

**Pamela Davidson (essay date 2007)**

SOURCE: Davidson, Pamela. "Between Derzhavin and Pushkin: The Development of the Image of the Poet as a Prophet in the Verse of Zhukovsky, Glinka, and Kiukhelbeker." *Poetics, Self, Place: Essays in Honor of Anna Lisa Crone*. Ed. Catherine O'Neil, Nicole Boudreau, and Sarah Krive. Bloomington: Slavica, 2007. 182-214. Print.

[In the following essay, Davidson explores the development of the concept of the poet as a prophetic figure in works by Zhukovsky, Fedor Glinka, and Vilgelm Kiukhelbeker. Davidson discusses how Zhukovsky's heavily prescriptive poem "Imperatoru Aleksandru" (may be translated as "To the Emperor Alexander") established "the poet's independence and right to set the moral and political agenda" for the czar.]

Вот как русский поэт говорит русскому царю.

That's how a Russian poet speaks to a Russian tsar.

Pushkin, 1825

The image of the poet as a prophet—from its earliest manifestations through the various stages of its interpretation and manipulation by successive generations of writers—has exerted a profound influence on the development of the Russian literary tradition.<sup>1</sup> It first entered Russian literature in the late 18th century, when Derzhavin and Lomonosov occasionally adopted a certain style in their verse that could loosely be termed prophetic. This can be sensed quite clearly in various poems in which they comment on contemporary events and personalities from a moral or religious perspective; it is even more obvious in their poems on biblical subjects and in their Russian translations of the psalms. A few explicit references to the image of the writer as a prophet can also be found in their verse. And yet it cannot be argued that the prophetic style or image played a central role in their works. Although both writers were often invoked retrospectively as representatives of this tradition, they were not in fact the original impetus behind it and did not have a particularly strong impact at the time on its formation or development.<sup>2</sup> Significantly, in 1834, when Belinsky tried to present Derzhavin as one of the originating poets of the prophetic tradition, he did so not by quoting directly from his verse but by characterizing it in terms that closely echoed the language of Pushkin's "Prorok" (The Prophet, 1826):

Дивное явление! Бедный дворянин, почти безграмотный, дитя по своим понятиям; неразгаданная загадка для самого себя; откуда получил он этот вещий, пророческий глагол, потрясающий сердца и восторгающий души, этот глубокий и обширный взгляд, обхватывающий природу во всей ее бесконечности, как обхватывает молодой орел мощными когтями трепещущую добычу? Или в самом деле он повстречал на перепутье какого-нибудь шестикрылого херувима?<sup>3</sup>

A wondrous phenomenon! A poor nobleman, almost illiterate, a child according to his own criteria; an insoluble

riddle even to himself; from where did he get this visionary prophetic language, stirring hearts and delighting souls, this deep and broad outlook, grasping nature in all its infinity, just as a young eagle grasps a quivering catch in its powerful claws? Or did he really encounter at a *crossroads* some *six-winged seraph*?

As Belinsky's approach reveals, Pushkin's "Prorok" was commonly invoked as the key source text, validating the representation of the poet (and by extension of Pushkin himself) as a prophet. It is important, however, to emphasize that this was a retrospective view, gradually built up in various stages during the decades following Pushkin's death. In the 1820s, at the time when the image of the poet as a prophet first became prominent in Russian literature, Pushkin was neither its main advocate nor its chief representative; his own contribution to the tradition, although highly significant, grew out of an independent, pre-existing context, which in turn shaped the reception of his treatment of the image.

The aim of this essay is therefore to reconstruct the literary and cultural context of the period between Derzhavin and Pushkin during which the image of the poet as a prophet became established in Russian verse in the 1810s and 1820s. The two main defining historical events of the age were Russia's participation in the Napoleonic wars and the Decembrist uprising of 1825. The emergence of the image of the poet-prophet will be traced through an examination of the direct and oblique responses to these events in the works of three influential writers, Zhukovsky, Glinka, and Kiukhelbeker. Two aspects of the legacy of this crucial period for the future development of the image of the writer as a prophet in Russian literature will receive particular attention: the contribution of these early texts to the subsequent tradition of validating the writer's prophetic status with reference to a chain of predecessors, and the impact of the shift of emphasis from the sociopolitical to the religious dimension of the poet's mission.

#### THE AFTERMATH OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS

The image of the poet as a prophet did not establish itself as a significant presence in Russian literature until the 1820s. Although it also crops up quite regularly in the works of other European writers of the same period (mainly English, French, or German), it was taken up in Russia at this time with an unparalleled intensity. To some extent this obsession can be explained by deep-seated religious factors: since the early writings of Metropolitan Ilarion the tradition of relating the providential mission of Rus to the writings of the biblical prophets was well established. Such an explanation, if taken on its own, however, would not be sufficient to account for the unusually rapid emergence and widespread adoption of the image of the biblical prophet during the 1820s. The catalyst that prompted this upsurge of interest was the contemporary historical context; writers' faith in their prophetic mission took root in the climate of ideas generated by the Russian victory over Napoleon in

1814 and gathered momentum as a means of articulating the resulting aspirations for reform, reinforced by the suppression of the Decembrist uprising in 1825.<sup>4</sup> For an understanding of the sources of this intriguing phenomenon we therefore need to consider the unique character of Russia's historical development, paying particular attention to the notion of its backwardness in relation to Europe.

The deeply ingrained perception of Russia's *otstalost'* (backwardness) has its roots in the paradoxical legacy of Peter the Great's reign. As Lindsey Hughes has pointed out, one of the main impulses behind Peter's drive to modernize Russia was an overwhelming sense of its backwardness.<sup>5</sup> Although Peter's enforced programme of accelerated reforms was designed to close the gap between "backward" Russia and "enlightened" Europe, in practice it served to reinforce the very characteristic that it sought to overcome. To many observers the most visible aspect of the tsar's modernizing rhetoric and strategic vision was the ruthlessness required to implement his ideals.<sup>6</sup> This trait—invariably associated with the despotic character of autocratic rule—could only contribute further to the image of Russia as a backward country.

The debate over Russia's position in relation to Europe came to the fore once more a century later in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars, aptly described by Geoffrey Hosking as "one of the great defining moments in Russia's evolution as a whole."<sup>7</sup> Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812 and eventual defeat, culminating in the triumphant entry of Russian troops into Paris in 1814, did much to fuel patriotic pride and a sense of national identity; at the same time, however, it raised important questions about Russia's relationship with Europe. Russia might have won a remarkable military victory, but did this also constitute a moral and spiritual victory?

Two major obstacles stood in the way of any such claim. One was the autocratic nature of tsarist rule, unbounded by any form of constitution or guarantee of civil liberties. The other closely related issue was the institution of serfdom, legalized under Peter the Great and resulting in a large population of discontented serfs. Alexander I was extremely vulnerable to criticism on both counts. The suspicious circumstances under which he came to power made it possible to question the very legitimacy and sacred status of his rule. The extent of his collusion in the dethronement and murder of his father Paul I is still a matter of considerable debate among historians; whatever school of thought is followed, it is generally agreed that "the circumstances of his father's deposition and murder left Alexander with a sense of guilt and unease which lasted the whole of his life."<sup>8</sup> Napoleon certainly did not miss the opportunity to insult him by hinting that he owed his throne to patricide.<sup>9</sup>

As far as reforms were concerned, although Alexander discussed ideas for a freer and better form of government, he never succeeded in implementing these. Nor was he able

to resolve the peasant question. At one stage he promised to emancipate the serfs, but failed to do so. The frustrated hope of freedom was the main motive for peasant resentment and serf revolts, which increased heavily in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars.<sup>10</sup> There was great bitterness among the peasants who returned from their militia service to find there was no emancipation; in a manifesto of 1814 the tsar thanked them for their courage but declared that they would receive their reward from heaven.<sup>11</sup> Alexander never managed to resolve the fundamental dilemma that had also faced Peter the Great: reforms could only be achieved if his autocratic powers were retained intact.

There was, however, a possible way of getting round these two obstacles, even if they could not be surmounted. This involved presenting the existing relationship between the ruler and his subjects in a positive light, rather than attempting to change it in any fundamental manner. If it could be demonstrated that the tsar's autocratic rule was founded on obedience to divine law and moral values, and that he enjoyed a stable relationship with his people, based on mutual love and respect and regulated by their common adherence to religious law, then Russia could be held up as an example of the triumph of Christian faith and moral values over the twin threats of atheism and revolution, posed by Napoleon and France. In this way the negative image of an autocratic tsar, exerting despotic authority over a large population of oppressed serfs, could be transformed into the more positive picture of a benevolent ruler, subject to divine authority and wholeheartedly devoted to the service of his people.

This was clearly in line with the self-image that Alexander I sought to project. He underlined his respect for divine law by encouraging the establishment of the Imperial Russian Bible Society in December 1812; he also initiated a project for a new translation of the Bible into modern Russian in order to make the Scriptures more widely accessible to the population. His religious vision of the ideal social order was reinforced by the victory over the atheist Napoleon, a triumph which he consistently attributed to the workings of divine providence rather than to human agency. When he came to lead the Holy Alliance established at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, it was with the express aim of rebuilding Europe in the spirit of Christian morality.<sup>12</sup> These public expressions of religious faith were reinforced on a personal level by the vows he exchanged with various close friends to read the same chapter of the Old Testament each day.<sup>13</sup>

To gain wide credence, such a vision of the ruler's role within the scheme of divine providence needed to be articulated by effective and persuasive spokesmen. In biblical times this task was carried out by the prophets in various ways. By compiling historical chronicles they established a record of the ruler's past actions in relation to the divine plan; by exhorting the ruler and the people to follow religious law they also set the agenda for the present and the future. If the ruler's deeds were meritorious, they

were recorded as such; if not, they would come under severe attack. The prophet's relation to the ruler of his day could therefore turn out to be one of support or of open opposition.

