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Joy Helene Bache

"WORD RETURN TO MUSIC... "

The Gradual Erosion
of Overt Mythic Reference in
Mandelstam's Poetry

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University of Durham
Russian Department
1990
Master of Arts



25 APR 1991

Joy Helene Bache

"Word Return to Music... "

The Gradual Erosion of Overt Mythic Reference in Mandelstam's Poetry

Beginning with a cursory survey of critical approaches to myth and mythology in Mandelstam's work, this thesis proceeds to investigate whether the poet's outlook is dominated by one or more myths.

Mandelstam appears to reject his Judaic background. He acknowledges the insubstantiality of his home city, St. Petersburg, which resembles 'a glittering veil thrown over the abyss', but experiences internal division rather than certainty and consolation from a personal faith in Christianity. Visual forms and architecture become a bridge between the tangible and transcendent, with Rome briefly occupying a central place in the poet's thought. Rome too, the poet realises, is within history and must perish. This may cause Mandelstam to consider the essence of Christianity from a more philosophical and universal perspective than previously. If at the heart of Christianity lies the 'very real fact of redemption' then the artist is released from the role of apologist or of redeemer - all that remains is the imitation of Christ. An integral part of this experience is that of catharsis. Without undermining tragedy Mandelstam views it through the Christian pattern of resurrection in which death is vanquished.

In the early 1920s, Mandelstam's notion of the word and of language is obviously sacramental, being understood in the light of Hellenism and Christianity. If language is allowed to develop freely, and if the poet responds to it without manipulation, then it becomes a vital, living element of timeless aspect.

From early in his creative life the poet longs for universal harmony. Music, the 'primal muteness' prior to creation, is seen as the origin of the word. Mandelstam also perceives the spirit of Greek tragedy and Christianity to be inherent in music. Possibly the concept of primal harmony is more important than any single, more elaborate myth, encapsulating the timeless mystery of redemption. Paradoxically the artist derives inspiration from this 'primal muteness', expressing himself in a language of music and words.

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I have seen the burden God has laid on men. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

Ecclesiastes 3 vv 10,11

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Preface: Critical approaches to Mandelstam and myth

The preface is not intended as a comprehensive survey of critical standpoints with regard to Mandelstam and myth; instead it aims to look at a few examples chosen for their diversity in handling this theme.

Contemporary critics were often struck by the ambience of antiquity created by the language, style and theme of Mandelstam's poetry. Typical are remarks such as those made by N. L. Stepanov - "возвращение к античным принципам гармонического стиха, может быть, главное завоевание Мандельштама"¹ (1920) [Possibly Mandelstam's main achievement was the return to the classical principles of harmonious verse] or in 1945 by the critic K. V. Mochulsky - "Кажется, что написаны они на чужом языке, древнем и торжественном, как язык Пиндара"² [It seems that they (the poems) are written in an alien language, an ancient and solemn one, resembling Pindar's language]. The apparent obfuscation of meaning in Mandelstam's poetry led several critics to associate him with the Futurists. Bukhshtab in his article 'The Poetry of Mandelstam' (1929) identifies Mandelstam as a 'classicist' who is close to Futurist principles of 'заумь'. In the poet's style he discerns an imitation of the Russian poetry of the classical age, of its solemn, archaic and rhetorical diction and polished syntax. Bukhshtab argues that context is of little importance in establishing meaning in Mandelstam's poetry and that words form more of a mosaic, many evoking whole cultures and epochs. Although Mandelstam does not reproduce the story of a myth, Bukhshtab notes how he borrows characteristic objects and details from mythology. Real possibility for general or biographical commentary or the existence of an underlying theme is, in Bukhshtab's opinion, entirely lacking.

An official Soviet critic, A. Selivanovsky, praises a desire on the poet's part to approach Soviet reality but is less enamoured with his references to the past - "но это желание перешибается старинными воспоминаниями об ушедшем прошлом... и социальная конкретность обволакивается пеленой все тех же старинных книжных условностей"³ (1934) [but this desire is shattered by old-fashioned reminiscences of the by-gone past... and the social concreteness is smothered by all these antiquated, bookish conventionalities].

Selecting poems with an obvious classical background, V. Terras elucidates individual references in the context of ancient myth and culture in one of his earlier articles, 'Classical Motives in the Poetry of Osip Mandelstam' (1966). For example, he relates that the asphodel, a flower used on several occasions in Mandelstam's poetry, is both a spring flower, sacred to Apollo as a symbol of the first fresh food, and a flower of the dead, sacred to chthonic deities.

In Essays on Mandelstam (1976) K. Taranovsky defines two ways of interpretation, the 'closed' method which limits one to the semantics of the given text and the 'open' method which investigates the context in the light of works by other poets and writers. He regards these two methods as complementary, observing that sometimes the key to deciphering is not given in the text. Taranovsky has done much to unravel the 'subtexts' which may appear in such forms as obvious reminiscences, enciphered subtexts and even quotations. The method of incorporating other texts to interpret references and allusions in Mandelstam's poetry has been adopted by others.

O. Ronen, in 'Лексический повтор, подтекст и смысл в поэтике Осипа Мандельштама' (1973), draws attention to Mandelstam's use of anagram. One example he gives is 'камень', an anagram of акме, the credo of the Acmeists. He uncovers what he judges to be a virtual lift from Zhukovsky's translation of a line from The Odyssey - "... дико растет Персефонин широкий лес из раakit, свой **теряющих плод**" as the model of, "И снова яблоня **теряет дикий плод**". All these elements make up Mandelstam's method, which Ronen perceives to function like an original examination in Russian literature, based on guessing the literary subtext partly as a poetic joke and partly as self-parody.

In the article, 'Русская семантическая поэтика как потенциальная культурная парадигма' (1974) written by Y. Levin and others, Mandelstam's poetry is described as manifesting a mythological nature in the way certain words carry a specific Mandelstamian meaning, for example век, яблоко, соль, ласточка, солнце, нежный, which then become mythologemes in their own right. The overlap of words with ancient mythology, such as the swallow being a symbol of the soul, makes individual mythologisms refer the reader to a more stable, universal circle of mythological images.

Steven Broyde in 'Osip Mandelstam's 'Nashedshij Podkovu" (1973) examines the significance of the subtitle "Пиндарический отрывок". He works on the assumption that: "Even in his apparently most obscure poems Mandelstam never attempts to 'trick' his reader; he merely forces him to relate to the poem in a somewhat new way. The concepts of 'subtext' and 'context' used in relation to Mandelstam's work presuppose that most, if not all, of a given work can be accounted for; a safe working hypothesis is that little in Mandelstam is unmotivated."⁴ In Broyde's opinion, Mandelstam may never have read Pindar in the original. Their poetic kinship lies not in Mandelstam's imitation of the old master but in their use of genre, the ode often signifying a topic of more than personal importance, and in a similar omission of the obvious, which compels the listener to be attentive in order to understand how such disparate elements can be related. For both artists the essence of poetry was timeless, and thus the dying horse of 136."Нашедший Подкову" is a classical image and an emblem of ancient Greece.

A number of critics have made individual studies of Mandelstam's poems in the light of Greek myth. C. Turner, in 'On Osip Mandelstam's Poem 'Vek" (1976), explores 135."Бек" through its allusions to the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. He observes that although the poem is reminiscent of Virgil's account in several details, not least the viper in the grass and the releasing power of music, essentially Mandelstam's use of myth is unsystematic and shows an apparent disregard for the time-scheme. Alongside myth, Turner notes how the poet has integrated two other planes, namely the image of the animal and the poet's age.

L. Burnett's essay 'Heirs of Eternity: An Essay on the Poetry of Keats and Mandelstam' (1981), considers why these two poets should return to classical times. In both poets he perceives a "distinct awareness of return". It becomes necessary for the poet to enable the mythological past to touch his own age. In reference to Mandelstam, Burnett writes: "For him, the past is felt to be at once a norm and a Geist that pervades the present. It is a norm in the sense that the present is in some way measured against the past and a Geist in so far as the culture he usurps is regarded as possessing abiding values that survive the ravishment of time."⁵

In the same year W. Schlott published a systematic study which

concerns thirteen poems, chosen from what he considers to be three different stages in Mandelstam's creative development. He outlines his methodology and specifies the one formal feature common to each poem: "In ihnen treten Götternamen auf, die sowohl in der griechischen als auch in der römischen Literatur eine bedeutende Rolle spielten und in einem Zeitraum von über tausend Jahren in verschiedenen europäischen Literaturen - aufgrund der an sie geknüpften Vorstellungsinhalte - einer vielfältigen Rezeption unterzogen worden sind."⁶ As a result the thesis covers not only poems by Mandelstam but an analysis of the mythological names in a historical and literary context. Schlott's investigation does not attempt to question why Mandelstam introduces mythological names.

O. Ronen's more general article on myth entitled 'A Function Technique of Myth Transformation in Twentieth-Century Russian Lyrical Poetry' (1983) includes poets such as Zinaida Hippus, Kuzmin, Khodasevich, Annensky, Khlebnikov, Pasternak and Akhmatova. He identifies two basic principles which underlie the treatment of myth in twentieth century Russian poetry, namely Ivanov's myth of Dionysus which calls for "an ahistorical reversion to the primeval, presumably synthetic, source of poetry" and what Ronen terms as Annensky's "metapoetic myth of the eternal return of artistic *eidola* in changing historical shapes". Mandelstam, he observes, uses myth for thematic purposes and not for referring to a particular ideological standpoint. Ronen notes the tendency in Mandelstam's poetry to give literary and scientific subtexts such a degree of universality that they function as "mythological metatexts", while accepted myths can be divested of their universal or sacral significance. He concludes: "Eventually, the eternal recurrence became the fulcrum and justification of Mandelstam's pan-poetic world view... The myth of the suffering Logos, because of its 'metapoetic value' was of special importance for Mandelstam".⁷

A Coat of Many Colors (1987), by G. Freidin, approaches myth on different levels. Firstly as the title suggests there is the author's mythological conception of Mandelstam as Joseph. This parallel is also significant in the light of the 'Ode to Stalin' for it underlines the identity between the tormentor, Stalin, and himself by the common root of their first name - "ось". Secondly Freidin interprets Mandelstam's use

of mythology through the sociological approaches to myth as expounded for example by Max Weber and Marcel Mauss. Thus a gift must be returned otherwise the one who has received remains under the 'spell' of the giver. Freidin relates this idea of the need to return the gift to the thanksgiving in the Eucharist and to the Christian martyr who gives himself. At the back of Freidin's mind appears to be the notion of the poet as a charismatic centre - one who is imagined in "the collective memory of the culture" in terms of "the archetypal poet-healer, poet-magician, poet-shaman, in short, the omnipotent poet".⁸ Mandelstam seems to fit this description for Freidin.

Freidin draws our attention to the conflict experienced by Mandelstam as a Jew who chooses to become a Russian poet, one who would remind the people of the forgotten myth of Christianity. The myth of incest, Freidin suggests, is able to bring together the disparate elements. Mandelstam's adoption of Christianity, he attributes to the poet's feeling of 'otherness' and to his fear of being detached from Russian poetry because of his rejection of a myth which was the ultimate source of reference for much of the Symbolist vocabulary and imagery. Christianity is primarily seen by Freidin through the 'central myth': "What was specifically Mandelstamian about this mnemonic imitation of Christ was the plot about which it revolved, namely, the myth of incest."⁹

The 'Phaedra' cycle, with its obvious allusion to the incest myth, is interpreted biographically; the poet identifies with the persona of Hippolytus, a son who has been ill-used by the incestuous step-mother, a hypostasis of Russia, who in the light of the convention of the "mystical marriage" between the poet and his land, has abused her poets. However the turning-point, according to Freidin, is reached when the incest myth is interpreted in terms of Christian martyrdom. Phaedra is now perceived as innocent, a martyr preparing the way for the historical Christ, who returns at the beginning of "Tristia" to "recapitulate the Christian drama of history". A similar pattern is traced in the prince of the 'Moscow' poems, who was promised the crown of Moscow but dies the redeeming death of a martyr. In the same way Hippolytus pays a high price to redeem Rus-Phaedra from her transgression. The incest myth develops into the figure of Oedipus, a Hippolytus who has become "tolerant and accepting in his old age". This persona is detected later in

the assertion "Но не волк я по крови своей", a sign that Hippolytus rejects the incestuous advances of Soviet Phaedra Russia.

In Freidin's opinion the century's central myth of uncertainty and pervasive eroticism, the centrality of the theme of "mystical marriage" and the general cult of sensuality "made the choice of the incest myth well-nigh inevitable".

Petra Hesse's critical study Mythologie in moderner Lyrik: Osip E. Mandelstam vor dem Hintergrund des "Silbernen Zeitalter" (1989) looks briefly at myth and poetry in the light of philosophy, religion and psychology, outlining the response to myth in Russian lyric at the turn of the century. Individual poems are examined, particularly those which allude to elements of the ancient, Homeric underworld ruled by Persephone and are connected to the cycle of death and birth. Hesse observes that placed in this context death and temporality do not lead to the end of existence but are a transition to another timeless mode of existence. By showing how features of the underworld signify art, she concludes that art is given the qualities of the mythic 'other world'; timelessness, autonomous existence and a shadowy 'transparent' immateriality thus giving man a symbolic expression of the transcendent.

After the 1920s, Hesse notes that Mandelstam portrayed the winged being of the word-psyche as injured, a sign that the transcendent, otherworldly 'Bildlichkeit' had become threatened and questionable when confronted with a totalitarian regime. Unable to withdraw into an autonomous, transcendent realm, the poet increasingly looked to a 'space-time-continuum', his own interpretation of Bergson's 'durée' and to the present world: " - die Pflug-Metapher für die Dichtung zeigt eine Orientierung auf das Diesseits an, die die vom Menschen und für den Menschen geschaffene Kultur an die Stelle eines mythischen Jenseits setzt."¹⁰

Some articles and books have been omitted here because they are referred to in notes or are discussed in the subsequent work. General trends in criticism on Mandelstam and myth are discernible. From concern with the classical style and ambience of Mandelstam's poetry, attention shifts to the quest for meaning, the continuity of theme and purpose.

Whereas some earlier critics deny a meaningful pattern or connection of theme and imagery, later critics brush aside the assumption that Mandelstam's work is futuristic or teasingly obscure and burrow into the labyrinth of various allusions and subtexts underlying the poetry. In addition to numerous articles on different aspects of myth and mythology, there emerges a questioning of why Mandelstam was so drawn to myth and the classical world in the first place and its significance for his life and outlook.

Notes for the preface

1. Mandelstam, O. Collected Works in Three Volumes, ed. G. P. Stüve & B. A. Filipoff, (New York, 1971), Inter-Language Literary Associates (Hereafter referred to as I, II, III). I, p.392
2. *ibid.*
3. I, p.393
4. Broyde, S. J. 'Osip Mandelstam's 'Nasedsij Podkovu'', Slavic Poetics: Essays in Honor of Kiril Taranovsky, (The Hague, 1973), p.49
5. Burnett, L. 'Heirs of Eternity: An Essay on the Poetry of Keats and Mandelstam', The Modern Language Review, vol. 76, part 2, p.396
6. Schlott, W. Zur Funktion antiker Göttermythen in der Lyrik Osip Mandelstams, (Frankfurt, 1981), Verlag Peter D. Lang, p.27
7. Ronen, O. 'A Functional Technique of Myth Transformation in Twentieth-Century Russian Lyrical Poetry', Myth in Literature, ed. A. Kodjak, K. Pomorska, S. Rudy, New York University Slavic Papers, V (Columbus, Ohio, 1983), Slavica Publishers Inc., pp.120-121
8. Freidin, G. A Coat of Many Colors: Osip Mandelstam and his Mythologies of Self-Presentation, (1987), University of California Press, p.14
9. *op. cit.* p.88
10. Hesse, P. Mythologie in moderner Lyrik: Osip E. Mandelstam vor dem Hintergrund des "Silbernen Zeitalters", (Frankfurt, 1989), Verlag Peter D. Lang, p.272

An Uneasy Faith

In our discussion of myth in Mandelstam we shall consider myth primarily in the light of religion. The three 'myths' which appear to have influenced Mandelstam's thought are Judaism, Hellenism and Christianity. Mandelstam's rejection of Judaism and his subsequent turning towards Christianity and Hellenism has been extensively studied.¹ Our investigation seeks to explore possible reasons for Mandelstam's gravitation towards religious myth and the different stages in his approach to it. We look at the way he integrates Christianity and Hellenism and question whether both of these mythological systems are not, in his eyes, of the same essence, belonging to one all-encompassing point of unity. Finally we note the use of Christian and Hellenic myth in Mandelstam's poetry of 1937 and its implications for our earlier thesis.

Let us address the question of why Mandelstam did not embrace the first religion in his life - Judaism. "Шум Времени" hints at the nature of the poet's early contact with Judaism. His parents were erratic in their practice of the Jewish faith and we learn that at the age of fifteen his father abandoned his rabbinical training in Berlin, preferring to find work in a leather factory and pursue his previously forbidden love of Seventeenth Century German writers. Significantly Mandelstam did not associate his father with religion.

"По существу, отец переносил меня в совершенно чужой век и отдаленную обстановку, но никак не еврейскую... Религиозные интересы вытравлены совершенно. Просветительная философия претворилась в замысловатый талмудический пантеизм."²

[In essence, my father carried me into a completely alien age and remote environment, though never Hebraic... Religious interests were totally eradicated. Enlightenment philosophy had become a complex Talmudic pantheism.]

Mandelstam's instinctive recoil from Judaism manifests itself in his neglect of the Jewish books on the bottom shelf of the family bookcase which contrasts with his delight in his mother's school copy of Pushkin. His remark, "Это был повергнутый в пыль хаос иудейский"³ [All this was Judaic chaos flung down in the dust], associates Judaism with inanimate,

formless matter rather than with harmony and life. Whereas his mother speaks "с несколько расширенными и чрезмерно открытыми гласными, литературная великорусская речь" [with somewhat pronounced and excessively open vowels, the literary speech of Great Russia], he depicts his father as having no language, "это было косноязычие и безъязычие"⁴ [it was inarticulate and dumb].

