### Is Translation Child's Play?

Circulation of Knowledge in Lomonosov's Kratkij rossijskij letopisec s rodosloviem (1760) and its Translations

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## Is Translation Child's Play? Circulation of Knowledge in Lomonosov's *Kratkij rossijskij letopisec s rodosloviem* (1760) and its Translations

1765 and 1767 saw the publication of the German, respectively the English translations of Lomonosov's *Kratkij rossijskij letopisec s rodosloviem* (1760). For the very first time the European reading public could find out how Russians saw their own history. These translations testified to Russia's ascent both as an empire and as a part of European learned society, and were made by youths who wanted to further their own career and were neither professional translators nor historians. In this article, we argue that the translations of Lomonosov's *Kratkij rossijskij letopisec s rodosloviem* should not be studied as an isolated act of *cultural transfer*, but as an episode in a longer history of *circulation of knowledge*. We demonstrate the complexity of this circulation by reassessing the 'quality' of these translations and positioning them in that longer history of circulation of knowledge by analyzing the distribution of historical concepts (*Begriffe*) in Lomonosov's original and its translations.

**Keywords:** Circulation of Knowledge, Translation, Historiography, 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Russia, Lomonosov, Conceptual History

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### 1. Introduction

In 1765 and 1767 respectively, German and English translations of Lomonosov's *Kratkij rossijskij letopisec s rodosloviem* (1760) hit the bookshelves. Remarkably enough, both translations were made by youths who, according to present-day standards, could never be expected to make a decent translation. The fact that they did get published, that the German translation even saw a second (updated) edition, and that contemporary scholars welcomed these translations as the first opportunity for European readers to find out how Russians saw their own history, indicate that in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century translations were assessed differently than in our time. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, commentators reassessed these translations from a narrower point of

view: as the rendering of a Russian text by *foreign* translators, whose credentials – and thus the quality of their translations – were checked against the background of Russian-European or East-West (Cold War) relations. Any mistake in the translations of Lomonosov's historical work was perceived as a downplay, if not deliberate attack on Russia's 18<sup>th</sup>-century luminary and thus on Russia itself (see 3. below). However, this approach neglects the fact that in his historical writings Lomonosov himself was indebted to European historical ideas and concepts that had been introduced in Russia since the time of Peter the Great. As such, the translations of Lomonosov's *Kratkij rossijskij letopisec s rodosloviem* should not be studied as an isolated act of *cultural transfer*, but as an episode in a longer history of *circulation of knowledge*, notably in the field of (Russian) history (see 2. below). In the present article, we want to demonstrate the complexity of this circulation by reassessing the 'quality' of these translations (see 4. below) and positioning them in that longer history of circulation of knowledge by analyzing the distribution of historical concepts (*Begriffe*) in Lomonosov's original and its translations (see 5. below).

### 2. Translation, circulation of knowledge and Russian history

Alexander Etkind (2011: 72) notoriously wrote that "historians write from the past to the present, but think from the present to the past." *Mutatis mutandis* the same idea applies to translational scholars: they acknowledge that translating in the past was quite different from today's practice with its focus on accuracy, adequacy, reliability and, following from this, quality assurance. Indeed, translators and interpreters from the past were less concerned with these issues: they did not receive a formal training to such an end, because, for one, translation and interpreting programmes did not come into existence until after the Second World War (Gambier 2018). Secondly, for a very long time, 'translation' was considered as only one of the possible *modes* of adapting (transferring) texts. In classical and renaissance culture, for example, *translatio* or *interpretatio* were seen as the lowest modes of adaptation, with *imitatio* and *aemulatio* much higher up the ladder (Warners 1956-1957; D'hulst 2018). The growing awareness about – and battles over – intellectual property rights as of the 18<sup>th</sup> century marked a shift in the position of the translational mode (Baldwin 2014; Bachleitner 2018: 105-107; Basalamah & Sadek 2014).

Precisely because of this uncertainty over the position of translation *strictu sensu*, translation historians increasingly turn to the concept of 'transfer studies' to address their subject (Göpferich 2010; D'hulst 2012 & 2018). However, *transfer*, like translation, implies directionality, suggesting an imbalance of power between sending and receiving cultures. Therefore, it is safer to see translation as a position on a gliding scale of modes within the broader and multidirectional concept of 'circulation of knowledge' (Bastin & Bandia 2006; Burke & Hsia 2007; Cook & Dupré 2012). What is perceived as 'translation' then depends on its cultural and historical context. On the basis of this broader, more relative definition of translation,

it has even been suggested that a 'translation turn' may lead to a paradigm shift in historiography as a whole (St-Pierre 1993; Payàs 2006; Cheung 2012; Rundle 2012) and contribute to the development of 'transnational' (Middell & Espagne 2013) and 'transcultural' history (Herren, Rüesch & Sibille 2012).

In the present article, we want to explore how translation can serve as a litmus test for the distribution of knowledge on a given subject at a certain moment in history (Valdeón 2018; cf. Tyulenev & Zheng 2017). We derive this idea from 'conceptual history' (Begriffsgeschichte), which claims that societal changes in history are necessarily reflected in the changing meanings of socio-political concepts (Brunner, Conze & Koselleck 1972-1997; Reichardt 1985; Richter 1995; Lehmann & Richter 1996). There have been methodological and conceptual issues with Begriffsgeschichte, not in the least because it usually studies vocabulary within a single linguistic environment (mainly German), thereby failing to substantiate the universal character of its claim (Dipper 2000). Several attempts have been made to overcome this problem (Hampsher-Monk, Tilmans & van Vree 1989), including through the notion of translation (Richter 2003; Richter & Richter 2006; Burke & Richter 2012). In the introduction to the Russian translation of a number of concepts from R. Koselleck's seminal Historische Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland, the translator acknowledges that he was facing an almost impossible task:

It is often difficult to find a translation of a word in its static meaning [...]. However, to find one or several translations when we are dealing with a dynamic range of meanings of concepts, turned out to be a very difficult task, because the semantic fields of Russian and German words are not identical, neither synchronically nor diachronically, and very often the Russian word has a myriad of connotations that are completely irrelevant. You can only filter these connotations with extensive references [...], and [...] this would also imply a separate, larger study, a semantical analysis of Russian fundamental historical concepts [...]. (Levinson 2014: 14)

