their respective accomplishments in order to develop them and achieve a deeper understanding of the phenomena under consideration.

Unlike the ‘classical’ syllabo-tonic (syllabic-accentual) metres (such as iambic, trochaic, dactylic, anapaestic, and amphibrachic metres), the length of the inter-ictic interval in a dolnik line is not constant. In syllabo-tonics, the amplitude of the variation of inter-ictic intervals is equal to **zero** (the inter-ictic intervals are invariable), while in dolniks the amplitude of the variation of inter-ictic intervals is equal to **one** (the inter-ictic intervals can be either monosyllabic or disyllabic). Thus, syllabo-tonic metres are ‘stricter’ than the dolnik. In the same sense, accentual verse, or ‘stress-metre’, where the amplitude of the variation of inter-ictic intervals is **one or more**, is ‘looser’ than the dolnik (hence the English descriptive term for dolnik: ‘*strict* stress-metre’, see Tarlinskaja 1993). Nevertheless, “dolnik’ is a metre *in its own right*, not just a looser variant of iamb, or a stricter variant of accentual verse” (Tarlinskaja 1992: 3).

This term is sometimes used in English-language scholarship and applied to Russian as well as English and German verse (Tarlinskaja 1992, 1995, 2002; Duffel 2008; Plungian 2011; Attridge 2012, 2013). Historically, however, the Russian dolnik is characterised by an isosyllabic tendency that Gasparov noticed but whose value he did not fully appreciate (cf. Liapin 2014, reviewed in Pilshchikov 2014: 153). We have to take into account not only the tonic factor, but also the syllabic factor, if we want “to situate the rise of dolnik in the historical tendencies characteristic of, specifically, Russian verse lines: the tendency of Russian verse to favour medium length and roughly equal lines, and its rejection of sharp deviation from syllable-counting in favour of stress-counting regularities” (Klenin 2008: 274).

Like a syllabo-tonic line, a dolnik line may contain unstressed ictuses (or, in other words, it may skip schematic stresses). Here the linguistic factor seems to play its role. Russian words are long enough, and compound words (with rare exceptions) do not bear a secondary stress (unlike most compound and some polymorphemic words in German or English). The average number of syllables per word in Russian is ca 2.5–3,¹ i.e. an average Russian word is almost twice as long as an average English word (ca 1.5 syllables).² This is why one or more metric stresses in Russian disyllabic metres (iamb and trochee) and in the

¹ 2.8, according to Tomashevsky (1919: 32). To be more precise: 2.74 for nouns, 3.11 for verbs, 3.44 for adjectives, 2.68 for adverbs, 1.98 for pronouns, 2.21 for other parts of speech, for an average of 2.72 (Gasparov 1984: 173). Or, using a different corpus and a different classification: 2.6 for content words, 1.9 for pronouns, 1.0 for form words (Zubkova 2010: § 3.1).

² To compare: 1.5 for content words, 1.15 for pronouns, 1.05 for form words (Zubkova 2010: § 3.1).

Russian dolnik are more often than not skipped (as opposed to, say, English disyllabic and strict-stress meters). Thus, we are dealing with the problem of unstressed ictuses: not all the downbeats are actually stressed.

The structure of the 3-ictus dolnik may be presented as

$$(0/1/2) \times (1/2) \times (1/2) \times (0/1/2/3)$$

Here \times denotes ‘strong’ positions (ictuses), numbers denote a number of syllables in ‘weak’ (metrically unstressed) inter-ictic positions, anacruses and clausulae, and variable intervals are divided by slashes and bracketed. This metre has five rhythmic forms, as described by Gasparov (1968: 67–70; 1974: 223–225):

- I $(0/1/2) \times 2 \times 2 \times (0/1/2/3)$
- II $(0/1/2) \times 1 \times 2 \times (0/1/2/3)$
- III $(0/1/2) \times 2 \times 1 \times (0/1/2/3)$
- IV $(0/1/2) \times 1 \times 1 \times (0/1/2/3)$
- V $(0/1/2) \times 4 \times (0/1/2/3)$

The last ictus is normally stressed (exceptions will be discussed further). Forms II, III, and IV can either be fully stressed or skip the stress in the first ictus. In Forms I and IV, the stress can also be skipped in the second ictus (in rare cases, it can be skipped on both the first and second ictuses, although in Form I, with its disyllabic inter-ictic intervals, a skip of metrical stress is less probable due to the average length of Russian words). Form V is a very peculiar form with a virtual (or movable) unstressed ictus or a prolonged inter-ictic interval as an ‘equivalent of stress’ (see discussion below). Forms II and III would turn into Form V if their second ictus were not stressed. Thus, in Form V, the syllabic factor prevails over the tonic factor.