The life and culture of St. Petersburg appear to present a contrasting image to the Judaism of home-life:

"Весь стройный мираж Петербурга был только сон, блистательный покров, накинутый над бездной, а кругом простирался хаос иудейства, не родина, не дом, не очаг, а именно хаос, незнакомый утробный мир, откуда я вышел, которого я боялся, о котором смутно догадывался и бежал, всегда бежал."⁵

[The harmonious mirage of St. Petersburg was all only a dream, a glittering veil thrown over the abyss, while the chaos of Judaism engulfed everything around and was neither a motherland, nor a home, nor a hearth but simply chaos, the unknown uterine world whence I came, of which I was afraid and about which I dimly guessed and fled, constantly fled.]

No refuge, however, is found in the dream-like reality of St. Petersburg. Whether the poet's recoil from the chaotic, uterine world of Judaism was so radical as the above excerpt suggests, is perhaps questioned by the speaker of 17. "Из омыта злого и вязкого", who displays a more ambivalent attitude towards his origin. One critic has suggested that the 'pool' (омут) is a central image and metaphor for Judaic chaos.⁶

Из омыта злого и вязкого
Я вырос, тростинкой шурша,
И страстно, и томно, и ласково
Запретною жизнью дыша.

И никну, никем не замеченный,
В холодный и топкий приют,
Приветственным шелестом встреченный
Коротких осенних минут.

The pool resembles the 'unknown uterine world' (незнакомый утробный мир): in its form as an enclosed world which nurtures, but because it has neither outlet nor inlet, also stagnates. In such an environment the speaker breathes the 'forbidden life', possibly a reference to the cultural and secular life of Petersburg. The juxtaposition of 'passionately, and languidly, and tenderly' indicates the fluctuation in his feelings, both his desire for the 'forbidden life' and his apparent relief at returning to the cold, boggy pool where he finds a 'shelter' and a 'welcoming whisper'. Life's resemblance to a dream may refer to the dream-like world of St. Petersburg, a world of which he naturally is not part. The poem continues:

Я счастлив жестокой обидою
И в жизни, похожей на сон,
Я каждому тайно завидую
И в каждого тайно влюблен.

The dream-like quality of life appears to be at odds with the acuteness of his feelings. Though he claims to be happy with the 'cruel offence', conflicting signals from the words 'happy' and 'cruel', 'to envy' and 'to be in love', communicate that this resolution may be too categorical to be convincing. A fourth stanza, published in 'Apollon' though not included in the 1928 edition of Стихотворения, confirms this impression.⁷

Ни сладости в пытке не ведаю,
Ни смысла я в ней не ищу;
Но близкой, последней победою,
Быть может, за все отомщу.

The speaker's isolation, apparent both in the fact that he remains unnoticed by those he loves and envies, and, as it were, only half-emergent from the obscurity of 'the pool', may not only be the result of 'existential' isolation but of his origin, of his Judaic background.

A further attempt to come to terms with himself and his origins appears to lie at the heart of 18. "В огромном омуте прозрачно и темно". In this instance the pool is not evil and viscous but enormous with a

possible exit indicated by a window.⁸ He does not struggle to escape the pool but wonders how to exist within its confines, contending with a heart which stubbornly sinks before resurfacing like a piece of straw. As in 17. tension arises from his simultaneous longing for the 'dear silt' and recoil from it.

То всю тяжестью оно идет ко дну,
Соскучившись по милом иле,
То, как соломинка, минуя глубину,
Наверх всплывает без усилий.

Rather than be at the mercy of the fluctuations caused by this inward division, the speaker tries to avoid either plummeting to the depths or reaching for the window, and opts for a compromise which requires less effort. This position is reflected in stanza III:

С притворной нежностью у изголовья стой
И сам себя всю жизнь баюкай,
Как небылицю, своей томись тоской
И ласков будь с надменной скукой.

The image of himself, standing at the foot of his bed, lulling himself to sleep, suggests his complicity in deceiving himself and stifling awakening life. Feelings are repressed and any tenderness is contrived, while the exhortation to be loving is undermined by the arrogant boredom. The speaker does not escape the dream-like quality, life as a fairytale.

St. Petersburg does not appear to offer a secure refuge for the young poet fleeing his Jewish origin. In 189."Дворцовая площадь" imperialist St. Petersburg is intertwined with the colours of Judaism.⁹

Императорский виссон
И моторов колесницы, -
В черном омуте столицы
Столпник-ангел вознесен.
В темной арке, как пловцы,

Исчезают пешеходы,
И на площади, как воды,
Глухо плещутся торцы.
Только там, где твердь светла,
Черно-желтый лоскут элится,
Словно в воздухе струится
Желчь двуглавого орла.

"Императорский виссон" conveys delicacy and fragility and is perhaps an image of the glittering cover thrown over the abyss of St. Petersburg. A similar sense of repression and lifelessness as experienced in 17. and 18. pervades the image of the pool, which additionally carries the sinister epithet 'black'. The chariots and the angelic statue which crowns Alexander's column, symbolise imperial power. Although the angel is raised up and by implication exalted, its figure is trapped within the confines of the pool, suggesting that it is not symbolic of a dimension which reaches beyond time and space but of a power created from within. Against this background, pedestrians vanish. There is a touch of irony in the original title of the poem "Зимний Дворец", perhaps alluding to Bloody Sunday, an occasion when pedestrians also vanished. The pedestrian's likeness to swimmers and the splashing noises of words such as "пловцы", "площади", "плещутся", and "пешеходы" convey a sensation of being engulfed by the waters, by a second flood. Even the wooden paving blocks underfoot splash like water and may indicate that the foundation is not as firm as it appears. In this literal and spiritual picture of gloom and darkness one would expect the gleam of brightness in the firmament to symbolise hope. Instead the black and yellow stripe of sky looms rather as a threat and the two-headed eagle is a clear reference to the imperial standard. As in 17. and 18. a sense of claustrophobia affects the speaker and now also the city.

91. "Эта ночь непоправима" was probably triggered off by the news Mandelstam received in the summer of 1916 of his mother's death. Gloom, darkness and a sense of imprisonment are intensified in the image of irremediable night. The 'brightness' found in "у вас еще светло" and the repeated phrase "В светлом храме иудей", offers no relief and seems to

represent, as in 189. (где твердь светла, / Черно-желтый лоскут), a light which is inimical and threatening. Stanza II reads:

Солнце желтое страшнее -
Ею баюшки баю -
В светлом храме иудеи
Хоронили мать мою.

The lullaby is reminiscent of stanza III of 18. with its association of a life-long deceit of illusory comfort and stultified growth. Perhaps this elucidates why the speaker pictures himself as a baby, who has woken up and is illuminated by the black sun, Phaedra's sun of guilt, an emblem of incestuous love.

И над матерью звенели
Голоса израильтян.
Я проснулся в колыбели,
Черным солнцем осиян.

The interweaving of imperialism and Judaism becomes more intricate. Yellow and black colours connect the Judaic theme of 91. with the imperialism of St. Petersburg in 189. The gates of Jerusalem could refer also to those of St. Petersburg (У ворот Ерусалима / Солнце черное взошло). Perhaps in the death of the poet's mother he also pictured the death of St. Petersburg, which in a sense had been a mother to him. In 1917 Mandelstam composed 100."Среди священников левитом молодым" which may mirror the fall of St. Petersburg in the fall of Jerusalem.

А. В. Карташеву

Среди священников левитом молодым
На страже утренней он долго оставался.
Ночь иудейская сгушалась над ним
И храм разрушенный угрюмо созидался.

Он говорил: небес тревожна желтизна.
Уж над Ефратом ночь, бегите, иереи!

А старцы думали: не наша в том вина;
Се черножелтый свет, се радость Иудей.

Он с нами был, когда на берегу ручья
Мы в драгоценный лен Субботу пеленали
И семисвещником тяжелым освещали
Ерусалима ночь и чад небытия.

Mandelstam dedicated this poem to A. V. Kartashev, president of the Religious-Philosophical Society, who was active in calling the Church Council of November 1917 that restored the Patriarchate. Perhaps it is a coincidence that, according to the poet's wife Nadezhda, Mandelstam wrote 100. during the same month.¹⁰ The dedication to Kartashev may hint at the conflict within the Orthodox Church evident at that Council, between those more conservative elements who wanted to 'rebuild' the Patriarchate, perhaps reminiscent of the Jews in their backward-looking after Christ's death, and those who hoped to return to the original vision of Christianity. If Jerusalem fell because the Jews tried to suppress the death of Christ and to replace it with their own authority which the poet regards as unlawful - "Благодати не имея / И священства лишены", St. Petersburg may suffer the same fate at the hands of her priests. Unlike those in the temple of 91. to whom the poet refers as Jews or Israelites but no longer as priests, the young Levite is still 'among priests' (Среди священников) and addresses them as such (иереи). It is uncertain for how much longer this will be their rightful title.

The elders choose to ignore the Levite's warning against the tell-tale black and yellow signs. They not only misinterpret but reverse the significance of the black and yellow light, which they regard as a joy rather than as a threat. Although the elders disclaim responsibility, the injunction which the young Levite gives to run, advice which in "Шум Времени" the writer heeds (хаос иудейства... откуда я... бежал, всегда бежал), indicates the possibility of choice. However the elders reject the new and determine to cling to the old forms and to rebuild what has been destroyed. There is an echo of the single charge that could be made consistently by the evidence of witnesses - "I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days".¹¹

The speaker includes himself in the group who 'swaddled the Sabbath in costly linen'. This act is reminiscent of Moses' parents who preserved a saviour for the Jews by wrapping the baby in a basket of reeds and placing it on the river; more overtly of those who welcomed Christ at his birth when they wrapped him in swaddling clothing; of those who anointed his body with costly spices; and also of those who were waiting at the early morning watch on the Sabbath to see the risen Lord. Associations of viscosity, gloominess and chaos permeate the images of the 'Judaic night' and the 'fumes of non-existence'. Only by a true acceptance of the risen Christ is light shed. The use of the menorah suggests, not an abolition of old forms, but an integration of old and new.

Claustrophobia, often associated by the poet with Judaism, is perhaps most poignantly felt in 109. "Вернись в смесительное лоно" (1920). Here return to the incestuous womb, the immersion into the 'unknown uterine world' (незнакомый утробный мир), represents compliance not to a second birth but to enclosure.

Вернись в смесительное лоно,
Откуда, Лия, ты пришла,
За то, что солнцу Илиона
Ты желтый сумрак предпочла.

It had been in just such a state of isolation that Lot's daughters resorted to incest. The Leah to whom the speaker refers, is the summation of Lot's daughters, who are unnamed, and the unloved and the uncomely wife of Jacob by the name of Leah. She is responsible for this reversion to the womb because she preferred the yellow dusk of Judaism to the sun of Ilium.

The 'dumb night' of stanza II implies a night which is unable to respond. His declaration - "Ты будешь Лия - не Елена" - highlights the consequence of choosing the 'yellow dusk' and reinforces Leah's contrast to Helen, a symbol of Hellenism in all its beauty, fame and influence. For Leah the parting words of the speaker are ambiguous: "Нет, ты полюбишь иудея, / Исчезнешь в нем - и Бог с тобой."¹²

The desire to return to his origins, to the womb, is evident in

Mandelstam's early poetry. If the poet returns to the womb of Judaism he fears suffocation. His rejection of Judaism seems to stem partly from its oppressive nature which manifests itself in its association with imperialism and the symbolic yellow sun, in its rejection of Christ and also in the way it stifles rather than inspires his art.

* * *

Christian motifs begin to appear in Mandelstam's poetry during his lonely period in Paris and in the course of his visits to Switzerland and Finland followed by two terms at the university of Heidelberg 1908-10, which were interspersed by travel. It is not easy to pinpoint direct influences which may have led him to an appreciation of Christianity.¹³

As a Jew, it appears that Mandelstam was not obliged to attend 'Divinity' classes at school. Literary trends of the day would probably have played a part in directing the poet's attention towards religion, both Greek and Christian, as would his visits to Vyacheslav Ivanov.¹⁴ In the autumn of 1908 Mandelstam attended sessions of the Religious-Philosophical Society and we know that while living in Finland during the summer of 1910 he became acquainted with S. P. Kablukov, who was the secretary of the Society 1909-13. From Kablukov's diary we learn that their main topic of conversation was poetry and it is evident that Kablukov greatly admired the young poet's work, even attempting through his literary contacts, such as the poet Zinaida Hippus, to help him publish. Undoubtedly Kablukov also had a profound interest in religion. Almost without exception the poems by Mandelstam which he entered into his diary have religious content and Morozov observes that, judging by Kablukov's articles published in "Музыкальный современник", he was fascinated by spiritual music.¹⁵ Perhaps his interests filtered through to Mandelstam. The poet's response to his older friend is unclear, although a poem which Kablukov recorded, originally composed in Berlin as a letter to him, shows that, at least in the early stages of their friendship, Mandelstam considered him to be a man of spiritual discernment and a judicious critic:

... в острых взорах византийца,
Огонь духовной красоты...
Вы чувствовали тайны нить,
Вы чуяли рождение слова...
Лишь тот умеет похвалить,
Чье осуждение сурово.¹⁶

Mandelstam's magpie nature probably enabled him to pick out what caught his eye about Kablukov, without adopting his world-view in its entirety. It may be also of value to recall the poet's attitude towards a world-view, as expressed in one of his early prose works: "мироощущение для художника орудие и средство"¹⁷ [for the artist his world-view is a tool and instrument]. In October 1912 Kablukov records in his diary that he has spent a long time trying to locate Mandelstam, but without success. Meanwhile Mandelstam had begun to attend the University of St. Petersburg in the autumn of 1912. Perhaps his need for Kablukov's approval and criticism was no longer so immediate, particularly as in December 1912 Kablukov notes that Mandelstam has found a new direction in Acmeism. There is, however, no direct evidence that Kablukov influenced the poet in converting to the Orthodox Church.¹⁸

Interestingly Kablukov does not appear to mention Mandelstam's baptism into a Non-conformist Church in 1911. We know that he was aware of Mandelstam's Jewish background. Within a month of their initial acquaintance he records that Mandelstam entered the University of Heidelberg after finishing at Tenishev because his Jewish nationality barred him from the University of St. Petersburg. For Mandelstam the Protestant Church was perhaps a natural choice. It was not associated with the State, demanded no confession and entailed minimum obligation and, incidentally, would facilitate his entry into the University of St. Petersburg.¹⁹ Nevertheless compared to 1910, the poetry written in 1911 has little 'religious' content and appears to shed no light on the motivation for his baptism. Perhaps 30."Образ твой, мучительный и зыбкий" (1911) is an exception.

Образ твой, мучительный и зыбкий,
Я не мог в тумане осязать,

«Господи!» - сказал я по ошибке,
Сам того не думая сказать.

Божье имя, как большая птица,
Вылетело из моей груди.
Впереди густой туман клубится,
И пустая клетка позади.

Isolation and distress are experienced by the speaker for he is unable to discern or reach the image in the mist. The absence of a capital letter in "твой" could indicate that the image is not one of the Lord but of another.²⁰ In such a position of helplessness, in which he finds no solace in the tangible, his instinctive cry is directed to the Lord. Though the fog still swirls around him, the involuntary utterance of the name has a palpable effect and the 'empty cage' would suggest release. No conclusion is reached and one is left with a feeling of uncertainty, perhaps because by its nature such an experience evades definition. We are left to wonder whether the bird is associated with the Holy Spirit as the spiritual life which finds a temporary dwelling in our bodies - a way of reaching what is imperceptible to the naked eye, or whether a sense of emptiness and disconnection is part of his early experience of the Christian faith.

In view of Mandelstam's baptism into a Non-conformist Church, the position of the speaker in 37."Лютеранин" is at first noticeably distant. He is out for a stroll and chances to come across a Lutheran funeral, observing the mourners, as 'an absentminded passer-by' (рассеянный прохожий). Their foreignness is evident by the term "иностранцы" and in their alien speech. The incongruity of the occasion is reflected by the proximity of 'stern agitation' to 'the festive streetway'. Compulsion rather than spontaneity marks the proceedings and the apparent 'leader' appears in the form of the coachman - "упорно / Над ними кучер правил в даль, упрямый". While their foreignness and apparent lack of a spiritual leader may indicate a poor connection with tradition and history, perhaps more disturbing for the speaker is the shallowness of their grief, the insipidness of their faith and an absence of historical perspective in which they regard themselves as neither prophets nor forerunners. In the

final stanza the speaker refers no longer to 'them' but to 'us'. Although he does not compliment them, he seems momentarily to identify with them.

И думал я: витийствовать не надо.
Мы не пророки, даже не предтечи,
Не любим рая, не боимся ада,
И в полдень матовый горим, как свечи.

Our clearest perspective of his early experience of Christianity is seen best perhaps in the poetry written between 1909-1910. According to the Soviet edition, 183. "В морозном воздухе растаял легкий дым" was written in 1909. The picture of the warm smoke rising and melting into the frosty air could be an image of the speaker's desire to rise 'in a cold, quiet hymn / To disappear forever' (в холодном, тихом гимне, / Исчезнуть навсегда). Although there is passivity in the desire to disappear, the reference to the cold, quiet hymn is unexpected and may indicate that the speaker longs not simply to escape but to be a part of an all-embracing harmony. 'Sad freedom' has little appeal for him²¹ and he seems to feel strangely detached from the world.

In 19. "Душный сумрак кроет ложе" the speaker is being smothered by the twilight. He desires not to vanish but turns to the cross and 'secret way' .

Душный сумрак кроет ложе,
Напряженно дышит грудь...
Может, мне всего дороже
Тонкий крест и тайный путь.

Uncertainty expressed by the word 'perhaps' and the description of the cross as 'slender' suggest that the speaker both values and questions the Christian faith. The cross is the first object that the speaker of 152. "Когда мозаик никнут травы" (1910) sees on entering a church. He envisages himself as a cunning snake dragging himself to the foot of the cross (как змей лукавый, / Влечусь к подножию Креста). The snake does not exclusively belong to the Christian tradition, though in apposition to the cross it is a reminder of fallen man and the need for the Son of

Man to be lifted up as the serpent was in the wilderness. Presentation of self in the form of a snake occurs also in 162.:

В самом себе, как змей, таясь,
Вокруг себя, как плющ, вивясь,
Я поднимаюсь над собою,-

Себя хочу, к себе лечу,
.
Омоюсь молнии огнем,
И, заклиная тяжкий гром,
В холодном облаке исчезну!

