

# Перунь

**ПЕРУНЬ: The Newsletter of the USC Slavic Department**

Issue № 5 ♦ December 2023

As 2023 draws to a close, a hearty congratulations to all for a very productive year despite the new and on-going wars that roil our worlds. This issue of *Перунь* highlights accomplishments from the summer and fall; thank you to our contributors for sharing their news!

**Julie Ammons** took part in a new virtual initiative funded by the Critical Language Scholarship Program for CLS Russian Alumni: she was selected to take part in the CLS Ukrainian Bridge Tutoring program and received 20 funded hours of private Ukrainian tutoring during August and September 2023.

**Andrzej Brylak** contributed to a [scholarly volume](#) that came out this fall and resulted from the very first conference devoted entirely to Leo Lipski. His article "Post-Holocaust Transformation. Leo Lipski's Perverse Catholicism and the Transubstantiation Dogma" interprets Lipski's literary project as an attempt to transform the bodies of those murdered in the Holocaust into a text. He launched the Polish Translation Workshop, in which USC Slavic graduate students will be translating works of Polish contemporary literature to Russian and English. Andrzej also organized and participated in the panel "Neurological Interpretations of Polish Culture" with his paper "The Aphasic Self of Sławomir Mrozek."



Andrzej with the volume *Doświadczenie – pamięć – pismo. Życie i twórczość Leo Lipskiego*, to which he contributed a chapter.



From left to right: Lena Petrova, Sasha Pchelintseva, Andrzej Brylak, Caity Giustiniano, Dmitrii Kuznetsov, and Sarah Matthews pose in their new Polish vocabulary tee shirts.





In June **Erica Camisa-Morale** participated in the biennial [conference](#) of the International Network for the Study of Lyric (INSL) in Oslo with the presentation “What can East Slavic Early Modern Poetry Tell Us about the Nature of the Lyric?” In July she presented the paper “Nikolai Karamzin and the Desacralization of Death. Between Enlightenment and Classicism” at the 16th [Congress of the International Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies](#) in Rome. She also participated in the [XI International Conference of the Study Group on Eighteenth-Century Russia](#) (SGEER), which should have been in Moscow, but was moved online due to the war. She gave a talk titled “Karion Istomin and the Dialectics Between Divine Wisdom and Human Knowledge” and chaired a panel on “Russian Literature in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century: Politics, Gender Politics, Social Challenges.” At ASEES Erica gave the paper “Skovoroda and Radishchev: Liberation Starts from Within Yourself” on the panel “Decolonization of the Mind through Literature and Time: The Question of *Svoboda* and *Volia*,” which she co-organized with Daria Solodkaia. She also served as discussant on the panel “Nature as Text and Context.” Erica’s article “In Search of Nature and Consciousness in Andrei Bialobotskii’s *Pentateugum*: Classical Echoes and Modern Impulses” is forthcoming any day now on the online, peer-reviewed journal [ВИБЛЮДИКА](#). Finally, Erica has been collaborating with USC librarians and the research group CHARM, and she served as a member of the selection committee for the Marc Raeff Prize this year.

**Natasha Dame** received another Dornsife Fellowship in General Education for 2023-2024. In June of 2023, she presented a paper (co-authored with Matthew Dame) “Translanguaging and Heritage Language Loss: Could Translanguaging Be The Answer for University Heritage Language Learners?” at the Summer Institute on Diversity and Equitable Teaching and Learning of Languages and Cultures held at Duke University. In the fall of 2023, she completed the six-week Advanced Faculty Teaching Institute: Creating Inclusive Teaching Environments at USC held at the USC Center for Excellence in Teaching.

This past semester **Evgeny Dengub** presented a poster at the Bilingualism Matters Research Symposium in Columbia, SC, focusing on ways *Trojan Bloom*, USC’s multilingual literary journal, promotes bilingualism and creative expression on campus. Earlier this year, he presented a paper at the IALLT conference in New Orleans, discussing the reconstruction of a language center, highlighting solutions, challenges, and discoveries. Additionally, Evgeny conducted an online workshop on ungrading for instructors teaching writing at California State University, East Bay. His book review of *Pro-Dvizhenie: Advanced Russian through Film and Media* appeared in the 67.2 issue of the *Slavic and Eastern European Journal*. Lastly, the book he co-edited *Art of Teaching Russian* was shortlisted for the AATSEEL prize for Best Book in Pedagogy.

**Yulia Dubasova** contributed two poems to the fall issue of *Trojan Bloom*, which is available in [USC Digital Library](#). This semester **Dmitrii Kuznetsov** organized an ASEES panel called “Battlefields of Memory in Contemporary Russophone Literature,” which investigated how contemporary Russophone literary fiction turns towards alternative practices of memorialization and commemoration in order to subvert and de-monopolize the governmentally-mandated narratives. At the panel, he presented a paper “Imaginative





Investment: Strategies of Familial Commemoration in Maria Stepanova's *Pamiati Pamiati* and Lyudmila Ulitskaia's *Lestnitsa Iakova*." At the end of May **Sarah Matthews** presented her paper "The Power of Perception in Olga Sedakova's Religious and Eco-poetic Samizdat Publications" at the Canadian Association of Slavists' annual conference.