In Russia, writers who harbored an interest in prophecy commonly adopted both strategies. The prophet's traditional involvement in compiling historical chronicles provided a role model for the many writers who developed a strong interest in the history of Russia and its rulers around this time. The exploration of historical issues often went hand in hand with a predilection for moral preaching, frequently directed at the people or the ruler, whether past or present. If support and adulation of the reigning monarch had tended to be the norm in much 18th-century verse, in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars this began to give way to the adoption of a more independent stance, at first somewhat tentatively and then more assertively, particularly after the suppression of the Decembrist uprising of 1825.

#### ZHUKOVSKY'S ADDRESS TO ALEXANDER I

Immediately after the Russian victory over Napoleon, Vasily Zhukovsky (1783-1852) composed a long poem addressed to the tsar, "**Imperatoru Aleksandru: Poslanie**" ("**To the Emperor Alexander: An Epistle**," 1814). This work provides a revealing example of the transitional stage between the earlier tradition of flattering subservience and the later more independent mode of address to the ruler, commonly associated with the prophetic stance. Zhukovsky was in a unique position to compose such an address.<sup>14</sup> Although he did not take a direct part in the fighting against Napoleon, he observed the Battle of Borodino in 1812 from close quarters and achieved fame by writing a highly patriotic poem on this subject, "**Pevets vo stane russkikh voinov**" ("**A Poet in the Camp of Russian Warriors**"), published in several revised versions between 1812 and 1815. After his move to St. Petersburg in 1813 he became closely involved with the imperial family as reader to the empress mother and teacher of Russian to members of the imperial family (in 1825, for example, he was tutor to the future emperor Alexander II). His position at court enabled him to address the tsar as a relative insider and to intercede before him on behalf of many people, including writers such as Pushkin and Gogol.

Zhukovsky's address to Alexander I was first published in November 1814 and then reissued as a separate brochure of over ten pages in 1815. It offers an extensive narrative of the tsar's exploits from the time of his coronation through the various stages of his struggle with Napoleon up until his triumphant return to St. Petersburg. The poet is unstinting in his extravagant praise of the ruler's deeds and character; he links him to his illustrious forefather, Peter the Great, "the teacher of earthly rulers" (*tsarei zemnykh uchitel'*), and constantly underlines his providential role as "the humble agent of the will of providence" (*voli promysla smirenniyi sovershitel'*).<sup>15</sup> Two themes are emphasized throughout the poem: the tsar's close association with

freedom (*svoboda*) and his loving relationship with his people (*narod*).

Needless to say, there is a very clear agenda behind these hyperbolic expressions of praise. The relentless references to the tsar's love of freedom and ideal relationship with his people are more prescriptive than descriptive; behind them lies a clear injunction that the ruler must develop a relationship with his people based on freedom rather than coercion. If he fails to achieve this, he will not have won a true "victory" in the eyes of Russia and the rest of the world.

In this way, through a combination of historical account and direct apostrophe, Zhukovsky succeeds in establishing the poet's right to address the tsar, to formulate the ruler's goals and to define the moral values by which he should conduct his affairs. He draws attention to the significance of the poet's role quite explicitly by framing the central narrative in praise of the tsar between two sections devoted to the poet. In the opening section he defends the right of the "unknown poet" (*neznaemyi pevets*) to address the "Russian tsar" (*ruskii tsar'*);<sup>16</sup> for this he uses the age-old tactic of flattery, promising to add his voice to the universal hymns in praise of the tsar. Having thus gained his audience, he then goes on to do rather more than suggested: in the concluding section of the poem he ends up by articulating the innermost thoughts and aspirations of the tsar. After describing the tsar's glorious return to the capital, he addresses him directly (in the familiar *ty* form), declaring his daring intention to enter his "holy palace" (*chertog sviashchennyi*) with a "bold [...] fantasy" (*otvazhnoi [...] mechtou*).<sup>17</sup> He then composes the text of a private prayer, addressed to God by the tsar as he watches over the sleeping city at night; significantly, the heart of the prayer concerns the ruler's special relationship with his people:

Покойся, мой народ, не дремлет твой хранитель;  
Так, мой народ! Творец, он весь в душе моей,  
На удивление народов и царей,  
Его могуществом и счастьем прославлю,  
И трон свой алтарем любви ему поставлю;<sup>18</sup>

Rest, my people, your guardian does not slumber;  
So, my people! Creator, my whole people is in my heart,  
To the astonishment of peoples and tsars,  
Through might and happiness I will make it glorious,  
And I will set my throne before it as an altar of love;

The poet is taking it upon himself to voice the tsar's feelings at this most sacred and intimate moment, when he is alone with his Creator; this device is remarkably daring as it allows the poet to assume the tsar's own voice and dictate his thoughts. The text of the imagined prayer underlines the tsar's status as a servant rather than a ruler—his dual duty to God above (to whom he owes his throne and power) and to his people below (whose interests he must serve).

The tsar is then invited to step down off his throne and to visit his people in order to witness their unbounded loyalty.

Families, a youth, an old man, a soldier and even a poet are described in succession: they all speak one language—the language of praise. This leads Zhukovsky to make the following rather pointed comment on the poet's role:

О дивный век, когда певец царя—не льстец,  
Когда хвала—восторг, глас лиры—глас народа,  
Когда все сладкое для сердца: честь, свобода,  
Великость, слава, мир, отечество, алтарь—  
Все, все слилось в одно святое слово: царь.<sup>19</sup>

O wondrous age, when the tsar's poet is not a flatterer,  
When praise is joy, when the voice of the lyre is the voice  
of the people,  
When all that is dear to the heart: honor, freedom,  
Greatness, glory, peace, fatherland, altar—  
All, all has merged into one holy word: tsar.

The prescriptive agenda is once more clearly in evidence: a new golden age is being inaugurated, when the poet's praise of the tsar is no longer empty flattery but true delight, and when his voice represents the voice of the people. This change can only come about when the tsar's name is synonymous with a number of key virtues; among these freedom comes close to the top of the list. The deliberate rhyming of *glas naroda* (voice of the people) with *svoboda* (freedom) emphasizes once more the crucial link between the tsar's willingness to embrace the cause of freedom and the praise that he can expect from the poet as the people's representative. Although the tsar rules over his subjects, Zhukovsky makes it clear that the people stand above him—they will ultimately judge him (in the form of posterity) and can even intercede on his behalf before God.<sup>20</sup> The poet therefore derives considerable authority from his key position as the people's chosen representative; he mediates between God and the tsar in the twin roles of prophet and judge, articulating the voice of the people, who validate his status.

Zhukovsky's address to Alexander I thus established an important new precedent: the poet's independence and right to set the moral and political agenda for the tsar. Pushkin was one of the first Russian writers to comment on its ground-breaking significance in this respect. In a letter of 1825 to his friend the Decembrist A. A. Bestuzhev (Marlinsky) comparing the evolution of the independence of writers from their patrons in Europe and Russia, he instructed his friend to read Zhukovsky's poem, recommended as a recent example of the Russian poet's new-found independence: "**Vot kak russkii poet govorit russkomu tsariu**" ("That's how a Russian poet speaks to a Russian tsar"). Zhukovsky's stance is contrasted with that of Derzhavin, castigated as an example of a writer who served three different tsars and was totally dependent on the system of patronage. Significantly, the lines that Pushkin quoted from Derzhavin to illustrate his "voice of flattery" contain an explicit reference to the poet's subjugation of prophecy to praise:

О вспомни, как в том восхищенье  
Пророча, я тебя хвалил,

Смотри, я рек, триумф минуту,  
А добродетель век живет.<sup>21</sup>

O recall, how in that panegyric  
Prophesying, I praised you,  
Behold, I proclaimed, victory lasts but a minute,  
But virtue lives forever.

Immediately before composing his address to the tsar, Zhukovsky had in fact completed a translation of a section from L. de Fontan's poem "Les livres saints," entitled "Bibliia" ("The Bible," October 1814). This extract lays great stress on the role of the patriarchs and prophets in the development of the Jewish nation's history; in Zhukovsky's translation they are characterized as follows:

Се мужи Промысла, предвечного зеницы;  
Грядущие лета как прошлые для них—<sup>22</sup>

These men of Providence, the eyes of the everlasting;  
For them future years are like the past—

The poet's interest in this particular extract evidently stemmed from his attraction to the role of the prophet in shaping a nation's history and desire to assimilate this theme into Russian literature through translation. For similar reasons he spent several years towards the end of his life translating the New Testament from Church Slavonic into Russian.<sup>23</sup> Significantly, however, in his own address to the tsar he refrained from using the term *prorok* (prophet) of the poet, preferring instead the traditional designation of *pevets* (poet/bard) or *poet* (poet). Although there are many typological similarities between the figure of the biblical prophet and the role of the poet as defined by Zhukovsky in this work, he was not yet prepared to invest the poet with the full status of the biblical prophet, who performed the dual functions of national leader and spokesman. This task was left to his successors.

#### THE DECEMBRIST MOVEMENT

The Decembrist poets followed Zhukovsky's lead in promoting the independence of the poet but took it one step further; their wish to translate the liberal ideals reflected in his address to the tsar into a program of social and political action led them to adopt the more authoritative figure of the prophet in their writings. For this reason we find that the image of the writer as a prophet first becomes widespread in the verse of poets associated with the Decembrist movement.