Some rhythmic forms of the 3-ictus dolnik are isomorphic to syllabo-tonic lines. Form I with a zero anacrusis is isomorphic to the 3-foot dactyl; Form I with a monosyllabic anacrusis – to the 3-foot amphibrach; Form I with a disyllabic anacrusis – to the 3-foot anapaest (that is, dactylic, anapaestic, and amphibrachic trimeters). Form IV with a zero anacrusis is isomorphic to the 3-foot trochee (trochaic trimeter); Form IV with a monosyllabic anacrusis – to the 3-foot iambus (iambic trimeter); Form IV with a disyllabic anacrusis – to the 4-foot trochee (trochaic tetrameter) with a skip of stress in the first ictus. Form II with a zero anacrusis (with or without stress in the first ictus) is isomorphic to the 2-foot anapaest (anapaestic dimeter). Only Forms II with monosyllabic and disyllabic anacruses, as well as Forms III and V are specific

to the *dolnik*, i.e. the lines of these forms are never isomorphic to classical syllabo-tonic lines (cf. Gasparov 1974: 235).³

Let us consider the rhythm of the most well known poem of Heine, “Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam...” From the ‘Russian’ point of view, the metre of “Ein Fichtenbaum...” is 3-ictus *dolnik*. In the following schemes, Roman numerals denote its rhythmic forms, Arabic numerals denote the number of unstressed syllables between stressed syllables, underlined Arabic numerals denote the number of syllables in anacruses and clausulae, and bullets denote the stressed syllables that coincide with ictuses.⁴ The “accentually ambiguous” words (as Viktor Zhirmunsky called them), such as articles and pronouns, are considered stressed when they are placed on ictuses, but are considered unstressed when they emerge in the inter-ictic positions (Zhirmunsky 1925: 90–130; Gasparov 1974: 131–138). Both main and secondary stresses are interpreted as metrically relevant accents. Ictic positions are henceforth italicised, syllables in anacruses and clausulae underlined:

<u>Ein</u> Fichtenbaum steht <u>einsam</u>	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 • <u>1</u>
<u>Im</u> Norden auf <u>kahler Höh</u> ’.	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 •
<u>Ihn</u> schläfert; mit <u>weißer Decke</u>	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 • <u>1</u>
<u>Umhüllen</u> ihn <u>Eis</u> und <u>Schnee</u> .	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 •
<u>Er</u> träumt von <u>einer Palme</u> ,	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 • <u>1</u>
<u>Die</u> fern im <u>Morgenland</u>	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 •
<u>Einsam</u> und <u>schweigend trauert</u>	III	• 2 • 1 • <u>1</u>
<u>Auf</u> <u>brennender Felsenwand</u> .	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 •

The prominent Russian linguist Lev Shcherba (1880–1944) did not consider the secondary stress on the final syllable of the compound word *Fichtenbaum* a full-fledged, metrically relevant accent. Moreover, he regarded the rhyming syllables of the second quatrain (*Mórgenland* and *Félsenwand*) as unstressed (Shcherba 1936: 106–107). Nevertheless, we interpret such lines as fully accented, following Brik, who stated that “In the German language, the number of unstressed syllables around the stressed syllables is very small, and, for instance, compound words, such as *Sommermorgen* [...], have two stresses, which cannot be

³ In fact, form V with a disyllabic anacrusis, a disyllabic clausula and a compulsory caesura after the fifth syllable – 2 × 2 | 2 × 2 – is isomorphic to the so-called “Koltsov’s pentasyllabic meter” (“penton III”) used in imitations of Russian folkloric verse, but a detailed discussion of non-classical syllabo-tonic metres lies outside the scope of our paper.

⁴ Gasparov used dots instead of bullets.

skipped. [...] The Germans use additional stresses, which sometimes are no less strong than the primary accents” (Brik et al. 2012: 289; see also Bailey 1969: 19, note 22). The consensus in modern phonological theory is that such words do have final secondary stresses (to cite just a few examples: Giegerich 1985; Eisenberg 1991; Wiese 1996; etc.). Shcherba also admitted that “in Russian, weak and strong accents are functionally different from German accents” (1936: 108), so that he was, in a somewhat self-contradictory way, not unwilling to qualify the secondary accent in German as metrically and rhythmically relevant:

It is particularly important to point out that all content words [in Heine’s ‘Ein Fichtenbaum...’] bear a full-fledged stress, which is not blurred in the phrase, due to which every word is as if hammered in the listener’s head. The number of such full-fledgedly stressed syllables, in proportion to the total number of syllables [in the poem], is about 35% (and if the syllables with the secondary accent are reckoned in the stressed syllables, it will increase to 41%). (Shcherba 1936: 106–107)

We count the line “*Er träumt von einer Palme*” as having three stresses, notwithstanding the (probably justified) opinion of Shcherba who considered the article *einer* a proclitic (Shcherba 1936: 107). Here we also accept Brik’s opinion that, in such lines of Heine as “*Zu Aachen langweilen sich auf der Straß*,” the prepositions and articles should be regarded as stressed: “We have got four stresses here, not three. If you sputter and mumble, no good will come of that. [The preposition] *auf* [...] should also be stressed here” (Brik et al. 2012: 289).

Let us compare the rhythm of “Ein Fichtenbaum...” with the rhythm of Usov’s translation of this poem. It is found in his private letter of 8 June 1942 and remained unpublished until recently (in Brik et al. 2012: 318–319):

На Севере кедр одиноко
на голом холме растёт.
Он дремлет. Покровом белым
одел его снег и лёд.