The speaker displays a paradoxical desire to hide in himself, like a snake, and simultaneously to reach himself by winding around himself like ivy, an implicitly self-destructive action reminiscent of a coiling snake. Evidently this does not provide a satisfactory answer. In his flight above himself he has no clear destination and on returning to his nest he discovers that it has been torn down into the abyss. The disappearance of the speaker into a cold cloud is reminiscent of 183., where his 'answer' comes in the form of escape from rather than attachment to this world.

The speaker of 161. "Осенний сумрак - ржавое железо - " also compares himself to a snake.

Я, как змеей танцующей, измучен
И перед ней, тоскуя, трепещу.
Я не хочу души своей излучин,
И разума, и Музы не хочу.

Perhaps this is the snake which the Gnostics value as the symbol of wisdom. The windings of the soul echo A. Blok's "Незнакомка" - "И все души моей излучины / Пронзило терпкое вино", where the wine enables the speaker to visualise his Muse, the Stranger. Both the Gnostic Muse and reason are renounced by the speaker of 161. as he begins to turn towards Christianity, which is seen here as an entirely transcendental

religion, leading away from intellectualisation and creativity. The suffering of Christ however, is real to him, and he asks "Что весь соблазн и все богатства Креста / Пред лезвием Твоей тоски, Господь?" Suffering he can identify with and the final image is of a prisoner facing an ecstatic death.

There are instances when the speaker does not wish to disappear into a cloud, when suffering no longer makes the transcendental real, and he prefers instead to value the threads which connect him to the world. From a collection probably written 1909-10²², 18. "Мне стало страшно жизнь отжить", expresses this preference. A leaf detached from the tree becomes a metaphor for the horror of disconnection from life. The illustration of the tree implies that the speaker sees himself as part of an organic whole, desiring to love and not to remain nameless. Visions of disappearing into a cloud and into emptiness become unattractive:

И в пустоте, как на кресте,
Живую душу распиная,
Как Моисей на пустоте,
Исчезнуть в облаке Синая.

For the speaker, the experience by implication of Christ on the cross, and of Moses on Mt. Sinai, has a frightening aspect of transcendence and disconnection from the world. The similar nature of their experience is reflected in the pattern "на кресте" and "на пустоте", "в пустоте" and "в облаке". What is tangible consoles the speaker:

И я слежу - со всем живым
Меня связующие нити,
И бытия узорный дым
На мраморной сличаю плите;

The smoke does not melt in the frosty air as in 183. but is carefully recorded on a marble slab. This tangible record provides a point of reference and stability for the speaker, connecting him to life. In 8. "Дано мне тело - что мне делать с ним?" (1909) the speaker is

consoled by the pattern that his warm breath leaves against the cold glass of eternity:

Запечатлеется на нем узор,
Неузнаваемый с недавних пор.

Пускай мгновения стекает муть -
Узора милого не зачеркнуть.

This could be read as a metaphor for the poet's art. To be of significance art must leave a tangible trace like the pattern on the window. Perhaps this is why the experiences of Christ and Moses seem so distressing to him, for they leave no personal, tangible trace, but tend rather to dissolve in an all-enveloping God - the cloud of Sinai.

21."Убиты медью вечерней",²³ reveals a conflict between the demand of the body for thorns and of faith for 'insane flowers'. This may reflect a clash between the way in which the body and faith wish to find expression. The speaker longs to immerse himself in the experience and to be confident of God's response.

Упасть на древние плиты
И к страстному Богу воззвать,
И знать, что молитвой слиты
Все чувства в одну благодать!

Once this state of harmony is reached and the wave of glorification swells (Растет прилив славословий), there is a realisation that its crest is temporary and in anticipation of the end hearts grow heavy. "В изголовьи Черное Распятъ"²⁴ also depicts an inward division between the intellect and emotion: "В сердце жар, и в мыслях пустота". The crucifix which hangs above the speaker's bed does not radiate a confident salvation but has a shadow cast on it by the dusty mark of a subtle malediction - "И ложится тонкое проклятье / Пыльный след на дерево Креста". He is unable to take comfort in the reality of the world around. The pattern of the frosted smoke on the glass retains neither the permanence of the patterned smoke on the marble slab nor of the breath

on the glass of eternity but resembles a 'mosaic dream' which the stark voice of silence is unable to penetrate: "Ах, зачем молчанья голос грозный / Безнадежной негой растворен". In this state of dislocation from reality the speaker does not cry out to be enveloped by a 'wave of glorification' for he is afraid that he will literally be carried away by the wave:

И слова евангельской латыни
Прозвучали, как морской прибой,
И волной нахлынувшей святыни
Поднят был корабль безумный мой.

Нет, не парус, распятый и серый,
В неизвестный край меня влечет:
Страшен мне подводный камень веры,
Роковой ее круговорот.

His fear of shipwreck is greater than his hope of salvation. Perhaps it is significant that in the first draft the second line of the final stanza began "С неизбежностью...", which implies that the poet felt strongly drawn to follow this course. A crucified and grey sail echoes a poem written in the same period, 19."Я вижу каменное небо"²⁵, where the soul is trapped hopelessly in loathsome Erebus. Its dominating grip is seen in the unchangeable nature of the environment. Though the sky falls it does not crack and though the water splashes it is without foam. Even the growth evident in the stipule is abortive - "И паруса трилистник серый / Распятый, как моя тоска". The wooden mast of the sail mirrors the image of the cross. Although the cross would appear to symbolise a 'fixed point' in a literal as well as in a metaphoric sense, the sail of the spirit in 21."Убиты медью вечерней" fails to experience it as such and remains homeless, open to follow all winds:

И парус духа бездомный
Все ветры изведать готов.

Ambiguity permeates the depiction of the crucified Christ in 182. "Неутолимые слова..." (1910).

Неутолимые слова...
Окаменела Иудея,
И, с каждым мигом тяжелея,
Его поникла голова.
Стояли воины кругом
На страже стынувшего тела;
Как венчик, голова висела
На стебле тонком и чужом,
И царст_вовал и никнул Он,
Как лилия, в родимый омут,
И глубина, где стебли тонут,
Торжествовала свой закон.

The unquenchable words, possibly referring to the mysterious cry "I thirst", remain hidden and the emphasis falls on the image of the body being drained of life. The scene of the crucifixion is indicated by the detail of the guards standing around the body. Just as the rule of Christ was preceded by the experience of death, His descent to the depths of everything that opposed His resurrection, so the imagery in 182. follows a pattern of descent and ascent; the drooping head, the stalk, and the depths of the pool are transformed by the comparison of the head to a halo and lily. Traditionally the lily is the flower of Easter and is symbolic of purity, peace, resurrection and royalty. The juxtaposition of the verb 'to reign' (царствовать), suggesting the reign of a king, and 'to droop', intimates that the image of drooping is not necessarily one of defeat. Whether the 'native pool' could be taken as a reference to Judaism as the home of Christianity, and whether this is supported by the notion of the stem being 'alien' to the head and of Judaism continuing to celebrate the 'law', is uncertain. The final image, however, is not of the lily but of the depths where stems drown. This echoes the speaker's earlier desire to return to his origin, to the 'pool' (омут) whence he came. A similar ambiguity is apparent in a pool which both drowns and nourishes the lilies' stems.

Faith appears not to satisfy the artist because of its transcendent nature which allows no foothold in the tangible world. The poet has come almost full circle. At times even the tangible world appears to be dim and fragmented, resembling a 'mosaic dream'. In a world of dislocation from reality and of faith, Mandelstam turns to visual works of art, to architecture and to sculpture.

Notes for chapter one

1. Taranovsky, K. Essays on Mandelstam, (1976), Harvard University Press, p.48

"One may say that the Hellenic-Christian spirit determined Mandelstam's intellectual and emotional outlook and perspective in the period of *Tristia*. As compared with *Kamen*, the poet's model of the world in his second book, *Tristia*, has undergone considerable change. The themes of Christianity and Hellenism in *Tristia* are in harmony with each other, while the Judaic theme is strongly antithetic, if not even antagonistic to both of them."

2. II, p.67

3. II, p.57

4. II, p.66

5. II, p.55

6. Taranovsky, op. cit. p.52

O. Ronen is cited by Taranovsky as the first critic who envisages 17. and 18. as a comment on Mandelstam's Jewish background in an article in Encyclopaedia Judaica: Yearbook 1972.

7. As a young poet it seems that Mandelstam was given a cool reception precisely as a Jew and foreigner. Nadezhda tells us that Zinaida Hippus "писала о нем Брюсову и многим другим, и в ее кругу Мандельштама стали называть «Зинаидин хидёнок»" (Вторая Книга, p.34). Gumilev faulted the poet for his uncertain knowledge of Russian and remarked in a review of the second edition of 'Камень' that "В 'Камне' есть погрешности, слабые и запутанные стихотворения, режущие ухо ошибки против языка" (I, p.385). Noticeably Mandelstam's Acmeist manifesto was not published along with Gumilev's and Gorodetsky's essays in the first issue of *Apollon* for 1913 but appeared for the first time in 1919 in *Siren*. This may reflect the poet's lack of recognition by his fellow poets.

8. Taranovsky, *ibid*.

Taranovsky discerns the image of the pool and the window in several later poems. The presence of the window in the pool, in his mind's eye, evokes the visual image of a room filled with water. In 86."Соломинка", the pool reappears as a mirror hung in a room which is invaded by the Neva, and in 78."Бессоница. Гомер. Тугие паруса" the black sea approaches the head of the bed, threatening to engulf the speaker.

9. While the poet was staying as a small boy with his Jewish grandparents in Riga, his grandfather pulled out of the chest of drawers a tallith which he placed on his grandson's shoulders. Though talliths are normally white, the writer describes this one as black and yellow, "черно-желтый шелковый платок" (II, p.68). The young boy stumbled over the strange words which his grandfather tried to make him say, longing to escape - "Мне стало душно и страшно".

10. Mandelstam, N. Вторая Книга, (Paris, 1972), p.121

11. Matthew 26 v 61

12. In A Coat of Many Colors (p.128) Freidin interprets 109."Вернись в смесительное лоно" in the light of Nadezhda's comments which point to the identity between herself and Leah. Nadezhda must become the devoted Leah who renounces her own identity in order to be fused with the poet.

13. The 'facts' of Mandelstam's religious experience are not easy to establish. There are however pointers for us to follow.

From Mandelstam's autobiographical work "Шум Времени", it is possible to infer the nature of his childhood exposure to Judaism. Visits to the synagogue were evidently few and far between: "Раз или два в жизни меня возили в синагогу, как в концерт..." (II, p.65). During a period of 'national repentance' a Hebrew teacher was hired for the young boy. Clearly the lessons were short-lived and he felt no kinship with his teacher: "В этом мальчике я не узнавал себя и всем существом восставал на книгу и науку." (II, p.57)

1900-7 In September Mandelstam began at Tenishev school which he left in March seven years later. N. Struve notes in his book Осип Манделштам that no mark was recorded in Divinity: "в законе Божиим отметки нет" (p.296). As a Jew it appears that Mandelstam was not obliged to study this subject.

1908 Attendance is recorded at one of the autumn meetings of the Religious-Philosophical Society.

1909 In the spring Mandelstam attended another session of the afore-mentioned society.

1909 N. Struve relates that during the month of November Mandelstam travelled to Switzerland and then to Italy. There is no evidence that this visit included Rome. S. P. Kablukov wrote under the poem "когда мозаик", Lugano, a Swiss town of Italian character situated virtually on the border with Italy. It is possible that Mandelstam's travels took him no further South.

1910 July Mandelstam lived in Hango and made the acquaintance of Kablukov.

1910 October Mandelstam attended another session of the Religious-Philosophical Society. In Kablukov's words recorded in his diary Mandelstam is now considered "членом-сопернователем".

1911 May, 14 According to N. Struve Mandelstam was baptised into the Methodist Church in Finland by pastor N. Rozen. A. Cohen states that Mandelstam was baptised into the Lutheran Church (cp. note 19).

Although Mandelstam's poetry displays some knowledge of ecclesiastical architecture and a degree of familiarity with the order of worship, there is no record of regular church attendance or of allegiance to a particular denomination. During 1922-1929 Mandelstam's poetry makes little reference to Christianity. Naturally there was strict censorship on any religious themes. Following the Mandelstams' journey to Armenia in the summer of 1930, Christian themes and images re-emerge. A prayer, dated January of the following year, which the poet hid even from his wife, reveals the depth of his distress and perhaps reflects faith:

Помоги, Господь, эту ночь прожить:
Я за жизнь боюсь - за Твою рабу -
В Петербурге жить - словно спать в гробу.

Whenever Mandelstam faced a separation from his wife in later years it was a traumatic experience and daily letters, telephone conversations or telegrams were exchanged. His letters to his wife mostly end with phrases such as - "Храни тебя Бог, солнышко мое" (III, p.205, begin. Nov. 25), "На ночь говорю: спаси, Господь, мою Наденьку" (III, p.225, Feb. 26) and "Христос с тобой, жизнь моя. Нет смерти, радость моя" (III, p.256, Feb. 30). Clearly God was not absent from his thoughts.

14. A postcard from Mandelstam to V. Ivanov dated 20 June 1910 begins: "Очень уважаемый и дорогой Вячеслав Иванович!" and continues, "Ваши семена глубоко запали в мою душу и я пугаюсь, глядя на громадные ростки". (II, p.485)

There is evidence that Mandelstam visited V. Ivanov's 'Tower' on several occasions. Nadezhda notes, however, that he never took to visiting the 'Tower' regularly. (Вторая Книга, p.37)

15. Kablukov, S. 'Мандельштам в записях дневника С. П. Каблукова', ed. A. Morozov Вестник Русского Христианского Движения, No. 129 IV (Paris,1979). Hereafter referred to as 'Kablukov's diary'.

Kablukov may have discussed some of his ideas on the concept of Christian time with Mandelstam. Morozov comments in his introduction to 'Kablukov's diary':

"Речь идет о чем-то связанном с тонкой и гармонической - музыкальной - организацией, возможной только на основе христианского понимания времени и существующей в том совмещенном пространственно

временном измерении, где 'духовное доступно взорам и очертания живут'." (p.134)

16. op. cit. p.138

17. II, p.320

18. Nadezhda speaks of the shift toward Russian Orthodoxy as already taking place under the influence of Kablukov and even prior to this time. "Мандельштам уже начал отходить от римско-католической концепции и склоняться к православию. Сдвиг произошел под влиянием Каблукова, но намечался еще до встречи с ним." (Вторая Книга, p.438).

19. Cohen A. A. Osip Emilievich Mandelstam: An Essay in Antiphon (1974), Ardis

According to Cohen's interpretation, Mandelstam reacted against his Jewish descent "chafing to the point of inexcusable pragmatic conversion to Christianity (the Lutheran Church) in order to gain admission to the university". (p.36)

Freidin, in A Coat of Many Colors, observes that it may be significant that Mandelstam was baptised neither into the Russian Orthodox Church nor the Roman Catholic Church - "Given the position of the Methodists in the religiously intolerant Russian Empire, they were an unlikely choice for someone in search of a fictitious baptismal certificate, which suggests that Mandelstam's baptism was more of a conversion than a pro forma ceremony for a Russian Jew seeking to enroll at the University of St. Petersburg." (p.30)

In 'Христианская Поэзия Мандельштама' G. Ivask concedes the ambiguity of the motives of Mandelstam's baptism but concludes, "Осип Эмильевич не крестился водой, но был крещен в Духом, и никто из русских поэтов такого пасхально-евхаристического стихотворения не написал." (p.114)

20. S. S. Averintsev pointed out to me the absence of a capital letter in the reference to the image "Образ твой", comparing this with the poet's use of a capital letter in his prayer "Я за жизнь боюсь - за Твою рабу -".

21. The early references to freedom appear to be made more in the context of 'existentialist thought'. Once freedom acquires a religious connotation it is often placed in conjunction with 'joy' (веселье). When culture has become the church then Mandelstam writes "мы обрели внутреннюю свободу, настоящее внутреннее веселье." (II, p.223)

22. 'Двадцать два неизданных стихотворения', Вестник Русского студентческого Христианского Движения, 97-98 (1970), pp.107-117

23. 'Двадцать два неизданных стихотворения', op. cit.

24. This poem is recorded in Kablukov's diary (p.141).

25. 'Двадцать два неизданных стихотворения', op. cit.

Visual Art, Architecture and Rome

Architecture and the visual arts offered a sensual, physical approach to reality and to Christianity, which was evident neither in Judaism nor in Protestantism, both of which eschewed the image.

The Acmeist movement may have guided Mandelstam towards a deeper appreciation of the tangible world of architecture and construction, with its ideal of craftsmanship in relation to the artist. Acmeism sprang up partly as a reaction against Symbolism which flourished under the banner of *a realibus ad realiora*. Gumiliev, one of the founding members of the Acmeist movement, acknowledged their debt to Symbolism but distinguished it in the following ways: Acmeists do not reject the symbol but bring it into balance with the other elements; they attempt to take the line of greatest resistance and would construct a cathedral rather than a tower; the unknowable by definition can not be known but should be respected; hierarchy is not a question of the greater or lesser but of each part having a specific gravity; and all become brothers in the confrontation with non-existence.¹ Gorodetsky, a fellow Acmeist, followed a similar line, maintaining that art was solidity and artists honest craftsmen in love with order and solid forms.

Mandelstam's Acmeist manifesto, "Утро Акмеизма" (1913), was not published until 1919. It can be seen partially as an attempt to resolve the dislocation previously experienced in the subjective nature of faith and in the dreamlike quality of 'reality', by providing an objective point rooted in the tangible world. Mandelstam embraced the three-dimensional world with its specific gravity, accepting it as a 'God-given palace'. The artist was to be regarded as an architect and craftsman, his art as the stones and building. Reality became a concrete phenomenon, residing solely in the work of art itself (единственно реальное - это само произведение).² Similarly the reality of poetry was rooted in the word (Эта реальность в поэзии - слово, как таковое).³ One did not need to seek for the metaphysical elsewhere when proof, (метафизическое доказательство), could be heard physically in the sound of a chisel splitting rock. Far from static, the craftsman's material had dynamic potential and already longed for another existence.