It is not difficult to understand why this should have been the case. Many of the Decembrists were writers, to whom the image of the poet-prophet presented itself as a natural one: the poet and prophet were, after all, both vehicles of inspiration, linked by a common medium of expression, the written or spoken word. The adoption of the image of the poet-prophet lent credibility to the Decembrists' nascent aspirations, formed in the wake of the Napoleonic wars, which had broadened the social base of Russian patriotism and increased the desire for social and political reform.

Their ideals—such as the plan to introduce a constitutional monarchy or to liberate the serfs—were inevitably undermined by practical obstacles as well as by various glaring inconsistencies. How, for example, could the Decembrists challenge the authority of a divinely appointed tsar, and how—when operating through the restrictive framework of a secret society—could they possibly claim to represent the needs of a people, with whom they had little or no real contact?<sup>24</sup>

The image of the poet-prophet was a helpful rhetorical tool in countering some of these objections. Donning the mantle of prophet invested the poet with the highest possible authority, derived from the supreme source, that of God, and thereby gave him the undisputed, biblically sanctioned right to challenge the authority of any earthly ruler, including the tsar. Furthermore, although the prophet is in many ways a lone figure, his voice is nevertheless always addressed to the nation, whose deepest spiritual and moral needs he articulates. The assumption of this role therefore helped to overcome the rift between the would-be reformers and the people. There was an additional, purely practical reason for the widespread use of this image: the use of biblical sources, whether translated, adapted, or loosely paraphrased, was a way of getting round the censors, who did not as a rule raise objections to texts of sacred origin.<sup>25</sup> For these various reasons, the biblical prophet, as an acknowledged force for the establishment of social and moral justice in the history of a nation, became a model for Russian poets, anxious to strengthen their voice in shaping the destiny of their people.

Among the many writers who were associated with the Decembrist movement to a greater or lesser degree, the image of the prophet crops up most frequently in the works of Glinka and Kiukhelbeker. Both writers deserve detailed attention, as the differences in their approaches to the image of the prophet foreshadowed later trends in the Russian development of this tradition.

#### GLINKA: THE POET-PROPHET AS MORAL TEACHER AND GOOD CITIZEN

Fedor Glinka (1786-1880), a cousin of the famous composer, was 13 years older than Pushkin and lived to the ripe old age of nearly 100. He took part in the wars against Napoleon of 1805-06 and 1812 and first achieved literary fame through his account of these experiences in *Pis'ma russkogo ofitsera* (*Letters of a Russian Officer*), published in two editions in 1808 and 1815-16. He was also an active member of the Decembrist movement in its early stages.

Glinka's wish to reconcile the Decembrists' plans for constitutional reform with his own religious and moral views led him to turn to biblical texts as a vehicle for the expression of a national ideal of freedom guided by divine providence. His favorite sources for this purpose were the writings of the prophets and the psalms. In some cases his approach was quite daring. In "Prizvanie Isaii" ("The

Calling of Isaiah”), published in 1822, he directly assumes the voice of God, charging the prophet with a mission to go forth to the people and spread the holy word:

Иди к народу, мой Пророк!  
Вещай, труби слова Егови!  
Срывай с лукавых душ покровы  
И громко обличай порок!  
Иди к народу, мой Пророк!

Go forth to the people, my Prophet!  
Prophesy, proclaim the words of Jehovah!  
Tear away the veils from cunning souls  
And loudly denounce vice!  
Go forth to the people, my Prophet!

This strong opening contains a passionate definition of the key elements of the prophet’s role: his divine election and closeness to God, his mission to go to the people, and the moral nature of his calling, highlighted by the key rhyme of *prorok* (prophet) with *porok* (vice).

The poet then continues with the text of the divine message that the prophet must deliver to his people:

ВЕЩАЙ:

Не я ль тебя лелеял  
И на руках моих носил?  
Тебе в пустынях жизнью веял,  
Тебя в безводии поил;  
А ты, народ неблагодарный,  
Ты ласки все забыл Отца!  
Как змеи—души в вас коварны,  
Как камни—черствые сердца!<sup>26</sup>

ПРОФЕСЫ:

Did I not cherish you  
And carry you in my arms?  
I breathed life to you in the wilderness,  
I gave you drink when there was no water;  
Yet you, ungrateful people,  
You forgot all the kindnesses of your Father!  
Like serpents—your souls are crafty,  
Like stones—your callous hearts!

He rounds off with the divine command to the people

Лукавство вырви из души;<sup>27</sup>

Uproot cunning from the heart;

and concludes with the promise that their sins will then be whitened like the day.

Pushkin’s “Prorok,” written four years later, was in many ways a direct response to this poem; it was also based on Isaiah and echoed several features of Glinka’s poem, such as the setting of the wilderness, the emphasis on the prophet’s calling and mission, the references to the serpent and heart, and to the eradication of cunning. There is, however, a substantial difference—Pushkin transfers many of these attributes from the people who receive the message to the prophet who delivers it. Whereas Glinka focuses on the

prophet’s mission and message to his people and concentrates on the need for the people to purify themselves in order to be able to listen to the prophet’s message, Pushkin dwells on the preceding stage: the profound inner process of transformation which the prophet himself must first undergo by way of preparation before imparting his message. As I have argued elsewhere, this shift of emphasis was very much in keeping with Pushkin’s special emphasis on the moral dimension of the prophetic ideal in its original biblical form.<sup>28</sup>

In a number of other poems Glinka assumes the voice of the prophet or psalmist, directly addressing God. A frequent device for this purpose was the composition of Russian versions of the psalms. In this respect he was developing a strong tradition in Russian literature, established by predecessors such as Simeon Polotsky, Kantemir, Trediakovsky, Sumarokov, Lomonosov, and Derzhavin, but investing this practice with new social and political significance. His poem “Pobeda” (“Victory”), published in his collection *Opyty sviashchennoi poezii* (*Experiments in Sacred Verse*, 1826), is a fairly close adaptation of Psalm 151 (an addition to the original Hebrew text, appended to the Greek translation of the psalms); it describes the moment when David was chosen for his mission and defended the freedom of his people by fighting the giant Goliath. The lines that evoke the appearance of the angel to David are not unlike those that describe the appearance of the seraph to the prophet in Pushkin’s “Prorok,” composed in the same year:

Но вдруг блеснул в пустыне свет,  
И мне явился ангел Бога:  
“Тебе широкая дорога  
Через поле жизни и в века!”<sup>29</sup>

But suddenly a light shone forth in the wilderness,  
And an angel of God appeared to me:  
“Before you lies a wide road  
Through the field of life and for all times!”

Although Glinka did not take an active part in the Decembrist uprising, he still suffered fairly serious reprisals. At first he was arrested and released; then he was arrested once more in March 1826 and held for three months in the fortress of SS. Peter and Paul. After his release he was removed from service and sent to Petrozavodsk, where he was kept under observation.<sup>30</sup> The image of the prophet survived in his poetry, but the emphasis changed from one of confident, anticipatory hope, associated with the mission and the message, to a tone of lament, bemoaning the loneliness and isolation of the abandoned prophet, to whom no one now listens. This transition is clearly reflected in Glinka’s decision to render into Russian a section of Psalm 43, beginning with the memorable line “Zabył ty nas, zabył ty nas, Bozhe!” (“You have forgotten us, you have forgotten us, o Lord!”).<sup>31</sup> It is also reflected in two original poems composed after 1825. In “Iliia—Bogu” (“Elijah to God”) the prophet Elijah addresses God with a lament on the passing of prophecy and a prayer for its renewal:

Твоих зарезали пророков,  
Твои разбили алтари!! . . .  
Проснись, Бог сил! заговори  
Нет места для твоей святыни,  
И я теперь, жилец пустыни,  
Я плачу пред тобой один! . . .<sup>32</sup>

Your prophets have been slaughtered,  
Your altars have been smashed!! . . .  
Wake up, God of strength! Speak out!  
There is no place for your shrine,  
And I now, living in the wilderness,  
I weep before you all alone! . . .

“Otvét prorokov” (“The Answer of the Prophets”), also written after 1825, is cast in the form of question and answer. Returning once more to the telling rhyme of *poroki* (vices) with *proroki* (prophets), the poet comments on the escalation of vices and addresses the prophets, asking them where they are. The prophets respond that although they still speak, nobody listens to them any longer:

1

Растут и высятся пороки,  
Везде страстей победный клич.  
Куда ж девались вы, пророки!  
Где ваш огнепалый бич?!

2

Мы говорим, но нам не внемлют,  
Лелеясь в своих мечтах:  
Над пропастью бездонной дремлют,  
Иль буйно пляшут на гробах!!<sup>33</sup>

1

Vices grow and rise,  
The triumphant call of the passions is everywhere.  
Where have you gone, prophets!  
Where is your fire-scorching whip?!

2

We speak, but the people do not heed us,  
Basking in their own dreams:  
They slumber over a bottomless pit,  
Or dance wildly on the graves!!

We can see from these examples that Glinka took up the image of the biblical prophet as a moral preacher and social activist with considerable force and conviction, assuming a variety of voices in his verse: we hear God addressing the prophet, the prophet or psalmist addressing God, and the poet addressing the prophets. Although Glinka did not explicitly state that contemporary writers should take on the role of the biblical prophets, this was certainly implied by his constant promotion of this image as a model of good citizenship. In a much later poem, “V zashchitu poeta” (“In Defense of the Poet,” 1840s), he attacked the notion that the poet is too unworldly to carry out the mission of a “Citizen” (*grazhdanin*); on the contrary, the poet’s “flying verse” (*letuchii stikh*) spreads throughout the world, leaving an indelible imprint on the hearts of all people, from the lowliest to the most power-

ful.<sup>34</sup> This fusion of poet and Citizen was a direct extension of Glinka’s earlier adoption of the model of the biblical prophet.