To illustrate the problem of divergent meanings of historical concepts in different languages we turn to a concrete example, i.e. *Kratkij rossijskij letopisec s rodosloviem* (1760, Short Russian Chronicle with Genealogy; Lomonosov 1952c), one of two attempts by Russia's luminary of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Michail Lomonosov

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> «часто бывает трудно подыскать перевод для слова, так сказать, в статике [...]. А подыскивать один или несколько переводов, когда мы имеем дело с динамикой значений понятия, — задача, как выяснилось, очень трудная, поскольку семантические поля слов в русском и немецком не совпадают ни в синхронии, ни в диахронии, и очень часто русское слово несет с собой множество таких коннотаций, которые оказываются совершенно не к месту. Отсечь же их можно было бы только с помощью очень обширного аппарата примечаний [...], а также [...] это потребовало бы самостоятельного большого исследования — анализа семантики основных русских исторических понятий [...].»

(1711-1765), to write a history of his fatherland, the first 'popular' history in Russian since the Kievskij synopsis (1674). And although Kratkij rossijskij letopisec was conceived as a traditional chronicle and genealogy, it reflected the state of (academic) historical knowledge of the mid-18th century. Kratkij rossijskij letopisec was the abridged version of Drevnjaja rossijskaja istorija, which appeared posthumously in 1766 (Lomonosov 1952e). Both volumes were translated into European languages, the former directly into German (Lomonoßov 1765 & 1771) and English (Lomonossoff 1767), the latter indirectly into French (Lomonossow 1769, 1774, 1776) via German (Lomonossow 1768). These translations, within a decade of their original publication, suggest that there was a European demand for materials on Russian history (Dahlmann 2006), or that at least someone wanted to stimulate that European interest in Russia. In this case, it transpires that the translators of Kratkij rossijskij letopisec s rodosloviem took the initiative: by translating the booklet into English and German respectively, Johann Georg Adam Forster (1754–1794) and Peter von Stählin (1744–1800) wanted to further their own career in the Russian service.

Another question altogether is: why translate precisely this book? The main reason, undoubtedly, was, that there were no other (modern) histories in Russian readily available. The aforementioned Kievskij synopsis, admittedly, saw reprints well into the 19th century, but did not reflect the current state of the field in Imperial Russia. In the mid-18th century, history as an academic discipline in Russia was still in its infancy, with German historians, hired by the Saint-Petersburg Academy of Sciences, laboriously translating sources and publishing their findings in European languages (Coudenys 2016). The main European handbook on Russian history at that time was Voltaire's Histoire de l'Empire de Russie sous Pierre le Grand (1759), written upon the request of the Russian court, but heavily criticized by Russian (contemporary) historians for its fantasist character (Voltaire 1999, vol. 46, 89-153 & 312-346; Mervaud 2009). One of these critics had been Lomonosov (1952a; 1952b). Although he himself specialized in sciences, notably chemistry, he had familiarized himself with Russian history as a translator at the Academy of Sciences on behalf of their (non-Russian) academicians-historians. Lomonosov had provided Voltaire with a summary of his own historical enquiries, the first drafts of what would become Drevnjaja rossijskaja istorija. Its subsequent publication, as well as that of its abridged version (Kratkij rossijskij letopisec), was largely inspired by the controversy over Voltaire's Histoire (Sverdlov 2011: 680-739). As such, Lomonosov's history writings are intrinsically interwoven with the circulation of (historical) knowledge in 18th-century Europe and therefore should be studied within that paradigm.

For the record: controversy has dominated every discussion over Lomonosov's contributions to Russian historiography since they first appeared. Russian popular history has it that 'foreigners,' i.e. non-Russian historians at the Saint-Petersburg

Academy of Sciences, downplayed Russia's importance in world history, and therefore it salutes the 'real Russian' Lomonosov for countering them (Fomin 2012; Naumova & Nikonov 2014). Specifically, this referred to the so-called Norman or Varangian question, whether the origins of the Russian state were either Norman (as claimed by these 'foreigners') or Russian (as pertained by Lomonosov (1952f)). The resultant controversy, however, was far more complex and subtle than the simple opposition between patriotic Russians and hostile foreigners would suggest (Black 1986: 109-122; Scholz 2000a & 2000b; Hoffmann 2007; Chlevov 2009; Sverdlov 2011: 548-589). It was fueled by personal enmities within the Academy itself, differences in professional standards – Lomonosov, after all, was a mere amateur when it came to history (Starčevskij 1845: 142) – and sheer bad faith. Lomonosov, for instance, was absolutely convinced that foreigners were conspiring against the Academy and the interests of Russian science in general (Usitalo 2013: 70-73).

Remarkably enough, this (ideological) controversy has also affected the literature on the translations of Lomonosov's historical writings.

# 3. The translations of Lomonosov's historical writings and their reception

In his *Allgemeine nordische Geschichte* (1771) the German historian A.L. Schlözer sarcastically wondered "what would come of these poor Russian chronicles, when they were left in the unwashed hands of chemists and *perevodcziks* [translators]."<sup>2</sup> (Schlözer 1771: 509 Anm. 97) Obviously, Schlözer was referring to Lomonosov, whose *Kratkij rossijskij letopisec s rodosloviem* and *Drevnjaja rossijskaja istorija* had recently been translated into German. The jibe was undoubtedly inspired by personal enmity and professional envy, and was not entirely new either. Already in 1768, in a review of the German translation of *Kratkij rossijskij letopisec*, Schlözer had sneered that "actually this historical work by a chemist looks like a chemistry handbook, written by a historian." He admitted, however, that for lack of anything better it would have to do (Z 1768: 101; cf. Hoffmann & Osipov 1995: 30).<sup>3</sup>

Two hundred years onwards, Soviet and East German scholars studying Russian-German relations in the Age of Enlightenment were still focusing on the antagonism between Lomonosov and Schlözer against the backdrop of the Varangian (Norman) controversy, largely ignoring the translational angle of Schlözer's barb. They contented themselves with a summary reading of the German and English