Architecture - art: the poet saw both as a means to fight with the

emptiness and to 'hypnotise space', just as the Gothic spire reproached the sky for being empty (Хорошая стрела готической колокольни - злая, - потому что весь ее смысл уколоть небо, попрекнуть его тем, что оно пусто).⁴ For Mandelstam the Gothic cathedral, such as Notre Dame, was built on the concept of an organism, which expressed the 'divine' physiological nature of humanity. As mankind, like architecture, conspired together against emptiness and non-existence, each person could be valued as a part of the whole.

The artist was not obliged to approach the tangible world wearing the spectacles of 'a realibus ad realiora' but with the law of identity and of logic. This became the poet's tool in order to be astonished (непрерывно удивляться) and was, in Mandelstam's opinion, the principle underlying Bach's music. The artist no longer needed to draw on his faith for inspiration and affirmation but on those tangible things which surrounded him, using construction and logic as his tools:

"Доказывать и доказывать без конца: принимать в искусстве что-нибудь на веру недостойно художника, легко и скучно... Мы не летаем, мы поднимаемся только на те башни, какие сами можем построить."⁵

[Endlessly to prove, this is the artist's task. It is beneath him to accept something on faith in art, it is easy and boring... We do not fly, we ascend only those towers which we ourselves are able to build.]

The artist was not free, however, to exalt the rational and tangible world to the exclusion of belief in the transcendent, for in Mandelstam's eyes the very nature of the former expressed the latter. Perhaps this is the reason for Mandelstam's sense of kinship with the Middle Ages, for they too had this 'noble mixture of rationality and mysticism, a sense of the world as a living equilibrium' (Благородная смесь рассудочности и мистики и ощущение мира, как живого равновесия).⁶

39."Notre Dame" and 38."Айя София" appear to embody the rationalistic and mystical aspects of Christianity respectively. The speaker of 38."Айя-София" does not speak from a direct encounter in a specific moment of time but from the evidence of an eye-witness. This indirect testimony creates a sense of awe and distance:

Айя-София - здесь остановиться
Судил Господь народам и царям!

Ведь купол твой, по слову очевидца,
Как на цепи подвешен к небесам.

The way that Haghia Sophia dominates the opening of the first stanza reflects something of her unquestionable authority and stature. Without mediation the Lord ordains where the great cathedral is to be built. The architecture expresses her direct attachment to the heavens and her sustenance through uninterrupted communion with the divine. Her timeless and universal relevance are evident by the divine order, which is directed to nations and kings alike, and by the fact that she will outlive nations and centuries. The purposes of the builder are inscrutable and the question, "Но что же думал твой строитель щедрый?", is left unanswered. Beauty, peace, light and wisdom suffuse the temple which seems destined to defy man's comprehension and time's corrosive action.

Notre Dame belongs to a different tradition and century. Her inspiration arises from the rational and physiological rather than from the mystical and sublime. The Gothic cathedral does not sustain a direct connection with the divine and it is a Roman judge, not the Lord, who judges. Delight in human experimentation and effort, embodied in the archetypal image of Adam, characterises the architecture of Notre Dame - "Как некогда Адам, распластывая нервы, / Играет мышцами крестовый легкий свод". Perhaps Adam refers obliquely to 'Adamism', a form of doctrine propounded by Gorodetsky, which advocated a return to the values of the natural and primitive world. In its immediate context the image intertwines archetypal man discovering the complexity and power of his own physiological organism with the comparable dynamic potential in the arch. Notre Dame is inscrutable, though in a different way to Haghia Sophia. The reference to the 'ineffable forest' (непостижимый лес) is reminiscent of the denser forest which in "Утро Акмеизма" Mandelstam discovers, not in a stroll through the 'forest of symbols' (лесу символов), but in 'divine physiology, the infinite complexity of our dark organism' (божественная физиология, бесконечная сложность нашего темного организма).⁷

Notre Dame is constructed in such a way that the speaker's attention is caught not by the weightlessness of the cupola but by the sheer

weight which is in part supported by the 'audacious arch'. This principle in architecture is reflected also in the equilibrium of "Египетская мощь и христианства робость, / С тростинкой рядом - дуб, и всюду царь - отвес". Its design is paradoxical in the way the secret plan is revealed by the outer structure - "выдает себя снаружи тайный план". The speaker is able to study the cathedral diligently.

Но чем внимательней, твердыня Notre Dame
Я изучал твои чудовищные ребра,
Тем чаще думал я: из тяжести недоброй
И я когда-нибудь прекрасное создам.

As an artist he can identify with the craftsmanship necessary to fashion the weight of material into something beautiful. The cathedral's beauty lies partly in the way that craftsmanship, aided by human ingenuity, can imitate a 'pattern' of an organism which has been divinely given.

The poet appears to have had a greater affinity with Notre Dame than Haghia Sophia, perhaps identifying more readily with the emphasis on human craftsmanship and effort. Notre Dame may mark the way forward to the 'Roman Cycle', begun the following year, in its pursuit of an order and a centre which is human and divine, the intangible experienced tangibly.

Rome is central to a number of Mandelstam's poems between 1913-15(17?).⁸ In "Шум Времени" the writer refers to an ambitious project he embarked on, which aimed to assess the reasons for the disintegration of the Roman empire.⁹ He describes it as a 'futile task'. However the poet's interest in Rome clearly ran deeper than a clinical dissection of its history. From his poetry it is evident that he viewed Rome both as the vortex of the Roman Empire and of the Catholic Church, a centre of the Christian and pagan worlds and of contemporary Italy.

Without attempting to unravel the complexities of historical references in the poems belonging to the 'Roman Cycle', it is illuminating to observe the position of the speaker and trace his shifting attitude towards Rome. Underlying 56."Поговорим о Риме - дивный град", tentatively dated 1913, is a tension between the speaker's

experience of Rome first as a place of harmony and beauty and then as one of shadows and chill.

Поговорим о Риме - дивный град!
Он утвердился купола победой.
Послушаем апостольское *credo*:
Несется пыль и радуги висят.

Unequivocal approval is expressed in the archaic words 'divine city'. No hint of dissent is evident in the 'victory' of the cupola, a victory that is not won by the machinations of war but is as natural and universal as the cupola of the sky. The picture of spray and rainbows, signifying amongst other things abundant life and hope, is like a tangible expression of faith that is heard in the 'credo'. Clearly the speaker participates in this harmony.

The other side of the 'coin' is revealed in the final stanza:

На дольный мир бросает пепел бурый
Над форумом огромная луна,
И голова моя обнажена -
О холод католической тонзуры!

Though the setting is still Rome, implicit in the reference to the Forum, the archaism of "дивный град" is replaced by that of "дольный мир", the nether world. The vitality and colours of the spray and rainbows have faded and instead brown ash descends. Contrary to the sense of correlation between what is heard and seen, here the moon dominates and appears to be impervious to the speaker. The chill of the Catholic tonsure may be a reminder of the persecuted Christians who were martyred in the Roman world.¹⁰

Whether Rome as an ever-present 'ideal' can be maintained when one is physically absent, is a consideration raised in 60. "О временах простых и грубых". Here the rhythm of the horses' hooves, thick furs and the yawning doorman conjure up a picture of the exile's lot. Ovid too was exiled from Rome and cast among barbarians.

Когда, с дряхлеющей любовью
Мешая в песнях Рим и снег,
Овидий пел арбу воловью
В походе варварских телег.

Without the physical presence of Rome, it is impossible to sustain a pure love,¹¹ and the image of Rome becomes mingled with the hue of the surrounding snow, the song following the rhythm of the ox cart.

Vitality and immediacy distinguish one of the cathedrals in 61. "На площадь выбежав, свободен". According to the Soviet edition, 'the Lord's temple' signifies the Kazan cathedral and the 'giant', St. Isaacs.¹² There is apparent confusion in the description of the architect as a 'Russian in Rome', for if the Kazan cathedral is taken to be the referent then the architect is the Russian born Andrei Nikiforovich Voronich (1759-1814) and the building is in Russia.

А зодчий не был итальянец,
Но русский в Риме; ну так что ж!
Ты каждый раз как иностранец
Сквозь рощу портиков идешь;

Perhaps the answer to the riddle is the way in which the cathedral so powerfully recalls Rome that the architect himself feels like a foreigner. Also the poet may have in mind his own 'foreignness', which enables him to understand the exiled Ovid and the 'foreign' architect. He can take heart from the way that Ovid adapts to an alien environment and from the construction of an authentic Roman cathedral by a Russian.

Two different natures characterise the cathedrals of 61. Whereas the 'giant' is immobile and helpless, a mass of rock (скалою целой / К земле беспомощно прижат!), the Kazan cathedral is compared to a garden spider. Light and mobile, the image of a spider imbues the building with a sense of freedom and dynamics - "На площадь выбежав, свободен / Стал колоннады полукруг - ". Its association with the Kazan cathedral also gives the impression of the nearness and mobility of a Rome which has come to be visually present in Russia through architecture.

Rome's emergence as a symbol coincides with a revival of interest in

P. Chaadaev. This may be partly attributed to the publication of his collected works, edited by M. O. Gershenzon, which appeared in a bilingual Russian-French edition in 1913-14.¹³ Undoubtedly Mandelstam would have read the work with interest and this assumption is not unfounded in view of his article entitled "Петр Чаадаев". Here Chaadaev is depicted as a man who recognised that Russia belonged to a world without organisation and therefore he sought an organising principle, a point of unity which could clear the way for historical synthesis. History, for Chaadaev, had no 'beginnings' but was in itself a unity and continuity, resembling Jacob's ladder down which angels descended from heaven to earth. He became fixated with the one point where, in his opinion, this unity had become flesh - the Pope, an omnipotent symbol of time. During Chaadaev's two-year visit to the West, he came to see the 'birthplace of the spirit, embodied in the Church and in architecture' (родину духа, воплощенного в церкви и архитектуре).¹⁴ Ultimately Chaadaev discovered his own West, "Запад, который гуще, конкретнее самого исторического Запада"¹⁵ [A West which is denser and more concrete than the historical West]. The vital ingredient that made Chaadaev's West more concrete was, in Mandelstam's eyes, the peculiarly Russian gift of the freedom of choice, of moral freedom. Even the Pope rose to greet this freedom. Chaadaev took it as his holy staff and set out for Rome.

69. "Посох мой, моя свобода" concerns the speaker's own pilgrimage to Rome. Threads of the article "Петр Чаадаев" are intertwined in 69. and Morozov suggests that both the poem and the article were written in November 1914.¹⁶ The first stanza reads:

Посох мой, моя свобода,
Сердцевина бытия -
Скоро ль истиной народа
Станет истина моя?

Like Chaadaev, the speaker takes Russia's gift of freedom, as one would a sacred staff and sets off for Rome.¹⁷ Significantly Rome is not depicted as the source of the staff, freedom or truth, for the personal pronoun 'my' qualifies each reference. The speaker's concern is not primarily

patriotic for he seeks truth which is universal.¹⁸ Nevertheless Rome is central as a place of pilgrimage to which the speaker comes on behalf of the people, "Прав народ, вручивший посох / Мне, увидевшему Рим!".

In 71."К Энциклике Папы Бенедикта" the position of the speaker is of one who has heard about Rome. The 'Roman priest' recalls Chaadaev.

Есть обитаемая духом
Свобода - избранных удел.
Орлиным зреньем, дивным слухом
Священник римский уцелел.

Chaadaev regarded himself as belonging to the elect (избранничество) and thought he had discovered a freedom which was more far-reaching than anything created by a 'material culture':

"Это свобода стоит величия, застывшего в архитектурных формах, она равноценна всему, что создал Запад в области материальной культуры...".¹⁹

[This freedom is worth the magnificence, petrified in architectural forms - it equals all that West had created in terms of material culture.]

The eagle's eyesight and marvellous hearing are indicative of a person who is able to see events within the context of historical perspective - a man like Chaadaev. In stanza II the dove retains its connotations of the Holy Spirit, of peace and freedom but in a sense is also projected as an image of Chaadaev.

И голубь не боится грома,
Которым церковь говорит;
В апостольском созвучьи: Roma!
Он только сердце веселит.

The dove does not fear the thunder of the church²⁰. Unlike the Russians Boris Godunov sent abroad, compared in "Петр Чаадаев" to the first doves sent from the ark who did not return, Chaadaev finds his way back to the ark with a message of hope.

Я повторяю это имя
Под вечным куполом небес,

Although the 'Roman priest' has disappeared and the speaker is not in Rome, the name "Roma", the Latin form of Rome noted by one critic to be the anagram of 'amor', suggests that the essence may not be found in a literal place but in the name. The speaker need not look to the cupola of St. Peter's but can dwell under the eternal cupola of the sky.

Mandelstam shared Chaadaev's longing for a timeless point of unity, a point perhaps not unlike the intersection of the tangible and transcendent embodied in the ladder that Jacob saw in his dream. Chaadaev was exemplary because like others he too had tasted 'the immortal springs of eternal Rome' yet had returned to Russia in a literal and psychological sense, thus retaining his freedom. The poet's attitude towards Rome remained ambivalent for clearly she was not the ultimate goal.

Written in 1914 or 1915, 74."Аббат", indicates a gradual shift away from the fascination with Rome. This change is highlighted if we compare the original draft with the omissions and variants of subsequent drafts. Stanza I of the original draft serves as the final stanza in the first published version and is later omitted altogether:

Переменилось все земное,
И лишь не сбросила земля
Сутану римского покоя
И ваше золото, поля.
И, самый скромный современник,
Как жаворонок, Жамм поет, -
Ведь католический священник
Ему советы подает!

Rome is considered to be a centrifugal point on the earth, its incorruptible nature suggested by the golden border. The priest is sensitive to the poetry of the French Catholic poet "Жамм", who shares the first two letters of his name with the Russian word for skylark, "жаворонок". This underlines their common world of song. In 74. the

subject is not simply a humble priest but an abbot who comes from the French secular literary tradition:

О спутник вечного романа,
Аббат Флобера и Золя -
От зноя рыжая сутана
И шляпы круглые поля;
Он все еще проходит мимо,
В тумане полдня, вдоль межи,
Влача остаток власти Рима
Среди колосьев спелой ржи.

Rome is no longer invincible and the soutane has turned red from the stifling heat. Compared to the field of ripe rye, Rome is in decline and has only a remnant of her former power. Her association with power contrasts with the Rome of the original draft as 'the home that awaits us', a home where 'canonical happiness' is experienced like the shining sun - "Как солнце, стало на зенит, / И никакое самовластье / Ему сиять не запретит." In the final draft, heat takes on connotations of oppression. The atmosphere is overhung by the sultry mist of midday and the abbot is clearly affected by the heat for following his pronouncement, "Католиком умрете вы!", he exclaims - "Как нынче жарко". Concern with the physical undermines his former declaration and, exhausted by the conversation, he retires to the castle to eat. The abbot's show of self-conscious condescension towards the speaker and others, his shielding of 'the honour of his shining tonsure' with secular garb, contrasts with the priest of the original draft whose 'splendour' and 'honour' are sustained by his attention to the living messages of the birds' song:

Священник слышит пенье птичье
И всякую живую весть,
Питает все его величье
Сияющей тонзуры честь.

Although both drafts are only a response to a single representative of Rome, the tone of the speaker would appear to reflect something of the poet's unease with an authoritarian Rome.

Rome, as a point of unity and authority, comes under scrutiny in 65. "Природа тот же Рим и отразилась в нем" and in 66. "Пусть имена цветущих городов". It is uncertain whether this pair was completed in 1914 or November 1917.²¹ Stanza one of 65. reads:

Природа - тот же Рим и отразилась в нем.
Мы видим образы его гражданской мощи
В прозрачном воздухе, как в цирке голубом,
На форуме полей и в колоннаде роши.

If nature is Rome, irrepressibly alive through growth and renewal, it suggests a universality and continuity common to both. Images of Rome's civil might are present in the circus, the forum and in the colonnade - all symbolic of Rome's cultural elements and which, as one critic has observed,²² mirror nature in the images of the sky, the fields and groves. Stanza II of the original draft casts a shadow over the confident tones of the first stanza:

А ныне человек - ни раб, ни властелин -
Не опьянен собой, а только отуманен.
Невольно говорим: «Всемирный гражданин»,
А хочется сказать: «Всемирный горожанин».

Man is neither slave nor master and is uncertain of his place in the universe. By comparison with 'town-dweller', 'citizen' has a fine ring and indicates empire and authority. However a note of disquiet is heard in the involuntary nature of the collective proclamation. In a subsequent draft of stanza II there is evident unease with an authoritarian system which has evolved without reference to the 'gods' and is built up with silent slaves and stones - "Рабы, чтобы молчать, и камни, чтобы строить".²³ A later article by Mandelstam names a superior concept to that of citizen - "... но есть более высокое начало, чем «гражданин», понятие «мужа»"²⁴ [but even more exalted than the principle of 'citizen']

is the concept of 'man']. An inkling of this second concept, which Gumilev held dear, is perhaps evident in 66.

Пусть имена цветущих городов
Ласкают слух значительностью бренной.
Не город Рим живет среди веков,
А место человека во вселенной.

Rome's relation to nature is no longer that of an equal but like all cities, she too is doomed to fade. Man's place in the universe is the pivotal point of history. The 'superstructure' of kings and priests, houses and altars are like wretched rubbish (как жалкий сор), without an understanding of that place. Figures of divine and temporal authority try to restrict man's freedom, priests justify wars by the 'place of man', and kings try to seize that 'place', the verb "овладеть" indicating not merely a desire to rule but to capture and possess.