Всё снится ему, что пальма
в полуденной стране,
Молча, одна тоскует
на знойной крутизне.⁵

⁵ Here and henceforth, unstressed ictuses in forms I to IV are both italicised and double-underlined. Vowels of tetrasyllabic inter-accentual intervals in form V will be double-underlined without added italics.

Or, schematically:

	H e i n e		U s o v
IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 • <u>1</u>	I	<u>1</u> • 2 • 2 • <u>1</u>
III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 •	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 •
III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 • <u>1</u>	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 • <u>1</u>
III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 •	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 •
IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 • <u>1</u>	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 • <u>1</u>
IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 •	IV	<u>1</u> • 3 •
III	• 2 • 1 • <u>1</u>	III	• 2 • 1 • <u>1</u>
III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 •	IV	<u>1</u> • 3 •

Usov's translation does not take into account anything of what Brik was trying to say at the Heine meeting.⁶ In effect, Brik formulated a new concept of metro-rhythmic equivalence in the poetic translation from German (and some other languages) into Russian, using the example of one of the most understudied metres – the *dolnik*. At the same time, Usov's translation eloquently reveals the most important aspects of metro-rhythmic equivalence that Brik wanted to problematise:

It seems to me that, in order to reproduce a rhythmic-intonational structure in translation, it is wrong, as we get used to doing, to confine ourselves to a merely external calculation of syllables, to establish certain external features of the metre. It turns out that the metre, the rhythmic-intonational structure is a much more complicated thing, and we have to find, in the Russian language and Russian versification, such possibilities that would not contradict our versification, on the one hand, and what is found in the original, on the other. In particular, in this case, I would not, for example, overuse the skipped stresses, I would attempt to imitate the high number of stresses, characteristic of the German language, because otherwise, when you read [...] translations, you often get an impression that the metre is lost and the line somehow finds itself out of the structure. (Brik et al. 2012: 291)

In the 1930s a systematic study of *dolniks* did not yet start, but contemporary verse theory can clear up and specify Brik's statements. First and foremost, two

⁶ Even if Usov translated Heine's poem before December 1934, he had an opportunity of revising his translation by 1942 (if he had been convinced by Brik's arguments).

of his ideas should be pointed out: the high number of stresses in the German dolnik (as compared to the Russian dolnik) and the observation concerning the rhythmic heterogeneity of the Russian translations from Heine, which creates "the impression that the metre is lost".

According to Brik, the "basis" of the German dolnik is "the iamb [...] complemented with additional unstressed syllables" (Brik et al. 2012: 288). In Heine's "Fichtenbaum", Form IV of the 3-ictus dolnik, which is isomorphic to iambic trimeter, is used in the first, fifth and sixth lines (therefore, each of the two quatrains begins with an 'iambic' line). Other lines belong to Form III, in which the first inter-ictic interval is longer than an iambic interval by one syllable. However, the 7th line, which has a zero anacrusis (and not a monosyllabic anacrusis, as all other lines) can also be interpreted differently: it sounds like an iambic trimeter with a trochaic inversion in the first foot.⁷ Since all the eight lines of Heine's poem are fully stressed (all ictuses bear accents, no stresses are skipped), there are no trisyllabic, tetrasyllabic or pentasyllabic interaccentual intervals in the text. Therefore, argues Brik,

in translation we should not ignore this rhythmic-intonational structure and cannot overuse what we often overuse in the Russian language, i. e. skipped stresses. Such skips of stresses on the downbeats⁸ cannot be admitted because when we start skipping the downbeats, the rhythmic-intonational structure will be violated. (Brik et al. 2012: 289)

Indeed, Usov's translation features a different repertoire of rhythmic forms in comparison with Heine's, and a completely different rhythmic composition – that is, the arrangement of these forms. At the same time Usov faithfully reproduces the structure of the anacruses and clausulae. The translation begins with an 'amphibrachic' line (Form I) instead of the 'iambic' line (Form IV), whereas Form I is not at all featured in the German original. The next three

⁷ Cf. Gasparov's description of Aleksandr Blok's poem "Голос из хора" ("A Voice from the Chorus", 1910–14), "where, side by side with additional syllables ('И век последний, ужасней всех...'), a shift of the initial stress is used ('Холод и мрак грядущих дней')" (Gasparov 1974: 317; accents and bold italics belong to us. – SL, IP).

⁸ *Udarnye doli* in the original; hence *dolnik*. Contemporary Russian verse theory, following Andrei Kolmogorov and Mikhail Gasparov, interprets *dolia* as an entire tact, which contains both the ictus and the 'weak' syllables, rather than the ictus itself. Kolmogorov (1903–1987), one of the greatest mathematicians of the twentieth century, was among the partisans of the statistical-probabilistic approach to the study of verse (on dolniks see Kolmogorov 1963; Kolmogorov, Prokhorov 1963, 1964).

lines belong to Form III, in compliance with the original. The second quatrain of the translation presents a crisscross rhythmic composition III-IV-III-IV (instead of the contiguous composition IV-IV-III-III in Heine). Moreover, in the original, the second stanza begins with Form IV and ends with Form III, whereas in the translation, just the opposite, the opening line belongs to Form III and the concluding line belongs to Form IV. Furthermore, in both ‘iambic’ (Form IV) lines of the Russian translation, the stress skips the second ictus, and a trisyllabic interaccentual interval emerges. ‘Long’ interaccentual intervals are very rarely featured in the German *dolnik*, so that their appearance drastically changes the sound of the poem and creates a substantially different intonational expression.