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> "[...] wie wird es den armen Rußischen Annalen ergehen, wenn sie von ganz ungewaschnen – chymischen und Perewodcziks: Händen bearbeitet werden."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> "Freylich sieht dieses historische Werk eines Chymicus so aus, wie eine Chymie aussehen würde, die ein Geschichtsgelehrter schriebe. Allein es hat doch immer seinen Werth; wenigstens für unsre Compendienschreiber; wenigstens so lange, bis wir was besseres erhalten: denn bisher hatten wir gar nichts."

translations of *Kratkij rossijskij letopisec*, or the German and French editions of *Drevnjaja rossijskaja istorija*. T.A. Bykova (1962: 240), for instance, called H.L.C. Bacmeister's German translation of *Drevnjaja rossijskaja istorija* "conscientious, without corrupting its meaning (with the exception of some minor inaccuracies) and enhanced with a series of commentaries that help to elucidate the text." With regard to the French version by M.-A. Eidous, Bykova (1962: 243-244) wrote that "Eidous, following Bacmeister's German text, was not always precise, which can be explained by negligence. [...] In general, Eidous' translation can be considered a bit free, but satisfactory." And if the contemporary critics were not totally satisfied by Eidous' translation – "The translator did not master the German language and did not have a clue about the nature of final consonants." ([Anonymous] 1770: 939; cf. Ržeuckij 2010) – then, obviously, they had been brainwashed by Schlözer (Bykova 1962: 242).

G. Mühlpfordt (1968: 335) assumed, without verification, that G. Forster's English translation of *Kratkij rossijskij letopisec* was based on the German version by P. von Stählin, whereas F.Ja. Prijma (1970) wrote that it had been directly translated from Russian (as was claimed in the title, by the way). However, Prijma's overall assessment of Forster as a translator of Lomonosov's was somehow blurred by his conviction that the future anthropologist and explorer had been a true revolutionary and a patriot, who, naturally, would be interested in a "scientific luminary" (ученый просветитель) like Lomonosov. Moreover, there could be no doubt that an "extremely well-educated" man like Forster, "who had received only a few months of formal training in Saint-Petersburg" and further learned Russian in the streets, would be fluent in Russian after only a couple of months and hence, well suited to make that translation (Prijma 1970: 83). In comparison with Stählin's translation, which Forster took some inspiration from (see below) but did not use as his primary source, Prijma judged Forster's to be superior to Stählin's, because he

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> «Перевод сделан Бакмейстером добросовестно, без искажения смысла (исключая некоторые мелкие неточности) и снабжен рядом подстрочных примечаний, разъясняющих текст.»

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> «Перевод Эду, следующий немецкому тексту Бакмейстера, не всегда точен, в некоторых случаях это объясняется небрежностью. […] В общем, перевод Эду можно признать немного вольным, но удовлетворительным.»

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> "Der Uebersetzer ist des Deutschen nicht mächtig gewesen, er hat die Natur der Endbuchstaben nicht gekennt."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> «Кстати сказать, один из исследователей Г. Форстера, касаясь его исключительно высокой образованности, добавляет, что знания Георг Форстер приобрел самостоятельным путем и что 'только в Петербурге он несколько месяцев сидел на школьной скамье'.» [...] Общение с русскими людьми для любопытного мальчика явилось также своеобразной школой. Знание русского языка давало Георгу Форстеру возможность выполнить работу над переводом 'Краткого российского летописца' самостоятельно.»

had preserved the Russian names (in a sort of transliteration) and only in a second instance provided their English translation, whereas Stählin had dropped the Russian names in favour of their German translation/equivalent (as explained, by the way, in his preface). Prijma's finding that he could find only one factual mistake in Forster's translation – whereas Stählin's had so many that he had to correct them in a second edition – is a farce. Prijma either never compared the texts, did not know English, or had made up his mind in advance. G. Steiner (1968: 263) preferred not to question the judgement of his Soviet colleague.

No one, apparently, took the trouble to find out what exactly Schlözer had meant by the "unwashed hands of [...] perevodcziks." As it happens, Schlözer provided the answer himself: he was criticizing the unreliable transcription of Russian/Slav names in Gotlieb Bayer's Geographia Russiae vicinarumque regionum circiter A.C. 948 (Bayer 1747; Schlözer 1771). Schlözer had shared his concerns about transliteration with Stählin and encouraged (and helped) him to produce a second, updated version of Kratkij rossijskij letopisec (Bacmeister 1774: 75). Apparently, two centuries later, 'transliteration' was still the criterion by which Soviet and East German historians and literary scholars were judging these translations, whereas there were far more interesting issues that could be raised. In what follows, we will try to make some inroads into these questions, focusing on the German and English translations of Kratkij rossijskij letopisec, not only because they were both direct translations from Russian, but also because they were made by extremely young translators. Georg Forster was only 13 when his translation of Lomonosov appeared (Prijma 1970; Reed 2015: 77-78; Martin 2008), while Peter von Stählin was 17 when his father Jacob, a dignitary at the Russian court and academic secretary of the Academy of Sciences, encouraged him to translate Lomonosov. In his preface, Stählin acknowledged that he made the translation to practice his Russian; the same may have applied for Forster, whose father was hoping for a new appointment in Russia (in vein, as it turned out). Forster's dedication to Aleksej Musin-Puškin, the then Russian ambassador to England, served the same purpose (cf. Steiner 1968: 263).