* * *

Just as Mandelstam's interest in Rome and the Roman Catholic Church has been labelled his 'Catholic period',²⁵ so his interest in Moscow and her churches has been regarded as a sign of his conversion to the Orthodox Church. According to Nadezhda, the poet Marina Tsvetaeva was instrumental in introducing Mandelstam to Moscow and thus providing a bridge to the Orthodox Church. She cites the quotation from 85., "И никогда он Рима не любил", as evidence of Mandelstam's renouncing Rome in favour of Orthodoxy.²⁶

Firstly we shall try to trace the nature of Tsvetaeva's influence. In the months between February and June of 1916 Tsvetaeva and Mandelstam made several visits together to Moscow, described in her own words as "дни, когда я Мандельштаму дарила Москву"²⁷ [Days, when I gave Moscow to Mandelstam]. Whether Tsvetaeva gave Mandelstam 'her Moscow' is another question. In an article written a few years later, Mandelstam expresses his dislike of her Moscow verse, "безвкусица и историческая фальшь стихов Марины Цветаевой о России - лженародных и лжемосковских..."²⁸ [the tastlessness and historical inaccuracy of Marina

Tsvetaeva's poems about Moscow - pseudo-populist and pseudo-Muscovitel.

90. "Не веря воскресенья чуду", inspired by Mandelstam's visit to Tsvetaeva in the summer of 1916, makes reference to the days when they were in Moscow exploring the city's churches.

И к Спасу бедному пришла,
Не отрываясь целовала,
А гордою в Москве была.

Tsvetaeva suggests that these lines allude to an occasion when she kissed the crucifix in one of the churches. Although the speaker mentions her devotion, he associates Tsvetaeva in Moscow with pride, which contrasts with the humility of the poor Saviour. Kablukov's record of a conversation which took place on the last evening of 1916 throws an interesting light on Tsvetaeva's impact on the poet:

"Какая-то женщина явно вошла в его жизнь. Религия и эротика сочетаются в его душе... Эту связь признал и он сам... и (он) не видит выхода из этого положения, кроме скорейшего перехода в православие".²⁹

[Evidently some woman or other has appeared on the scene. Religion and eroticism are intertwined in his soul... He himself admits to this connection... and sees no way out of this predicament except for a rapid conversion to Orthodoxy.]

This hints that Tsvetaeva may have influenced the nature of his religious appreciation, though not necessarily its 'content'.

Secondly we shall look at two poems composed in 1916, 84. "В разноголосице девического хора" and 85. "На розвальнях, уложенных соломой", which belong to the 'Tsvetaeva' cycle. In 84. the speaker has a bird's eye view of the city and hears the girlish choir of the churches' dissonant voices. By contrast the speaker of 85. must travel through the huge city in a sledge, its runners diving into the black potholes. His fate appears to be linked to that of the Tsarevich mentioned in stanza four, "Царевича везут, немеет страшно тело - ". This is suggested by the parallel construction in the second stanza - "По улицам меня везут без шапки". Such a connection is also indicated by the fateful bast matting and straw lining of the sledge which presage the burning straw of the final stanza. It is not, however, possible to identify a historical

Tsarevich as no single character fits all the details implied in the poem.³⁰

.....
И теплятся в часовне три свечи.

Не три свечи горели, а три встречи -
Одну из них сам Бог благословил,
Четвертой не бывать, а Рим далече, -
И никогда он Рима не любил.

It is as though a 'second voice' re-interprets the three candles to signify three meetings. His reasoning that God has blessed one meeting but never loved Rome, divests Rome of authority with the result that Moscow can legitimise her own authority, which proceeds to justify even murder.³¹ Judging by the comment Mandelstam picks out from Chaadaev, he is unlikely to subscribe to the idea of Moscow as the third Rome:

"Чаадаев и словом не обмолвился о «Москве Третьем Риме». В этой идее он мог увидеть только чухлую выдумку киевских монахов."³²

[Chaadaev makes no reference to Moscow as the third Rome. He could only see in this idea a worthless fantasy of the Kiev an monks.]

Like Rome before her, Moscow cannot legitimately claim to be the eternal city. She too ultimately tramples on man's place in the universe, whether he be slave or prince, and is doomed to temporality.

Perhaps there follows a more conscious search for what is universal and transcendent, no longer to be realised in the tangible and particular, for as we have seen every city and system tends towards authoritarianism and is destined to perish. In several depictions of the Church the poet does not look to the tangible nature of for example, ecclesiastical architecture, to embody the universal and transcendent but sees her as a timeless expression of these things. It is as though Mandelstam was searching for a foundation of eternal significance, one which could exist independently of man's effort, an 'unshakable rock of values' and an inexhaustible source of life that flows from within.

Kablukov records that on 24 June 1915 Mandelstam showed him three poems; "Евхаристия", "Имя божие" and "Свобода". All three poems emphasise

the 'inward' aspect of religion. We shall discuss the first one, 117."Вот дароносица, как солнце золотое, in more detail:

Вот дароносица, как солнце золотое,
Повисла в воздухе - великолепноый миг,
Здесь должен прозвучать лишь греческий язык:
Взять в руки целый мир, как яблоко простое.

No one denomination is professed. The Greek language is perhaps specified because of its significance as the true ancestor of the liturgy and of Russian poetry. The imagery speaks neither of a specific time nor place, but of wholeness, perfection and eternity. Both the golden sun and the simple apple are abstract yet concrete images and their circularity is echoed in the references to the 'round temple' and the 'cupola'. The internal echoes in "дароносица" and "солнце", "торжественный" and "божественный" also reflect harmony. Time is no longer an enemy, which a building need defy as does the unwarped gilt of Haghia Sophia, but is itself transformed into a moment of eternity:

И Евхаристия как вечный полдень длится -
Все причащаются, играют и поют,
И на виду у всех божественный сосуд
Неисчерпаемым веселием струится.

At midday the sun reaches its zenith and bears no other comparison. The speaker is the voice not of 'I' but of 'we', of everybody, for such a vision of harmony is universal by nature.³³ Significantly the source of harmony and joy is inexhaustable.

Two poems composed a couple of years later, 106."В хрустальном омуте какая крутизна!" (1919) and 124."Люблю под сводами седья тишины" (1921) also view the Church as a universal phenomenon.

В хрустальном омуте какая крутизна!
Зв нас сиенские предстательствуют горы,
И сумасшедших скал колючие соборы
Повисли в воздухе, где шерсть и тишина.

The sense of depth and clarity of the crystal pool contrasts with the viscous, black pool associated with Judaism and imperialist St. Petersburg. Sublime, like St. Sophia, the 'prickly cathedrals' are 'suspended' in the air. Though Siena is both Roman Catholic by tradition and predominantly Gothic in architecture, these characteristics are not made explicit and the cathedrals are considered as a part of nature's universal and ancient design.³⁴ A sense of sharpness and exhilaration is conveyed by the crisp 'k's and the expansive 'y's, like the pause of the psalm singer while he breathes deeply. Height, in a literal and figurative sense, is indicated by the rocks and mountains. Nature's acknowledgement of Christianity is expressed in the way that the speaker, together with the immovable earth, drinks the cold mountain air of Christianity. Images of the sheepdogs and the shepherds' sheepskins with the judges' staffs allude to no one civilisation but belong to a timeless, Biblical tradition. The meeting of divine and temporal is embodied neither in the figure of the Pope nor in the city Rome, but is understood by the image of the ladder of prophets and kings from which the organ descends, 'the fortress of the Holy Spirit', and by a second image envisaged in musical terms:

И с христианских гор в пространстве изумленном,
Как Палестрины³⁵ песнь, нисходит благодать.

The clear participation of the natural world and the uninterrupted link between the divine and temporal point to a Christianity which is universal.

In 124. the speaker expresses his delight in the requiems and public prayers and in the rites of the funeral services in St. Isaacs. A sense of stability and time-honoured tradition is conveyed by the archaic genitive form of "седья тишины", the unhurried step of the priest and the repeated rituals of Lent. The 'orphaned cry' of the priest may illustrate that he is not part of a 'system' but is symbolic of the paradoxes at the heart of Christianity where purity, humility and majesty meet. St. Sophia and St. Peter's, the homes of the Byzantine and Roman Catholic traditions are united in their description as:

Соборы вечные Софии и Петра,
Амбары воздуха и света,
Зернохранилища вселенского добра
И риги Нового Завета.

Images of granaries and threshing-floors do not commend the cathedrals simply as monuments, but point to their universal role in storing air and light - essential to existence.

From external evidence it appears that the Church, to a certain extent, did tolerate the 'wolfish tracks' within its walls when it faced 'hard times' (годы тяжких бед). Nadezhda remarks that although they heard individual accounts of those who died a martyr's death, there were also many reports of others involved in compromise and betrayal. She makes the following observation concerning Mandelstam's reaction towards the Church at this time: "Я думаю, что в двадцатых годах заглохла вера в церковное начало... он не мог не заметить, как ослабела связующая сила церкви, тоже переживавшей тажкий кризис наравне со всей страной!"³⁶ [I think that in the twenties his faith in the basis of the Church faltered... he could not help noticing that the unifying power of the Church was weakened, for it too was undergoing the severe crisis which faced the whole country.] Perhaps this is one reason why Mandelstam looked increasingly to something less dependent on outward forms, to the essence of Christianity which could accommodate the suffering of those years.

Notes for chapter two

1. This information is extracted from a translation of Gumilev's essay 'Symbolism's legacy and Acmeism'.

2. II, p.320

3. *ibid.*

4. II, p.323

5. II, pp.324-325

6. II, p.325

7. II, p.323

8. Struve, G. 'Итальянские образы и мотивы в поэзии Осипа Мандельштама', *Studi in onore di Ettore Lo Gatto Giovanni Maver*, (Rome, 1962), pp.601-614

Struve observes that Mandelstam probably never visited Rome but saw it "сквозь призму истории и истории религии". He further comments: "В стихах Мандельштама в годы 1913-1916 очень большое место занимает возвращающийся снова и снова образ Рима. Это не Рим конкретный, Рим, виденный во очию (даже если Мандельштам и видел его) а Рим не только республиканский и императорский, но и Рим папский, католический". (pp.604-5)

9. "Об эту пору мы с ним делали большую и величаво бесплодную работу: писали реферат о причинах падения римской империи." (II, p.80)

10. Freidin, G. 'Osip Mandelstam: The Poetry of Time (1908-1916)', *California Slavic Studies*, II (1980), pp.141-86

Freidin interprets "Поговорим о Риме - дивный град" as a testimony to Mandelstam's commitment to Catholicism in spite of the difficulties that he encountered. The reasons for his commitment, Freidin suggests, are not solely rooted in faith but in a historical perspective of the Roman culture, the Aventine and the Caesars. He proposes that Mandelstam's attraction to Catholicism lay in his "admiration for harmony and order" which could offer an established form to the poet's "rather amorphous religiosity". As an assimilated Jew, this would also help him find a cultural and religious identity.

11. It may be coincidence that 57."1913", also written in 1914, uses the adjective "дряхлый" in relation to Rome in a negative sense. Under the contemporary Victor Emmanuel III, characterised by his small stature, Rome was far from an 'ideal city'.

Или возит кирпичи
Солнца дряхлая повозка,
И в руках у недоноска
Рима ржавые ключи?

12. Soviet edition, Note 54., p.264

13. The date and publication of Chaadaev's works are mentioned in a note to the translated article 'Peter Chaadaev' in Mandelstam: The Complete Critical Prose and Letters (p.592).

14. II, p.287

15. II, p.290

16. 'Kablukov's diary', p.146

17. "Чаадаев принял ее (нравственную свободу), как священный посох, и пошел в Рим". (II, p.291)

18. Mandelstam quotes Chaadaev's words, '«истина дороже родины»' (II, p.288), and remarks that Chaadaev never discovered their prophetic meaning.

19. II, p.290

20. The title of the poem "К энциклике Папы Бенедикта" as well as the reference to the church's thunder, suggest an allusion to Tyutchev's "Encyclica". Here the Pope is associated with violence and suppression:

Был день, когда господней правды молот
Громил, дробил ветхозаветный храм,
И собственным мечом своим зволот,
В нем издыхал первосвященник сам.

Mandelstam does not become the Pope's apologist though he points to an individual who found a path through chaos in the light of Rome.

21. According to the Soviet edition, 65."Природа тот же Рим и отразилась в нем" and 66."Пусть имена цветущих городов" have been placed incorrectly in the 1914-16 group, whereas their rightful date is November 1917. In Вторая Книга Nadezhda remarks that these two poems were left out of the first two editions of *Tristia* but included in the third. From the line "Священники оправдывают войны", she concludes that 66. could only have been written at the beginning of the First World War. Although they were begun together, Nadezhda observes that they were finished at different times, when Mandelstam had already begun to move away from his ideas about Roman Catholicism.

22. Przybylski, R. An Essay on the Poetry of Osip Mandelstam: God's Grateful Guest, tr. M. G. Levine, p.15

23. In "Гуманизм и Современность" written a couple of years after the poem, Mandelstam writes: "Бывают эпохи, которые говорят, что им нет дела до человека, что его нужно использовать, как кирпич, как цемент, что из него нужно строить, а не для него... Но есть другая социальная архитектура, ее масштабом, ее мерой тоже является человек, но она строит не из человека, а для человека." (II, p.352)

24. II, p.258

25. Taranovsky comments in Essays on Mandelstam: "It is also well known that in *Kamen* the poet was more concerned with Catholicism (Protestantism plays only a marginal role in this collection), while in *Tristia* he turned to Orthodoxy, although Catholic Rome was not forgotten... " (p.48)

26. "Цветаева, подарив ему свою дружбу и Москву, как-то расколдовала Мандельштама. Это был чудесный дар, потому что с одним Петербургом, без Москвы, нет вольного дыхания... увидав Россию, он от Рима отказывается «Рим далече», - и никогда он Рима не любил..." (Вторая Книга, pp.522-523)

27. III, pp.340-341

28. II, p.328

29. 'Kablukov's diary', p.153

30. Taranovsky, K. 'Mandelstam's Monument Not Wrought by Hands', California Slavic Studies, 6., (1971)
Taranovsky observes that Uglich and the image of the bound Tsarevich point to the Time of Troubles. He lists the historical personalities who

could match the depiction of the Tsarevich and concludes "that from all these historical facts Mandelstam composed a generalized type of Tsarevich, a victim of inhuman cruelty." (p.46)

31. In the article 'Mandelstam's Monument Not Wrought by Hands' (p.46) Taranovsky supposes that the three meetings refer to Rome, Byzantium and Moscow, all meetings of mankind and Providence. If the Lord did not like Rome then which of the other two did he bless, Byzantium the cradle of the true Faith or Moscow its heir? Taranovsky supposes that he was more likely to have blessed Byzantium. N. Struve maintains in Осип Мандельштам that Mandelstam denounced Rome but regarded the three meetings to concern Judaism, Roman Catholicism and Byzantine or possibly Russian Orthodoxy.

32. II, p.328

33. Mandelstam captures the joy inspired by grace which lies at the heart of the Eucharist. This is in accord with the etymology of the word. It is derived from the Greek for thankful, ευχαριστος, which in turn is derived from the Greek for favour or grace, χάρις.

34. In N. A. Nilsson's article 'Osip Mandelstam and his Poetry' (p.50) he comments on the unique appearance of Siena, which is built on the steep hills of Tuscany.

35. It is thought that Mandelstam refers not to 'the song of Palestine' but to the song of the Italian composer Palaestrina who was known for his Catholic masses.

36. Mandelstam, N. Вторая Книга, p.438

Christianity Hellenised

The 'central point' of Mandelstam's new poetic world and personal piety differs from all such potent and tangible symbols as Rome and Moscow. It is to the fundamental nature of Christianity and its precursor, discerned not in Old Testament Messianism but rather in Greek tragedy and Hellenism, that Mandelstam now turns, although he perceives both to be of the same essence.

Tragedy is traditionally considered to be the medium which endows human life with dignity and meaning in a world of death and suffering, a genre which unites form with depth of feeling. Greek tragedy demands a set of absolute values.

In 1914 Mandelstam wrote 64. "Есть ценностей незыблемая скала". The first stanza affirms the speaker's belief in the existence of an 'unshakable rock of values':

Есть ценностей незыблемая скала
Над скучными ошибками веков.

The tragedian, Sumarokov, is not attentive to this rock and babbles the script he has memorised in a theatre of 'half-words and half-masks' (В театре полуслова / И полумаск). A similar sense of incompleteness is expressed by Mandelstam's remarks in "Заметки о Шенье" (1914) concerning the impoverishment of the eighteenth century concept of 'good'. In antiquity 'good' had encompassed so many meanings that it resembled a golden ball - "Добро, благополучье, здоровье были слиты в одно представление, как полновесный и однородный золотой шар... "1 [Goodness, prosperity and health were fused into a single concept, like a solid and homogeneous golden ball]. However, with the increased influence of scholasticism, expressed in rationalism, in allegorical thinking, and personification of ideas, the Age of Reason began to dissect concepts like 'good', thereby creating an inner emptiness. Bad tragedies resulted from the eighteenth century way of thought. All that was alive and healthy was meanwhile diverted into trifles because they demanded less supervision: "а дитя с семью няньками - трагедия выродилась в пышный пустоцвет, именно потому, что над ее колыбелью склонялись и заботливо

ее нянчили «великие принципы»".² [but the child with seven nannies, tragedy, grew up into a luxuriant sterile flower precisely because the 'Great Principles' bent over her cradle and anxiously fussed over her.]

The dramatist Ozerov (1769-1816) escaped this pernicky moralism perhaps through his appreciation of the 'unshakable rock of values'. Ozerov is described as the last ray of tragic dusk - "И для меня явление Озерова / - Последний луч трагической зари". It is as though the dawn of tragedy, "заря" describes dusk and dawn, may usher in the daylight of Christianity and the 'unshakable rock of values' find its fulfilment in the fact of redemption. Kourboulis' concordance records that the adjective "незыблемый" occurs only once in Mandelstam's poetry, namely in 64. This adjective is used in a similar context about a year later in prose:

"Питая искусство, отдавая ему свою плоть, предлагая ему в качестве незыблемой метафизической основы реальнейший факт искупления, христианство ничего не требовало взамен. Поэтому христианской культуре не грозит опасность внутреннего оскудения. Она неиссякаема, бесконечна, так как, торжествуя над временем, снова и снова вгущает благодать в великолепные тучи и проливает их живительным дождем."³

[Christianity nourishes art, yields its own flesh to it and offers as an unshakable metaphysical foundation the very real fact of redemption, demanding nothing in return. Christian culture is therefore not in danger of being threatened by inner impoverishment. It is inexhaustible and eternal, for in triumphing over time grace is condensed ever anew in magnificent clouds, suffusing them with life-giving rain.]

