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## 210 YEARS OF THE PATRIOTIC WAR OF 1812



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## EDITORIAL NOTE PAGES OF HISTORY



This June marks the 210th anniversary of the invasion of Russia by The Great Army commanded by Napoleon Bonaparte.

In addition to the French, troops from 16 other nations participated in the campaign, and the army itself was armed with thousands of guns and tested in battles almost throughout Europe, firmly believing in the military genius of its commander.

The army has reached Moscow, locating its headquarters in the Kremlin, where its generals raised a toast to the final victory over Russia. However, as a result of the Patriotic War of 1812, The Great

Army suffered defeat, its survivors miraculously escaped the Russian territory, and Paris was eventually surrendered to the Russian army and regiments of Russia's allies.

That was far from being the first experience of an armed struggle of the Russian people against foreign invaders. Under Ivan the Terrible, The Tatar Yoke was finally abolished; under Peter the Great, an end was put to the aggressive policy of Sweden and Baltic states.

Finally, in the most terrible war in the history of mankind, Russia defeated fascist Germany and its numerous allies and one more time defended its right to life and freedom.



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## PATRIOTIC WAR OF 1812

# PEOPLE'S WAR

*It was a brutal war between two large armies  
with excellent commanders and heavy losses*

By MAXIM ZAMSHEV

The Patriotic War of 1812 has been mythologised many times. Some may even think that this is almost a romantic story. However, this is wrong. It was a brutal war between two large armies with excellent commanders and heavy losses. Army movements, military decisions are still the subject of discussion, and many of them have become standards of military science. What conclusions do those long-standing events force us to draw now?

Important is the outcome after every war, or rather, what the world has become after the victory of one side or another. No less important are the reasons, which, as a rule, are very insignificant and not worth the

grandiose losses. Remarkably, that the war exhausts both sides, and often someone else turns out to be a significant winner.

One of the reasons for the war of 1812 was that Russia interrupted the naval blockade of Great Britain, starting to trade with it through intermediaries, thereby violating its obligations given to France (does it remind you of anything?). It is believed that trade with Foggy Albion did not affect the overall Russian economy in any way, but was extremely beneficial to the Russian elite.

Besides that, Alexander I considered his hands free, since under the terms of the Treaties of Tilsit, Prussia was to be liberated from French

troops, which did not happen. How shall we incorporate it today? Don't make agreements for the sake of formal agreements. One of the vaccines against the war is a system of treaties that no one violates. Any violation results in a response. It does not matter how powerful or influential is the country which respects no rules. NATO ignored that fact. Outcome is known. The feeling of specialness always leads to a sad end. The end of Napoleon is well known.

One more thing. Alexander was extremely annoyed by Napoleon's desire to make Poland a new *Rzeczpospolita*. Again Poland and its ambitions! It is a beautiful country with a great culture, which is always

unlucky with allies and rulers. Isn't it good time for the Poles to understand that there is no country closer to them than Russia, and that it's time to change their minds?

Another argument. Napoleon tried several times to intermarry with the Russian imperial house, but each time he was refused. He was so offended, that he could only alleviate the offense by crossing the Neman River. Even great politicians sometimes act like ordinary people. Isn't it better to behave like a normal person with them too? Maybe then there will be less bloodshed. Everyone should know that if Russia is offended and subjected to existential threats, it responds not only militarily and politically, but also with a grandiose solidarity of its people, which cannot be reversed. It would be good for modern globalists to study the history of Russia more carefully.



Franz Roubaud. *Battle of Borodino panorama (fragment)*. 1911–1912

The lessons of that military campaign confirm that the main goal is to save the army. Then the war will be won. Gaining control of a city is not always a victory. Retreat is not always a disaster. The war must be stopped in due time. Kutuzov begged the tsar to avoid

moving to Europe, but the tsar did not listen to him. This led to the fact that Great Britain won colossal preferences. It got more than victorious Russia. There is something to think about.

But the deeds of heroes are treated as sacred...

## TIMELINE OF THE PATRIOTIC WAR OF 1812

**June 4** – The French Foreign Minister Duc de Bassano signs a note on the severance of diplomatic relations with Russia in Königsberg.

**June 12** – Main French forces cross the Neman River.

**June 16** – The French enter Vilna.

**June 17** – General Kulnev's detachment repulses the attacks of Marshal Oudinot's troops on the town of Vilkomir.

**July 6** – Alexander I signs the manifesto "On the defense of the Fatherland and the creation of people's militia".

**July 14** – Bagration deals a serious blow to Davout's troops near the village of Saltanovka.

**July 19** – Peter Wittgenstein withstands the battle near the village of Klyastitsy, repulsing the attacks of Oudinot.

**July 22** – The 1st and 2nd Russian armies unite near Smolensk.

**July 27** – Ataman M. I. Platov fights at the Molevoy Swamp with French troops of General Sebastiani, who were defeated.

**July 31** – The Austrian corps of the Prince of Schwarzenberg attack Russian troops near the town of Gorodechna. General Tormasov retreats to Kobrin.

**August 4–6** – The Battle of Smolensk between troops of Barclay de Tolly and the main forces of Napoleon. The Russians leave Smolensk.

**August 17** – The new commander-in-chief M. I. Golenishchev-Kutuzov arrives in the army, occupying a convenient defensive line near the village of Borodino.

**August 24** – The Battle of Shevardino between troops of Lieutenant General M. D. Gorchakov 2nd and the main forces of Napoleon.

**August 26** – The Battle of Borodino. The losses on both sides were enormous. Kutuzov orders to retreat.

**August 27** – Ataman Platov's Cossacks repulse all Murat's attempts to capture Mozhaisk.

**September 1** – During the Council at Fili, Kutuzov decided to leave Moscow without a fight in order to save the army.

**September 3** – The vanguard of Murat's corps was forced to release the rearguard of General M. A. Miloradovich from Moscow. On the same day, Murat occupies Moscow, and in the evening Napoleon arrives in the Kremlin.

**September 16** – The partisan detachment led by Colonel D. V. Davydov defeats the enemy unit protecting carts with fodder and artillery equipment near Vyazma.

**September 20** – Russian troops enter the Tarutino camp. This is the moment the guerrilla war begins.

**September 28** – The partisans of General I. S. Dorokhov storm Vereya.

**October 3–5** – Sick and wounded Frenchmen set out from Moscow under the cover of Claparede's division and Nan-souty's detachment.

**October 6** – L. L. Bennigsen attacks Murat's isolated units and defeats them. On the same day, a three-day Battle of Polotsk begins between troops of Peter Wittgenstein and the French led

by Saint-Cyr. Polotsk is taken by storm by columns of Major General Vlasov, Major General Dibich and Colonel Ridiger.

**October 10** – The last units of the Napoleonic army leave Moscow.

**October 12** – The Battle of Maloyaroslavets.

**October 17** – Napoleon enters the Smolensk road.

**October 26** – Miloradovich's troops take Dorogobuzh, defeating Ney.

**October 27** – Napoleon enters Smolensk.

**October 31** – Napoleon leaves Smolensk and moves to Orsha.

**November 1** – French troops attack the corps of General Alekseev.

**November 4, 5 and 6** – Kutuzov defeats the corps of Davout and Ney near the town of Krasny.

**November 7** – Napoleon moves his army at Orsha on thin ice across the Dnieper River.

**November 22** – Victor's rearguard is defeated by troops of Platov and Chaplits on the road to the city of Molodechno.

**November 23** – Napoleon abandoned the remnants of his army and fled to France.



# DEFENDER OF MOSCOW MIKHAIL KUTUZOV

*General Mikhail Kutuzov was a charismatic Russian general, most remembered for his defense of Moscow against Napoleon*

By MICHAEL DAVIS



Aleksey Kivshenko. «Kutuzov at the conference of Fili deciding to surrender Moscow to Napoleon». 1880

When Napoleon invaded Russia in 1812, Michael Andreas Barclay de Tolly (then Minister of War) chose to follow the scorched earth principle, inviting the enemy into the depths of Russia and retreat rather than to risk a major battle. His strategy aroused grudges from most of the generals and soldiers, notably Prince Pyotr Bagration.

As Alexander I had to choose a new general, there was only one choice: Mikhail Kutuzov. He found popularity among the troops mainly because he was Russian (most of the generals commanding Russian troops at that time were foreign), he was brave, he had proven himself in battle, strong-

ly believed in the Russian Orthodox Church, and he looked out for the troops' well-being. The nobles and clergy also regarded Kutuzov highly.

