

Title: The Cultural Role of John Milton's "Paradise Lost" in Russian and Czech Literature at the End of the 18th Century and the Early Part of the 19th Century

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Abstract:

John Milton was the first English poet mentioned in the Russian press, and the first whose work was translated into Russian. His name can be found in all of the canonical lists presented in the works of the famous Russian authors. "Paradise Lost" became the most popular Western epic in Russia of the 18th century. This text was far more popular in terms of the number of translations and editions than Aeneid, Iliad, and Odyssey or epic poems by Tasso, Ariosto, Voltaire, Wieland, Camoes, Klopstock, "The Divine Comedy" by Dante Alighieri. In my paper, I discuss the possible reasons for this success and the significant decrease of it in the 19th-century Russia, despite the striking interest in the romanticist figure of Milton's Satan.

In 1810 Czech revivalist Josef Jungmann wrote a translation of Paradise Lost in Czech choosing iambic blank verse close to the original text. Interestingly, all Russian translations were written in rhythmic prose, using the achievements of French prose (Bitaubé's Joseph and Fénelon's Telemac). I will discuss how "Ztracený raj" changed the whole course of Czech literature and literary language. Russian and Czech reception of "Paradise Lost" could be viewed as a productive dialog. For instance, Josef Jungmann introduced to Czech the loanwords *vzduch* and *příroda* from the Russian translation of Paradise Lost (1777).

As noticed by David Cooper: "Czech and Russian writers sought to establish the identity of their national literature and its language through translations and appropriations from the literature of model nations, including Germany and England as well as classical Greece" (Cooper 2010: 253). In my paper, I discuss the role of "Paradise Lost" in two Slavic cultures in the context of the process of "domestication" of the Western literary traditions, literary style formation, Anglomania, the dialog with the national "Other", the reception of Protestantism.