Perhaps this vibrant image of Christianity's life-giving power was glimpsed in the wholeness of the golden ball of antiquity, also figuring in the golden sun of the Eucharist.

Mandelstam did not want, however, to shy away from the conflict and deep colours of tragedy. This is underlined by two early criticisms he made with regard to V. Ivanov and I. Annensky.

"Только мне показалось, что книга слишком - как бы сказать? - круглая, без углов. Ни с какой стороны к ней не подступиться, чтобы разбить или разбиться о нее.

Даже трагедия в ней не угол - потому что Вы соглашаетесь на нее.

Даже экстаз не опасен - потому что Вы предвидите его исход."⁴

[Only it seems to me that the book is, how can I best say it - too rounded, without any angles. In whatever way it is approached, one can neither smash it nor bruise oneself against it. Even its tragedy lacks grit because you consent to it and the ecstasy is harmless because you already foresee the resolution.]

In a review of Annensky's "Фамира-кифаред" (Thamyris the Cithara Player 1913), Mandelstam wrote:

"К жестокой сказке Софокла Иннокентий Анненский подходит с болезненной осторожностью современного человека.

Тема любви матери к собственному сыну превратилась у Анненского в мучительное чувство лирической влюбленности..."⁵

[Annensky approaches the cruel tale of Sophocles with the sickly caution of a modern man. He transforms the theme of a mother's love for her own son into an agonised sentiment of lyrical infatuation...]

Annensky's reluctance to write a 'proper' tragedy may be explained by an article published in January 1922, which identifies the existence of 'an integrated, popular consciousness' as a pre-requisite for tragedy.

"Дух отказа, питающий поэзию Анненского, питается сознанием невозможности трагедии в современном русском искусстве благодаря отсутствию синтетического народного сознания - непререкаемого и абсолютного - народного сознания посылки трагедии; и поэт, рожденный быть русским Еврипидом, вместо того, чтобы спустить на воду корабль всенародной трагедии, бросает в водопад куклу, потому что: «сердцу обиды куклы обиды своей жалчей»."⁶

[The spirit of resignation which nourishes Annensky's poetry, is fostered by the realisation that tragedy is impossible in contemporary Russian art due to the absence of an integrated, popular consciousness of incontestable and absolute character, which is the premise of tragedy. Instead of launching the ship of universal tragedy, the poet born to be the Russian Euripides, throws a doll into the waterfall because "The heart pities the injury of a doll more than its own injury".]

If the ship of universal tragedy can no longer be launched and more pity is felt for injury inflicted on a doll, it suggests that people no longer place a universal value on individuals and are therefore unable to sympathise with the 'everyman' in one other. Thus the essence of a national consciousness is distorted.

Poems written on the theme of Phaedra highlight the state of contemporary tragedy and ultimately point to an appreciation of the essence of tragic myth. The poems fall into several categories; those seen from the spectator's viewpoint; a translated excerpt from Racine's play entitled 460."Начало «Федры»" and an expression of Phaedra's inner state.

Composed in 1914, 59."Ахматова", illustrates how the spectators' indifference is a barrier to their understanding of tragedy.

В пол-оборота, о печаль,
На равнодушных поглядела.
Спадая с плеч, окаменела
Ложно-классическая шаль.

Зловещий голос - горький хмель -
Душа расковывает недра:
Так - негодующая Федра -
Стояла некогда Рашель.

Akhmatova's account of the incident, which probably triggered off the poem⁷, draws attention to the gulf between those who appreciate art and those who feel indifferent (чуждых всякому искусству). The latter appear to be content with the exterior of what is a lifeless and fossilised classical shawl, the essence of tragedy remaining hidden. Only the voice seems able to penetrate. 'Ominous', 'bitter intoxication' have connotations of danger, ecstasy and discomfort. The image of the soul unfettering the depths (entrails) is deliberately physical and in a sense uncouth, perhaps in order to convey tragic eagerness to participate in the depths of Phaedra's experience.⁸

Tragedy played in the theatre fares no better.⁹ One is aware of the high sooty gallery and the guttering candles of 81."Я не увижу знаменитой 'Федры'". The actors are conscious primarily of their position by the footlights and are eager to collect 'a harvest of applause'. Reference to Racine's play rather than to Euripide's drama creates distance from the original tragic enactment of Phaedra. Division between the inner tragedy and the exterior world is expressed in a quotation

translated from Racine's play, "- Как эти покрывала мне постылы... ". Here the veils are repellent to the heroine for they are both stifling in her feverish state and outward signs of modesty which her burning passion belies. Her speech is cut short by a reference to the curtain which separates the audience literally from the stage and metaphorically from the theatre of Racine's day:

Театр Расина! Мощная завеса
Нас отделяет от другого мира

The voice may be able to penetrate the powerful barrier of time.

Спадают с плеч классические шали,
Расплавленный страданием крепнет голос
И достигает скорбного закала
Негодованием раскаленный слог...

82." - Как этих покрывал и этого убора" (1916) comes closer to an appreciation of the tragic myth. By comparing 82. with two earlier drafts, one dated 13 October 1915, and the other simply headed 1915,¹⁰ it appears that Mandelstam increasingly tried to convey the significance of a central myth to the individual by intensifying and internalising the poem's imagery.

Attention given to other characters is noticeably trimmed back and the nurse who appears in both drafts is not mentioned in the final version. In the October draft the second speech by the chorus begins:

Черным факелом среди белого дня
К Ипполиту любовью Федра зажглася
И сама погибла, сына вина,
У старой кормилицы учась.

The final version of this section reads like an incantation:

- Черным пламенем Федра горит
Среди белого дня.

Погребальный факел чадит
Среди белого дня.

Contrasts in 82. are more stark and visual and Phaedra is identified with the image of the black flame. Her association with pictures of light and heat, darkness and death, is reinforced in the final two lines :

Страсти дикой и бессонной
Солнце черное взойдет. (1915)

This reads differently from the concluding lines of the October draft:

Злая ложь и правда мудрая
Пред тобой равны, любовь.

The fusing of myth and image creates a powerful means of communicating tragedy in poetry.

Pushkin and Scriabin are described in their death as two transformations of the same sun (два превращения одного солнца)¹¹. They are a unique example of those who died a 'full death' and became a symbol for the whole people, so that 'the sun-heart of the dying man remained forever at the zenith of suffering and glory' (и солнце-сердце умирающего остановилось навеки в зените страдания и славы).¹² Perhaps Phaedra's black sun also imparts the notion of glory and suffering intertwined in Greek tragedy, for the universal image of the sun conveys the sense that her death, though ominous, provides a central point.¹³ The picture of Pushkin's burial reminds the poet of the nocturnal sun, reminiscent of Phaedra's death.

"Я вспоминаю картину пушкинских похорон, чтобы вызвать в вашей памяти образ ночного солнца, образ последней греческой трагедии, созданной Эврипидом - видение нечастной Федры."¹⁴

[I recall the picture of Pushkin's burial in order to stir up in your memory the image of the nocturnal sun, the image of the last Greek tragedy, composed by Euripides - a vision of unhappy Phaedra.]

This sun, perhaps related to the image of the black sun which rises after the death of the poet's mother (Я проснулся в колыбели, / Черным

солнцем осиян), emerges as the sun of guilt and not of redemption. Its association with the regression of time is negative: "история обратит течение времени - черное солнце Феды"15 [History reverses the course of time - the black sun of Phaedra].

The musician, Scriabin, is a complex mix of the ancient world, living under the sun of guilt, and a foreshadowing of the Christian era, illuminated by the sun of redemption. Music is affected by these different eras. Whereas the ancient world feared music, using it in government to maintain civic harmony only in conjunction with the word (слово казалось им... верным стражем, постоянным спутником музыки),16 Christianity appreciated pure music.

"Собственно чистой музыка эллины не знали - она всецело принадлежит христианству. Горное озеро христианской музыке отстоялось только после глубокого переворота, превратившего Элладу в Европу."17

[Strictly speaking the Hellenes did not experience pure music which belongs exclusively to Christianity. The mountain lake of Christian music was stilled only after the profound change that transformed Hellas into Europe.]

The profound change refers to the acceptance of Christianity in the ancient world. Music is now able to function freely, partaking of the nature of redemption:

"Еще не исследована область христианской динамики - деятельность духа в искусстве, как свободное самоутверждение в основной стихии искупления - в частности музыка."18

[The field of Christian dynamics, that is the spirit's activity in art as an act of free self-confirmation in the fundamental element of redemption, has not yet been researched, in particular the role of music.]

Beethoven counterpoints Scriabin, a Hellene who has rejected Christian music: "Католическая радость Бетховена, синтез Девятой симфонии, сей «белой славы торжество», недоступна Скрябину"19 [Beethoven's Catholic joy, the synthesis of his Ninth Symphony, this 'triumph of white glory' was inaccessible to Scriabin]. Unlike Scriabin, Beethoven's world was underpinned by the unity which he found in Christianity. Without the fear of fragmentation, his music was distinguished by an overtone of the 'assurance of personal salvation'.

'This white triumph of glory' is quoted from one of Mandelstam's poems, 72."Ода Бетховену" (1914). Beethoven seems to combine characteristics of the ancient world, the frenzy and tortuous joy of Dionysus, with an experience of the redemptive sacrifice. The penultimate stanza reads:

Тебе монашеские кельи -
Всемирной радости приют,
Тебе в пророческом весельи
Огнепоклонники поют;
Огонь пылает в человеке,
Его унять никто не мог.
Тебя назвать не смели греки,
Но чтили, неизвестный бог!

Different layers of time and religion are intertwined. Neither a particular place nor time are necessary to intuit the glory of Christianity. The unknown God is an allusion to St. Paul's teaching to the Athenians : "as I walked around and observed your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you".²⁰

Fire imagery in the poem contains hints of both Christian and ancient ideas and rituals within the context of art. In the deaf composer's room the fire inspires and illuminates as well as destroys - "И в темной комнате глухого / Бетховена горит огонь". The sobriety of the flaming clarity with which Beethoven sanctifies the struggle of the will, is set against the prophetic joy of the ancient fire worshippers. An indwelling fire suggests the potential universality of the divine, creative gift, culminating in the flame of sacrifice.

О величавой жертвы пламя!
Полнеба охватил костер -
И царской скинии над нами
Разодран шелковый шатер.
И в промежутке воспаленном,

Где мы не видим ничего, -
Ты указал в чертоге тронном
На белой славы торжество!

Fire which covers half of the sky alludes to a line of Tyutchev's poem, "Последняя Любовь",²¹ which reads: "Полнеба обхватила тень". Tyutchev's speaker sees the dusk and the encroaching darkness as a metaphor for his last love. By contrast the fire in "Ода Бетховену" may symbolise Christ's love which, far from dying, blazes. The tent of the royal tabernacle, ("скиния" is a specifically religious word referring to the veil or curtain before the sanctuary) is rent, revealing the 'white glory'. Suffering and sacrifice as the precursor of glory is a pattern which has been intuited by the ancient world.

Over a year later Mandelstam chose the mythological figure Persephone as a key motif in the poetical experience of the death of Petersburg. She moves between the realms of life and death, her transition being reflected in the yearly cycle of winter and spring.²² 88. "Мне холодно. Прозрачная весна" is filled with her ambience.

Мне холодно. Прозрачная весна
В зеленый пух Петрополь одевает,
Но, как медуза, невская волна
Мне отвращенье легкое внушает.

The speaker's initial cold is followed by his reference to the spring and the 'green down'. This sequence would seem to indicate a pattern of winter and spring, mirroring that of death and life. A straightforward identification of the positive connotations of spring and green with life and hope is not allowed to settle. Spring is tempered by the epithet 'transparent' (прозрачная), a word associated with the underworld in 89. "В Петрополе прозрачном мы умрем". Petropolis,²³ a name for Petersburg used also by Derzhavin, resembles the Russian word for necropolis. Both words recall the Greek world with their common root πολις, suggesting that Peter's city and the city of the dead may not be so far apart. This corresponds with the fact that in 1914 Petersburg was renamed Petrograd and in the spring of 1918 the capital was transferred to Moscow; thus

the city experienced death as a cultural and civic centre.

Unease is signalled by the position of "Но", which introduces a disturbing note into the tranquil scene. Though the speaker's disgust at the Neva's wave, likened to a jellyfish, is a mere sudden repulsion, the second meaning of "медуза" as the murderous and ugly Gorgon of Greek mythology, is ominous. The Neva's wave may also echo the threat of Petersburg being submerged by the sea, a menace that is ever-present in Pushkin's "Медный Всадник".

The threats hovering over the speaker of 88. appear to have been realised in 89.:

В Петрополе прозрачном мы умрем,
Где властвует над нами Прозерпина.
Мы в каждом вздохе смертный воздух пьем,
И каждый час нам смертная година.
Богиня моря, грозная Афина,
Сними могучий каменный шолом.
В Петрополе прозрачном мы умрем,
Где царствуешь не ты, а Прозерпина.

A sense of imprisonment is conveyed by the element of repetition in the two opening and closing lines, the rhyme scheme based on variations of "ем" and "ина", combined with the repetitions of single words and whole phrases. If by breathing one drinks the fatal air this intimates that the city is already submerged by the sea. The goddess of sea and of cities, Athene, is exhorted to remove her mighty stone helmet²⁴ for Petropolis is not under her authority but is ruled by Proserpina, a goddess of life and death.

The death of Petropolis reaches its climax in 101. "На страшной высоте блуждающий огонь" (1918), where the crisis seems to be primarily spiritual, and disorientation fundamental. No concrete details, such as the dusty poplars or the Northern shore, are given by which to identify the city. Even the speaker doubts what he sees, whether it is a will-o-the-wisp or a twinkling star. Although Persephone is not named her presence is recognised by greenness (зеленая звезда) and by the re-appearance of 'transparent spring':

Прозрачная весна над черною Невой
Сломалась, воск бессмертья тает

The ambiguity of the spring shattering over the Neva is evident in the reference to the wax of immortality which melts before forming a pattern for the future, life emerging from death.

It is as if a series of transfers have been laid over Petersburg. Firstly the city is considered as Petropolis by an individual watching the scene from the wintry Neva; then as a city of the dead, reminiscent of the underworld and of a nightmarish, flooded Petersburg. Thirdly Petersburg is lost in the sky, which expresses a sense of universal desolation. Interwoven into such scenes of horror and death, runs the thread of life and resurrection.

This death-life pattern is also evident in the enigmatic presence of the swallow in 112. "Когда Психея-жизнь спускается к теням" and in 113. "Я слово позабыл, что я хотел сказать". In many traditions the swallow is the harbinger of spring and in Derzhavin's poem "Ласточка", it is a symbol of death and resurrection.

Identical words describe the action of the swallow in 112. and 113.; "...бросается к ногам / С стигийской нежностью и веткою зеленой". A knot of conflicting associations is compressed within this phrase. The Styx is a river of the underworld which has several exits connecting it to the land of the living. It acts as a barrier between the dead and living and is feared as the river by which oaths are sworn that are inviolable to men and gods alike. Tenderness juxtaposed with 'Stygian' seems to contradict that sense of ineluctable death, but it is worth noting that there are a number of such instances in Mandelstam's poetry, where tenderness is allied to death.²⁵ The green branch is a natural symbol of hope, life and peace. According to one critic²⁶ it may originate from the same cypress tree as V. Ivanov's branch in "Speculum Speculorum" or allude to the dove that carried an olive branch to Noah after the flood.²⁷ The opposing signals of death and life which the swallow evokes, may infer that life and death are interdependent, the green branch cannot be offered without Stygian tenderness.

116. "Возьми на радость из моих ладоней" reveals a sense of profound

disorientation inherent in life yet expresses the potential of the death-life cycle:

Не отвязать неприкрепленной лодки,
Не услышать в меха обутой тени,
Не превозмочь в дремучей жизни страха.

Three impossibilities in life are set in the context of the life-giving command of Persephone's bees to take a little sun and honey. In stanza II there is a hint of a loving relationship, as the kisses remain like furry bees:

Нам остаются только поцелуи,
Мохнатые, как маленькие пчелы,
Что умирают, вылетев из улья.²⁸

Death may appear to intrude momentarily but is not at odds with the theme of love. In the final stanza the dead bees transform honey into sun, becoming the dry necklace:

Возьми ж на радость дикий мой подарок,
Невзрачное сухое ожерелье
Из мертвых пчел, мед превративших в солнце.

Although the fear and suffering of life are not denied, the nature of Persephone's existence inextricably bound to death and life, persists and triumphs.

* * *

The fusing of Christian and tragic patterns is also evident in Mandelstam's prose, particularly in "Пушкин и Скрябин".²⁹ When G. Freidin asks how tragedy can be incorporated within a Christian framework, he resolves this question for himself by pointing to Christ as the one who can redeem a world bound to the pattern of tragedy.³⁰ In a note he supports this assertion with the following quotation:

"Покуда в мире существует смерть, эллинизм *будет*, потому что христианство *эллинизирует смерть*... Эллинизм, оплодотворенное смертью, и есть христианство."³⁰

[So long as death exists in the world there will be Hellenism, because Christianity hellenises death... Hellenism made fruitful by death is Christianity.]

The first part of the sentence could imply that death and Hellenism are indicative of an inferior and temporary state which gives way to the immortality of Christianity. However, the concept of death as something which enriches and as an intrinsic part of Christianity, reverses this interpretation. The interlacing of death and life in Hellenism, in a sense, anticipates Christianity. Perhaps Mandelstam does not make such a clear distinction between the ancient and Christian idea of death and the tragic pattern, as Freidin implies. Additional perspective is given if the sentences before and after the afore-cited quotation are considered. The preceding sentence reads:

"Ткани нашего мира обновляются смертью. Приходится бороться с варварством новой жизни, потому что в ней, цветущей, не побеждена смерть".³²

[The fabric of our world is renewed by death. We must fight against the barbarism of the new life, for death flourishes in it and is not vanquished.]