#### KIUKHELBEKER: THE POET-PROPHET AS POLITICAL ACTIVIST AND TRADITION-BUILDER

The image of the writer as a prophet also played a prominent role in the works of the poet and critic Vilgelm Kiukhelbeker (1797-1846). Kiukhelbeker was 11 years younger than Glinka and much more active on the political front. He attended the Lyceum with Delvig and Pushkin and remained good friends with them until their deaths. For a few years after his graduation he was a regular visitor at Glinka’s evening salon; he also developed close relationships with Zhukovsky, Baratynsky, Griboedov, and Gnedich.

Kiukhelbeker’s treatment of the writer as a prophet stood out for its strongly defined social and political orientation. Whereas Glinka’s adoption of the image of the biblical prophet was largely prompted by his fairly conservative moral and religious views, Kiukhelbeker took it up in a more radical way and sought to apply it directly to the political situation of his day. He was also the first Russian writer to attempt to construct a literary tradition of writers as prophets in support of this image.

These two distinctive aspects of his approach were apparent from very early on in his writings. In May 1820 he created quite a stir by reciting his long poem “Poety” (“Poets,” 1820) at a meeting of the Society for Lovers of Free Literature. This work set the figure of the writer as a prophet within a broad literary tradition, largely defined by the poet’s resistance to various forms of suffering and oppression over the centuries. At the time of its first reading the poem was widely understood as a manifesto in honor of Pushkin, who had recently been exiled to the South; it was considered so inflammatory that an anonymous political denunciation of its author was even sent to the Minister of the Interior in June 1820.<sup>35</sup>

The underlying message of “Poety” is highlighted by the epigraph appended to it: two pithy lines from Zhukovsky on the independence of the poet’s gift.<sup>36</sup> Kiukhelbeker starts off with a rhetorical question addressed to Delvig: what is the reward for noble deeds and verse in a world dominated by evil, stupidity, envy, and mediocrity? The rest of his poem develops a fairly conventional answer to this question: the poet will receive his reward not in this world but in eternity, through the recognition of posterity leading to immortality. Although this claim is not in itself particularly original, the way in which it is advanced is of considerable interest; Kiukhelbeker chooses to support his argument by constructing a long tradition of writers as prophets, spanning several centuries and cultures. He first establishes the principle that poets possess a special prophetic insight into the hidden workings of destiny, which they communicate to the people in their verse:

В священных, огненных стихах  
 Народы слышат прорицанья  
 Сокрытых для толпы судеб,  
 Открытых взору дарованья!<sup>37</sup>

In holy, fiery verses  
 Nations hear predictions  
 Of destinies concealed from the crowd,  
 Revealed to the eyes of talent!

He then goes on to present a series of “prophetic” writers as part of a single tradition leading up to the present. The list is headed by Homer, addressed as the eternal teacher of poets, “creator of future talents,” and “prophet of hearts”:

Ты вечно будешь их учить—  
 Творец грядущих дарований,  
 Вселенная картин и знаний,  
 Всевидец душ, пророк сердец—  
 Гомер,—божественный певец!<sup>38</sup>

You will be their teacher for evermore—  
 Creator of future talents,  
 Universe of pictures and knowledge,  
 Seer of souls, prophet of hearts—  
 Homer,—divine poet!

Homer is followed by a series of several writers, including the Roman satirist Juvenal, the legendary Gaelic bard Ossian (an 18th-century fabrication by James Macpherson), and the German Romantic poet Schiller. Kiukhelbeker then makes the key transition to the writers of “holy Rus,” introducing them as the disciples of the previously enumerated “holy poets” and “prophets of lofty truths,” whose role they inherit and continue:

Их зрела и святая Русь—  
 Певцов и смелых и священных,  
 Пророков истин возвышенных!  
 О край отчизны,—я горжусь!<sup>39</sup>

Holy Rus also saw them—  
 The daring and holy poets,  
 Prophets of lofty truths!  
 O land of my fathers—I am proud!

The element of undisguised national pride, underscored by the rhyme of *Rus'* with *gorzhus'* (I am proud), is clearly a significant factor in the extension of this tradition to the poet's native land. The reference to Holy Rus' also harks back to the times of Metropolitan Ilarion, one of the earliest writers to articulate the prophetic destiny of Rus' in the context of world history. After offering brief characterizations of Lomonosov and Derzhavin, Kiukhelbeker brings the tradition up to his own age. At this point he renews his address to Delvig, affirming that “persecutions” (*gonen'ia*) have no lasting significance, for immortality is the poet's lot. The “free union” (*soiuz svobodnyi*) to which he and his fellow-poets belong will therefore never die.<sup>40</sup> Alongside Kiukhelbeker and Delvig, this select company includes two other members, Baratynsky and Pushkin, who are addressed in turn and assured of their future immortality through art.

In this way Kiukhelbeker and his circle of fellow-poets are represented as forming part of a long tradition of “prophets of lofty truths,” stretching back through Derzhavin and Lomonosov to the poets of Western Europe and classical antiquity. Here we can already discern an important mechanism at work, which later informs the dynamics of prophetic succession in Russia: the title of prophet is conferred by one poet on another like-minded poet of his circle in order to assert the superiority of their exclusive company over the outside world, largely defined by its persecution of the poet. The extension of the prophetic tradition back through the generations serves to reinforce the sense that belonging to the inner circle will guarantee the poet's survival through immortality.

One could argue, with some justification, that Kiukhelbeker's poem put the cart before the horses. It sets up a vast tradition to validate the status of contemporary Russian poets as prophets—without first defining the content of this role. Kiukhelbeker was evidently more than ready to embrace a prophetic destiny, yet not entirely clear what form this role might take. In the autumn of 1820 he left Russia on a trip to Europe, working as the private secretary of the wealthy grandee, A. L. Naryshkin. His first stop was Germany, where he met several prominent figures in the literary world, including Goethe. As was often the case among Russian writers, the experience of living abroad acted as a catalyst, strengthening his longing to define his prophetic role in relation to Russia (the same phenomenon can be observed in the cases of Gogol and Ivanov, who both articulated their sense of prophetic mission most clearly while living abroad in Germany and Rome).<sup>41</sup> In 1821 he composed a poem “K druž'iam, na Reine” (“To My Friends, on the Rhine,” 1821), addressed to the “sacred union” (*soiuz sviashchennyi*) of his fellow-poets and friends back in Russia.<sup>42</sup> He uses the key rhyme of *prorok* (prophet) and *rok* (fate) to speculate on his destiny, asking a “bird of predictions” (*ptitsa predveshchaniï*), described as a “languid, lamenting prophet” (*tomnyi, zhalobnyi prorok*) what “inevitable fate” (*neotrazimyi rok*) has in store for him, and expressing his readiness to fall for the cause of freedom. Kiukhelbeker is clearly anxious to take on a prophetic role, but is not yet ready to articulate it by assuming the prophetic voice himself.

After a spell in Germany, Kiukhelbeker moved to France, settling in Paris, where he mixed with a number of leading French intellectuals. In the spring of 1821 he delivered a course of lectures (in French) on the Russian language and Russian literature.<sup>43</sup> His fascination with the Russian language dated back to his schooldays, when according to Pushkin he was already a “living lexicon.”<sup>44</sup> Although his native language was Russian, both his parents were russified Germans and his foreign origins may well have contributed to his special passion for the Russian language.

Kiukhelbeker began his introductory lecture with the assertion that certain ideas, born of the “age” and the spirit of



enlightenment, were currently bringing about a great revolution in the spiritual and social history of humanity and prophesied even more significant further change. These ideas, concerned with the concepts of freedom, enlightenment and law, are shared by all “thinking people,” who form a community of ideological “brothers and fellow-countrymen,” transcending national boundaries. Although Russia’s historical record in relation to the defence of freedom and law is notably weak, its youth, strength and “great receptivity to truth” are said to give grounds for hope.<sup>45</sup>

He then posed a leading question, which prepared the audience for his main point. How has providence ensured that the character of the Russian nation has been saved from total ruin at the hands of its despotic leaders? The answer lies in the Russian language, which has succeeded in preserving the freedom-loving soul of the Russian *narod* (people). It has been able to do this because it was formed before the institutionalization of serfdom and imposition of autocratic regimes on the country, and is therefore intrinsically “free, strong, rich.” It has never lost and will never lose “the memory of freedom, of the supreme power of the people who speak it.” For this reason the word *vol’nost’* (freedom) exercises a particular power over every truly Russian heart.<sup>46</sup>

In the rest of his lecture Kiukhelbeker attempted to demonstrate that various historical, lexical, and grammatical features of the Russian language provide evidence of its inherent “freedom” (arguing, for example, that the case system allows great liberty with word order and syntax).<sup>47</sup> He concluded by expressing his faith that the path to a “better future” lies in the preservation and perfection of the Russian language, which will in due course produce its own talents; writers like Homer and Plato will emerge and enable the Russian people to overcome slavery.<sup>48</sup>

It follows from this that the writer who uses the Russian language to advance the cause of freedom wields a providential instrument which is intrinsically pure and free, in tune with the people’s soul, and uniquely suited to the expression of “prophetic” ideas destined to change history. Russian writers are therefore in possession of a God-given medium, which not only empowers them but also transcends their own individual contributions by ensuring the continuity and survival of the ideal of freedom. Similar ideas were developed by Gogol in his essay of 1834 on Pushkin’s prophetic use of the Russian language and later by Viacheslav Ivanov in his exploration of the sacred quality of Russian, “Nash iazyk” (“Our Language,” 1918).