**Colleen McQuillen** was gratified to see her article "The Imperial Underground: Russian Coal Mining Narratives of the Donbas at the Fin de Siècle" published in *Slavic and East European Journal* (67.2 Summer 2023). The article relates to her current book project that addresses the paradoxes of becoming modern in imperial Russia's natural resource frontiers in the 1880s and 1890s. She was invited to give a talk "Vasilii Nemirovich-Danchenko's *Kama and the Urals* Brings Submerged Perspectives Ashore via the *putevoi ocherk*" at Ludwig Maximilians Universität Munich in July. The talk was part of a conference organized by the Russian Ecospheres Network, of which she is a member. While that talk was also related to her book, her ASEES paper "Satirical Illustrations of Antediluvian Creatures" was part of a stand-alone project about a series of humorous paleontological and microbiological drawings that appeared in the journal *Jester (Shut)* in 1897. She also served as chair and discussant for the ASEES panel "Human Subjectivity/Ecological Embodiments in Russian Literature" that was organized by the ASEES Committee on Environmental Sustainability.

This semester **Lena Petrova** received an Association for Jewish Studies Travel Grant from the Michael H. Baker Family to support her participation in the AJS 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in San Francisco in December. She and Assel Uvaliyeva organized the panel "Living through Empire: Subjugation, Sexualization, and Violence" for this year's ASEES Convention, where she presented the paper "Judith in Disguise: A Comparative Analysis of Pushkin's Oriental and Jewish Heroines." Lena also started to volunteer at the USC Shoah Foundation.

**Kelsey Rubin-Detlev** is first and foremost delighted to be back around the department and to be serving as Director of Graduate Studies. Before her return in August, the summer's highlights included attending the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Annual Meeting in Berlin (especially a reception with German president Frank-Walter Steinmeier at his residence, Schloss Bellevue—complete with a bouncy castle for the younger attendees!) and the International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Congress in Rome. Her peer-reviewed article, "Addressing the Public in Eighteenth-Century Russian Printed Letter Collections," appeared in the July 2023 issue of the *Slavonic and East European Review*, and her peer-reviewed book chapter, "'Notre style n'est bon que pour nous et pour les commis des postes': Catherine II de Russie et la surveillance des correspondances," was published in *Secrets et surveillance épistolaires dans l'Europe du dix-huitième siècle*, ed. Sébastien Drouin and Sébastien Côté (Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment/Liverpool University Press, 2023). She enjoyed participating in the department roundtable on Digital Humanities and Slavic in October. She was also honored to be named to the editorial board of Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment.

**Ellina Sattarova** organized a panel for ASEES titled "Post-Soviet Cinema with and beyond Agamben," where she presented a paper titled "Aesthetics, Biopolitics, and Empire in Aleksei







Fedorchenko's *Angels of Revolution*." She also served as a discussant and chair for the virtual ASEES panel titled "Challenges of Contemporary Cinema." In addition to peer-reviewing an article for *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema*, she was invited by Birgit Beumers to join the editorial board of KinoKultura.

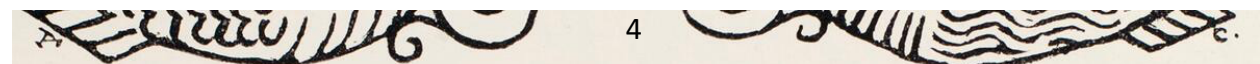
**Anna Sbitneva** presented her paper titled "*Vokrug shum*: Political Noise in Contemporary Russian Rap Music" on the panel "When Cannons Speak, Muses Can't Be Mute: Contemporary Political Songs: Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Russian Cases" at the ASEES conference. Over the summer she taught a 3rd level Russian language class as part of Middlebury College's intensive language program. And before that in May, she passed my MA exam. Anna also just received confirmation that the collection of essays called *Nostalgia, Anxiety, Politics: Media and Performing Arts, from Egypt to Central-Eastern Europe, Including Russia*, including my essay titled "Nostalgia for the Violent Times: Reincarnations of Danila Bagrov in Contemporary Russian Culture" was accepted by the publisher and is scheduled to be in print by May 2024.