Speaking of the rhythm of Heine’s *dolnik*, Brik emphasises the fact that, distinctly from the Russian language, “in German this rhythmical impulse, [...] this rhythmical scheme [...] is very easily formed by the verbal material” (Brik et al. 2012: 289). The concept of “rhythmical impulse” was exposed in detail by Boris Tomashevsky (1890–1957), an active participant in both *Opoyaz* and the Moscow Linguistic Circle, who borrowed this term from Brik’s earlier papers. The impulse emerges on the way from metre to rhythm and back: the poet obeys the rhythmical impulse and finds for it “an expression in the actual rhythm of individual lines”, while the listener grasps it “due to his/her perception of a sequence of verse-lines” (Tomashevsky 1923: 83). Rhythmical impulse is not a determinist, but a statistical type of norm (Červenka 1984: 30). From the point of view of the reader of the poem, the *rhythmical impulse* is the same as *rhythmic inertia* (as Viktor Zhirmunsky called it). Scholars of Russian verse also defined this phenomenon in statistical terms, as a *rhythmic tendency* or a *stressing profile* (Kiril Taranovski), a *rhythmic profile of the metre* (Mikhail Gasparov), or the “*image of the metre*” (Andrei Kolmogorov).⁹ In this case we can speak of different ‘national images of the metre’.

This problem was ardently debated at the meeting on 28 December 1934. The first discussant was Usov, who opposed Brik’s thesis about the inadmissibility of skipping stresses in the ictuses:

I do not fully agree with [Brik] here. The thing is that a double-beat line sometimes has an equivalent of the third accent, a phenomenon already noted by the acmeists and symbolists. Consider, for example, the following line: ‘Ha

⁹ On these terms see Rudy 1976: 510; Brik 2012: 535–536 (Marina Akimova’s note); Gasparov 2012: 505; Liapin, Pilshchikov 2013: 54. Taranovski and Gasparov’s *stressing/rhythmic profile* is not, in fact, identical with the statistics of rhythmic forms and does not usually describe the differences between various types of rhythm adequately (Dobritsyn 2014).

шелковом одеяле’. You can find similar things in both Tynianov’s translation and [Penkovsky’s] translation. In the Russian language, they very often animate the motion of verse. Why [...] shouldn’t we use what is allowed: stresses on two syllables? Sometimes the two-stress lines sound very good. (Brik et al. 2012: 301)

The term ‘equivalent (*of text/metre/stress*)’ was introduced by Tynianov (1924: 22 sq.) and developed by other Opoyaz members. Tomashevsky explained that, in what will be later called ‘dolnik’, a skip of metrical stress is possible: “The accent is a feature of the rhythmical unity, [or] the rhythmical group”; however, “a group of unstressed syllables [...] can form a rhythmical group even without stressing. Long unstressed series of syllables can become an equivalent of rhythmical stress” (Tomashevsky 1925: 100). A poetic line quoted by Usov is taken from a poem composed by the acmeist Anna Akhmatova in 1914 (*incipit* “Бесшумно ходили по дому...”). The metre of this poem is 3-ictus dolnik, but the line “На шёлковом одеяле” contains only two stressed syllables with a tetrasyllabic interval between them. This example was also analysed by Tynianov (1924: 75).

There is no surprise then that, in Usov’s translation of “Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam...”, skipped stresses are found. The stress skips the second ictus twice, in the 6th and the 8th line: “в полуденной стране”; “на знойной крутизне”. Let us now compare the rhythm of Akhmatova’s poem mentioned by Usov and the rhythm of his translation from Heine. To make the sizes of the texts comparable, we take only two quatrains from Akhmatova’s seven-stanza poem (the opening stanza and the fourth stanza – the one quoted by Usov):

	A k h m a t o v a			U s o v		
<u>Бесшумно</u> ходили по <u>дому</u> ,	I	<u>1</u> • 2 • 2 • <u>1</u>	I	<u>1</u> • 2 • 2 • <u>1</u>		
<u>Не</u> ждали уже ничего.	I	<u>1</u> • 2 • 2 • •	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 • •		
<u>Меня</u> привели к больному,	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 • <u>1</u>	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 • <u>1</u>		
<u>И</u> я не узнала его.	I	<u>1</u> • 2 • 2 • •	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 • •		
[...]						
<u>Казалось</u> , стены сияли	II	<u>1</u> • 1 • 2 • <u>1</u>	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 • <u>1</u>		
<u>От</u> пола до потолка.	V	<u>1</u> • 4 • •	IV	<u>1</u> • 3 • •		
<u>На шёлковом одеяле</u>	V	<u>1</u> • 4 • <u>1</u>	III	• 2 • 1 • <u>1</u>		
<u>Сухая</u> лежала рука.	I	<u>1</u> • 2 • 2 • •	IV	<u>1</u> • 3 • •		

The total number of accents in each of these texts is 22: both Usov’s translation and two quatrains from Akhmatova’s poem contain two two-stress lines. (In compliance with Zhirmunsky’s rule of the “accentually ambiguous” words, we do not ‘count’ the extra-schematic stresses on the pronouns *он*, *его* and *всё* in the third, fourth and fifth lines of Usov’s translation.) For comparison:

the German original is fully stressed, it contains 24 stressed syllables (three stressed syllables in each of eight lines). However, the difference between Akhmatova's rhythm and Usov's rhythm is drastic.