Although presented as a lecture on his native tongue, Kiukhelbeker’s speech amounted to far more: it was in effect a radical invitation to Russian writers to oppose tyranny in all its forms by promoting the prophetic ideal of freedom in their works. Needless to say, the Russian authorities were not pleased when they got wind of the speech. Kiukhelbeker was promptly sacked by Naryshkin and recalled to St. Petersburg through the Russian Embassy in Paris in Au-

gust 1821; he was then despatched to the South to serve in Tiflis, where he remained under observation until May 1822.

By 1821, in the space of just a few years since leaving school, Kiukhelbeker had therefore made three important steps towards establishing the image of the contemporary Russian poet as a prophetic figure. In Russia he had given a public reading of a controversial poem which set up a broad historical tradition in support of the image and its application to his generation; then from Germany he had invited speculation from his fellow-poets on the future of his own prophetic role in Russia; finally, in Paris he had presented a theory of the Russian language as intrinsically prophetic. All this constituted a solid and impressively “international” framework for the promotion of his prophetic ideal and his own role in this context. Two key elements were missing, however, and still had to be supplied. First, in order to translate his rather vague and undefined enthusiasm for freedom into action, he needed to find a specific political cause to embrace. Second, in order to buttress the image of the poet-prophet as a moral force guiding the providential course of the nation’s history, he needed to ground it in biblical tradition, which commanded a far greater authority than the purely classical and literary line of succession set up by him in “Poety.”

The first political cause espoused by Kiukhelbeker was the Greek national struggle for liberation from the Turks; here he was following in the footsteps of Byron, whose readiness to fight on the side of the Greeks in defiance of his own country’s policies had contributed to his legendary reputation as the most famous poet-prophet of the age. From 1821 onwards Kiukhelbeker wrote several poems in support of the Greek cause. This was also the context in which he made his first attempt to anchor the image of the poet-prophet in biblical tradition. From his enforced exile in Tiflis on the banks of the river Kura he wrote a remarkable poem, “Prorochestvo” (“The Prophecy,” 1822), in which he assumed the voice of the biblical prophet receiving the divine word of God. Its opening stanza evokes several passages from the Hebrew prophets; one could, for example, compare it to Jeremiah’s account of receiving his calling to the prophetic office.<sup>49</sup>

Глагол господень был ко мне  
За цепью гор на Курском бреге;  
“Ты дни влачишь в ленивом сне,  
В мертвящей душу, вялой неге!  
На то ль тебе я пламень дал  
И силу воздвигать народы?  
Встань, певец, пророк свободы!  
Вспрянь! Возвести, что́ я вещал!”<sup>50</sup>

The word of God came to me  
Beyond the mountain range on the banks of the Kura;  
“You drag out your days in lazy dreams,  
In soul-destroying, stagnant languor!  
Is it for this that I gave you the ardour  
And strength to arouse nations?  
Arise, poet, prophet of freedom!  
Spring up! Proclaim that which I prophesied!

After the conclusion of the divine message, which urges the “prophet of freedom” to support Greece in its struggle for national independence, the poet continues to describe the providential course of the Greek struggle and prophesies divine retribution against “perfidious Albion” (*kovarnyi Al’bion*) for siding with the Turks. In the closing stanza he reaffirms his resolve to proclaim the word of God, even in exile and incarceration:

А я и в ссылке и в темнице  
Глагол господень возвещу!  
О Боже! я в твоей деснице,  
Я слов твоих не умолчу!  
Как буря по полю несется,  
Так в мире мой раздастся глас  
И в слухе сильных отзовется!  
Тобой сочтен мой каждый vlas!<sup>51</sup>

And I in exile and in prison  
Will proclaim the word of God!  
O Lord! I am in your right hand,  
I shall not suppress your words!  
As a storm passes over a field,  
So will my voice resound in the world  
And be heard by the ears of the powerful!  
My every hair is numbered by you!

Kiukhelbeker’s poem shares several features with Glinka’s “Prizvanie Isaii” (1822) and Pushkin’s later “Prorok” (1826).<sup>52</sup> It is unique, however, in the way that it merges the account of the biblical prophet receiving the divine message with the details of a specific contemporary political cause. Pushkin, who received a copy of the poem from Del’vig while in Kishinev,<sup>53</sup> objected very strongly to this confusion of different modes of discourse. In a letter of September 1822 to his brother L. S. Pushkin he gave vent to his critical feelings:

Читал стихи и прозу Кюхельбекера—что за чудак!  
Только в его голову могла войти жидовская мысль  
воспевать Грецию, великолепную, классическую, поэ-  
тическую Грецию, Грецию, где все дышит мифоло-  
гией и героизмом,—славяно-русскими стихами,  
целиком взятыми из Иеремиа. Что бы сказал Гомер и  
Пиндар?—но что говорят Дельвиг и Баратынский?<sup>54</sup>

I read Kiukhelbeker’s verse and prose—what an eccentric! Only he could have come up with the Jewish notion of singing the praises of Greece, magnificent, classical, poetic Greece, Greece, where everything breathes mythology and heroism—in Slavonic-Russian verses, lifted in their entirety from Jeremiah. What would Homer and Pindar have said?—but what do Delvig and Baratynsky say?

Pushkin’s indignation over Kiukhelbeker’s use of the biblical prophetic style to characterize the heroic and mythological world of Greece is very revealing. It reflects his general tendency to discriminate and to preserve distinctions that other writers tended to ignore or erode. In “Prorok” (1826) and “Poet” (“The Poet,” 1827) he presents these two figures within clearly differentiated traditions; the prophet is modeled on Isaiah and rooted in biblical

tradition, while the poet is related to the classical cult of Apollo. Pushkin was also well aware of the fundamental difference between the poet and the socially committed political activist; in “Arion” (1827) the carefree poet is set apart from the wise helmsman and his crew of diligent sailors, whose fate he does not share. Although Pushkin did not object to the purely classical tradition of poet-prophets that Kiukhelbeker constructed in “Poety,” he clearly did resist the indiscriminating extension of this tradition into the world of biblical prophecy. On a more personal level he may well also have objected to the element of personal hubris implicit in Kiukhelbeker’s representation of himself as a prophet in exile, receiving a direct call from God to join the struggle taking place in distant Greece.

After “Prorochestvo” Kiukhelbeker went on to write several more poems, which explicitly linked poets to prophets. Up until the time of the Decembrist uprising, the framework for this association tended to be predominantly classical rather than biblical. In “Proklatie” (“The Curse,” 1822), for example, he utters a powerful denunciation against all those who dare to insult the poet. Although the “holy, frenzied prophet” (*sviatyi, neistovyi prorok*) whose voice he echoes could well belong to biblical tradition, the portrayal of the poet wearing his “suffering wreath” on his “sacred brow” and taking up his place “among the gods” firmly places this image in a classical context.<sup>55</sup> The same is true of “Uchast’ poetov” (“The Poets’ Fate,” 1823), in which poets, set against a background of classical imagery, are directly compared to suffering prophets, as both may experience madness, exile, or isolation:

Пророков гонит черная Судьба;  
Их стерегут свирепые печали;  
Они влачат по мукам дни свои,  
И в их сердца впиваются змии.<sup>56</sup>

Prophets are hounded by black Fate;  
They are surrounded by savage sorrows;  
They drag out their days in suffering,  
And their hearts are stung by serpents.

In “Zhbii poeta” (“The Poet’s Lot,” 1823-24) Kiukhelbeker once more laments the fate of the poet-prophet in the classical sense of the term, this time with clear autobiographical overtones:

О, страшно быть сосудом бранным,  
Пророком радостных богов!  
Снедаемый огнем священным,  
Внушителем златых стихов,  
Тот предан в жертву грозной власти,  
В ком песней жар питает страсти.<sup>57</sup>

O, it is terrifying to be a mortal vessel,  
The prophet of joyous gods!  
Consumed by the holy fire,  
That inspires golden verses,  
He in whom ardor nurtures the passions with song  
Is given up in sacrifice to threatening power:

Byron’s unexpected death in Greece in April 1824 set the final seal on the image of the heroic poet-prophet, prepared

to sacrifice his very life to the cause of freedom. In "Smert' Bairona" ("The Death of Byron," 1824) Kiukhelbeker used this watershed event as an opportunity to buttress the prophetic credentials of his generation of poets in Russia by reasserting its links with the West European tradition of the poet-prophet. His poem opens with an exotic description of sunset and the imam's call to evening prayers; after the "sons of the prophet" (*syny proroka*) have completed their devotions, all return home and night descends.<sup>58</sup> At this sacred hour only one person remains awake: Pushkin, banished to the land of Ovid's exile (Bessarabia),<sup>59</sup> sits alone on a high rock, watching the river waters swirl at his feet. At this point Kiukhelbeker introduces his own voice as the first-person narrator of the poem, telling the reader of his fear when he "sees" (*ia vizhu*)<sup>60</sup> Pushkin throw down his wreath to the ground (this gesture evidently suggests that the poet must withdraw from all creative activity in order to receive prophetic visions). The narrator then recounts his vision of Pushkin, who "beholds" (*on zrit*)<sup>61</sup> a series of figures depicted in Byron's works, including Dante, Tasso, Manfred, and Mazeppa; according to his explanatory preface to the poem, these are "visions, prophesying [...] the death of Byron" to Pushkin.<sup>62</sup>