**Katia Shubenkina** recently presented her paper "*Russkie zvuki*: Students' Literary Exercises as an Instrument of Imperial Ideology" at ASEES. **Kate Tomashevskaja** gave several conference presentations in the summer and fall: the paper "Elley Ivanov's *Cursed Ground* and Stepan Burnashev's *Cursed Land*: Fate: Ethics and Politics in Sakha Horror" at ASEES; a flash-round presentation "Literary Formation of National Narratives: Representations of 'Asia' in Soviet Production Novels" also at ASEES; and the paper "Nabokov in the Literary Samizdat Journal *Chasy* (1976–1990)" at The Annual Nabokov Readings, IRLI RAN, Saint-Petersburg in July. Her review of the film *Our Winter* (Вінігі кінимміт / Nasha zima, 2022) by Stepan Burnashev was published in Kinokultura, Issue 82, and she's already at work on a review for the December issue. Kate attended two workshops organized by the USC Center for Ethnographic Media Arts and received grants from the GSG Professional Development Fund and the Ph.D. Academy Scholarship and Research Fund, as well as a VSGC Summer Research Grant.



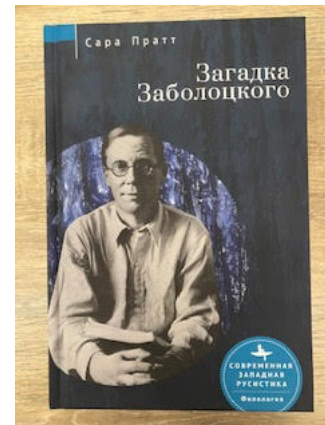
Far left: Assel in Krakow.

In the summer **Assel Uvaliyeva** attended the Summer School of Polish Language and Culture at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland, and Madina Tlostanova's workshops "Post-Soviet/Postcolonial: Central Asian crossroads" and "Reimagining the Future" in Almaty, Kazakhstan. In the fall, she published a film review on *Nartai* at KinoKultura, under the supervision of Professor Ellina Sattarova. Assel also received the ASEES Graduate Student Travel Grant to attend the 2023 Convention, where she presented a paper titled "Imperial Chronotope: A Perpetual Cycle of Conflict in Vadim Abdrashitov's *Time of a Dancer*."





**Sally Pratt's** book *Nikolai Zabolotsky: Enigma and Cultural Paradigm* has been well translated and published in Russian as *Загадка Заболоцкого* by Academic Studies Press in the series Современная западная русистика, филология. Sally reports, "The cover with winsome-looking Zabolotsky is a joy (at least for me)." We agree, Sally!



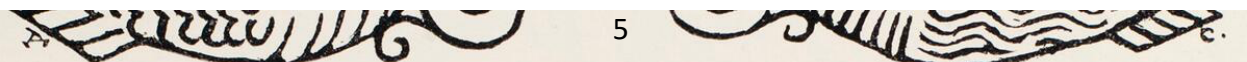
During the summer, **Peter Winsky** won a Symposium Travel Grant to attend the XVIII International Dostoevsky Symposium in Nagoya, Japan. There he presented his paper "Where is the Man Seated at the Foot of Christ?: On the Exorcism of the Retired Bishop Tikhon and Dostoevsky's Failed Hesychasm in Demons." During the fall semester, he organized and presented on the roundtable "Reassessing Christ in Ivan Karamazov's Poema 'The Grand Inquisitor'" at ASEES. In his work as editor for [the academic Forum](#) for the Northwestern University Research Initiative for the Study of Russian Philosophy and Religious Thought, Peter has published a short meditation on *Notes from the Underground* and COVID-19, conducted several interviews with major scholars on topics of philosophy and literature, and published numerous other articles from scholars on topics ranging from the war on Ukraine to the theological elements in Nabokov's work. He was also recently invited to serve on the Reader's Advisory Board for the North American Dostoevsky Society, which plans creative projects, outreach initiatives, and Dostoevsky-related events.

### Looking Ahead

Spring 2024 promises to be full of exciting talks and events. Here's what we know so far:

- History Job Talks at 2:00pm: tentatively Jan. 17 (Wed.), Jan. 22 (Mon.), and Jan. 29 (Mon.)
- SLL Job Talks, Fridays at 2:00pm: tentatively Jan 12, 19, 26 (and/or Feb 2)
- February 22-24: Parajanov Centennial Conference
- March 18, 12pm-2pm: Adam Michnik
- March 22-23: Workshop on Eurasian Modernisms (topic Women and Innovation, and the Making of Modernity with portrait [exhibit of Ukrainian women](#))
- April 13: California Slavic Colloquium, live and in person at UCLA
- April 26-27: History Dept conference on removing monuments in post-Soviet space

TBD: Merkulova and Chupov, screening of *Captain Volkonogov Escaped*; and a talk by activist and journalist Elena Kostiuhenko.





*Перунъ, which may be translated as thunderbolt, is the name of the pagan Slavic thunder god. It is also the penname of Vadim Nevskii, who contributed illustrations to Russian satirical journals from the years 1905-1907. His monogram graces this newsletter's heading, which was taken from the Russian Satirical Journal Collection housed in the University of Southern California Digital Library.*