Death is, if not a synonym for life, then a pre-requisite of resurrection. Classical tragedy depends on the notion of death in the universe, and catharsis involves a recognition of this reality. Mandelstam, however, charges the Greek 'death-life' pattern with a Christian emphasis on resurrection. It is no longer death which is the 'enemy' of humanity but 'unvanquished' death.³³ Grace enables the soil to accept the seed of death and to be fruitful:

"Семя смерти, упав на почву Эллады, чудесно расцвело: вся наша культура выросла из этого семени... все римское бесплодно, потому что Рима камениста, потому что Рим это - Эллада, лишенная благодати."³⁴

[After the seed of death fell on to the soil of Hellas, it miraculously blossomed. Our whole culture has sprung up from this seed... what is Roman is infertile because it is stony and Rome is Hellas devoid of grace.]

In a fragment that Mandelstam crossed out, Rome emerges as a symbol of oppression, a system that may seize Man's place in the universe, an incestuous womb from which there is no salvation:

"Рим железным кольцом окружил Голгофу: нужно освободить этот холм ставший греческим и вселенским. Римский воин охраняет распятие и копье на готове: сейчас потечет вода: нужно удалить римскую стражу... Бесплодная, безблагодатная часть Европы восстала на плодную, благодатную. Рим восстал на Элладу... Нужно спасти Элладу от Рима."³⁵

[Rome has encircled Golgotha with an iron ring: this hill, which has become Greek and universal, must be freed. A Roman soldier guards the crucifixion, his spear at hand: now the water begins to flow: the Roman watch must be sent away... The infertile, graceless part of Europe has attacked the fertile part of grace. Rome has attacked Hellas... Hellas must be saved from Rome.]

Opposition is depicted between a graceless Rome and Golgotha, which now has become Greek and universal. Hellenism and Christianity appear to be of the same essence.

By the time Mandelstam wrote "Пушкин и Скрябин", he seems to have moved away from the quest for a personal faith or for the embodiment of Christianity in visual art and in human forms, towards a Christianity which is fundamental to his aesthetic vision, incorporating suffering and tragedy.

"Итак, не жертва, не искупление в искусстве, а свободное и радостное подражание Христу - вот крайугольный камень христианской эстетики. Искусство не может быть искуплением, ибо мир вместе с художником уже искуплен, - что же остается? Радостное богообщение, как бы игра Отца с детьми, жмурке и прятки духа! Божественная иллюзия искупления, заключающаяся в христианском искусстве, объясняется именно этой игрой с нами Божества, которое позволяет нам блуждать по тропинкам мистерии с тем, чтобы мы как бы от себя попали на искупление, пережив катарсис, искупление в искусстве."³⁶

[Thus the cornerstone of Christian aesthetics is neither sacrifice, nor redemption in art, but free and joyful imitation of Christ. Art cannot be redemption because the world and the artist have already been redeemed. What remains - save joyful communion with God, as if the father were to play a game of hide-and-seek of the spirit with his

children. The divine illusion of redemption is fulfilled in Christian art and is understood precisely in this game which the Deity plays with us, allowing us to wander along the paths of mystery so that we might, as it were, come across redemption for ourselves, having experienced catharsis, redemption in art.]

If Christ's redemption is the fundamental fact, then the artist is neither the slave nor the apologist of Christianity but is free to enjoy communion with God. This takes the form of a game of hide-and-seek which is played out in art. References to catharsis³⁷ and the mystery play (мистерия), normally an enactment of the Easter story, suggest that redemption in art is not joy untempered by suffering, but partakes of Greek and 'Christian' tragedy.

Notes for chapter three

1. II, p.293

2. II, p.294

3. II, pp.315-6

4. II, p.486. A letter addressed to V. Ivanov dated 13/26 August 1909. It is worth noting that Ivanov formulated the idea of the Dionysian cult from which tragedy originated as a precursor of the notion of redemptive sacrifice. He traces tragedy back to the cult of the suffering god descending and that of dead heroes ascending, becoming human sons of the god and suggests this explicit parallel in a series of articles entitled "Эллинская религия страдающего бога", (Новый Путь, 1904).

5. II, p.415. "Иннокентий Анненский. Фамира-кифаред. Вакхическая драма."

6. III, p.34-35

7. In the notes given by the editors, Akhmatova's account of the incident is cited:

"... в январе 1914 г. Пронин устроил большой вечер 'Бродячей Собаки', не в подвале у себя, а в каком-то большом зале на Конюшенной. Обычные посетители терялись там среди множества 'чужих' (т. е. чуждых всякому искусству) людей. Было жарко, людно, шумно и довольно бестолково. Нам это наконец надоело, и мы... пошли в 'Собаку' на Михайловской площади... Я стояла на эстраде и с кем-то разговаривала. Несколько человек из зала стали просить меня почитать стихи. Не меняя позы, я что-то прочла. Подошел Осип: 'Как вы стояли, как вы читали', и еще что-то про шаль." (I, p.420)

8. Rachel has been identified as Elisa Rachel, pseudonym of Elizabeth Felix (1821-58), celebrated for her playing of Racine's Phèdre in 1843 and renowned for her captivating voice.

9. Nadezhda remarks: "Мандельштам часто говорил о трагедии, но не как о литературном жанре, а об ее сути. Он рано осознал, что трагедия на театре невозможна... Причина конца трагедии в несовместимости трагедийности с теми, к кому обращаются с подмостков зрители шакалы, которые готовы растерзать музу."

(Вторая Книга, p. 390)

10. Soviet edition О. Мандельштам, pp.269-270 no.69
11. II, p.313
12. *ibid.*
13. Mandelstam commented on the importance of a 'central sun' with regard to two writers whom he respected:
"Поэтическая культура возникает из стремления предотвратить катастрофу, поставить ее в зависимость от центрального солнца всей системы, будь то любовь, о которой сказал Дант, или музыка, к которой в конце концов пришел Блок." (II, "Барсучья Нора", p.275)
14. II, p.314
15. IV, p.100
16. II, p.316
17. *ibid.*
18. *ibid.*
19. II, p.317
20. Acts 17 v 23
21. Tyutchev, F. I. Стихотворения. Письма, ed. K. V. Pigarev (Leningrad, 1939), p.109
22. The two sides of Persephone are noted by Gillis and Iverson. Iverson traces these aspects of the Hellenic outlook in her article 'The Ancient Greek 'Death' Aspect of Spring in Mandelstam's Poetry':
"This thematic dichotomy pervades much of Mandelstam's Greek-inspired verse, wherein joy and pathos are strikingly juxtaposed. We perceive the bitter-sweet tonality of the ancient Greek attitude toward spring - revered as a time of warmth and love, but feared for its constant threat of sudden cold and death." (p.34)
Gillis sums up the two sides of the myth in his essay 'The Persephone Myth in Mandelstam's Tristia':
"... the Stygian side and the vernal side - is Mandelstam's way of poetically portraying the essence of Persephone and her myth. Verdance,

beauty, growth and life coexist with drought, ugliness, decay and death in this essence; there is no inherent contradiction in this fact and no resulting conflict. All of the characteristics flow into each other and comprise the whole of Persephone's being." (p.148)

23. In an article 'O. Mandelstam and His Poetry', N. Nilsson interprets the reason for Mandelstam's use of mythology against the background of distressing, contemporary events:

"He tries to keep these experiences at a poetic distance by clothing what happens in a garb of classical history and mythology. He sees them as a classical tragedy, as a part of world history's perpetual circulation: his Petersburg is consequently transformed to Petropolis." (p.46)

24. S. Broyde in Osip Mandelstam and His Age identifies the statue as the one "sculptured by Terebenov in stone and wearing a helmet". He further comments that it is not Athene, "a goddess noted for her mercifulness and generosity, the goddess of wisdom who reigns, but Prosperine, queen of the underworld". (p.66)

25. In 86. "Соломинка" death and tenderness are linked.

Всю смерть ты выпила и сделалась нежней,
Сломалась милая соломка неживая

Apart from the fact that death is not a negative concept for Mandelstam and therefore 'tender' would be appropriate, there is also a phonetic similarity between "нежней" and "неживая".

26. Gillis, D. op. cit. p.148

27. Genesis 8 v 11

28. "Нам остается только... ", follows the syntactical pattern of 90. "Не веря воскресенья чуду", which was written in 1916 and is included in the "Tsvetaeva cycle".

Нам остается только имя
Чудесный звук, на долгий срок.

Though the speaker may not believe in the miracle of the resurrection, he believes in the miracles created by the force of the sun, a mark which would have endured possibly from the summer of 1915 when Mandelstam met Tsvetaeva in Koktebel:

Целую кисть, где от браслета
Еще белеет полоса.
Тавриды пламенное лето
Творит такие чудеса.

In 116. the speaker refers not only to the effect of the sun but to the miracle of the dead bees in transforming honey into sun.

Nilsson and Taranovsky have a different slant in their interpretation of 116. In Osip Mandelstam: Five Poems (p.74-5) Nilsson acknowledges that the kisses left like furry bees, may signify love in a chaotic world but suggests that the bees are the offering of poetry by the poet to his readers. Taranovsky in Essays on Mandestam (p.103-8) regards 116. primarily as a love poem. The bees of Hellenic poetry are servants of the goddess of fertility and pass on her commandment to enjoy life.

29. "Пушкин и Скрябин" was entrusted to the care of Kablukov. On learning of his friend's death Mandelstam made several fruitless trips to the library which held Kablukov's papers. Nadezhda recalls Mandelstam's reaction - , "Потеря очень его огорчала. «Мне не везет, - говорил он, - это основная моя статья»". Some years later Nadezhda found about half of it while sorting through the trunks of Mandelstam's father. "Мандельштам", she writes, "обрадовался, посмотрел все странички... " (Вторая Книга, p.121,122). According to Nadezhda he never came back to it again, since publication would have been absolutely out of the question.

29. Freidin, G. 'Mandelstam's Ode to Stalin', The Russian Review, IV (1982), pp.400-26

In Hellenism, Freidin sees the unblemished lineage of Christianity, which fulfills the promise of "communion of the Father with His children". Due to their legalistic approach the Hebrews had not experienced this but "the Greeks had enjoyed this blessed state, if only on those occasions when their gods were taking a rest from supplying material to the writers of tragedies. But Christianity, Mandelstam believed, had rendered this undesirable aspect of Greek life obsolete. By accepting the bitter cup, Christ focused upon himself and redeemed the fatal flaw of mankind, thereby relieving once and for all the tension between the divine and the human that had hitherto made universal participation in tragedy an inevitable fact." (p.418)

31. II, p.318

32. *ibid.*

33. Nadezhda distinguishes between the attitudes of Mandelstam and fellow Acmeist Akhmatova, concerning the relation of tragedy to death.

"Ахматова настаивала, что именно в гибели или, точнее, в смерти нерасцветшего заключается сущность трагедии. Я вспомнила стихи: «И ранней смерти так ужасен вид, что не могу на Божий мир глядеть я», но в стихах печаль и горечь, а не раскрытие трагического. Мне легче понять торжество смерти, которое ощущал Мандельштам, чем ее трагичность." (Вторая Книга, p.393)

34. *ibid.*

35. IV, "Отрывок из статьи 'Пушкин и Скрябин'", p.100

36. II, p.315

37. Catharsis is derived from the Greek verb 'to cleanse' - καθαίρω, and its adjective 'clean' - καθαρός. Understood in this sense, catharsis is a pointer towards redemption.

Though suffering is central to the Eucharist, 117. "Вот дароносица, как солнце золотое" shows that for the participants play is an important element:

Все причащаются, играют и поют"

This is not unlike the poet's perception of the game that we play with the Deity.

The Triumph of the Word and Language

"Слово и Культура" could almost be a sequel to "Пушкин и Скрябин". The emphasis appears to shift from the artist's freedom and joy as a result of unconditional redemption in Christianity, to the freedom and joy of the word, which also partakes of suffering. Mandelstam's concept of the word is finely woven with his understanding of culture, Christianity and antiquity.

Culture is identified with the Church and the word with flesh.

"Культура стала церковью. Произошло отделение церкви-культуры от государства. Светская жизнь нас больше не касается, у нас не еда, а трапеза, не комната, а келья, не одежда, а одеяние. Наконец мы обрели внутреннюю свободу, настоящее внутреннее веселье... Христианин, а теперь всякий культурный человек - христианин, не знает только физического голода, только духовной пищи. Для него и слово плоть и простой хлеб - веселье и тайна."¹

[Culture has become the Church. A separation between Church-culture and the authorities has taken place. Secular life no longer concerns us and we partake of a meal in the refectory rather than food, we have a cell instead of a room and raiment rather than clothes. At last we have achieved inner freedom, a true inner joy... The Christian, and now every cultured man is a Christian, experiences not merely physical hunger, merely spiritual nourishment. For him the word is flesh and simple bread is joy and mystery.]

The transcendent and tangible merge, as the potent symbols of the cell, bread and raiment, are fused with everyday life. Freedom and joy, two characteristics of the pilgrimage to Rome, are rediscovered in a more universal context. The 'moral freedom' of "Петр Чаадаев" is no longer blazoned as a Russian prerogative, and now 'inner freedom' can be realised by any cultured person / Christian. In the same way inner joy, a hallmark of the pilgrim in 69."Посох" ("Посох взял, развеселился / И в далекий Рим пошел" contrasts with "Но печаль моих домашних / Мне попрежнему чужда"), is experienced anywhere by any cultured person.

In "Слово и Культура" Mandelstam returns to the Christian symbol which may best express the uniting of the tangible and the transcendent - the Eucharist. An earlier poem, 117."Вот дароносица, как солнце

золотое" (1915) illustrates how the cup of suffering becomes the source of joy, a symbol which brings eternity into time: "И Евхаристия как вечный полдень длится... / И на виду у всех божественный сосуд / Неисчерпаемым веселием струится." Mandelstam discerns now in culture the celebration of the Eucharist. He perceives the word as flesh and bread, sharing in the same fate - suffering. Any cultured person who raises up the word becomes like the priest who displays the Eucharist: "Кто поднимет слово и покажет его времени, как священник евхаристию - будет вторым Иисусом Навином"² [Whoever lifts the word on high and shows it to time will be like the priest holding the Eucharist. He will be a second Jesus of Navin (Joshua)]. The word, bread, and flesh all brush against one another; Christianity is inextricably linked with culture and thus the tangible with the transcendent.

Published the following year, "О Природе Слова", highlights the role of language in the poet's thought. Mandelstam recalls Chaadaev, who believed that Russia was cut off from universal unity and therefore from history. The philosopher found a position from which he could combat the formlessness that threatened history in the symbol of the Pope, a point where unity had become flesh. Having perhaps outgrown his former fascination with Chaadaev's thought, Mandelstam discovers for himself that point of unity in language:

"Чаадаев, утверждая свое мнение, что у России нет истории, то есть, что Россия принадлежит к неорганизованному, неисторическому кругу культурных явлений, упустил одно обстоятельство, именно: язык. Столь высоко организованный, столь органический язык не только дверь в историю, но и сама история."³

[When Chaadaev maintained that Russia had no history, in other words that Russia belonged to the unorganised and nonhistorical group of cultural phenomena, he overlooked one consideration, namely language. With its highly organised and organic nature, language is not only the door to history but is history.]

Chaadaev is included among those Russian thinkers who could not live without walls, without an acropolis. Although Mandelstam acknowledges that there is no acropolis in the Russian culture, he regards each word in Dal's dictionary as a kernel of the Acropolis (орешек Акрополя).⁴

Mandelstam emphasises the Hellenic nature of the Russian language:

"Русский язык - язык эллинистический... живые силы эллинистической культуры... устремились в лоно русской речи, сообщив ей самоуверенную тайну эллинистического мировоззрения, тайну свободного воплощения, и поэтому русский язык стал именно звучащей и говорящей плотью."⁵

[The Russian language is Hellenic... the animate forces of Hellenic culture... rushed to the womb of Russian speech, having imparted to it the self-affirming mystery of the Hellenic world-view, the mystery of free incarnation, thereby making the Russian language ringing and speaking flesh.]

Mystery, incarnation and flesh recall the poet's conception of the Christian's world: "Для него (христианина) и слово плоть и простой хлеб - веселье и тайна". The Russian language by its very nature continuously repeats the mystery of incarnation - "он (русский язык) есть волнующееся море событий, непрерывное воплощение и действие разумной и дышащей плоти..."⁶ [The Russian language is a heaving sea of events, a continuous incarnation and activity of reasoning and breathing flesh]. Every moment and event reflects the transcendent incarnate in the tangible.

Hellenism, like the word in "Слово и Культура", is related to the everyday world and seeks both an inner and outward manifestation.

"Урок творчества Анненского для русской поэзии не эллинизация, а внутренний эллинизм, адекватный духу русского языка, так сказать, домашний эллинизм. Эллинизм - это печной горшок, ухват, крынка с молоком, это домашняя утварь, посуда, все окружение тела; эллинизм - это тепло очага, ощущаемое, как священное."⁷

[The lesson of Annensky's creation for Russian poetry is not Hellenisation but inner Hellenism which can match the spirit of the Russian language; a domestic Hellenism: in other words domestic utensils, the dishes and everything that surrounds the body, including a cooking pot, an oven fork and an earthenware vessel containing milk; Hellenism is the warmth of the hearth experienced as if it were sacred.]

Inner Hellenism concerns man's relationship with the external world. The Bergsonian fan, which expresses the internal connection of events,⁸ in a sense depends on man to discern the connection and this resembles the central role accorded to man by inner Hellenism. Any object that is brought 'into the sacred circle of man, may become a utensil, and therefore a symbol' (в священный круг человека, может стать утварью, а,

следовательно, и символом).⁹ This compares with the Christian, who realises inner freedom in the relationship of the 'inner' world to the 'external' world so that he drinks the water in earthenware vessels like wine, and the room becomes a cell. The room and water are not intrinsically 'spiritual', nor are objects naturally utensils: all become so only through the inner attitude of man who discerns this potential.