Gasparov identified three types of the 3-ictus *dolnik*, according to their frequency in the works of three outstanding poets of Russian modernism (the epoch when *dolniks* began to flourish): "Esenin's type" with predominant forms I and III, "Gumilëv's type" with predominant forms III and II, and "Cvetaeva's type", in which forms III and V stand out (Gasparov 1968: 100–102; 1974: 241–242). Akhmatova's poem is a standard example of an 'average' Russian 3-ictus *dolnik*, which combines the features of all three above-described types. A high frequency of Form V is characteristic of "Tsvetaeva's type", a combination of Forms II and III is typical for "Gumilëv's type", whereas an abundance of 'amphibrachic' forms (Form I) characterises "Esenin's type".

Usov's translation does not reflect any of these tendencies: it is a spontaneous juxtaposition of the German and Russian 'images' of *dolnik*. On the one hand, Form III, which is significantly less frequent in Akhmatova, predominates both in Heine's original and Usov's translation. On the other hand, Usov departs from the original rhythm by skipping schematic stresses (twice). However, the two-stress lines in his translation do not belong to Form V, as in Akhmatova, but present Form IV with a skipped stress, the frequency of which is vanishingly small in both Akhmatova and Heine. They sound as a dissonance against the background of either Heine's or Akhmatova's *dolnik*. But Usov did not apparently intend to imitate the rhythm of Akhmatova, whose authority he cited. When he pointed to Akhmatova's *dolnik*, he only meant skipping ictic stresses, rather than preference for particular rhythmic forms.

Lev Penkovsky shared a similar position. On the one hand, he emphasised the difference between the rhythm of inter-ictic intervals in Heine and Akhmatova:

What is the difference between Heine's *dolnik* and Akhmatova's and other [Russian poets'] *dolnik*? The difference is that his *dolnik* contains many purely [...] iambic lines. [...] Moreover, the peculiarity of Heine's rhythmical construction consists in the fact that he sometimes gives 2 to 2½ iambic stanzas one after another, two stanzas of pure iambs, and sometimes inserts an additional [syllable] in this or that line. (Brik et al. 2012: 309)

Penkovsky was not against reproducing such *dolnik* forms in translation and even using them in original Russian poetry (Brik et al. 2012: 309). Nevertheless, he utterly opposed the idea of imitating Heine's fully stressed lines. If Heine's line is isomorphic to a classical Russian syllabo-tonic metre, e.g. *iambus*, then

why, Penkovsky argues, should we reproduce this iambus retaining all schematic accents? The real Russian iambus is very seldom fully stressed. "I have the ready-made metres – why should I look for another equivalent?" Is a "different number of accents" the only reason? (Brik et al. 2012: 310). And what happens if we imitate the German rhythm? In Penkovsky's opinion, such literalism is of no use: "Such an iambus is impossible to observe, or it will be a clumsy iambus which nobody can read" (Ibid.).

Brik's point of view is that of a "rhythmist", and from this point of view, to state the iambic base of Heine's dolnik is not enough. The concept of the rhythmical impulse or rhythmic-intonational structure also includes the number of the actual accents in the line of verse: 4-3-4-3 for *Deutschland*, 3-3-3-3 for "Ein Fichtenbaum..." (Brik et al. 2012: 288–289). For Brik, the issue of fully-stressed lines is of utmost importance, whereas Usov and Penkovsky, whose practice was supported by Fedorov's theory, considered a lack of *equirhythmicity* in the poetic translation not only possible, but even necessary, provided that the metre is preserved (i.e. the principle of *equimetricity* is observed). Such a deviation is, to their opinion, dictated by the pressure of the Russian poetic tradition. Their position is that of the "metrists". An equimetrical translation necessarily involves some features of the original rhythm, but other features of the original rhythm can be ignored (in this case the feature to be ignored is the predominance of fully stressed lines). The main thing is to reproduce the metre. With all this in view, Fedorov argues, "an absolute rhythmical fidelity seems to be needless": "What is important is not the actual alternation of strong and weak elements of sound, but a principle and a sign of the system" (Fedorov 1928: 52). For Brik, however, an abstract metrical scheme only means the "external features of the metre", a reproduction of which is not sufficient: the translators quite often focus on them and "simply destroy the rhythmic-intonational system found in the original" (Brik et al. 2012: 288).¹⁰

The scholar who discussed the problem of correspondence between equirhythmicity and equimetricity six decades later, using the Russian translations of "Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam..." as examples, was a leading Russian verse theorist Maksim Shapir (1962–2006). In 1994 he attempted to translate Heine's