### 4. Comparing texts: the traditional approach and its pitfalls

A classical approach to translation studies is: comparing texts. The 1765 and 1771 Stählin translations amalgamate the distinct concepts of *letopis* '(*Chronik*, chronicle) and *rodoslovie* (*Genealogie*, genealogy) into *Kurzgefaßtes Jahr-Buch der russischen Regenten*, with *Regent* referring to the concept of ruler (DWB, vol. 14, 534-5; DRW vol. 11, 505-6). Apart from the title, Stählin meticulously followed the 1760 original, with one exception, i.e. he dropped Lomonosov's dedication to Grand Duke Pavel Petrovič in favour of a preface by the translator, in which he explained his motives – language exercise, pastime during his military service, lack of Russian histories and their unreliability (especially foreign ones) – and methodology. The latter amounted to explaining transliteration and the use of Russian names. Stählin thought

that as an author "is responsible for the content of his writing; the translator has no other responsibility, but to correctly translate the original text he wanted to translate." (Lomonoβoff 1765: 3v) In the preface to the second edition he wrote that there had been typos in the first edition (he was living in Copenhagen at the time, far away from the printer in Riga), as well as factual mistakes, pointed out to him by Schlözer. And as that first edition was now sold out, a corrected version was due, if only because "it renders excellent service to the Russian Empire that has reached such heights." (Lomonoβoff 1771: 7r-v)

Forster's English translation considerably differs from both the original and Stählin's German version. Forster's title – A Chronological Abridgment of the Russian History – does not mention genealogy and suggests a transition from chronology to history-writing, which in his case amounts to editing, commenting and expanding the text: already on the front page he refers to Lomonov being a chemist and confesses that the text has been "continued to the present time by the translator." Moreover, Forster adds a separate chronology of Russian (and in his case also Tatar) rulers, whereas the Russian original, as well as the German translation, incorporate this information, chronicle-wise, in the layout of the main body of the text. Last but not least, all three versions have a genealogy at the end, but Forster also duplicates this information in the main body of the text.

Stählin's 1765 edition had indeed (minor) mistakes and typos, and the majority of them had been corrected in the 1771 one. Unlike Stählin, who mastered Russian and German very well, Forster not only struggled with the Russian original, but also with the English language, which was not his native tongue either and which he had started to learn only recently. And contrary to Stählin's editions, which are almost literal translations from Russian, Forster's version was in many places cumbersome and fantasist. A simple comparison of his version with Lomonosov's Russian original and even Stählin's translation suffices to illustrate this.

Table 1: 'Mistakes' in the translations of *Kratkij rossijskij letopisec* 

Lomonosov ([1760] 1952c)	Stählin (1771)	Forster (1767)
Но и то правда, что от преселений и дел военных немалое число чудское поколения	Dieses aber hat seine Richtigkeit, daβ keine geringe Anzahl Tschuden, bey der	for it was a long time after that period, before a number of Scythians joined the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> "Uebrigens muß derselbige den Innhalt seiner Schrift verantworten; und der Uebersetzer ist mehr nicht schuldig, als eine richtige Uebersetzung der Urschrift die er zu übersetzen sich vorgenommen hat."

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<sup>9 &</sup>quot;...daß es zum kurzen Begriffe und zur Erläuterung der Geschichte des sich so hoch geschwungenen Russischen Reichs vorzügliche Dienste leiste."

соединилось со племенем славенским и участие имеет в составлении российского народа. (295)	Veränderung ihres Aufenthaltes, und den Kriegen der Slaven, sich mit ihnen vereiniget, und also einen Antheil an dem Ursprunge des Russischen Volkes haben. (4)	Sarmatians, and partook in the union of the Russian empire. (4)
Много воевали по Балтийскому морю, соединясь с готами; (295)	Sie haben met den Gothen zusammen öfters Kriege an der Ostsee geführt. (4)	They afterwards had many naval engagements upon the Baltic with the Goths, (5)
Во-первых, новгородцы славянами по отменности именовались и город исстари слыл Славенск. (296)	Zu allererst hatten sich die Nowogroder vorzüglich Slaven genennt, und die Stadt hat vor diesem Slawänsk geheiβen. (5)	The <i>Novogrodians</i> , who took the name of <i>Sclavenians</i> , built the old city <i>Slaviansk</i> . (6)
Итак, недивно, что Волхв, разбойничая по реке Мутной, почитался за крокодила и дал ей свое имя от волшесбства. (296)	Und also ist es kein Wunder, daβ ein gewisser Zauberer, der auf dem Strohme Mutnaja seine Räuberenen ausübte, von dem abergläublischen Volke für ein Krokodill gehalten, und dem Strohme ein Namen von der Zauberen gegeven worden. (6)	so that we have the less occasion to be surprized, that the magician of the robbers upon the river Mutnoi, looked upon them as if they were a crocodile, and gave them such a name, pretexting his sorcery. (7)
[Ольга] отмстила смерть своего супруга древлянам хитростию и храбростию и землею их вовсе завладела. (298)	den Tod ihres Gemahls an den Drewiern mit List und Tapferkeit, und brachte derselben ganzes Land unter ihre Bothmäβigkeit. (8)	she [Olgha] revenged her husband's death on the Drevlians, partly, by her power, and partly by policy. (11)
От вырезания железы умер тяжкою болезнию. (301)	Er starb an einer Schmerzhaften Krankheit, als man ihm	He died after the extraction of a bullet, which had occasioned

	eine Verhärtung ausschneiden muβte (11)	a very painful sickness. (14)
Преставился мирно. (302)	Er starb endlich in Ruhe. (12)	Svetopolk died quietly. (15)
и владел мирно. Только имел сражение с Ольгом Святославичем, дядею своим, хотевшим княжить в Киеве, и одержал над ним победу. (303)	und regierte friedlich. Nur allein mit Oleg Svätoslawitch, seinem Oheim, gerieth er in Streit, da derselbe auf das Großfürstenthum Kiew Anspruch machte; den Sieg aber wie die Regierung, jenem überlassen mußte. (13)	in his reign the empire would have enjoyed peace, had it not been from some disturbances raised by the duke Olegh the son of Svetoslaf, who wanted to dethrone him, but these were in the end entirely suppressed. (16)
Половец победил неоднократно и был от прочих князей почитаем. (306)	Die Polowzer sind zum öftern von ihm geschlagen worden, und sein Ansehen bey den übrigen Fürsten war groβ.	He defeated the Poloszes, and on that account was afterwards much feared by all the dukes of Russia. (20)
По краткой войне, пришед в Новгород, примирился. (310)	Nach einem kurzen Kriege kame er nach Nowogrod, und machte Frieden. (19)	but after a short war he died at Novogrod. (23)
[Дмитрий Александрович] Выгнан был с великого княжения братом своим меньшим Андреем Александровичем, но после оное в Орде у царя выпросил. Был всегда от брата обеспокоен. (310)	Sein jüngeren Bruder Andrei stieβ ihn von dem Groβfürstlichen Throne; er bestieg denselben aber wieder, nachdem ihn der Chan in der Horde wieder eingesetzt hatte. Indessen vergoennete ihm sein Bruder doch niemals einen ruhigen Sitz. (19)	But being expelled by Andrew his younger brother. He afterwards went to request the great dutchy at the Horda; however his request never met with success. (23)
[Данило Александрович] При нем Москва начала приуготовляться быть	Unter seiner Regierung fieng Moskau an, sich zur	It was imagined in his time that Moskof would soon be the