This somewhat surrealist chain of connected visions may seem to have rather little to do with the purported subject of Byron's death; a better title for the poem, more closely related to its actual contents, might have been "The Prophetic Visions of Pushkin and Kiukhelbeker." Byron's death is used by Kiukhelbeker as a pretext to establish his place alongside Pushkin in the nascent Russian tradition of the poet-prophet that he is constructing; by recounting his vision of Pushkin's prophetic visions of Byron's imminent death, he places himself and Pushkin in the direct line of succession to one of the most widely respected West European models of the poet-prophet. This line of succession goes back even further. Through Byron it can be traced back to Tasso and Dante, who both appear to Pushkin in his visions as the personifications of works by Byron in which they figure; the prophetic qualities of these two poets, transcending their experiences of imprisonment and exile, were celebrated by Byron in two poems which enjoyed great popularity in Russia, "The Lament of Tasso" (1817) and "The Prophecy of Dante" (1819-20). In addition, the introduction of Pushkin against the exotic background of the "sons of the prophet" suggests that the modern Russian literary prophet is heir to a tradition that has its origins in the model of the religious prophet, grounded in biblical tradition.<sup>63</sup>

The treatment of Byron's death in this poem provides a revealing indication of the extent of his impact on the Russian tradition of the poet as a prophet. The image of the politically engaged poet-prophet that crystallized around Byron's participation in the Greek struggle for independence was used as a model to define the role of the Russian writer in the struggle for freedom that grew up around the Decembrist movement.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, as we shall see

below, Byron's death and the various literary responses it provoked served as a template, determining the reading of all the subsequent deaths of Russian poets that were to follow in the post-Decembrist period.

In the following year Kiukhelbeker's life took a dramatic change of direction. In the spring of 1825 he settled in Petersburg and was accepted into the Northern Society later that year by Kondraty Ryleev, one of the five poets subsequently executed for his leading role in the Decembrist conspiracy. On the day of the uprising Kiukhelbeker stood on Senate Square, armed with a pistol, and fired a few shots (unsuccessfully) at the Grand Duke Michael and General Voinov. During the night of 14-15 December, disguised in a sheepskin coat, he fled from the city, intending to escape abroad. On 19 January 1826 he was caught and arrested in Warsaw and brought back in chains to the fortress of SS. Peter and Paul (where Glinka also languished for a few months in 1826). Although his initial death sentence was commuted to exile, he was held in solitary confinement in various fortresses for a further ten years; upon his final release in December 1835 he was exiled to Siberia, where he spent the rest of his life.<sup>65</sup>

These dramatic experiences inevitably affected Kiukhelbeker's approach to the image of the poet-prophet. The suppression of the Decembrist uprising and the deaths, imprisonment, or exile of many of its supporters required him to develop new strategies to sustain the image. One response to this challenge was to reassert the stronger model of the biblical prophet, first introduced in "Prorochestvo" (1822) but then absorbed into the more neutral literary context of classical references. This shift back to the original biblical model was clearly signalled by Kiukhelbeker in his long poem "David" (1829), a composite work comprising different poems divided into several books. King David was in many ways the perfect model for aspiring poet-prophets of this generation, as he combined the three key roles of poet, prophet, and national leader. Kiukhelbeker underlined this in the pair of sonnets with which he concluded the fifth book of the poem. In "Geroi i Pevets" ("The Hero and the Poet," 1829) he extols David above all others for wearing the "dual wreath" (*dvoimoi venets*) of the "warrior" (*boets*) and "poet" (*pevets*);<sup>66</sup> this was, of course, precisely what the Decembrist poets longed for: a strong poetic voice, similar to that of the prophets, which was clearly allied with action.

Another strategy, looking more towards the future, was to refocus on the prophetic power of language itself. As we saw above, this idea was first introduced by Kiukhelbeker as a central tenet of faith in his lecture of 1821 on the Russian language. He returned to it once more in one of the poems from "David," which opens with a direct address to the holy power of poetry:

О, власть святая вдохновенных песен,  
Неодолимая! сколь ты сильна!

O, holy power of inspired songs,  
Invincible! How strong you are!

The enduring power of the sacred poetic or prophetic word extends the boundaries of this world and can even bring into being a new world:

Дохнешь, расширишь вдруг его пределы  
И новый мир пробудишь ото сна;

As you inspire, you will suddenly expand its boundaries  
And awaken a new world from its slumber;

Human hearts may be hard and unfeeling, but “the powerful voice of the prophetic poet” (*glas mogushchii veshchego pevtsa*) will pour life into them, and they will melt like wax before the flame of the poet’s wondrous countenance.<sup>67</sup> Although the prophets may have lost their audience, as Glinka lamented in his post-Decembrist verse, the prophetic word nevertheless retains its strength, ready to be unleashed by poets on future generations. Kiukhelbeker’s bold claim that the poetic word could bring new worlds into being was later taken up and developed into a fully-fledged theory of theurgic art by Vladimir Solovev and his symbolist disciples. Through this channel it came to play an important role in fostering the general climate of ideas that led to the Russian revolutions of 1917.<sup>68</sup>

A further strategy developed by Kiukhelbeker involved building up a tradition of poems of lament, which preserved the memory of deceased fellow-poets while placing them within a strongly defined prophetic context. In this way the losses of the past could be converted into a source of strength for the future. We noted above how important the sense of belonging to a “free union” of friends and poets was for the establishment of the image of the poet-prophet in its early stages. Over the years, as more and more members of this company passed away, the tradition of poems of lament gathered momentum and eventually became a method for translating the original circle of “living” fellow poet-prophets into a pantheon of immortal poet-prophets, standing outside time in eternity. Death thus became an important rite of passage, enabling writers to acquire the status of eternal prophets.

In Kiukhelbeker’s verse this process of transformation can be traced over some two decades through his responses to the deaths of Ryleev (1826), Griboedov (1829), Delvig (1831), Pushkin (1837), and Baratynsky (1844) up until the time of his own demise in 1846. We shall look at just three examples in order to demonstrate how these poems of lament came to acquire an increasingly pronounced prophetic dimension.

One of the first poems in the series, “Ten’ Ryleeva” (“The Shade of Ryleev,” 1827), was most probably written on the anniversary of the poet’s execution (13 July 1826). It opens with a description of an unnamed “poet, a follower of fiery freedom” (*pevets, poklonnik plammenoi svobody*), who lies in darkness, incarcerated in a fortress. This figure clearly

represents Kiukhelbeker, who was at the time held in solitary confinement in the Schlüsselburg fortress on Lake Ladoga in the province of St. Petersburg. He is visited by a “heavenly vision” (*nebesnoe videnie*); “this was not a dream” (*to ne byl son*) but a prophetic revelation. The shade of Ryleev appears to him, introducing himself as one who sung “freedom for the Russian people” (*svobodu russkomu narodu*) and gave his life for this cause. He promises to reveal the future to the prisoner and tells him that all his hopes will be fulfilled. After delivering this prophetic message (underscored by the use of the archaic verb “he uttered” [*on rek*]), the shade moves apart the walls of the prison and dissolves its bars. The captive looks up in delight and sees that freedom, happiness and peace now reign “in holy Rus’” (*na Rusi sviatoi*).<sup>69</sup>

Kiukhelbeker’s elevation of a recently deceased poet to the rank of a prophet was not in itself a new phenomenon. A few years earlier Ryleev had introduced a similar approach to Derzhavin. In his poem of praise, “Derzhavin” (1822), included in his celebrated cycle “Dumy” (“Meditations”), he described the late poet as “a vessel of holy truth” (*orgánom istiny sviashchennoi*) in his native land and likened his life-long struggle with vice to the task of the holy prophet:

Таков наш бард Державин был;  
Всю жизнь он вел борьбу с пороком;  
Судьям ли правду говорил,  
Он так гремел с святым пророком.<sup>70</sup>

Such was our bard Derzhavin;  
All his life he carried on the struggle with vice;  
Whenever he spoke the truth to judges,  
He thundered thus with the holy prophet:

This was an association or analogy, however, rather than a direct equation. Ryleev did not actually refer to Derzhavin as a prophet, nor—more importantly—did he attempt to present himself as the poet’s prophetic successor. From the point of view of building up a tradition of poets as prophets, Kiukhelbeker’s poem on Ryleev went much further. He not only portrayed the shade of Ryleev as a seer, whose prophetic utterances could change the course of history; by representing himself as the poet who received a vision of Russia’s future direct from Ryleev, he also established his own credentials as his successor in the role of national prophet. In this way he instigated one of the main methods by which later writers traditionally validated their own status as prophets: the representation of a recently deceased writer as a prophetic predecessor.

Ryleev’s execution was followed by the murder of Griboedov, torn apart by a furious mob in Persia in 1829. Kiukhelbeker responded obliquely to both deaths in a section from the tenth song of “David” entitled “Plach Davida nad Saulom i Ionafanom” (“The Lament of David over Saul and Jonathan,” 1829), cast in a rich archaic biblical style.<sup>71</sup> This was a fairly transparent device, which allowed him to mourn openly the deaths of two recently deceased friends, both associated with the Decembrist movement. In this

way he was able to assimilate current events into biblical tradition and, in the process, to assume the voice of David, the most celebrated poet-prophet of Hebrew scriptures.