Therefore, when Kutuzov was appointed commander-in-chief and arrived with the Russian army on 17 August 1812, the nation greeted Kutuzov with delight. Only Alexander I, irrationally holding him responsible for the defeat at Austerlitz did not celebrate Kutuzov's commission. Within two weeks Kutuzov decided to give major battle on approaches to Moscow.

Two huge armies clashed near Borodino on 7 September 1812 in what has been described as the greatest

battle in human history up to that date, involving nearly a quarter of a million soldiers. The result of the battle was inconclusive, with near a third of the French and third of the Russian army killed or wounded. It was the beginning of the end for Napoleon's Grand Armée.

After a conference at the village of Fili, Kutuzov fell back on the strategy of his predecessor: withdraw in order to save the Russian army as long as possible. This came at the price of losing Moscow, whose population was evacuated.

Napoleon's Grand Armée entered a deserted Moscow, part of Kutuzov's scorched earth policy that left

no food or housing for the enemy, and with the Russian winter rapidly approaching, Napoleon began his long retreat from Russia. Having retreated along the Kaluga road and replenished his munitions, Kutuzov forced Napoleon into retreat in the Battle of Maloyaroslavets.

As with the German army, the harsh winter claimed many casualties while Kutuzov added to the French misery by harassing the retreating army from the rear. Of 450,000 French soldiers, only 10,000 returned to France.

The old general's cautious pursuit evoked much criticism, but the Russian general's caution was thoroughly vindicated. Kutuzov now held the rank of Field Marshal and had been awarded the victory title of *His Serene Highness Knyaz Smolensky* – having achieved this title for a victory over part of the French army at Smolensk in November 1812.

Early in 1813 Kutuzov fell ill, and he died on 28 April 1813 at Bunzlau. Memorials have been erected to

him there, at the Poklonnaya Hill in Moscow and in front of the Kazan Cathedral, Saint Petersburg, where he is buried, by Boris Orlovsky.

Among Russian military commanders, Kutuzov is held second only to his teacher Suvorov.

Alexander Pushkin addressed the Field Marshal in the famous elegy on Kutuzov's sepulchre. The novelist Leo Tolstoy clearly idolised Kutuzov. In his influential 1869 novel *War and*

*Peace*, the elderly, sick Kutuzov plays a major role in the war sections. He is portrayed as a gentle spiritual man, far removed from the cold arrogance of Napoleon, but with a much clearer vision of the true nature of warfare. Tolstoy wrote of Kutuzov's insight and the national sentiment, "... this sentiment elevated Kutuzov to the high pinnacle of humanity from which he, the general-in-chief, employed all his efforts, not to kill and

exterminate men, but to save and have pity on them."

While fighting the Turks, Kutuzov sustained two separate severe head wounds that ultimately led to loss of sight in his right eye. A portrait of General Kutuzov hangs in the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia, Kutuzov's birthplace. In the portrait Kutuzov is standing with his left side facing forward, presumably to hide his disfigured right eye.



Monument to Kutuzov in Saint Petersburg. 1837



## PATRIOTIC WAR OF 1812

## FIRE OF MOSCOW

*The Fire of Moscow began during the occupation of the city by French troops on September 2, 1812 and lasted four days*

By LEONARD GORLIN

As the French army advanced towards Moscow, the towns and villages lying between the western border of Russia and Moscow were filled with rumors of French brutality towards the local population. Although there were indeed many cases of violence, such stories were either seasoned with terrible details or simply invented. But urban and rural populations frightened by them left their homes and moved far inland.

After the Russian army left Smolensk, a mass exodus from Moscow began. Most of the inhabitants left the city in the first half of August 1812; of the 270,000 Muscovites, a little over 6,000 remained in the city. But besides them, about 9,000 wounded and sick Russian soldiers and officers, who could not be supported to Yaroslavl or Rostov the Great, remained in Moscow.

Local fires began in Moscow, when French troops were still on the outskirts of the city. But by the time Napoleon entered the Kremlin to the Marseillaise sounds, the fire had engulfed almost the entire Zemlyanoy Gorod and Bely Gorod, as well as significant territories on the outskirts, destroying three-quarters of the wooden buildings.

According to the official version of the tsarist government, the fire was caused by the invaders' actions. There were some grounds for this version: the French soldiers set fire to the New Artillery Yard, the Pravoberezhny Arsenal and the barracks on Tverskaya street, and the fire could spread to neighboring streets. But it is also known that the police and the Cossacks led by the Moscow mayor Rostopchin, taking advantage of the fires that had begun, decided to turn the city into a fiery hell for the invaders. For example, Rostopchin issued the order to set fire to some public stores, judicial offices and river boats, as well as the Moskvoretsky Bridge and the barracks in the Kremlin.

Count Fyodor Vasilyevich Rostopchin was a prominent Russian statesman, a general of infantry. During the time of Emperor Paul, Rostopchin was his favourite and de facto managed his foreign policy. He was also a publicist and a patriotic writer. Being the Mayor and the Governor-General of Moscow under Alexander I, Rostopchin clearly understood that if French troops settled in the Kremlin, it would not be easy to expel them from there. In addition, for Rostopchin, who was a patriot and an Orthodox person, the very idea of the French army occupying the Kremlin, destroying, robbing and defiling Russian churches, was unbearable. Actually, this is what happened: in the Cathedral of the Dormition, next to the tomb of the Russian tsars, the French set up a stable. On top of that, there were rumors that Bonaparte considered the Kremlin architecture as medieval and barbaric and intended to rebuild it completely. Rostopchin decided to literally smoke Napoleon out of the Kremlin.

By the night of September 3, Moscow had become a huge bonfire: the fire quickly spread from Pokrovka and the German Quarter to neighbouring quarters. Houses, storehouses, food and building materials warehouses were burning. Napoleon looked at the burning Kitay-Gorod

from a viewing point on the Borovitsky Hill and silently cursed: his grand entry into the Kremlin turned into a terrible disaster, which, as he suggested, would attach a "new Nero" epithet to him. And so, it really happened.

The next day smoke and fumes made it impossible for Napoleon and his entourage to stay in the Kremlin. The French emperor left the burning Moscow together with his retinue and headed for the Arbat, but houses were already burning in its back alleys too. Trying to get around the burning quarter, the French got lost and somehow made their way to the village of Khoroshevo. From here they went to the Moskva River, took the ferry to cross it and, passing by the Vagankovo Cemetery, reached the Petrovsky Palace in the evening. It follows from the notes made by the emperor's adjutant, that the fire pursued them for a long time, destroying one street after another.

Napoleon spent three days in the Petrovsky Palace and returned to Moscow on the fourth day: there was no longer a city in front of him, he saw only ruins and ashes.

The fire subsided by the morning of September 6, making a bonfire of three-quarters of the city. Returning to the Kremlin, Napoleon ordered that the arsonists be found immediately. The French made no bones about those they met on the streets. They seized townspeople and policemen in the city, who, like the peasants from the suburbs, were accused of arson, and some were declared fugitives. All those caught were recognised as arsonists, and on September 12, executions began in the Kremlin

and on the city squares. The French executed 400 Moscow inhabitants without any trial.

The death of 9,000 wounded and sick soldiers and officers who still remained in the city became a terrible tragedy for Russia and its army: they were burned alive. General Aleksey Yermolov recalled the thousands of burnt soldiers: "It was heart-breaking to hear the groans of the wounded, who were left at the mercy of the enemy." The French command believed that those who were recovering could organise partisan detachments, and

therefore committed brutal reprisals against the wounded Russians. The French guards attacked the Kudrinsky hospital, which was located in the Widow's House, where thousands of wounded Russian soldiers were cared for, and killed them all. The French fired cannons at the hospital, threw combustibles through its windows...

The occupation of Moscow by the French lasted 34 days. On October 6, Napoleon ordered his troops to leave the city that they had almost completely plundered. During the retreat, the Great Army mined the Faceted Palace, the Arsenal, the Ivan the Great Bell Tower, as well as the walls and towers of the Kremlin. Explosions began on the night of October 8 to 9, after the last French detachment left the ancient capital. Fortunately, they failed to blow up the Ivan the Great Bell Tower and the Faceted Chamber.