столицею всероссийскою. (311)	Hauptstadt Ruβlandes anzuschicken. (20)	metropolis of Russia. (24)
[Иван Васильевич] Тогда ж и нагаи Орду оную конечно опустошили, и Ахмет, на встрече ими побежден, жизни лишился. (320)	Zu eben der Zeit verwüsteten auch die Nagaier die Tattarhorde; und Achmeth ward im Anzuge gegen sie von ihnen geschlagen: er blieb selfst im Treffen (28)	In the same time the Russians also destroyed the horda of the Nagaï Tartars. Akhmed having been defeated once before this, killed himself out of despair, (33)
[Алексей Михайлович] Также ходил в Лифландию даже до Риги; но город не взат за зменою иностранных служивых людей. Между тем Никон сошел с патриаршества и ради учиненного государю многого беспокойства признанными вселенскими патриархами лишен своего чина. (336)	Nachmals zog er gegen Liefland bis vor Riga, es wurde aber die Einnahme dieser Stadt, durch die Verrätheren einiger Frenden, die bey der Armee dienten, verhindert. Unterdessen kam der Patriarch Nikon um seine Würde, da ihn der Zar, weil er ihm allerley Unruhen gemacht, durch die zusammenberufenen Oecumenischen Patriarchen absetzen lieβ. (44)	He marched into Livonia as far as Righa, where some foreign troops had revolted; in the mean time one Nickon was made partriarch, but having been the cause of great troubles to the tzaar, he was soon after deposed, in a general congregation of the patriarchs. (47)
[Петр Великий] отчего внезапно очутились за пределами российские полки, страшные неприятелям, в Лифландии, Финландии, в Польше, в Померании, в Швеции, в Турции, в Персии. (339)	Daher stammen die nachher auβerhalb den Russischen Gränzen unvermuthet erschienenen und seinen Feinden schrecklichen Regimenter, in Liefland, Finnland, Polen, Pommern, Schweden, Türkey, und Persien. (47)	The fear of such hard duty, made a great number of his troops upon the frontiers, desert to the enemies in Livonia, Finnland, Poland, Pomerania, Sweden, Turky, and Persia. (50)
Уже славою Европу побудив к своему вниманию, предприемлет	Kaum hatte sein Ruhm in Europa einiges Aussehen gemacht, so unernahm er	And having already excited the attention of Europe by his glorious conquests, he

путешествие на запад	auch schon incognito eine	secretly undertook his
тайно. (340)	Reise nach Westen. (48)	voyage into the
		West; (50)

A particular treat of Forster's translation are the additions. What immediately catches the eye is Forster's 'continuation' of the chronology into the present time, i.e. up until 1766. He presents Anna Ioannovna and Catherine II in a positive way, as they gave much credit to foreigners; Elisabeth was credited with the military successes of the Seven-Years War, but Peter III had relinquished all that: "But being directed by people who were no politicians, he dissipated more than five millions sterling, and attempted to alter the present state of the Greek Russian religion; and not withstanding he was warned by his friend and ally the king of Prussia, yet he still continued upon the same false principles, till CATHERINE II, Alexievna his consort was put on the throne by a revolution of the guards [...]." (Lomonossoff 1767: 59). In his attempt to please the ruling Empress, Forster, undoubtedly instructed by his father, did not refrain from euphemisms: Lomonosov's "And therefore the Lord [Peter the Great] was forced to apply justice" (Lomonosov 1952c: 345) became "which obliged him to be a little severe." (Lomonossoff 1767: 54). In the same vein, Forster was far less concerned with historical accuracy than Lomonosov or Stählin, hence the repeated use of "Russian Empire" for the Russian lands prior to the creation of said empire (1721) (vi, 4, 9, 29, 39, 43). However, this did not mean that Forster was unaware of the difference, as testified by the switch in the headers from "Tzaardom of all Russia" to "Empire of Russia" (49-50) when reaching the time of Peter the Great.

This short comparison, on the one hand, confirms the bias in the aforementioned Soviet and East German researchers (see 3. above), and, on the other hand, states the obvious: that a translation will always differ from the original and (therefore) will contain 'mistakes'. From our point of view, it is much more fruitful to compare texts within the broader context of 'circulation of knowledge' and find out how they reflect changing/circulating knowledge.

### 5. An alternative approach: the distribution of terminology

A more productive comparison of translations within their historical context can be achieved by looking at the distribution of and shifts in terminology. For the purpose of this article, we focus on terminology in relation to power – position, hierarchy, transfer of authority/power – within the source and target texts. Whereas *Begriffsgeschichte* (conceptual history) studies these concepts within broad semantic fields such as 'Herrschaft', 'Monarchie' or 'Republik' (Boldt 1978; Hilger 1982; Mager 1984) – leading to the aforementioned methodological and translational issues (see 2. above), – we opt for a modest, concrete approach as applied to other

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> «и для того принужден был употребить правосудие государь».