¹⁰ Besides equimetrical and equirhythmical translations, an equiprosodic translation is possible, "which conveys the versification system of the source text" (Lotman 2012: 447). We assume that the Russian and German dolniks (as well as the Russian and German syllabo-tonic metres) belong to the same versification system, although they represent different national systems of verse (as parts of different national poetic cultures). The German tradition of verse theory might give a different metrical interpretation to what we refer to as the German dolnik (cf., e.g., Heusler 1929).

poem equirhythmically, but, according to his own evaluation, succeeded in a complete equirhythmicity only in four lines out of eight (lines 3, 5, 6 and 7):

	Shapir's translation		Heine's original	
<u>Стоит</u> на севере кедр ¹¹	II	<u>1</u> • 1 • 2 • <u>1</u>	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 • <u>1</u>
<u>Один</u> на склоне крутом.	II	<u>1</u> • 1 • 2 •	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 •
<u>Под</u> белым он спит покровом,	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 • <u>1</u>	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 • <u>1</u>
<u>Укутан</u> снегом и льдом.	II	<u>1</u> • 1 • 2 •	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 •
<u>Он</u> видит сон о пальме.	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 • <u>1</u>	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 • <u>1</u>
<u>Одна</u> в чужой земле	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 •	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 •
<u>Молча</u> она тоскует	III	• 2 • 1 • <u>1</u>	III	• 2 • 1 • <u>1</u>
<u>На</u> раскалённой скале ¹²	I	3 • 2 •	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 •

In 2005 Shapir delivered a lecture course to the seminar on verse theory at Moscow State University. One of the lectures was devoted to the comparative rhythmicity of German, English and Russian iambs and dolniks. He used his own translation to substantiate the conclusion: “A complete equimetricality is possible, but equirhythmicity is not, and this is language pressure”.¹³ Indeed, as has already been stated, he managed to observe the rhythm of the original only in half of the lines. It is interesting to note that in all other lines he used Form II, which is not found in the original. Moreover, in three cases Form II is fully stressed, while in the last line, the stress skips the first ictus. As a result, the concluding line begins with a sequence of three unstressed syllables, which obviously contradicts the ‘rhythmical impulse’ of Heine’s poem. Furthermore, in two of the four lines, which Shapir translated equirhythmically, the syntax of the original is transformed. In the German original, the third line has a strong syntactic pause after the third syllable, and there is an enjambement

¹¹ “Кедр” is a disyllabic word here, with a syllabified [r].

¹² Formally, the concluding line of Shapir’s translation can be also interpreted as form II, with a monosyllabic anacrusis (‘На раскалённой скале’). The stress skips the first ictus in both interpretations.

¹³ We quote the notes from the course compiled by the members of the seminar. This lecture was taken down by Anastasia Belousova, Alina Bodrova, Riva Evstifeeva, Kirill Golovastikov, Vera Polilova, Maria Rachinskaia and Mikhail Trunin. Preparatory notes for the course written on numbered cards are preserved in the family archive of Maksim Il’ich Shapir. In particular, card 9 contains a thesis: “Metrical equivalence is attainable, a complete rhythmical [equivalence] is apparently not”.

between the third and the fourth line: “Ihn schläfert; mit weißer Decke...” [“It slumbers; with a white cloak...”]. Cf. Usov’s translation: “Он дремлет. Покровом белым...” [“It slumbers. With a white cloak...”]. In the original, the first sentence of the second quatrain does not end with the fifth line – in the next line a subordinate clause begins: “...von einer Palme, / Die...” [“...of a palm, / which...”]. Both Usov and Shapir failed to reproduce this construction. Other available Russian translations are less faithful than those two.¹⁴

The authors of the present article tried to take into account the pluses and minuses of Usov’s and Shapir’s translations and ventured to put forth their own attempt at an equirhythmical translation of Heine’s poem:

		O u r		H e i n e ’ s
		t r a n s l a t i o n		o r i g i n a l
<u>Один</u> на гол <u>ом</u> скл <u>оне</u>	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 • <u>1</u>	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 • <u>1</u>
<u>на</u> севере кедр ¹⁵ раст <u>ёт</u> .	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 •	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 •
<u>Он</u> дремлет; покр <u>овом</u> бел <u>ым</u>	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 • <u>1</u>	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 • <u>1</u>
<u>одел</u> его снег и л <u>ёд</u> .	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 •	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 •
<u>Всё</u> грезит он о п <u>альме</u> ,	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 • <u>1</u>	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 • <u>1</u>
<u>что</u> там в чуж <u>ой</u> зем <u>ле</u>	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 •	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 •
молча одна тоску <u>ет</u>	III	• 2 • 1 • <u>1</u>	III	• 2 • 1 • <u>1</u>
<u>на</u> знойной кру <u>той</u> ска <u>ле</u> .	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 •	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 •

Nevertheless, even this translation is equirhythmic only to a certain extent. Thus, in the fifth line we managed to place an ‘accentually ambiguous’ word (the pronoun *он* ‘he’) in the second ictus, in accordance with an ‘accentually ambiguous’ word in the original (the indefinite article *einer*, which can be recited with a weaker stress or as an unstressed word). However, in the very first line of Heine’s poem the stressed monosyllable *steht* occupies a weak position. Such a configuration is quite common in German verse, but very rare in the Russian dolnik. None of the existing translations (including ours) reproduces this extra-schematic stress. In lines 6 and 8 Heine rhymes the compound words *Mórgenland* and *Félsenwand*, in which the last (rhyming) syllable bears a weaker, secondary stress (Nebenton, Nebenakzent), and we were unable to reproduce this effect. At the end of the dispute after Brik’s talk, Boris Jarcho suggested, perhaps drawing from Tynianov’s experiments, that

¹⁴ See <http://www.ruthenia.ru/tiutcheviana/publications/trans/heine-fichte.html>.