Already on October 10, the Russian cavalry avant-garde under the command of General Alexander von Benkendorf entered the city. This saved the few surviving buildings from new fires. To the surprise of the cavalrymen, peasants from all over



Alexander Smirnov. *The Fire of Moscow. 1813*

the district flocked to the city with carts: they hoped to profit at least something in abandoned houses and, of course, in the Kremlin. A huge crowd tried to penetrate there, but the Guards Cossack regiment forced the crowd to withdraw and prevented the invasion of the Kremlin through gaps in the walls formed after breakdown. The crowd immediately switched its efforts to the French falling behind their army.

Two-thirds of important city buildings burned down in the fire, including the building of Moscow University, the rich library of Dmitry Buturlin, the Arbat Theater. The Moscow Orphanage, located next to one of the fire locations, was extinguished by soldiers led by General Ivan Tutolmin. However, several historical buildings have been preserved in the city, and among them, the oldest civil building outside the Kremlin – the Old English Court of the 15th century, as well as the oldest "multi-storey building" of the city – a drying room of the Simonov Monastery. The town house of the mayor also remained intact. According to experts, the fire destroyed

about 6,500 residential buildings out of 9,000, including more than 2,500 stone ones, about 8,500 warehouses, shops and barns, about a third of the temples. Two-thirds of the churches were sacked by the French.

Many valuable documents and cultural artefacts of Russia perished in the fire. The list of them included such treasures as the copy of the *Tale of Igor's Campaign* from the collection of Count Musin-Pushkin and the Trinity Chronicle. The total damage caused to the city and its inhabitants was estimated by historians at 320 million roubles (about 600 billion roubles in today's money).

The city had been reviving for more than twenty years. In February 1813, following the proposal of Fyodor Rostopchin, Emperor Alexander I established a Construction Commission in Moscow, which was abolished only thirty years later. Rostopchin became the head of the Commission, Osip Bove became the chief architect, and Yegor Cheliev became the chief engineer. Such major architects as Domenico Giar-di and Afanasy Grigoriev took part in the restoration of the city. Bove's



function was to ensure the harmonious image of the reconstructed Moscow, and, given his talent and experience, it was hardly possible to find a more suitable candidate for the chief architect post in post-fire Moscow. In 1813–1814 the reconstruction of the Red Square was carried out under his leadership, and the destroyed Kremlin towers and walls were restored. And a few years later, Alexander Garden was laid out near the Kremlin wall in memory of the victory over Napoleon. According to the plan, the Kremlin was to be surrounded by a ring of squares; Bolotnaya Square became one of the main ones. The city has significantly increased the number of garden squares.

The great achievement of the Commission, as well as the Moscow nobility and merchants, was that by 1816 the main part of housing stock in Moscow was almost completely restored, although due to a lack of financial resources and building materials, many wooden houses were still being built in the city. If we talk about the construction of stone buildings, the revival of the city was marked by the appearance of a variety of classicism known as “Moscow classicism”: the architecture of mansions and public buildings was distinguished by unique shape plasticity, modest but elegant decoration and refined proportionality.



Vasily Vereshchagin. *The Kremlin is on fire. 1887–1898*

Many streets were expanded, including the Garden Ring. The townspeople appreciated it when cars appeared in Moscow 100 years later.

Count Rostopchin played a special role in the life of both Moscow and Russia. He remained in the combat

army after the fall of Moscow. The count manifested himself as a proactive organiser and propagandist: he composed leaflets, traveled around the villages calling on the peasants to partisan actions, and he managed to convince many to start fighting

against the French. In his estate Voronovo, he emancipated his serfs and burned the house and the horse farm.

After the French left Moscow, Rostopchin helped food supply to get back on track to support the population returning to the city. To prevent epidemics, the count created special detachments and organised the removal and disposal of the human corpses and horse bodies in Moscow and on the Borodino Field.

Under the leadership of Rostopchin, work began on the restoration of the Kremlin, the walls and cathedrals of which the French tried to blow up. The Construction Commission headed by Rostopchin received five million roubles for that purpose. Previously, the treasury allocated two million roubles for the distribution among sufferers, but such amount was not



Viktor Mazurovsky. *The Fire of Moscow. Napoleon retreats from the burning city. 1910s.*

enough, and Rostopchin became a scapegoat for many: accusations and reproaches from the disadvantaged people rained down on him. These accusations, as well as the widespread belief that he was responsible for the Fire of Moscow, outraged Rostopchin, who devoted so much time and energy to the revival of Moscow after the departure of the French.

And it should be noted that the most irreconcilable accusers of Rostopchin were, first of all, those who treated the French with sympathy or collaborated with them in one way or another. And Rostopchin, immediately in the first months after returning to Moscow, ordered to restore supervision over the Freemasons and Martinists and established a commission to investigate cases of cooperation with the French.

Rostopchin had many things to do: in particular, he was responsible for recruiting, as well as for

collecting artillery abandoned by the French. After the victory, Moscow had to create a monument from the collected cannons “to humiliate and obscure the self-praise” of the aggressor.

By that time, Rostopchin began to face health problems, and Alexander I, returning from Europe, accepted Rostopchin’s resignation as governor in 1814.

The count spent some time in Saint Petersburg, but constantly felt the hostility of the imperial court. In May 1815 he left Russia to undergo a course of treatment in Carlsbad and hoped to return home soon, but it turned out that he spent eight more years abroad. He enjoyed a reputation as a celebrated war hero in Germany and elsewhere; the kings of Prussia and England considered him as a great patriot of Russia and received him with pleasure. The ingratitude shown by his compatriots, apparently, was the reason why Rostopchin settled in Paris in 1817, periodically traveling to Baden for treatment, as well as to Italy and England. Formally considered a member of the State Council, Rostopchin returned to Russia in 1823 and petitioned the emperor for his complete resignation. He suffered paralysis and died in Moscow in January 1826.



Count Fyodor Rostopchin



# RESULTS OF THE PATRIOTIC WAR OF 1812

*After the Battle of Waterloo, the French empire led by Napoleon crumbled and the European countries he conquered became independent again*

By OLEG OZEROV

The Patriotic War of 1812 was cruel and bloody; it became a tragedy for both Russia and France. If we talk about human losses, they were very high. True, they are incommensurable with the losses in the First and Second World Wars, but the mobilisation capabilities at that time were much lower, since the population of the warring countries was several times smaller. For example, the population of Russia before the war of 1812 was only about 40 million people.

Russia lost more than 450 thousand people during the Patriotic War of 1812 and subsequent campaigns in Europe. This number includes those who died from wounds and frostbite, as well as civilians who died as a result of hostilities. Of course, this figure is terrible, given that Russia's active army included only 540 thousand soldiers and officers by the beginning of hostilities in 1812, and it covers all military units, of which a good quarter was located in the vast expanses of Russia far from its western borders!

If we talk about irretrievable combat losses, then Tsar Alexander I himself admitted, based on the reports of regimental and divisional commanders, that 300 thousand people became victims of the "unparalleled invasion".

But by the end of 1812, Napoleon's Great Army had ceased to exist as a major military force. When Napoleon was preparing for the campaign, the French mobilisation capabilities

were about twice as high as those of Russia: after all, more than 71 million people lived on the territory of the French Empire and on the territories of vassal countries, and Napoleon could freely use both human and economic resources being available in much of Europe.

Being mobilised and equipped for decisive battles, The Great Army of Bonaparte numbered about 670 thousand soldiers and officers. This number was achieved due to the fact that troops of 16 nationalities took part in the eastern campaign. The most numerous national groups after the French included Germans and Poles. Based on the allied agreements with France, Austria allocated the full 30,000-strong army, and Prussia a contingent of 20,000 soldiers. After the invasion of Russia, units of up to 20 thousand people consisting of the inhabitants of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania, were added to The Great Army. In total, according to the most conservative estimates and including the second line and reinforcements, up to 685 thousand people took part in Napoleon's Russian campaign. Napoleon also had reserves numbering from 130 to 220 thousand soldiers in the garrisons of Central Europe and 100 thousand of them in the National Guard of France; the latter, by law, could not fight outside the country, but when was necessary, it sourced sergeants and gunners, and even entire battalions.