The subsequent deaths of Delvig, Pushkin, and Baratynsky were also lamented by Kiukhelbeker—often in the context of the poems that he traditionally composed on 19 October to commemorate the anniversary of the foundation of the Lyceum.<sup>72</sup> His late poem “Tri teni” (“Three Shades,” 1840), addressed to Griboedov, Delvig, and Pushkin, marked the completion of this gradual process of transformation of the original sacred union of fellow poet-prophets into a company of shades, suspended outside time, linked only by memories of the past and visions of the future.<sup>73</sup> This process culminated in a poignant poem, written in the year before Kiukhelbeker’s death at a time when his sight was failing. In “Do smerti mne grozila smerti t’ma . . .” (“Before death I was threatened by the darkness of death . . .,” 1845) the poet describes himself wandering in gloom around a tomb, directing his blind eyes into the dark abyss of a night without dawn; and yet, he adds, with his “eyes of the spirit” (*ochi dukha*) he will be able to see the “prophetic mysterious shades” (*veshchie tainstvennye teni*) of his departed friends.<sup>74</sup> These lines make it plain that the original circle of fellow poet-prophets has now become a purely virtual one, existing only in the mind, sustained by the spirit through memory and faith, and relying on poetry for its expression.

The shades of four specific poets are evoked in this late poem: Griboedov, Pushkin, Delvig, and Baratynsky. Among this company Griboedov is given pride of place and elevated to the status of a biblical prophet; Kiukhelbeker claims that the fire that burned within Griboedov was the same as the one that burned in the hearts of the biblical prophets, possessed by the divine spirit:

В его груди, восторгами томимой,  
Не тот же ли огонь неодолимый  
Пылал, который некогда горел  
В сердцах метателей господних стрел,—  
Объятых духом Вышнего пророков?  
И что ж? неумолимый враг пороков  
Растерзан чернью в варварском краю . . .<sup>75</sup>

In his breast, worn out by raptures,  
Did not that very same invincible fire  
Blaze, which once burned  
In the hearts of those who sent forth the arrows of the  
Lord—  
The prophets, filled with the spirit of the Almighty?  
And what then? The implacable enemy of vices  
Was torn asunder by a mob in a barbaric land . . .

Kiukhelbeker evidently chose to single out Griboedov among this company for promotion to the rank of biblical prophet because of two factors: the strong moral tendency of his writings, directed against social vices (indicated by the traditional rhyming of prophets [*prorokov*] with vices [*porokov*]), coupled with his martyr’s death at the hands of a crowd. The experience of sacrificial death was the final

stage in his transformation from moral teacher in this world to biblical prophet in eternity.

#### CONCLUSIONS AND LEGACY

This essay has focused on the literary and cultural context in which the image of the writer as a prophet established itself in Russian literature, at first fairly tentatively in the late 1810s and then more forcefully throughout the 1820s and beyond. As we have seen, the historical situation played a role of crucial importance in prompting the emergence of this image and in defining its future development. The notion of Russia’s backwardness as a negative characteristic that needed to be overcome led to the cult of the strong ruler or prophetic leader, charged with the task of moving Russia forward in time by a potent combination of vision and action. Since writers were primarily responsible for articulating this cult, it is not surprising that they gradually came to take upon themselves the role that they first sought to attribute to the leaders, particularly in cases where the ruler of the day was found to be wanting in vision or in capacity for action.

We have traced the gradual process by which writers assumed this prophetic role through a range of examples drawn from the works of Zhukovsky, Glinka, and Kiukhelbeker. Russia’s victory over Napoleon in 1814 led to a broad expectation that the problem of the country’s backwardness would be overcome by a program of reforms, initiated from above. In his address of 1814 to the tsar Zhukovsky took it upon himself to voice these expectations, defining the tsar’s role as a strong ruler guided by providence and setting out his moral and political agenda. Although he did not explicitly characterize the role of the poet in this context as a prophetic one, there were many typological similarities between the traditional role of the biblical prophet and his presentation of the poet as an independent moral authority, advising the ruler and chronicling his deeds. This was reinforced by his emphasis on the key triangular relationship between poet, tsar, and *narod* (people), in which the poet’s authority over the tsar is validated by his status as the people’s representative.

After the publication of Zhukovsky’s poem it was only a matter of years before the biblical prophet became a familiar presence in Russian literature. From the early 1820s the prophet occupied a central position in Glinka’s verse, contributing to the established view that Russia’s fate depended on the ability of a strong prophetic leader to guide the country forward. For Glinka, social or historical progress was contingent on the success of the prophet in overcoming the deep-seated moral vices of the people. The prophet represented in his verse was a fairly abstract, disembodied figure, based on biblical tradition, but not associated with any particular historical ruler or literary figure. Although Glinka’s frequent adoption of this image could certainly be taken as indirect evidence of his association of the role of the writer with that of the prophet, this link was not made explicit in his verse.

At what point, therefore, did the independent poet, advanced by Zhukovsky, openly merge with the biblical prophet, promoted by Glinka? For this next stage we must turn to the works of Kiukhelbeker, who did more than any other writer of his generation to identify the writer with the prophet and to develop this ideal within the context of a strong supporting tradition. He was one of the first Russian writers to cultivate the image of the politically engaged poet-prophet, using Byron as a model, and to embrace this dual role in his own life. His view of the Russian language as a God-given providential medium enabled him to narrow the gap between poetry and politics and paved the way for some of the ideas that later crystallized around the notion of the theurgic artist. He also went to considerable pains to construct a wide-ranging literary tradition to support his image of the writer as a prophet. In general terms, he grounded the image in both classical and biblical tradition, thus facilitating its assimilation into literature while retaining its authority as a religious and national symbol. At the same time he laid the foundation for various practical strategies used to validate the status of the writer as a prophet.

The first stage of this process of validation involved the creation of an intimate circle of friends and fellow-poets, linked by shared memories of school, attending the same literary societies, and sustained by common ideals; members of this inner circle would confer the title of prophet upon each other through an exchange of poetic addresses and epistles. The second stage extended this narrow circle of living friends beyond the confines of physical existence. In this transition death became a significant rite of passage, enabling writers to achieve immortality and long-term prophetic status in the after-life. Kiukhelbeker's verse articulates this gradual process of transformation, turning deceased friends into "living" shades and in some cases elevating them to the status of prophetic figures. This approach was subsequently developed into a method of self-validation by writers who wished to take on the prophetic mantle of their deceased contemporaries; it can be traced, for example, in Gogol's and Dostoevsky's readings of Pushkin, in Solovyov's presentation of Dostoevsky, and in Ivanov's cult of Solovyov.

Another strategy contributing to the process of validation involved relating the small circle of contemporary poet-prophets, whether living or dead, to a much broader, international tradition. Kiukhelbeker set this process in motion in his early poem "Poety" by presenting a few members of his own company, including Delvig, Baratynsky, and Pushkin, as the successors to a tradition stretching from earlier Russian writers through various European writers all the way back to the poets of classical antiquity. Later authors such as Gogol, Belinsky, Dostoevsky, Solovyov, and Ivanov continued to develop this model, adding more writers, whether Russian or European, to swell the ranks of their prophetic predecessors and strengthen their platform.

As the tsar's promised program of reforms failed to materialize in the years following the victory over Napoleon, the supportive voice of poets such as Zhukovsky gave way to a more radical confrontational stance; after the suppression of the Decembrist uprising and execution, imprisonment or exile of many of its supporters, this voice either became openly dissident or was reduced to silence. The resulting shift of the image of the prophet from the world of social action, grounded in history, into the more abstract domain of belief, colored by nostalgia and lament and fueled by faith in its renewal, was undoubtedly the result of the huge change in historical expectations of reform which took place between 1814 and 1825.

The loss of the illusion of social engagement by a generation of poets who styled themselves as prophets of freedom led to the transformation of the original image into a more abstract, mystical version of its original incarnation. This change overlapped with the natural phenomenon of one generation succeeding another. As the living representatives of the company of poet-prophets departed for the next world, the self-image they had adopted became increasingly spiritualized. Although the model of the poet-prophet was no longer invoked in an active political context, this process of gradual abstraction transformed it into a powerful symbol of creative energy, preserved in the very Russian language, to be tapped by later generations.

The shift from the secular socio-political realm to the religious dimension of messianic nationalism bequeathed an important legacy to future generations: it engendered a fundamental tension at the very root of the tradition of representing the writer as a prophet, which surfaces throughout its development, leading to repeated oscillations between secular and religious readings and manipulations of the image as well as to numerous attempts to reconcile them. Was the prophetic writer's message to be regarded as of transcendent origin, or was it a man-made artefact, dressed up in the language of prophetic discourse to lend greater authority to secular political ideals and to provide a method for the writer's own self-aggrandizement? These questions played a key role in the works of later writers, who developed the tradition set in motion during this period and drew on the subtle shifts and ambiguities already inherent in the language of the poet-prophets of the 1820s.

In this way, as we have seen, the generation of poets between Derzhavin and Pushkin facilitated the transition from the poet as "a kind of alternative king,"<sup>76</sup> closely bound to mirroring the glory of the current ruler, to the poet-prophet as a truly independent figure, able to challenge the tsar and, ultimately, even to transcend the finite boundaries of time and space. Without the contributions of Zhukovsky, Glinka, and Kiukhelbeker, defined by the historical context of their day, Pushkin's extraordinarily powerful evocation of the biblical prophet as a disembodied force, answerable only to divine inspiration, could not have come into being.