Russian historical texts as well (cf. Volkov & Mžel'skaja 2005-2012; e.g. Volkov & Matveev 2015). As a corpus of linguistic data *Kratkij rossijskij letopisec* has the advantage of being a short, very straightforward text with a rather limited number of specific terms. As the *Slovar'jazyka M.V. Lomonosova* is still an ongoing project and has not (yet) addressed his historical lexicon (cf. Volkov 2011; Bucharkin, Volkov & Matveev 2013; Baranov & Vernjaeva 2016; cf. also Korpus M.V. Lomonosova), we derive their meaning from the usage in Lomonosov's text itself:

- *Князь, великий князь*: prince/duke, grand prince/duke, i.e. members of the ruling dynasty (i.e. the Rurikids).
- *Lapь*: any sovereign ruler, be it Russian, Tatar or other. Strictly opposed to the concept of κοροπь, which refers to European rulers.
- Государь, государство: sovereign ruler of Rus', Muscovy or the Russian Empire, as well as his dominion.
- *Самодержец, самодержавие*: sole and absolute sovereign ruler of Rus', Muscovy or the Russian Empire. Strengthens the concept of государь.
- *Pecnyблика*: only used in connection with Novgorod.
- Владетель: generic term for ruler (e.g. of the Republic of Novgorod).
- *Избрать*, выбрать: election of ruler, usually in early Russian history, and in particular in relation to Novgorod; also the election of sovereigns during the Time of Troubles.
- Наречь на царство, венчать царем и самодержцем всероссийским, принять [на царство], выпросить на царство, посадить на царство: any other way of ascending the throne than via election.

Generally speaking, the translations are far more specific in their terminology with regard to *μαρь* (tsar): depending on the context (Russian, Tatar or European), they are translated as Tsa(a)r/Tzaar, Chan/Khan or King. The shift from Tsaar to Chan in Stählin's translation takes place between the 1765 and 1771 editions, but is already present in the English translation (1767). A similar specification is used with regard to *μαρь* (tsar) as a non-Russian ruler: the Byzantine (Greek) *μαρь* becomes an emperor; there is only one reference to the Russian *imperator* (as of Peter I). The Swedish κοροπь Charles XII is a king/König. Γοςγὸαρь is both in the German and English translations rendered as Tsa(a)r/Tzaar as of Ivan III and Ivan IV (who respectively started to use the term and was crowned as tsar).

At first sight, the consistency with which Lomonosov used historical-legal terminology seems to do the "chemist and *perevodczik*" credit. It is in line with the huge interest Lomonosov and other translators at the Academy of Sciences were taking in lexicography as of the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century; Lomonosov himself even developed a theory on how to compile a Russian dictionary, but his ideas were put

into practice only after his death (Lomonosov 1952d; Makeeva 1961; cf. Biržakova 2010: 15-16, 36; 100-101, 121). However, even the first Russian monolingual academic dictionary, *Slovar' Akademii rossijskoj* (1789-1794, hereinafter SAR), which built on Lomonosov's ideas and lexicographical work, does not make a clear distinction between different semantic and historical-cultural nuances, nor does it provide a historical context for legal terminology. In most cases, SAR explains legal concepts of Russian history through synonyms:

- *Царь* (SAR, Vol. 6, 612-613): 1) Государь, монархъ, самодержецъ.
- *Государь* (SAR, Vol. 2, 279): Meaning 1) Царь; владѣтель, ни отъ какой другой державы не зависящій.

Moreover, самодержець / самодержавіе does not have a separate entry, but is commonly used as a synonym for other entries within the semantic field of power, such as монархь — государь, самодержець, от монархія — единодержавіе, самодержавіе, единовластіе (SAR, Vol. 4, 249). Lomonosov's владътель does not have a separate entry in the dictionary.

However, when compared to the richer variety of the translations, Lomonosov's vocabulary suffers from a certain reductionism, most likely inspired by political motives. In his comments on Voltaire's *Histoire de l'Empire de Russie sous Pierre le Grand* Lomonosov rejected the French philosopher's suggestion that the concept *yapь* may have oriental (Siberian) origins and corrected him as follows:

The origins of the name *tsar* [as explained by Voltaire – WC & VW] is an absolute lie [...] because: 1) the Tatar rulers were not called tsars, but khans, and the name of tsar was given to them by the Russians, because since time immemorial up until this day we call sovereign rulers in the East tsars, and in the West kings; 2) the name *tsar* was totally customary in Russia many years before there was even talk about the Tatars, to which the oldest translations of Church books for 800 years are testimony; 3) the Russians called the Greek tsar John Tzimiskes tsar [...]; 4) in light of the long historical relation and frequent wars of the Slavs with the Greeks and trade, it is simpler and more logical to derive the name of *tsar* from *cesar* through the grammatical figure of abbreviation (per syncopen), than looking for its origin with the Tatars, who did not have them [tsars, WC & VW]. (Lomonosov 1952b: 363)

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> «Происхождение имени *царь* совсем ложно [...], для того что: 1) татарские обладатели царями не назывались, но ханами, а имя царское дано им от россиян, потому что мы издревле и поныне всех самодержавных владетелей на востоке называем царями, а на западе – королями; 2) имя *царь* весьма употребительно было в России за много сот лет прежде, нежели и о самих татарах слух появился, что засвидетельствуют самые старинные переводы церковных книг за 800 лет; 3) греческого царя Иоанна Цимисхия россияне царем называли [...]; 4) великое издревле сообщение и частные войны славян с греками и торги удобнее ввести могли и прежде

Indeed, in *Kratkij rossijskij letopisec s rodosloviem* Lomonosov refers to κοροπь (king) only in relation to Polish and Swedish rulers, and completely bans the use of *xa*μ (khan). It is safe to assume that *Kratkij rossijskij letopisec*, for that reason, is far more a political work than the (more extended) *Drevnjaja rossijskaja istorija*, where the vocabulary seems more diversified.

If we set out Lomonosov's terminology against those used by Stählin and Forster, we see the following shifts:

Table 2: Comparison of terminology

Table 2. Comparison of terminology			
Lomonosov ([1760] 1952c)	Stählin (1765 / 1771)	Forster (1767)	
князей (293)	Beherrscher (1765: 2 / 1771: 2)  Fürst (1765: 2, 6, 8, 10, 12 / 1771: 2, 6, 8, 10, 12)	princes (2)	
великий князь (302, 313, 321)	Herr (1765: 22 / 1771: 22)  Groβfürsten (1765: 5, 12 / 1771: 5, 12)  Wasilei Iwanovitch (1765: 29-30 / 1771: 30)	great duke (15, 26, 34)	
государь	Herr (1765: 8, 25, 34, 52 / 1771: 2, 8, 25, 34, 52)  Monarchen (1765: 2)  Za(a)ren (1765: 33, 35-36, 36, 37, 44, 45 / 1771: 33, 35-36, 36, 37, 42-43, 44; 45)  Beherrscher (1765: 41, 53 / 1771: 42; 53)	prince (3, 11, 38) monarch (29) tzaar (36, 39, 40, 45, 47) empire (39) tzaar Peter (49) Yvan (49) Peter (52)	

имя *царь* от *цесарь* через грамматическую фигуру сокращение (per syncopen), нежели после искать от татар, у коих того не бывало.»