¹⁵ In this text, “кедр” is a monosyllabic word, with a nonsyllabic [r].

the rule of “the compulsory stress on the last downbeat of the line”¹⁶ might sometimes be deliberately violated in translation:

Let us say, I will rhyme ‘кóсть’ [‘a bóne’] and ‘в́идимость’ [‘illúision’], such as, for example: *То, что пёс не гложет кость, / есть одна лишь видимость* [‘The fact that the dog is not gnawing a bone / is a mere illusion’]. The question is where such [dactylic] endings can be placed. If they are placed on strong syllables, they will sound good. If I translated [German poetry], I would play upon such accents because they would create an impressive sound effect. (Brik et al. 2012: 315)

In his translations from Heine, Tynianov used heteroaccentual (разноударные) rhymes such as “существо : имущество” or “привести : совести” (quoted and discussed in Fedorov 1928: 56).¹⁷ Very few translators, however, use this device when translating from German into Russian, so we can only agree with Shapir who stated:

But even if some wonderworker succeeds in making the rhythmical structure of the Russian translation correspond precisely to Heine’s original, this text would be an exception, not a rule.¹⁸

A way to a solution of the problem of equimetricity and equirhythmicity was outlined by Jarcho in his closing statement on 28 December 1934. Jarcho, who was not only an outstanding theorist, but also a fine translator himself,¹⁹ pointed out “a certain confusion” in the theories of metre developed by the participants in the discussion:

Of general questions I venture [...] to touch upon the issue of rendering the verse [in translation] because, as far as I can see, there is a certain confusion here. This confusion mainly consists in the continuous mix-up of the [syllabic] principle with the tonic principle. (Brik et al. 2012: 313)

¹⁶ As formulated later by Roman Jakobson (1955: 168). There and elsewhere (in “Linguistics and Poetics”) he called this rule one of the “constants” observed “in the classic pattern of Russian syllabic accentual verse (‘syllabotonic’ in native nomenclature)” (Jakobson 1960: 361). The violation of this rule (which is also applied to dolniks) is very rare and is perceived as exceptionally unusual.

¹⁷ On Russian heteroaccentual rhymes (разноударные рифмы) see Sherr 1986: 204–205.

¹⁸ Preparatory notes for the course on verse theory (card 15).

¹⁹ Brik also translated poetry (from French, Spanish, English and German), but the amount of his translation is much less significant in comparison with Jarcho’s (see Polilova 2014).

By the "syllabic principle" of the construction of the dolnik Jarcho means the number of syllables in a particular dolnik line (the number of ictuses, and the maximum and minimum length of inter-ictic intervals). The tonic principle comprises secondary features: (1) a particular distribution of strong and weak positions in the line; and (2) skipped ictic stresses and extra-schematic stresses (that is, accents on weak syllables). However, these principles and the series of features that they condition are not equal hierarchically. To demonstrate this, Jarcho developed a theory, according to which every versification system is characterised by primary (constant) and secondary (variable) features (Brik et al. 2012: 314). The primary features represent a determinist norm and should be reproduced in translation to the full extent, while the secondary features represent a statistical norm: they may be reproduced in a proportion that the language and the poetic tradition can afford and that is at the same time similar to the proportion found in the original text (Jarcho 2006: 32, 50, 621–622n52, 638n133). Various individual instances of metre are different from each other due to the different statistical distributions of secondary features.

From the point of view of Jarcho, the syllabic principle is the primary feature of the dolnik line, which is necessary and sufficient for defining the text as a dolnik and distinguishing it from all other metres. This feature is necessarily present in poetic work written in this metre, and it should be compulsorily preserved in the translated text. Reproduction of variable features is not compulsory, but desirable. It is advisable to preserve them as far as the language allows:

Is it necessary to observe the constant number of accents [...] in translation? It turns out that the Russian dolnik admits a certain freedom in this respect, but I think it is possible to reproduce this in Russian without great difficulty. (Brik et al. 2012: 315)

Thus, according to Jarcho, when we render the German dolnik in Russian, we should faithfully reproduce the primary features, and this is equimetricity. The secondary features may be reproduced "approximately" (Brik et al. 2012: 315). We should define which features constitute the national image of the metre and use them in an approximately equal proportion. This is equirhythmicity.