The underestimation of the combat capabilities of the Russian army,

the climatic conditions in Russia, the scale of a possible partisan movement and, in general, the national-patriotic spirit of the Russian people led to the rapid death of The Great Army. The shameful step back of French troops from Moscow turned into a disaster. It was previously believed that about 60 thousand people returned across the Russian border, that is, about a tenth of Napoleon's troops, but other figures can be found in French sources: as French generals noted, less than 32 thousand people managed to cross the Berezina River. And some of them subsequently died from wounds and diseases...

If we summarise the losses of the French throughout the war, they are huge: 200 thousand killed, more than 200 thousand imprisoned, about 130 thousand deserted and about 60 thousand more sheltered by Russian peasants, townspeople and nobles. Of the 47 thousand elite guards of Napoleon, who entered Russia with the emperor, only several hundred soldiers survived six months later.

As of January 1, 1813, according to the reports of the governor-generals from the western, Volga and Ural provinces of Russia, there were more than 200 thousand captured soldiers and officers of The Great Army, of which 140–150 thousand were "organised" (in camps) and 50–60 thousand of them were "unorganised" (so called *"sharomyzhniki"*). It is known from the same reports that more than 60 thousand former prisoners of war became Russian subjects. According



A. D. Kivshenko. "The Entry of the Russian Army into Paris". 1880

to various estimates, approximately 10 thousand people out of the total number of The Great Army that invaded Russia, remained in French troops. And over 1200 guns were left in Russia.

Although the surviving soldiers and officers eventually became the backbone of the new army established by the French emperor from scratch, this new army did not have that combat experience and that fighting spirit which Napoleon's victorious army possessed. It is not surprising that the French army was defeated in the two decisive battles of the subsequent period, at Leipzig and at Waterloo. This gives grounds to assert that the campaign against Moscow ended with the fact that the largest and most combat-ready army of the 19th century Europe was defeated, and the mighty French Empire was finally defeated three years later. After the Battle of Waterloo, the French empire led by Napoleon crumbled and the European countries he conquered became independent again.

On December 25, 1812, Emperor Alexander I of Russia announced that the Russian army would continue its offensive against France. 380 days later, on March 13, 1814, the Russian corps as part of Allied troops took Paris.

It is well known that the word *bistro* appeared in French usage, because Russian officers ran into French cafes and, when ordering food, said: "*Bistro, bistro!*" ("Quickly, quickly!"). Indeed, this often happened, but one should not think that the capture of Paris was a smooth ride for the Russian army. Russian troops sometimes faced fierce resistance both in the vicinity of Paris and in the city itself, but the guards and the Cossacks broke it.

It is recognised that the battle for Paris was one of the bloodiest for the Allies in the campaign of 1814. In just one day of fighting, they lost more than 8,000 servicemen, of which more than 7,000 were Russian soldiers. But that was the last day of a whole era – the era of the Napoleonic wars.

Wanting to save the city of many thousands from bombardment and street fighting, Marshal Marmont, a commander of the right flank of the French defense, sent a truce envoy to the Russian emperor by 5 o'clock in the afternoon. Alexander I replied that he would order "to stop the battle if Paris is surrendered: otherwise, by the evening they will not recognise the place where the capital was." Paris was surrendered.

On March 19, 1814, squadrons of cavalry led by Emperor Alexander I solemnly entered the capital of France. The streets along which the allies were to move, and all the streets adjoining

them, were full of people; people occupied even the roofs of houses. In the suburbs, the people greeted Allied troops in the sullen silence, but in the rich blocks, the Allies were welcomed with flowers.

Alexander I generously rewarded his generals. The commander-in-chief of Russian troops, General Barclay de Tolly, received the rank of field marshal. Six generals, including Raevsky and Yermolov, were awarded the Order of Saint George Second class. Those were high awards, considering that only one Barclay de Tolly was awarded such an award for the Battle of Borodino. The Russian infantry general Langeron, who distinguished himself during the capture of Montmartre, was awarded the highest Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle the First-Called.

In May, peace was signed, returning France to the borders of 1792 and restoring the power of the Bourbon dynasty in the country.

The Allies thought Napoleon was done for, but he became yet another European troublemaker when he



returned to power for a full hundred days in 1815, but only to again lose the battle and finally ruin France's prestige.

In contrast, the international prestige of Russia increased unprecedently after the war of 1812. In the next few decades, the Russian Empire remained the most influential country in Europe. When the Congress of Vienna took place in 1814–1815, at which the European powers concluded a number of important treaties, it was Russia that played the decisive role there, and all Western European countries took its opinion into account. The situation began to change by the middle of the 19th century, when the Western European countries started overtaking Russia economically, creating a kind of coalition of bourgeois states that

aimed at limiting Russia's influence on European affairs. At that time the main problem of Russia consisted of serfdom, which restrained the productive forces in the Russian Empire and hindered the development of industrial relations.

Summing up the results of the war of 1812, Western (including French) historians prioritise such reasons for the defeat of The Great Army as severe frosts and the unpreparedness of the French army for them, the unwillingness of the Russian command to conduct decisive battles and the "dishonest use" of partisan forces against the regular army. By the way, some modern Western historians also explain the defeat of Nazi troops by the same reasons, perhaps with the exception of the decisive battles.

But such explanations and references to the country's severe climate do not stand up to scrutiny.

First, war is not only guns and cannons, but also the supply of troops with the necessary resources: ammunition, equipment, warm clothes and hot meals. Going to a huge country with a colder climate, with great human resources and material capabilities, the French strategists and, above all, Napoleon himself had to consider the scale of people's resistance and the likelihood that the war might change the scenario that the French emperor had prepared. He should have foreseen that such a large country as Russia had the opportunities to manipulate its forces and resources, envelop enemy troops and create powerful obstacles for their cavalry.



Carl-Friedrich Beyer. "Capitulation of Paris on 19 (31) March 1814". First quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century



Russian army enters Paris in 1814

No doubt, Russia has severe climatic conditions, but hard frost affected Napoleon's army most of all when it was already stepping back, when it was completely demoralised and only a small part of it survived. Frost below 20 Celcius degrees really took place, but at the time when the remnants of The Great Army stepped back to the Berezina River.

Important battles in this war included Smolensk, Borodino, Tarutino and Maloyaroslavets. Western historians complain that there was no battle near the border which Bonaparte dreamed of and in which he would clearly have an advantage. The refusal of the Russian army of a general battle near the border and its step back to the inland was the right decision: Napoleon was forced to march up Russia, which extended his supply chains and complicated the management of troops. The stubborn resistance of the Russian army and the ability of the commanders-in-chief

M. B. Barclay de Tolly and M. I. Kutuzov to save the army did not allow Napoleon to win the war by victory in one big battle.

As they moved away from the Neman, the Napoleonic army was forced to rely more and more on foraging, but not on the early prepared system of supply centers. Under such conditions, the inefficiency of the French foragers, as well as the resistance of the peasants to the enemy, led to disastrous consequences. The peasants not only hid food and fodder, but also implemented guerrilla warfare against the French foragers and intercepted enemy carts. The French system of supplying troops with food and fodder collapsed, famine began in the French units, and a significant part of the army turned into an incapacitated crowd in which each soldier dreamed only of his personal salvation.

The historian and participant in the war of 1812, Lieutenant Gen-

eral Mikhailovsky-Danilevsky emphasised the importance of strategic planning carried out by Emperor Alexander I and his military advisers, in his book *Description of the Patriotic War of 1812*. At a time when the main forces of the Russian army were still stepping back, action plans were already drawn up in Saint Petersburg for the armies led by Chichagov and Wittgenstein against the flank corps of The Great Army. Those plans began to be put into practice shortly after Napoleon's entry into Moscow (Chichagov's offensive) and ended with the unification of all Russian troops on the Berezina River.

Thus, the main reason for the defeat of The Great Army was the nationwide upsurge in defense of the fatherland, the mass heroism of Russian soldiers and officers, as well as the military leadership talents of Russian military leaders.

This nationwide feat was repeated during the Great Patriotic War.



# NAPOLEON ON BOARD THE BELLEROPHON

*The work by Charles Lock Eastlake is the only portrait of the defeated French emperor ever done by an English painter.*

By VYACHESLAV KATAMIDZE

They say that during the time that Napoleon Bonaparte ruled France and the countries he had conquered (or reduced to the status of colonies), about two hundred portraits of him were painted. Of these no more than thirty became well known, since they were painted by leading French and other European painters. However, there is one portrait of him that French historians and art critics do not like to talk about: this is a portrait painted from life by the British artist Charles Eastlake, 'Napoleon on Board the Bellerophon'.