	Zar Peter (1765: 46 / 1771: 46)  Zar Iwan (1765: 46 / 1771: 46)  Peter der Groβe (1765: 50 / 1771: 50)	
великую государыню императрицу (344)	Kaiserin (1765: 50 / 1771: 49)	consort (52)
республиканском владетеле (296)	democratischen Regenten (1771: 6) Regenten dieser vormaligen Republik (1765: 6)	Republican governor (7)
владетель (307)	Regenten (1765: 16 / 1771: 16)	princes (20)
греческую царевну (299, 320)	Griechischen Zarischen Prinzessin (1765: 9, 29 / 1771: 9, 29)	daughter of the Greek emperor (12, 33)
царь (303, 323, 326, 331, 333-4)[Russian]	Za(a)r (1765: 12-13, 31, 32, 35, 40, 42 / 1771: 12-13, 31, 32, 35, 40, 42)	emperor (16) Tzaar (35, 36, 40, 45
царь [Machmet Amin, Šingalej] (321, 325)	Zaaren (1765: 29, 30) Chan Schigalei [zum Regenten an] (1771: 29- 30)	khan (29, 30
[грузинские] цари (328)	Grusinischen Zaaren (1765: 37) Grusinischen Chanen (1771: 37)	king of Grusinia (40)
царевич [Safakirej, Kašak] (321, 324)	Prinzen [Safkirey] (1765: 30 / 1771: 30)	Sophakirey (34) khan's son [Kashtchack] (36)

	Zarewitsch [Kartschack] (1765: 32 / 1771: 32)	
король (294; 300; 304; 335; 340-341; 342; 247; 347-55) королевские дети (296) королевич (330; 332)	König (1765: 3; 4; 10; 13; 41; 43; 48-9; 54-68; 1771: 3; 4; 10; 13; 41; 43; 48-50; 54-68) [fürstlichen Prinzen] (1765: 6) königlichen Prinzen (1771: 6) königlich [] Prinzen (1765: 38; 41; 1771: 38; 41)	king (3; 5; 13; 17; 44; 46; 51-2; 56; 59; 60; 65-79) king's children (7)
самодержец (303, 322)	eigenmächtigen Beherrscher (1765: 12-13 / 1771: 12-13) Selbstherrscher (1765:31 / 1771: 31) Beherrscher (1765: 39 / 1771: 39)	sovereign (16, 35) tsaar (43)
самодержавство (298)	Oberherschaft (1765: 7 / 1771: 7) Bothmäβigkeit (1765: 29 / 1771: 29)	dominions (9-10) subjection (32)
самодержавствовать (299)	führte die Regierung [über Ruβland] alleine (1765: 9 / 1771: 9)	reigned (12)
избрать (293, 296, 314, 331; 333-4)	erwählt(en) (1765: 2, 5, 6, 39 / 1771: 2, 5, 6, 39) auf den Za(a)rischen Thron erhoben (1765: 41 / 1771: 42)	with Rurick at their head (2) election (6) elected (7; 45) was made [tzaar] (43)
выбрать (295, 332)	erwählte (1765: 5 / 1771: 5)	chose (5)

просить / призвать на великое княжение (297, 302)	erwählt (1765: 12-13, 41 / 1771: 12-13, 41)	elected (15; 44)
принять великое княжение (321)	erwählten (1765: 30 / 1771: 30)	elected (34)
наречь на царство (330)	erwählt (1765: 39 / 1771: 39)	seated upon the throne (42)
поставлен и венчан на царство (338)	auf den Thron gesetzet (1765: 46 / 1771: 46)	elected and crowned (48)

The juxtaposition of terminology used by Lomonosov, Stählin and Forster also provides some insights into the relationship between the two translations. It now becomes highly probably that Forster copied 'Tsaar' from Stählin's first edition ('Zaar') and more or less followed his use of 'khan' ('Chan' in German) for Tatar rulers, whereas the Russian original has 'μαρδ'. Curiously, both authors dropped a reference to the Russian occupation of East-Prussia under Elisabeth during the Seven-Years War (cf. Lomonosov 1952c: 295).

At the time of Forster's and Stählin's translations, a specific bilingual dictionary from Russian into another modern language did not exist. However, there existed a number of Russian translations and adaptations of (multilingual) dictionaries e.g. from Latin into modern European languages, compiled to serve the needs of Russian language learners and, to a lesser extent, the translators at the Academy of Sciences. Their circulation was not broad, and some of these dictionaries only existed in manuscript (Vomperskij 1986: 26). The didactical purposes of these dictionaries were obvious: they were printed as additions to school grammars of European languages and were organized not alphabetically, but thematically. The first alphabetically organized multilingual dictionary from Russian into French and German only appeared in 1780s (Nordstet 1780-1782). Even if Forster and Stählin had access to the existing dictionaries, they either did not contain terminology with regard to power (Poletika 1763), or were never completed (Volčkov 1755-1764).