In translation, it is possible to lean on particular variations of the metre already available in the recipient national tradition. As recent studies have demonstrated, several rhythmic types ('images') of the 3-ictus dolnik, which can be justifiably compared to Heine's type *sensu stricto*, are possible and actually exist in Russian poetry. This is, for example, the dolnik Marina Tsvetaeva's uses in many of the poems from her émigré period and, in particular, of the

first poem from the verse cycle entitled “Магдалина” (“The Magdalene”, 26 August 1923):

<u>Меж</u> нами – десять <u>заповедей</u> :	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 • <u>3</u>
Жар десяти костров.	III (IV) ²⁰	• 2 • 1 •
<u>Родная</u> кровь отшатывает,	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 • <u>3</u>
Ты мне – чужая кровь.	III (IV?) ²¹	• 2 • 1 •
Во времена <u>евангельские</u>	III (IV) ²²	3 • 1 • <u>3</u>
<u>Была</u> б одной из тех...	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 •
(<u>Чужая</u> кровь – <u>желаннейшая</u>	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 • <u>3</u>
<u>И</u> чуждейшая <u>из</u> всех!)	V	<u>1</u> • 4 •
<u>К тебе</u> б со всеми <u>немощами</u>	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 • <u>3</u>
<u>Влеклась</u> , стлалась – светла	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 •
Мать! – очесами <u>демонскими</u>	III	• 2 • 1 • <u>3</u>
Таясь, лила б масла	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 •
<u>И</u> на <u>ноги</u> <u>бы</u> , <u>и</u> под <u>ноги</u> <u>бы</u> ,	V (III)	<u>1</u> • 4 • <u>3</u>
<u>И</u> вовсе бы так, в пески...	III	<u>1</u> • 2 • 1 •
Страсть по купцам <u>распроданная</u> ,	III	• 2 • 1 • <u>3</u>
<u>Расплёванная</u> – <u>теки</u> !	V	<u>1</u> • 4 •
Пеною уст и <u>накипями</u>	III	• 2 • 1 • <u>3</u>
<u>Очес</u> и <u>пóтом</u> всех	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 •
Нег... В волоса <u>заматываю</u>	III	• 2 • 1 • <u>3</u>
Ноги твои, как в мех.	III	• 2 • 1 •
Некою тканью под <u>ноги</u>	III	• 2 • 1 • <u>2</u>
<u>Стелюсь</u> ... Не тот ли (<u>та!</u>)	IV	<u>1</u> • 1 • 1 •
Твари с кудрями <u>огненными</u>	III	• 2 • 1 • <u>3</u>
Молвивший: <u>встань</u> , сестра!	III	• 2 • 1 •

²⁰ In a different rhythmical context this could also be interpreted as an ‘iambic’ Form IV with an extra-schematic stress on the monosyllable (Жа́р десяти́ костро́в.).

²¹ The logical stress on the personal pronoun *ты* ‘you’ (“Ты мне – чужая кровь” [‘You, to me, are foreign blood’]) does not allow us to interpret the rhythm of this line as Form IV, as some readers insist (*“Ты мне – чужая кровь” [‘You, to me, are foreign blood’]).

²² If we suppose that the stress skips the first ictus (filled by the preposition *во*), the line then

Let us consider briefly the rhythmical composition of Tsvetaeva’s poem. Of course, it is not easy to compare its rhythm with the rhythm of “Ein Fichtenbaum...” intuitively, by ear, due to the hyperdactylic clausulae in “The Magdalene”, but for the rest the rhythmic-intonational similarity between the two poems is striking:

	“The Magdalene”	“Ein Fichtenbaum...”
Form I	0%	0%
Form II	0%	0%
Form III	50%	62.5%
Form IV	37.5%	37.5%
Form V	12.5%	0%

Forms I and II are utterly absent from both the 3-ictus dolnik of Tsvetaeva’s “The Magdalene”²³ and the 3-ictus dolnik of Heine’s “Fichtenbaum”. The frequency of the ‘iambic’ forms (Form IV with a monosyllabic anacrusis) is equal in both poems: 37.5%. Gasparov described a high frequency of Form IV as a peculiar feature of the German dolnik and pointed to its dysillabic (iambic) basis as opposed to the trisyllabic basis of the Russian dolnik (Gasparov 1968: 88–89, 91; 1974: 234–235). At the same time he did not notice the existence of a very similar type of dolnik in Russian poetry: apparently, the reason is that, when he started to examine this metre in the 1960s, he did not have access to the majority of Tsvetaeva’s émigré poems, which were banned in Soviet times. Meanwhile, the share of Form IV in these poems is as high as in the average German dolnik.

The most frequent form in all widespread types of the Russian dolnik is Form III. Its share is even higher in Heine than in Tsvetaeva, who also uses Form V, so that the proportion of Form III decreases. The proportion of Form V in Tsvetaeva is 12.5%, but this does not contradict a ‘Heine-like’ rhythmical impulse of the poem thanks to a specific structure of ‘secondary features’. The first line of Form V appears amid the fully stressed ‘iambic’ lines (Form IV). They make it possible to perceive it as verse that is constructed à la Heine, that is by inserting an additional syllable to one of the iambic ‘feet’:

И чуж- | дей-ша+я | из всёх! 2+(2+1)+2

belongs to Form III. If we suppose, however, that the stress skips the second ictus (which is less likely for linguistic reasons), the line could belong to Form IV.

²³ This is not to be confused with “Tsvetaeva’s type” in Gasparov’s classification. The type with predominating Forms III and V, described by Gasparov, should rather be called “the early Tsvetaeva type”.

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