Napoleon surrendered to the captain of the Bellerophon ship about a month after the Battle of Waterloo. All this time the French authorities, including the Provisional Government in Paris, demanded that Napoleon leave France as soon as possible. If he lingered in France, he risked becoming a prisoner of the Bourbons or the Austrians, and in France they really did not want the former emperor to be executed or end up in prison.

It was decided that it was best for Napoleon to surrender to the British and ask them

for political asylum. But Napoleon still hoped that he would be able to escape punishment in Europe and reach the American continent.

On 10 July, he sent two of his emissaries, General Savary and Comte de Las Cases, to the British Royal Navy ship Bellerophon to meet with Captain Maitland and discuss with him the possibility of British help in the emigration of the former emperor to the United States.

Napoleon did not know that all the captains of the British Navy, including Maitland, had been ordered not to allow such an unfolding of events on any account. Thus, Maitland refused to help Napoleon, but kindly offered to take him with a small retinue aboard his ship to transport him to the UK. The negotiations went on for several days, and when Napoleon was finally convinced that it would be impossible to soften the position of the British, he decided to surrender to them.

On 15 July, the former emperor arrived on board the Bellerophon and thereby put his fate into the hands of the British Prince Regent [the future George IV].

The Bellerophon first anchored in Torbay, near the small fishing town of Brixham. The rumour that Bonaparte himself was on the ship quickly spread in the town, and dozens of boats surrounded the ship. It was said that the former emperor suffered from seasickness greatly during the journey and that it was time for him to go ashore, to finally be on solid ground. Rumours of this kind and the intense interest of the inhabitants of the

coastal region in the Bellerophon's passenger caused the authorities' discontent. The UK did not want Napoleon to set foot on British soil at Brixham or anywhere else, so it was decided to move the Bellerophon to Plymouth Bay. Napoleon had to stay on the ship for some time: after all, all the monarchs of the victorious countries, and not just the British Prince Regent, were to decide his fate.

But soon Plymouth and its surrounding area were agitated by the message that Napoleon was on board the Bellerophon: thousands of local people rushed to hire boats to get closer to the ship and look at the 'monster' who had been tormenting all of Europe for decades. They were amazed at what they saw. A plump man of

small stature, dressed in the uniform of a colonel of the French guards, was walking around the deck; he sometimes squatted to stretch, or did exercises. When another boat approached the ship, he took off his cocked hat, greeting the 'tourists'. He seemed to enjoy the attention of the British public. And all this was in no way consistent with the image of the 'cannibal and exterminator of youth' that the British had developed...

At that time the painter Charles Lock Eastlake, an expert on European painting and art history, worked in Plymouth. He did not become an ordinary spectator: Eastlake rented a boat quickly, ordered it to go up to the ship and began to make sketches that later allowed him to do the painting, 'Napoleon on Board the Bellerophon'. And, by the way, this



Charles Lock Eastlake. 'Napoleon on Board the Bellerophon'. 1815

is the only portrait of the defeated French emperor ever done by an English painter!

In the painting Napoleon takes centre stage; a fairly large space on the canvas is devoted to the British flag – a symbol of Napoleon's final defeat at the Battle of Waterloo. To the left of Napoleon we see General Bertrand, a man devoted to him who followed him to the island of Elba. The defeated emperor looks rather blank; he does not know what fate the European monarchs are preparing for him, but the worst awaits him: in prison or exile, where there will be no place not only for battles or campaigns, but also for simple actions, which for him is tantamount to death.

As we know, he was exiled to the island of St Helena, located at a distance of 2,000 kilometres from the

African coast. He had complete freedom of movement on the island, took horseback rides and was not limited in contacts with anyone, although there was a detachment of British military and representatives of France, Russia and Austria on the island. The island had a healthy climate, Napoleon did not need anything, but he was terribly homesick. After a life full of action, the former emperor, who possessed a huge capacity for work, felt completely lost. His only serious occupation was dictating his memoirs. In them he recognised the war with Russia as one of his major mistakes, which had catastrophic consequences for him. Napoleon died in 1821.

As for Eastlake, his painting attracted the attention of the general public; it was called the artist's indisputable success. His popularity grew rapidly: he began to order canvases on which the portrait, the genre, and the reality of the situation were equally important for the composition.

His knowledge of European painting was highly appreciated. In 1843 he became the first curator of the National Gallery in London, in 1850 – president of the Royal Academy, and in 1855 – director of the National Gallery.

Eastlake was a humanist with an encyclopedic knowledge. In particular, his knowledge of European culture and painting helped not only to form, but also to study the collection of the National Gallery, to which he bequeathed his extensive art collection.



I. Aivazovsky. 'Napoleon on the Island of St Helena' (detail). 1897



## FILMS

# WAR AND PEACE: ONE OF FILM'S GREATEST EPICS

The biggest blockbuster in Soviet history, a 7-hour adaptation of *War and Peace*, is absolutely worth seeing.

In any serious, sober-minded discussion about what could be selected to exemplify the farthest reaches of cinema's capabilities, *War and Peace* – Sergei Bondarchuk's largely unseen adaptation of Tolstoy's literary classic – would have to be on the table.

The story of its production, of a man moving heaven and Earth to realize a staggering vision, boggles the mind to this day. The adaptation set a new standard for "epic," capturing all the passion and tragedy of Napoleon's clash against the Russian aristocracy in its seven-hour sprawl.

Anyone who hears "431 minutes of *War and Peace*" and imagines an airless museum exhibit passing itself off as a film has another thing coming.

The film's larger-than-life legend begins in 1961, when Bondarchuk commandeered the largest budget the USSR had ever seen for a single motion picture. Released in four parts in 1966 and 1967, it was a colossal success in its original homeland run as well as a worldwide sensation, and playing as a four-night special on ABC in 1972 after having set a new record for highest ticket cost – as steep as \$7.50, the equivalent of dropping \$56.52 on a ticket today, and a big step up from the \$1.20 rate in place at the time – during theatrical screenings of an abridged six-hour edit in the US. The 1966 Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film was just the feather in its cap – er, shako.

In 1956, a take on Tolstoy's doorstopper novel by Hollywood lu-

minary King Vidor inadvertently launched a competition that would yield the seventh art's high-water mark. Vidor's version – which tapped Henry Fonda and Audrey Hepburn to carry its 208 minutes – earned plenty of Academy love without the box-office receipts to match. A subtitled version finally made the trek to Russian theaters in 1959.

Still, government apparatchiks didn't like seeing Fonda and Hepburn's faces filling their people with ideas about Western excellence. So culture minister Yekaterina Furtseva commissioned a red-blooded production from the homeland that would "surpass the American-Italian one in its artistic merit and authenticity," as the open letter she published in state press announced. It was to be "a matter of honor for the Soviet cinema industry."

Sergei Bondarchuk recognized that a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity had fallen into his lap in the form of a blank check drawing on an infinite bank account. Bondarchuk harnessed a nationalist spirit for unprecedented scope. Riding the wave of nationalist sentiment, he put a small fortune of 8.29 million rubles to work on a spectacle that would blow his overseers away. With the administration's notoriously short patience for failure in mind, he literally directed the film as if his life depended on it.

It's tough to say definitively, but this critic is fairly certain that no single filmmaker in the medium's history has ever been granted the level of access afforded to Bondarchuk during *War and Peace*'s six-year pro-

duction process. In addition to having a gargantuan sum of money at his disposal, Bondarchuk had his pick of the Soviet Union's finest playwrights to draw up his script.

He filled his opulent sets with chandeliers, furniture, and other 19th-century relics on loan from over 40 museums across the USSR. The military advisers acting as Bondarchuk's consultants gave him the

go-ahead to marshal thousands upon thousands of actual soldiers for use as extras in his psychotically ambitious battle scenes. And he cast himself in the lead role of Pierre Bezukhov.

Bondarchuk was insistent upon using the meticulously bred Borzoi dogs for a fox-hunting sequence in keeping with the national tradition, except that the noble-bred species had grown uncommon. He managed

to find 16 of them, only to discover that the canines had lost the tracking instinct. His fix? Borrow a pack of wolves from the state zoological department, get some scent hounds from the Ministry of Defense to chase down the wolves, and then send the Borzois to follow the hounds. Convolution? Yes. Needlessly expensive? Sure, but when you're working without limits, who could possibly care?