## Notes

1. For an analysis of this phenomenon see Pamela Davidson, "The Validation of the Writer's Prophetic Status in the Russian Literary Tradition: From Pushkin and Iazykov through Gogol to Dostoevsky," *Russian Review* 62: 4 (October 2003): 508-36.
2. Anna Lisa Crone has convincingly demonstrated the extent to which Derzhavin developed the image of the poet as an independent source of moral and aesthetic authority, arguing that he "did more than any Russian writer to advance the idea that a great poet was a kind of alternative king." The image of the poet as prophet does not figure prominently in his verse, however, and differs from that of the poet as king. See Anna Lisa Crone, *The Daring of Derzhavin: The Moral and Aesthetic Independence of the Poet in Russia* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2001), 226.
3. V. G. Belinskii, "Literaturnye mechtaniia (Elegiia v proze)" (1834), in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 13 vols. (Moscow-Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1953-59), 1: 48.
4. On the crucial interplay between historical events and literature during this period, see Richard S. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy*, vol. 1, *From Peter the Great to the Death of Nicholas I* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 215-43; B. M. Gasparov, *Poeticheskii iazyk Pushkina kak fakt istorii russkogo literaturnogo iazyka* (St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 1999), 82-117; Andrei Zorin, *Kormia dvuglavogo orla . . . : Literatura i gosudarstvennaia ideologiia v Rossii v poslednei treti XVIII-pervoi treti XIX veka* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2001), 269-95; Alessandra Tosi, *Waiting for Pushkin: Russian Fiction in the Reign of Alexander I (1801-1825)* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006), 19-33.
5. Lindsey Hughes, "Peter the Great: A Hero of Our Time?" *History Review*, September 1999, 42-47.
6. Simon Dixon, *The Modernisation of Russia 1676-1825* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 12-13.
7. Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire. 1552-1917* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), 133.
8. *Ibid.*, 123.
9. *Ibid.*, 128.
10. "Troops were called to suppress serf revolt 150 times in the reign of Alexander I alone, when the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars proved a particularly troubled time." Dixon, *The Modernisation of Russia*, 105.
11. Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire*, 136.
12. *Ibid.*, 138-40, and Wortman, *Scenarios of Power*, 1: 225-26.
13. Zorin, *Kormia dvuglavogo orla*, 288. In a similar vein, Wortman cites evidence of Alexander I reading Psalm 90 and listening intently to Admiral Shishkov reading passages from Jeremiah about the downfall of Jerusalem (Wortman, *Scenarios of Power*, 1: 225).
14. For an interesting discussion of the background to this work and its reception by members of the imperial family, see Zorin, *Kormia dvuglavogo orla*, 269-80.
15. V. A. Zhukovskii, "Imperatoru Aleksandru: Poslanie," in *Sobranie sochinenii v chetyrekh tomakh*, 4 vols. (Moscow-Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1959-60), 1: 209, 205.
16. *Ibid.*, 1: 199-200.
17. *Ibid.*, 1: 209.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*, 1: 210.
20. See the lines "I, sudiia tsarei, potomstvo vpered / Veshchalo, skvoz' veka iaviv svoi lik sviashchennyi: / 'Derzai! Ia nareku tebia: Blagoslovennyi'" and "Predstatel' za tsarei narod u providen'ia"; *ibid.*, 1: 204, 211.
21. A. S. Pushkin to A. A. Bestuzhev, late May-early June 1825, in A. S. Pushkin, *Sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh*, ed. D. D. Blagoi et al. (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1974-78), 9: 151. Pushkin cites Derzhavin's ode "Na vozvrashchenie grafa Zubova iz Persii" (1797) with slight variations; see G. R. Derzhavin, *Sochineniia*, ed. G. N. Ionin (St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 2002), 275.
22. Zhukovskii, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 1: 199.
23. A. S. Ianushkevich, "Zhukovskii, Vasiliu Andreievich," in *Russkie pisateli 1800-1917: Biograficheskii slovar'* (Moscow: Bol'shaia rossiiskaia entsiklopediia, 1992), 2: 286.
24. See Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire*, 143-44, 171-82, 181-82.
25. See Orlov's introduction in VI. Orlov, comp., *Dekabristy: Antologiia v dvukh tomakh*, 2 vols. (Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1975), 1: 20.
26. *Ibid.*, 1: 73.
27. *Ibid.*, 1: 74.

28. Pamela Davidson, "The Moral Dimension of the Prophetic Ideal: Pushkin and his Readers," *Slavic Review* 61: 3 (Fall 2002): 490-518.
29. Orlov, *Dekabristy: Antologïia*, 1: 76. For other versions of the psalms by Glinka, see "Perelozhenie psalma 136-go," published in 1823; "Blazhenstvo pravednogo" (variant of Psalm 1), published in 1824; "Iz psalma 43-go," written after 1825, published in 1869, 1: 72, 77, 80.
30. *Ibid.*, 1: 439.
31. *Ibid.*, 1: 80.
32. *Ibid.*, 1: 79-80; first published in 1869.
33. *Ibid.*, 1: 81; first published in 1869.
34. *Ibid.*, 1: 94; first published in 1938.
35. *Ibid.*, 1: 446, 468.
36. "I im ne razorvat' venka, / Kotoryi vzialo darovan'e." *Ibid.*, 1: 138. Cited inaccurately from the concluding lines of Zhukovsky's "K Kn. Viazemskomu i V. L. Pushkinu: Poslanie" (16 October 1814); the original has "ventsã," not "venka."
37. *Ibid.*, 1: 139.
38. *Ibid.*, 1: 141.
39. *Ibid.*, 1: 142.
40. *Ibid.*, 1: 143.
41. See Davidson, "The Validation of the Writer's Prophetic Status," 520, and Pamela Davidson, "Viacheslav Ivanov's Ideal of the Artist as Prophet: From Theory to Practice," *Europa Orientalis* 21: 1 (2002): 182-84.
42. Orlov, *Dekabristy: Antologïia*, 1: 146-47; published in 1939.
43. Only the introductory lecture has survived. For a Russian translation, see Vil'gelm Kiukhel'beker, "[Lektsiia o russkom iazyke]," in *ibid.*, 2: 347-56.
44. *Ibid.*, 1: 445.
45. *Ibid.*, 2: 347-48.
46. *Ibid.*, 2: 348.
47. *Ibid.*, 2: 353, 355, 356.
48. *Ibid.*, 2: 336.
49. Cf. "Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, [. . .] Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. [. . .] Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee" (Jer.1:4, 7, 17).
50. Orlov, *Dekabristy: Antologïia*, 1: 151; published in 1902.
51. *Ibid.*, 1: 153. The poem's last line echoes the words of Jesus to his apostles: "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matt. 10:30).
52. The poem's opening lines anticipate to a remarkable degree the beginning and end of Pushkin's "Prorok," which was clearly influenced by Kiukhelbeker's poem.
53. N. V. Fridman, "Obraz poeta-proroka v lirike Pushkina," *Uchenye zapiski moskovskogo gos. universiteta*, 118, *Trudy kafedry russkoi literatury*, 2, 1946, 99.
54. A. S. Pushkin to L. S. Pushkin, 4 September 1822, in A. S. Pushkin, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 9: 45.
55. Orlov, *Dekabristy: Antologïia*, 1: 155-56.
56. *Ibid.*, 1: 156; first published in 1939. See also the late sequel to this poem, "Uchast' russkikh poetov" (1845), in which Kiukhelbeker describes Russian poets as "inspired seers" (*prozorlitsy vdokhnovennye*) and takes a bitter view of their fates: some are executed or imprisoned, while others are killed in duels or murdered by crowds. The allusions to Ry-leev, Pushkin, and Griboedov are transparent (*ibid.*, 1: 192-93).
57. *Ibid.*, 1: 158-59; published in 1862.
58. *Ibid.*, 1: 160-61.
59. Pushkin was exiled to Ekaterinoslav in May 1820; on 21 September he was transferred to Kishinev in Bessarabia until July 1823.
60. *Ibid.*, 1: 162.
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Ibid.*, 1: 159. Kiukhelbeker was evidently worried that his readers might not be sufficiently versed in Byron's works to recognize his references; he therefore clarified these in a preface to the poem: "videniia, vozveshchaiushchie pevtu Ruslana i Liudmily o smerti Bairona, sut' olitsetvorennnye proizvedeniia poslednego." Significantly, the first work cited is Byron's "Prophecy of Dante."
63. Russian poets often served in or were exiled to parts of the Russian empire where Islam was the main religion. This experience affected their representation of the prophet. See, for example, Pushkin's cycle



- “Podrazhaniia Koranu,” composed in 1824 immediately after his Southern exile.
64. For another example, see K. Ryleev, “Na smert’ Beirona” (1824), in Orlov, *Dekabristy: Antologiiia*, 1: 269-72. Ryleev’s poem formed part of his cycle “Dumy,” first published as a book in 1825.
65. For further details, see *ibid.*, 1: 447.
66. *Ibid.*, 1: 171; published in 1939.
67. *Ibid.*, 1: 174-75.
68. See Pamela Davidson, “Vladimir Solov’ev and the Ideal of Prophecy,” *Slavonic and East European Review* 78: 4 (October 2000): 643-70; esp. 649-50, 666-69, and Davidson, “Viacheslav Ivanov’s Ideal of the Artist as Prophet,” 174-93.
69. Orlov, *Dekabristy: Antologiiia*, 1: 166-67.
70. *Ibid.*, 1: 264; first published in 1822, then in the cycle “Dumy” (1821-23), printed as a book in 1825.
71. *Ibid.*, 1: 171-73.
72. See “19 oktiabria 1828 goda,” “19 oktiabria 1836 goda,” “19 oktiabria” (1838), in *ibid.*, 1: 168-69, 182-85.
73. *Ibid.*, 1: 186-87.
74. *Ibid.*, 1: 191.
75. *Ibid.*, 1: 192.
76. Crone, *The Daring of Derzhavin*, 226.