A quick glance at those that do contain such vocabulary corroborate Stählin's choices:

Table 3: Terminology in contemporary dictionaries

Vejsman (1731)	Cellarij (1746)	Volčkov (1755-1764)
Prinz, Princeps, Князь, (477)	Princeps, <i>ipis</i> , <i>o</i> . 3. Первый, начальный. Vornehm. <i>Subst</i> . Князь,	ce Prince est agreable quand il est en son domestique, en son

	великій господинъ. Fürst, grosser Herr (304)	particulier. Dieser Fürst ist lustig und frölich, wann er allein mit seinen Hausgenossen ist. Princeps ipse inter domesticos hilaris est. Этоть, сей князь в тѣ поры весьма весель и прїятень, когда одинь съ своими домашними бываеть. (758-759)
König, Rex, Царь, Король. (341)	Rex, <i>regis, m.</i> 3. Царь, Король. Ein König (325)	Duc, m. Seigneur. Ein Herzog. Dux. Герцогь, Князь, Дукь полковникъ (776)
Неггясhег, гедпатог, dominator, Imperator, повелитель, государь, владълець, (Їмператоръ.) (293)	Imperator, is, m. 3. Императоръ, повелитель, полководецъ. Ein Feld-Marschall, Kenfer (268)	dans l'empire chaque Prince et chaque Republique fournit son contingent, sa taxe. Im Reiche müssen alle und jede Fürsten und Republicken ihr Contingent am Gelde und βolte geben In Imperio singuli principes et singulae Respublicae debitam portionem conferunt Въ Нъмецкой (Римской) Имперіи, всѣ князья и всѣ републики, должную или надлежащую свою часть (контингентъ) дають. (536)
Мопагсh, Мопагсhа, Монархъ, саморержавецъ, самодержецъ, единоначальникъ (421)		

Both translators struggle with the concept of 'election' vs 'appointed,' whereas Lomonosov is rather more specific. At first glance, both translators seem to be mistaken, but when we check the vocabulary in the available dictionaries, it transpires that 'election' in the Latin tradition – with a meaning that comprises both election in the narrow sense and ascending to the throne – is far more common or acceptable than in the Russian tradition. It is arguable that Stählin and Forster were indeed using these Latin-based dictionaries, or were advised by people who were very familiar with this tradition (their fathers?). As such, both translators chose to *linguistically* adapt the foreign, i.e. Russian tradition to the target (European) legal tradition, and in doing so, create a distance between Lomonov's *Kratkij rossijskij letopisec* and *Kurzgefaßtes Jahr-Buch der russischen Regenten* and *A Chronological Abridgment of the Russian History*.

Table 3: Terminology in contemporary dictionaries (continued)

Vejsman (1731)	Cellarij (1746)	Volčkov (1755-1764)
Wählen, eligere, выбирати, избирати, zum König, creare aliquem regem, въ короли (732)	Eligo, egi, ectum, 3. Избираю, выбираю. Erwehlen, auslesen.  Electio, nis, f. Избраніе. Die Aussonderung, Erwehlung. (190)	Electeur; m. Ein Churfürst. Elector. Курфиршть, избирательной Князь.  Electif, la Pologne est un Royaume electif. Pohlen ist ein Wahlreich. In Polonia Rex eligitur. Польша, избирательное королевство: Король Польской избирательной, а не наслѣдной, то есть: по выбору, а не по наслѣдству корону получает. (815-816)

Last but not least, there is the rather curious use of "Regent" in the German translation. Only one of the dictionaries, Vejsman's Nemecko-latinskij i ruskii leksikon (1731) has it: "Regent, gubernator, imperator, регенть, владътель, владътель, управитель, государь, владыка, властитель, начальнъишій." (497) As a generic term, it comprises most of Lomonosov's vocabulary, and its appearance suggests that Stählin may have used this dictionary.

#### 6. Conclusions

By addressing the 'circulation of knowledge' in Lomonosov's Kratkij rossijskij letopisec s rodosloviem and its translations we pursued several goals. First, we reassessed the relationship between Lomonosov's original and its German and English translations, thereby demonstrating that hitherto research into their relationship has been superficial and biased. This bias is inherent to the accepted paradigm of translation as cultural transfer, which implies directionality and an imbalance of power between sending and receiving cultures. Consequently, the translations of Lomonosov's Kratkij rossijskoj letopisec are either perceived as an endeavour to spread Russian knowledge abroad, or, as translations are easy to fault, as an attempt to do injustice to Russian knowledge. Lomonosov, however, was no isolated figure whose historical work happened to be translated by chance. Lomonosov himself, as well as his *Kratkij rossijskij letopisec*, are heavily indebted to the circulation of historical knowledge between Europe – mainly Germany – and Russia since the time of Peter the Great, at the centre of which were the Academy of Sciences in Saint Petersburg and its translators (among them: Lomonosov). One of the goals of the Academy was precisely to be an integral part of Europe's learned society, and its composition, especially in the 18th century, reflected its international orientation. Peter von Stählin was the son of the academic secretary of the Academy of Sciences, and Georg Forster's father had participated in the scientific exploration of the Volga region on behalf of the Russian government; both fathers wanted their sons to pursue similar, international (scientific) careers.

There is, of course, no doubt that the particularities of the people involved – the chemist and *perevodczik* Lomonosov, the young (and ambitious) von Stählin and Forster – have defined the outlook of *Kratkij rossijskij letopisec* and its translations. It is wrong, however, to study them in isolation, as a mere act of cultural transfer, and in doing so reduce their importance for the circulation of knowledge.

We have used these three texts as a litmus test for the circulation of knowledge against the background of Russia's integration into Europe's learned society. By looking at the distribution terminology in relation to power in both original and translations, we have established that Lomonosov used a narrow range of concepts – probably for political reasons – and that his translators tried to fit them into the (broader) European mould of terminology. Remarkably enough, the translators could not rely on translational dictionaries as we know them today, and only had access to multilingual dictionaries that give synonyms in different languages. These dictionaries did not cater for translators who have to transfer a text from one language into another, but for members of an international (scientific) community who were multilingual and were operating in a world that was not (yet) defined by national identities based on language. The texts they produced therefore must be seen as contributions to a broad, international (scientific) knowledge base, rather than a transfer from one culture to another. Moreover, this knowledge base is not restricted

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to historical narratives as in our example, but effectively comprises all fields of knowledge, including metatexts about the accumulation and organisation of knowledge (science) itself. Therefore, the historical knowledge as produced and circulated by Lomonosov and his translators cannot be isolated from the developments in lexicography at that time, which was trying to organize lexicographical materials in a consistent way, and provide contemporaries with useful multilingual – not translational! – tools. Only by looking at translation through the paradigm of 'circulation of knowledge', we can get a grasp of the complex, multilayered history of translation.

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