Sergei Bondarchuk as Pierre Bezukhov

The director's plan to hook the masses relied on shock and awe, bending even the most stubborn detractors into submission via the sheer magnificence of his vision. Within the tangled web of passion between Natasha Rostova (Lyudmila Savelyeva), Pierre Bezukhov (Bondarchuk), and Andrei Bolkonsky (Vyacheslav Tikhonov), the crew mounted a series of astonishing set pieces, continually topping themselves.

The fox-hunting bit that Bondarchuk worked so hard on came out like a psychedelic swirl of gnashing teeth and gaping eyeballs, and early clashes at Austerlitz and Schöngrabern tease the viewer with a taste of the sum total of the film's might. For his grand finale, Bondarchuk recreated the burning of Moscow by razing a vast swath of land in a village just outside the city. The terror in the

eyes of the extra dashing alongside Pierre through the inferno appears as authentic as it gets. Say what you

will about the wonders of CGI, but sometimes there's just no substitute for the real thing.

Bondarchuk's staging of the conflicts between the Napoleonic and Russian forces make *Apocalypse Now* look like a particularly audacious senior thesis film.

Virtuosic camerawork rendered each scene of Bondarchuk's *War and Peace* its own sort of spectacle. Aerial shots that stretch out for miles survey the full breadth of Bondarchuk's army, assuming a God's-eye-view so that he may squeeze as many bodies into a frame as possible. On the ground, custom rigging enabled how-the-hell-did-he-do-that tracking shots, wending in and out of bayonet stabbings, horse deaths, and chains of detonations to capture all the hysteria in these orgies

The film was produced by the Mosfilm studios between 1961 and 1967, with considerable support from the Soviet authorities and the Red Army which provided hundreds of horses and over ten thousand soldiers as extras. At a cost of 8.29 million Soviet rubles – equal to US\$9.21 million at 1967 rates, or \$60–70 million in 2019, accounting for ruble inflation – it was the most expensive film made in the Soviet Union. Upon its release, it became a success with audiences, selling approximately 135 million tickets in the USSR.

Principal photography began on 7 September 1962, the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Borodino/

In July 1965, *War and Peace* was awarded the Grand Prix at the 4th Moscow International Film Festival together with the Hungarian entry *Twenty Hours*. Ludmila Savelyeva was presented with an honorary diploma. [86] The readers of *Sovetskii Ekran*, the official publication of the State Committee for Cinematography, chose Savelyeva and Vyacheslav Tikhonov for the best actress and actor of 1966, in recognition of their appearance in the picture. In the same year, *War and Peace* also received the Million Pearl Award of the Roei Association of Film Viewers in Japan.

In 1967, the film was entered into the 1967 Cannes Film Festival, outside of the competition. It was sent there instead of Andrei Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev*, which was invited by the festival's organizers but deemed inappropriate by the Soviet government.

In the United States, it won the Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Language Film in the 26th Golden Globe Awards. The picture was the Soviet entry to the 41st Academy Awards, held on 14 April 1969. It received the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film and was nominated for the Best Art Direction.

*War and Peace* was the first Soviet picture to win the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, and was the longest film ever to receive an Academy Award until *O.J.: Made in America* won the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature in 2017.

It also won the National Board of Review Award for Best Foreign Language Film and the New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Foreign Language Film for 1968.

In 1970, it was nominated for the BAFTA Award for Best Production Design in the 23rd British Academy Film Awards.

The film has often been considered the grandest epic film ever made, with many asserting its monumental production to be unrepeatable and unique in film history.

of brutality. It might have taken approximately the same amount of effort and resources to mount an actual ground invasion.

Though he'd been appointed a de facto keeper of the cultural gates, Bondarchuk found plenty of room to get his own kicks through indulgent formal experimentation. The scenes of dialogue bristle with their own weird sense of artistry and beauty. Even the barren snow has been shot with a lushness that imbues a majesty in the blankness, and the footage is gussied up with double-exposures predating the arrival of the word "trippy" in the Russian language.

At the conclusion of the film's second segment, Bondarchuk plays around with rhythm by inserting a split-second shot of a jingling chandelier to punctuate Pierre's initial courtship of Natasha.

One of the most indelible scenes takes place during a roaring night of revelry among the nobles, as Bondarchuk literalizes their stupor with aggressive, whirling cinematography to make a tornado out of their party. It's gloriously disorienting, and still, it's hard to miss the real live bear chugging a stein of beer. One might wonder what this bear is doing, tearing it up with human beings, but Bondarchuk's is a film of "why not?" and not "why?"

From Tolstoy's dense prose, Bondarchuk's *War and Peace* mines visceral blockbuster entertainment.



Lyudmila Savelyeva as Natasha Rostova



Lyudmila Savelyeva as Natasha Rostova

Like *In Search of Lost Time* or *Infinite Jest*, *War and Peace* is preceded by an intimidating reputation. Clocking in at north of 1,200 pages and boasting hundreds of characters (many

of whom share tough-to-keep-straight family names), it still scares off all but the most determined readers. There's the old cocktail party line about highbrow types who split their lifetime into two periods: before and after they conceded they'd never read Proust; it's easy to succumb to the same self-limitations with Tolstoy.

Bondarchuk wasn't playing to the monocle-polishers, however. His goal was nothing less than for every living citizen of Russia – if not the world – to see his movie, preferably multiple times. He wanted the finished product to be opulent, titanic, heartbreaking and above all, compulsively watchable. Along with screenwriter Vasily Solovyov, he pruned a handful of the original novel's subplots and worked the thorny historical philosophizing into a palatable episodic structure. Much in the same respect that Shakespeare pitched himself first and foremost to the groundlings, Bondarchuk fancied his work something closer to a prestigious binge-watch than a lofty high-culture object.



# JUNE SAINTS

*June 17 of the Gregorian we celebrate the memory of Frontasius, Severin, Severian and Silanus, whereas on June 17 of the 'Julian calendar' the memory of Savel, Manuel and Ismail is celebrated*

By AUGUSTINE SOKOLOVSKI,  
Doctor of Theology, priest

The ongoing series of publications about the forgotten and unknown, famous, and unnamed saints of the Ancient Church offers readers of the Russian Mind a theological reflection on the saints, whose memory is celebrated in June. In the Church of that time they were famous. Now they are forgotten.

These are saints Frontasius, Severinus, Severian and Silanus, of Gaul, who lived and suffered for their faith in Christ in the south of modern France, and Sabel, Manuel, Ismael of Persia became martyrs in the west of Asia Minor. Let us call the first saints "Provençal", while the memory of the Church calls others "Martyrs of Chalcedon".

They lived at different times in different parts of the Roman Empire. However, they are surprisingly connected by the amazing irony of the combination of the Gregorian and Julian, that is, the new and old calendars.

The fact is that June 17 of the Gregorian, that is, the modern secular calendar, we celebrate the memory of Severin, Severian and others. Whereas on June 17 of the 'Julian calendar', that is June 30th of the Gregorian, the memory of Savel, Manuel and Ismail is celebrated. The Julian calendar is astronomically late. Now the difference between the calendars is 13 days. Therefore, despite this factual difference, the memory of the Provençal and Chalcedonian saints seems to fall on the same day.

*Frontasius, Severinus, Severian and Silanus – Saints of Provence*

The book of Acts of the Apostles reports that the Emperor Claudius (41–54) "ordered the Jews to withdraw from Rome" (18:2). The consequence of this Jewish exile was the resettlement of the Roman Jews. At that time, the Romans did not yet fully distinguish Judaism from Christianity, and the Early Church itself expected that all Jews would believe in the Messiahship of Christ. Therefore, as a consequence of Claudius' edict of, Christians were also affected by this imperial order of exile.

So, Saints Frontasius, Severin, Severian and Silanus, according to their lives, found themselves in the South of France, where they preached Christianity. In this mission, they were not alone, since there were quite a lot of such itinerant preachers, following the example of the Apostles, in the first centuries of Christianity. According to the testimony of the vita of Mary Magdalene, after the Resurrection of Christ, she also preached Christ in Provence. At the origins of the mission of Frontasius was a certain Bishop Frontonus.

Since the existence of Judaism was sanctified by antiquity, Roman laws recognized it as a legitimate religion. In its turn, Christianity, from the moment the Roman authorities began

to distinguish it from Judaism proper, was considered a new, innovative religion, and therefore was forbidden. The time of the preaching of the Provençal martyrs fell on that very historical moment when the Romans began to understand that Christianity was not only not identical, but also opposed itself to Judaism.

For preaching about Christ, the saints were seized and brought to trial. According to the acts, at a trial chaired by the local Roman governor, Frontasius and his companions were required to renounce the faith. To do this, they had to make a sacrifice to Zeus. According to the Church Fathers, as well as modern historians, such a sacrifice could be both public and solemn, but it also could be completely formal. However, the Ancient Church perceived even such a formal renunciation as an apostasy – a direct denial of the faith of Christ.

"After the governor could not overcome the saints with torment, he made the last decision regarding them – he ordered them to cut off their heads", – is written in the acts. "The impious warriors, having beheaded the heads of the martyrs, threw their bodies to the ground, leaving them without burial," the same text testifies. So, for refusing to renounce Christ and to sacrifice to the gods, the saints were tortured and then beheaded.

After some time, as the acts say, the Lord revealed with the bodies



*Manuel, Sabel, and Ismael of Persia*

of the saints something supernatural. It was an obvious miracle. The beheaded Frontasius, Severinus, Severian and Silanus got up, and took their heads in their hands. They ascended a high hill, where at that time Bishop Frontonus, who had sent them to preach, was hiding from persecution. Having laid down their heads before the feet of the bishop, they "stretched out their bodies on the ground in the form of a cross."

Note that the cross bow, when the arms are completely outstretched, and the shape of the body forms a cross, is one of the oldest forms of Christian bow. Nowadays, it used during the orthodox rite of monastic tonsure.

So, the holy martyrs "rose, took their heads in their hands, and ascended a high hill." A similar, almost analogous story is contained in the description of the martyrdom of saint Denis of Paris (+96), who was a contemporary of our saints.

It is possible that the very identity of these stories indicates that their authors hardly pursued the goal of reconstructing the historical picture of what happened after the death of the martyrs. There is an eschatological symbol.

Recall that eschatology is a theological discipline that aims to interpret the end times.

The task of the systematic theologian is the need to try to decipher special semantics, and eschatological

symbolism of a text. "Things begin to speak when you look at them for a long time", writes Erich Maria Remarque in the novel "Shadows in Paradise" (1971). To paraphrase these words of the famous writer, the lives of the saints are silent if you do not listen to them.

It was precisely this miraculous resurrection from the dead, the taking into hands of his own head in the martyrdom of saint Denis of Paris, that was the subject of special ridicule from Ivan Karamazov himself in Dostoevsky's novel "The Brothers Karamazov."

It is important to understand that the worldview of the first Christian generations was based on opposing the Christian belief in overcoming



death by the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus to the idea of biological, technological, literary, natural and any other immortality of personalities, people, gods, or heroes.

If we try to translate what has just been said into the language of modernity, then we can say that Christian understanding of immortality is not a natural-religious, mythological, or even biblical Old Testament immortality of procreation. It is not the bare life of medical technologies and not the “immortality of dictionaries”.

“The immortality of dictionaries”- when the memory of a person is stored in encyclopedia articles, or in volumes of countless books and works written by him and stored on the shelves of libraries. Contemporaries called such people “prolific authors”, but the writer Vladimir Nabokov (1899–1977) considered them “petrified”. So, Christian immortality is not the immortality of petrification.

This is extremely important. Because both in the secular and even in our “internal” orthodox mentality, the presence, recognition and even the desire for such “immortality of dictionaries” is sometimes extremely strong. We are often convinced that through a career, work, hierarchical affiliation, or theological creativity, one can firmly enter history and, thereby, gain “immortality”. Thus, the illusion arises that future generations will read our texts, see our name on the bookshelves, and which may seem a very convincing and weighty factor, read, remember, and know about us thanks to dictionaries.

It is very important to remember that the person who lives and acts here and now, while still alive and the name, designation, title, photograph, picture, and obelisk that will exist here on earth after death are not identical. This not-identity is both biblical and axiomatic. We are absolutely not identical to what will be after us. We are not identical to all those who will come after us.

Death cannot be overcome by any

biological, hereditary, hierarchical way. In this total denial of the “surmountability” of death lies one of the axioms of the Christian understanding of the last things. This is what eschatology is about. The Ancient Church tried to formulate this in a very special semantic form.

Let’s call this first axiom “the axiom of non-identity”. In Christianity there is another axiom. This second axiom asserts that to the extent of real communion, that is, the communion of a person here and now with the grace-filled gift of the Faith of Christ, death will be overcome.

On the other side of his earthly existence the human being, in Christ Jesus, and only in Him, is predestined to live. Not just to exist, but to live – and this is the most important thing. Not on their own, not because “the soul is immortal by nature and continues to live after the death of the body,” as ancient philosophy taught. But, firstly, due to the fact that man was created in the image of God, and the image of God cannot turn into non-existence. And secondly, by the power of Christ’s Resurrection, as Paul writes about it, “as in Adam all die, so in Christ, on the contrary, all shall be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22).

“We need to die in such a way that death itself loses its strength when it meets us”, writes Andrey Platonov (+1951) in one of his stories. “He lived as if he had to die, so that, hav-



*Julian, the last pagan ruler of the Roman Empire*

ing died, he would live”, the medieval epigram echoes this.

It is important to understand that the trials of Christians in the Roman Empire followed a pattern. Therefore, many of these acts, that is, descriptions of the trial of the martyrs, which necessarily included demands to renounce faith in Christ, torture, and suffering, were simply the same. To give these documents theological and philosophical relevance, they used a language saturated with special semantics, a play on words and images. They used images, symbols, and narrations that, not only to us, but also to the children of Modernity, such as Ivan Karamazov, seemed and continue to seem naive, absurd, and meaningless.

So, back to the language of martyr acts. It has a special semantic depth. The martyr is already partaker of the power of the coming general resurrection of the dead.

By the power of faith, he is already with Christ in Heaven. The Witness of the Faith, and this is precisely what the word ‘martyr’ means, acquires the ability to look at the former self, and therefore the former mortal.

Now the martyr has partaken of the immortality of the Lord Jesus Christ. He looks at us from the pages of his own acts, in order to call us by word and deed, with a gesture, as if repeating the gospel words of the Lord. “Get up, let’s get out of here” (John 14:31). He speaks in the symbolic language of hagiographic martyr stories, and he calls to “pick up your head and ascend the High Hill.” He invites us to follow the eschatological call of Christ the Savior.

### *Manuel, Sabel, and Ismael of Persia*

Contemporaries called Chalcedon “the city of the blind”. It was here, on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus, that the ancient Greeks founded a colony in 680 BC. They did not notice that on the other, European coast, there was an area that was incomparably more convenient and incredibly suitable for founding a city. A thousand years later, in 330, it was there that Emperor Constantine founded the new capital of the Empire, Constantinople, New Rome.

Modern Chalcedon is a district of Istanbul, on its Asian side. It has long lost its former name; there are no traces of the ancient Christian presence in it. But in ancient times, it was very significant.

In the ancient Roman Martyrology, Saints Manuel, Sabel and Ismail are called the “Martyrs of Chalcedon” and are not listed by name. Such “nameless” mention of certain saints in Christian antiquity was not rare. It

could mean that those who entered the names in the calendar knew them personally. This could also testify to the great veneration that took place then. Now Manuel, Savel and Ismail are forgotten saints.

It so happened that the first three centuries of Christian history were a time of persecution. However, since the Edict of Milan (313) and the era of the sole reign of Constantine the Great (272–337), the persecution ceased. As many thought, the persecution ceased forever.

At the same time, persecution of Christians continued to take place in Persia, as well as in other lands and territories. Persia was a rival empire of Rome for many centuries. For the apologists of Orthodox Christianity, mainly in the east, this served as a very weighty argument for the apotheosis not only of Christian emperors, but also of the Roman Imperial Rule itself. Up to the point that the definition of Orthodoxy became: “the official doctrinal formulation of the Roman Empire.” Starting from that era, it finally took shape at the Ecumenical Council of 451.

Surprisingly, it was under such circumstances that in 361–362 the rule passed to Julian. Initially, he was an adherent of Christianity, so that even in the Church he was considered catechumen. Recall that in those days baptism was accepted, if not before death, then at a very mature age. However, just before accession to the throne, Julian proclaimed himself a pagan and began a campaign to destroy Christianity.

In 362 it was the Shah of Persia who sent three Christians in military rank to Julian to conclude peace between the Empires. Not knowing about the faith of the envoys, he invited them to his celebrations in Chalcedon. Most likely, there was simply no place for such a holiday in too Christian Constantinople – New Rome was originally a Christian city – therefore the ruler preferred to make sacrifices and prayers “outside the city wall”. Manuel, Savel, and Is-

mail, and it was they, refused to join the pagan holiday.

In the form in which it has come down to us in the description of the suffering of the martyrs, the confession of faith by Manuel, Sabel, and Ismail bears obvious features of authenticity. It does not repeat the arguments of traditional canonical hagiographical formulas.

The saints did not make excuses before the Emperor. “You constantly talk about the gods!” They were diplomats. They succinctly and justly put Julian on the look that, under the pretext of religious disputes he was waiting for the settling of personal scores with those whose religion he obviously hated and despised.

Julian accused the martyrs of espionage and tortured the envoys. Then, finding no reason to accuse them, for confessing the faith, he ordered them to be beheaded.

The saints confessed their faith in Christ. And in this confession, they were profoundly modern. In fact, they defended the right of politics to secularity. The right for religion to remain religion, and relations between states to be regulated by diplomacy. According to the vita, the saints urged the Emperor not to argue about faith, but to reason about deeds. Having beheaded them, Julian ordered their bodies to be burned.

In one of his works, the philosopher Giorgio Agamben (born 1942) says that the real etymology of the concept of “religion” lies not in the combination of “divine” and “human”, but in the ability to separate them. If this is so, then Manuel, Savel and Ismail were not only convinced Christians, but also truly religious people in the modern sense of the word.

Soon war broke out between Rome and Persia. On June 26, 363, Julian was killed in battle. His last words were the exclamation: “You defeated me, Galilean!”. Just as it seemed to him, very contemptuously, but, in fact, in full agreement with the gospel text, as befits the catechumen, Julian the Apostate called Christ during his lifetime.



# DYNAMICS AND LUXURY: LION HUNT BY RUBENS

450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sir Peter Paul Rubens' birth

By OKSANA KOPENKINA,  
art analyst, founder of the Arts Diary & Pad website



*Lion Hunt. 1621. Old Pinakothek, Munich*

How to combine chaos with harmony? How to make mortal danger beautiful? How to depict movement on a fixed canvas? Peter Paul Rubens knew how to do it all masterly. And all these seemingly incompatible things we see in his painting "Lion Hunt".

## *The Lion Hunt and Baroque*

If you love baroque, then most likely you love Rubens. Including his "Lion Hunt".

It has everything that is inherent in this style. Also performed with in-

credible skill. Everything boils in it: horses, animals. Bulging eyes. Open mouths. Muscle tension. Swing with a dagger. Passion is incredible.

These emotions are in every detail. Well, baroque "loves" redundancy. And the "Lion Hunt" is not an exception.

The artist needs to try very hard to fit four horses, two lions and seven hunters in one picture into one picture! And all this is magnificent, pompous. In baroque, it's nowhere without it. Even death must be beautiful.

And how well the "shot" was chosen. The stop button is pressed at the climax. Another split second, and the entered spears and knives pierce the flesh. And bodies of hunters will be strung with claws.

But baroque is a theatre. Absolutely repulsive bloody scenes will not be shown to you. Only anticipation that the denouement will be cruel. One can be horrified, but without disgust.

## *The Lion Hunt and Realism*

Particularly sensitive people can relax. In reality, nobody was hunting lions like that.

Horses will not fit a wild beast. Lions, too, are more likely to retreat than to attack larger animals (for them, the horse and rider appear to be a single creature).

This scene is a complete fabrication. But in a luxurious, exotic version. This is much more interesting and fanciful than the banal hunt for defenceless roe deer or hares.

Therefore, customers were appropriate. The highest aristocracy, which hung such huge canvases in the halls of their castles.

But this does not mean that baroque is the "zero" of realism. Just the same heroes are more or less realistic. Even wild animals whom Rubens most likely did not see alive.

Images of any animals are now available to us. But in the 17th centu-

ry you can't just see an animal from another continent. And artists made a lot of mistakes in their image.



*Crocodile and Hippo Hunt. 1616. Old Pinakothek, Munich*

So, we can only admire Rubens' talent for depicting so realistically what he did not see with his own eyes.

## *Orderly chaos in Lion Hunt*

Despite the chaos of hooves, faces and legs, Rubens masterly built the composition.

With the spears and body of a man in white, the picture diagonally beats in two. All other details are as if strung on this diagonal axis, and not just scattered in space.

## *The Lion Hunt as part of the "picturesque" series*

The Lion Hunt is not Rubens' only artwork on this subject.

The artist created a series of such works that are in demand among the nobility.

But it is The Lion Hunt, which is stored in the Pinakothek of Munich, is considered the best.

Although in this series there is an even more exotic "Hippo Hunt". And the more prosaic "Wolf and Fox Hunt".

"Hippo" is losing to "Lions" because of a simpler composition. It was created five years earlier. Apparently, Rubens became a little more skilled and in "Lions" he already gave out everything he was capable of.

But in the "Wolf and Fox Hunt" there is no such dynamics which Lions stand out so much.

All these canvases are huge. But for the castles

it was a suitable size.

In general, Rubens almost always wrote such large-scale works. He considered it lower than his dignity to take a canvas of a smaller format.

He was a brave man. And he loved complex stories. At the same time, he was self-confident: he sincerely believed that there had not yet been such a picturesque challenge that he could not handle.

Not surprisingly, he was successful in hunting scenes. The courage and confidence of hunters is consonant with the same qualities of the artist.



*Peter Paul Rubens. Wolf and Fox Hunt. 1621. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*



ANNIVERSARY

# THE QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE

Queen Elizabeth II became the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the Realms and the Commonwealth.

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said: "No other British monarch has reached this milestone and we will celebrate it with tradition, pomp and circumstance. I hope that people and communities across the country will come together to pay tribute to Her Majesty – whether that be to watch on big screens or toasting Her Majesty at a Big Jubilee Lunch with their neighbours or coming together in their local village hall."

In London, screens broadcasting the BBC's live feed will be placed down The Mall and in St James's Park for members of the public to watch the events taking place across the Bank Holiday weekend.

In Edinburgh, screens will be placed in Princes Street Gardens with thousands able to host picnics and watch the celebrations with a backdrop of Edinburgh Castle and entertainment provided by the Royal Marines and local performers.

The Welsh Capital is also inviting families to bring their Jubilee Picnic and enjoy an afternoon in Bute Park. The beautiful Grade I listed park in the heart of Cardiff's city centre will provide the perfect ven-

ue for an afternoon of Jubilee celebrations as families are invited to enjoy the Jubilee Pageant on a large screen along with entertainment from the bandstand.

In Northern Ireland, a design competition will see primary school children create a 'snapshot of Northern

local food and drink producers, and representing the appreciation of the people of Northern Ireland for Her Majesty's dedicated service.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said: "Watching the celebrations on the big screens the UK Government is setting up around the country is a great way for people to really get involved and soak up the atmosphere of this fabulous occasion. We're looking forward to a great family-focused event in Princes Street Gardens in Edinburgh where people can bring a picnic, enjoy the weekend's festivities and raise a glass to Her Majesty to mark her 70-year reign."

Welsh Secretary Simon Hart said: "The Jubilee is going to be a fantastic occasion and I know people up and down Wales will be celebrating with family or community events. Whether you are watching events on the big screen at Bute Park, at a picnic in Colwyn Bay or at the carnival in Welshpool I hope as many people as possible take the opportunity to get involved in this incredible milestone in UK history."

Around 7,000 members of the public will watch the ceremony as they return to Horse Guards Parade for the first time since the pandemic. Beacons will be lit throughout the UK and the Commonwealth in the evening.



Ireland', with the winning entry to be manufactured into a rug by leading company Ulster Carpets and sent to Her Majesty the Queen. In addition, The Queen and other members of the Royal Family will receive Northern Ireland Platinum Jubilee Hampers showcasing over 50 top quality



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