Intermingling Christian and Hellenic concepts was not uncommon. Such a trend among Mandelstam's contemporaries, linking Christianity and paganism, was influenced in part by the Russian reaction to Nietzsche.¹⁰ F. F. Zelinsky, one of Mandelstam's professors at the University of St. Petersburg, discussed the relationship between Christianity and Hellenism, the question "о подготовке христианства религией эллинизма" and made the following observation:

"Исходя из несомненного факта, что только область эллинистической вселенной была на первых порах охвачена движением к христианству, мы спрашиваем, в чем сказалось, так сказать, воспитательное значение эллинизма, к каким религиозным воззрениям успел он приучить человечество, облегчая этим восприятие им христианства; какие пробудил в нем религиозные потребности, имевшие со временем найти свое удовлетворение в христианстве."¹¹

[In view of the indisputable fact that at first only the Hellenic world was drawn to Christianity, it raises the question of the effect which the 'educational' value of Hellenism had and the success with which it instilled in humanity such religious sentiments, thereby facilitating their perception of Christianity, having awoken such religious desires which would in due course find their fulfilment in Christianity.]

Mandelstam displayed neither the sociological approach of Zelinsky nor the scholarly interest of for example, V. Ivanov, but perceived the bond between Hellenism and Christianity as a natural affinity related to language:

"... представление о реальности слова, как такового, животворит дух нашего языка и связывает его с эллинской филологической культурой не этимологически и не литературно, а через принцип внутренней свободы, одинаково присущей им обоим."¹²

[... the notion of the reality of the word, as such, revives the spirit of our language and connects it with the Hellenic philological culture,

through the principle of inner freedom inherent in both rather than in an etymological or literal sense.]

Mandelstam reiterates the significance of inner freedom, which is prized as the point of unity for the two languages. Rarely does he refer to sin (грех) and so when he names three sins, it is not done lightly. These are identified in "О Природе Слова" as: any kind of 'utilitarianism'; disrespect for the Hellenic nature of the word by exploiting it for personal intuitive ends, and contrived symbolism. All these are attempts to interfere with the freedom of the word.

Blok is exemplary in that he neither distorts nor exploits his material.

"Свобода с которой обращается Блок с тематическим матерьялом этой поэтики, наводит на мысль, что некоторые сюжеты, индивидуальные и случайные до последнего времени, на наших глазах завоевали гражданское равноправие с мифом... вершина исторической поэтики Блока, торжество европейского мифа, который свободно движется в традиционных формах, не боится анахронизма и современности - это «Шаги Командора». Здесь пласты времени легли друг на друга в заново вспаханном поэтическом сознании, и зерна старого сюжета дали обильные всходы..."¹³

[The freedom with which Blok handles his thematic material of this poetics, suggests that certain subjects previously considered as individual and random, have attained in our eyes the same rights of citizenship as myth... the summit of Blok's historical poetics, the celebration of the European myth, which moves freely in traditional forms and fears neither anachronism nor contemporaneity, is "Steps of the Commander". Here the layers of time lie stratified in the freshly ploughed poetic consciousness and the seeds of the old subject have produced lush shoots...]

'Freedom' and 'freely' are keywords in this extract. A result of the poet's responsiveness to his material is that its significance remains unaffected by forms, whether anachronistic or contemporary, and like the lush shoots from the seeds of the old subject, continues to produce life. The layers of time, though freshly ploughed, do not merge into one uniform soil but retain their individual relevance. In such poetics time is understood as a relative rather than a linear concept.

In Mandelstam's thinking time is not a quantity uniformly measured by

the hands of a clock, but is seen in events, in a storm, in the grass pushing its way up from under the stones of St. Petersburg. Furthermore he does not regard the past as an outmoded stage of development along the trail of progress, but as a potentially living factor, the subsoil of the present and future.

"Поэзия - плуг, взрывающий время так, что глубинные слои времени, его чернозем оказываются сверху. Но бывают такие эпохи, когда человечество, не довольствуясь сегодняшним днем, тоскуя по глубинным слоям времени, как пахарь, жаждет целины времен."¹⁴

[Poetry is a plough turning up time in such a way that it reveals time's remote layers, throwing up its black earth to the surface. There are epochs when humanity is no longer satisfied with what belongs to today but longs for time's remote layers and like the ploughman thirsts for the virgin soil of time.]

In 1923 language was still pivotal to Mandelstam's outlook, though the specifically Christian and Hellenic vocabulary seems to have disappeared. One senses the poet's affinity with Khlebnikov, who regarded language as a sovereign state (язык, как государство), existing in time. Khlebnikov drew no distinction between his own age and other ages: "Хлебников не знает, что такое современник. Он гражданин всей истории, всей системы языка и поэзии"¹⁵ [Khlebnikov does not know the meaning of 'contemporary'. He is a citizen of the whole of history, of all linguistic and poetical systems].

Blok may have been at odds with history yet he too is a proof 'that the sovereign state of language has its own particular life' (что государство языка живет своей особой жизнью).¹⁶ For Mandelstam, as for other writers, the state became increasingly intrusive in the 1920s.¹⁷ Having seen the separation of the state from 'Church-culture', the poet was probably attracted by the image of language itself as an autonomous state which could span the centuries.

V. Ivanov's use of language may appear archaic, but in essence captures its timelessness.¹⁸

"Ощущение прошлого, как будущего, роднит его с Хлебниковым. Архаика Вячеслава Иванова происходит не от выбора тем, а от неспособности к относительному мышлению, то есть сравнению времен. Эллинистические стихи Вячеслава Иванова написаны не после и не параллельно с

греческими, а раньше их, потому что не на одну минуту он не забывает себя, говорящего на варварском родном наречии."¹⁹

[His feel for the past and the future makes him akin to Khlebnikov. The archaism of Vyacheslav Ivanov arises not from deliberate choice but from his incapacity for relative thought, for comparing different ages. Vyacheslav Ivanov's Hellenic poetry is written neither after nor concurrently with the Greeks but earlier, for he does not forget himself for a moment and speaks in his barbaric, native dialect.]

Thus the timeless nature of V. Ivanov's verse does not derive from a particular form or subject but from his ability to capture the sound of what is contemporary and barbaric, pointing back to a time before civilisation

That barbaric, native idiom can be stifled. The Byzantine monks, according to Mandelstam, foisted an alien spirit and form onto language so that it petrified.²⁰ He does not deny that Latin too had once been a trans-sense language (though still intelligible it has lost the 'rhythm' of colloquial speech), but favours Luther's translation of the Bible into 'secular' speech.

Mandelstam regarded Khlebnikov as one of the pioneers of the 'secularisation' of the Russian language, his trans-sense language realising Russia's oral destiny - "... в его зауми, которая есть не что иное, как переходные формы, не успевшие затянуться смысловой корой правильно и праведно развивающегося языка"²¹ [... in his trans-sense, which is nothing more nor less than transitory forms of language that are developing in a correct and true way, and which have not had time to become encrusted by a semantic layer]. One outworking of this is the role of consonants, for example in Khlebnikov's 'laughter' poem,²² where the consonants break through the semantic crust, acting as a seed and pledge of the posterity of language (семя и залог потомства языка).²³

Concern with the word and language is reflected in the poetry of the early 1920s. At this time Mandelstam became increasingly aware of the word as a separate entity under threat. In "Слово и Культура" Mandelstam distinguishes between friends and enemies of the word:

"Социальные различия и классовые противоположности бледнеют перед разделением ныне людей на друзей и врагов слова. Подлинно агнцы и козлища."²⁴

[Social differences and class distinctions pale now before the division of people into friends and enemies of the word. This is truly a division of sheep and goats.]

As early as 1917 Taranovsky suggests that the swallow and the daughter of 98. "Что поют часы-кузнечик" are indicative of inspiration and creativity which are dangerous, inviting the penalty of death in a world increasingly hostile to true 'art'.²⁵

Что зубами мыши точат
Жизни тоненькое дно,
Это ласточка и дочка
Отвязала мой челнок.

Though the action of the mice implies the gradual destructive work of time chewing through the floor of the boat, the responsibility for untying it rests with the swallow and daughter. A boat which is untied and suffers a hole in its thin bottom will sink.

An impression of drowning is created in the final line of stanza III - "И на дне морском - прости." Death itself is not blamed: "Потому что смерть невинна, / И ничем нельзя помочь". This links the swallow and daughter more closely with drowning and death.

Creativity is also the main concern of the speaker in 113. "Я слово позабыл, что я хотел сказать". The image of the bark floating on a dry empty river is more disturbing - "В сухой реке пустой челнок плывет". Flanked by adjectives 'empty' and 'dry', similar in sound, the river seems to be enclosed in an environment where the normal rules of existence do not apply. Even death caused by drowning is no longer possible because the bark is not able to sink - it floats even when the river is empty. Such a state of stasis causes far-reaching disorientation which makes choice and any resulting change impossible.

This state is marked by stifling forgetfulness, "беспмятство" (lack of memory, unconsciousness)²⁷, the enemy of life and creativity. The speaker has forgotten the word he wanted to say and the swallow, a symbol of creativity like the bark, returns to the palace of shades:²⁶

Я слово позабыл, что я хотел сказать.
Слепая ласточка в чертог теней вернется.

Although the speaker cannot recognise the word, the form of the word and its sound do not disappear altogether: "В беспамятстве ночная песнь поется... Среди кузнечиков беспамятствует слово". Tradition tells us that when humans first heard the Muses they were so captivated by their song that they forgot to eat and became grasshoppers. It is as though the word is preserved in its essence but is in danger of becoming powerless, forgotten and unrecognised by her poets.

Much of the 'plot' in 114. "Чуть мерцает призрачная сцена" and 118. "В Петербурге мы сойдемся снова" revolves around the conflict between the realm of 'art' and the realm which opposes it.

The world of art in 114. is experienced through the performance of Glück's opera, 'Orpheus and Eurýdice'. Undoubtedly Mandelstam had attended one of the performances, for we know that he wrote the programme notes and that the opera was staged seven times in 1919 and twice in 1920. The first stanza of Mandelstam's original draft envisages Glück summoning the shades through music:²⁸

Снова Глюк из жалобного плена
Вызывает сладостных теней.

Glück's art mirrors Orpheus' skill on the lyre, which had captivated even dread Persephone in her hypostasis as queen of the underworld. A sense of return is present in the repetition of "снова",²⁹ which begins stanza I and II of the original draft. It appears that the myth and the music are to be repeated many times, belonging to past, present and future generations. The setting of Melpomene's temple evokes the mysterious and ritualistic nature of the early Greek tragedies. Mandelstam chooses, however, to open the final version on a different note:

Чуть мерцает призрачная сцена,
Хоры слабые теней

Glück is omitted and the sweet shades are now faint choirs, fading into a spectral stage. Already the world of 'art' is losing its magic and our attention is drawn to the outside world. Eurydice, who belongs to a climate of immortal spring, may not be able to withstand such a world of darkness and penetrating cold. The speaker's response, "Ничего, голубка Эвридика",³⁰ suggests that he has chosen to remain loyal to his native tongue:

Слаще пеня итальянской речи
Для меня родной язык,
Ибо в нем таинственно лепечет
Чужеземных арф родник.

Italian is the language of opera and conjures up visions of the warm South. In another draft the last two lines of stanza III read:

И румяные затопленные печи,
Словно розы римских базилик.

Stoves counter the impression of a bitterly cold winter. Their comparison to roses implies a literal redness and beauty which connects Russia with the world of warmth and art. The final version of these two lines throws the emphasis on his native tongue. Though neither the swallow nor Eurydice may survive the Russian snows, language preserves in itself 'the spring of alien harps'.

The essence of language as that which withstands opposition is evident also in 118. Here the word is described as 'the blessed, meaningless word' (блаженное, бессмысленное слово). 'Blessed' often connotes a religious meaning while 'meaningless' may signify the word's trans-sense nature and its ability to transcend time and meaning. The domain of the word is aligned to the 'blessed women', the immortal flowers and other words within this domain, all of which interrelate phonetically.

Opposing the realm of the word is the sinister domain of Soviet darkness³¹ and universal emptiness. Its sound pattern resonates through the associated words and images in the repetitive 'к's, exemplified in

"дикой кошкой", "кукушкой прокричит" and "кукла". The wind-up doll may be a counterfeit of the blessed women and of Venus, the goddess of love and beauty, who is part of the realm of the word and of art.

Glück's opera is alluded to in a variant of the opening lines of stanza IV:

Где-то хоры сладкие Орфея
И родные темные зрачки,
И на грядки кресел с галереи
Падают афиши-голубки.

For the present, the performance is over and the 'poster-doves' flutter down. If a link can be made between "голубка Эвридика" mentioned in 114., and a similar use of the verb "падать" in relation to the living swallow that has fallen onto the burning snow, then perhaps it points to a rupture in the vision of harmony. "Что ж, гаси, пожалуй, наши свечи" is a harmless remark until it is considered as an attack on art by the opposing domain of emptiness and night. Significantly both the Russian language and the word are rooted in a triumphant music, in the spring of alien harps and in the enduring song of the 'blessed women' - "Всё поют блаженных жен крутые плечи".

'Blessed women' first appear in 86."Соломинка". Their names are the 'blessed words' which the speaker learns by heart - "Я научился вам, блаженные слова - / Ленор, Соломинка, Лигейя, Серафита." The poet associates tender names with poetic inspiration and for this reason the speaker of 25. is perplexed as to why his soul is full of melody but so few names - "Отчего душа так певуча / И так мало милых имен". By the act of naming greater permanence is given to the named object so that not all is swept away by time's rushing river. In 136."Нашедший Подкову" the speaker bestows a triple blessing on the one who introduces a name into a song - "Трижды блажен, кто введет в песнь имя". The 'mosquito-like trifle' of 139."Как тельце маленькое крылышком" appears as an aeroplane which is being shot down. Its one cry is to be named and recognised as an individual - "Не забывай меня, казни меня, / Но дай мне имя, дай мне имя". In XVIII "Мне стало страшно жизнь отжить", to be cut off from life is characterised by being unloved and disappearing

anonymously - "И ничего не полюбить, / И безымянным камнем кануть". This suggests a connection between the name and love.

Things are named not according to an arbitrary process determined by man, but according to a relationship which appears to exist already between the thing and the name. Mandelstam remarks: "никогда не было так, чтобы кто-нибудь крестил вещь, назвал ее придуманным именем"³² [It has never happened that someone has christened a thing and called it by an invented name]. Objects demand names that are cherished and intimate, hidden and sacred. XX"Как облаком сердце одето" compares this craving with the desire to be caressed - "Как женщины, жаждут предметы, / Как ласки, заветных имен". In the final stanza the poet awaits the secret sign, and in combining the words breathes the mystery of marriage:

Он ждет сокровенного знака,
На песнь, как на подвиг, готов:
И дышит таинственность брака
В простом сочетании слов.

Mandelstam sympathised with the monks who were condemned by the Orthodox Church as heretics, because they had elevated the name of God so that it became unpronounceable and was considered by them as the divine mystery - God Himself. In 75."И поныне на Афоне" the Divine Name is sung. The speaker does not want to be saved from this 'beautiful heresy':

Каждый раз, когда мы любим,
Мы в нее впадаем вновь.
Безымянную мы губим
Вместе с именем любовь.

It seems that when we love we should not utter the name because this destroys both the name and nameless love. Although it is important to be named there is the sense in which some names are too beloved and sacred to utter for the essence of a person, of a relationship is embodied in the name. Perhaps by remaining unspoken, the name is not expressed in terms of a world of definition and finiteness. This notion is not unlike

Helen a number of times but only obliquely refers to Penelope. The latter seems to fall into the category of blessed women for she too is one of the faithful ones who mourns their dead. Significantly Christ is never named in Mandelstam's poetry.

Many of the poets of Mandelstam's generation disregarded the interlocking of intimacy and veiled sacredness. They spoke the language of all times and all cultures, indiscriminately picking over everything as if the room of a dying man had been thrown open to the outside world. Intimacy and reverence vanished in the tumult and suddenly everything became public property: "Все доступно: все лабиринты, все тайники, все заповедные ходы"³⁷ [Everything is accessible, every labyrinth, every hiding-place, every secret passage]. Mandelstam observes that a desire for secrecy is inherent in man: "Человек любит запрет, и даже дикарь кладет магическое запрещение, «табу», на известные предметы"³⁸ [Man loves interdiction and even the savage places a magical prohibition, a taboo on familiar objects].

In Dante's creation Mandelstam admires the charm of the oblique method - "... а дантовские многочленные, многопарусные и кинетически раскаленные сравнения до сих пор сохраняют прелесть никому не сказанного"³⁹ [Dantesque intricate and multifaceted, kinetically white-hot comparisons preserve up to this day the charm of what is left unsaid]. At the heart of Dante's approach Mandelstam detects comparison:

"Я сравниваю - значит я живу, - мог бы сказать Дант. Он был Декартом метафоры. Ибо для нашего сознания (а где взять другое?) только через метафору раскрывается материя, ибо нет бытия вне сравнения, ибо само бытие есть сравнение."⁴⁰

[Dante could have said: "I compare, therefore I am". He was the Descartes of metaphor. Matter is revealed to us only through metaphor by our consciousness (and how could we experience another's?), for there is no existence outside of comparison because existence itself is comparison.]

Perhaps this sense of play and an understanding arrived at through the interrogative method is a way of showing reverence for what is sacred. After all, the artist plays a game of hide-and-seek with the Deity and rather than being offered an easy explanation by Him, wanders the paths of mystery so that he falls on redemption as if by himself

(блуждать по тропинкам мистерии с тем, чтобы мы как бы от себя напали на искупление).⁴¹

We move towards the question of the form in which the essence of poetry exists. From our investigations it has become clear that poetry is experienced not by means of our naked eye or solely by our mind. Mandelstam distinguished between the poetically literate and illiterate. The former are able to supply all the signs and markings which in poetic notation are merely implicit and are not written in. Absence of signs, in Mandelstam's view, made poetry no less exact than musical notes - "поэтически грамотный читатель ставит их от себя, как бы извлекая их из самого текста"⁴² [the poetically literate reader supplies them by himself, as if drawing them out of the very text].

In order to compose poetry one must be able to listen to its essence, its sound.

"Стихотворение живо внутренним образом, тем звучащим слепком формы, который предваряет написанное стихотворение. Ни одного слова еще нет, а стихотворение уже звучит. Это звучит внутренний образ, это его осязает слух поэта."⁴³

[A poem lives through an inner image, that ringing mould of form which anticipates the written poem. Before a single word is conceived, the poem is already ringing. This is the ringing of the inner image which the poet's ear apprehends.]

The hearing and perceiving of the inner image is described in terms of the joy of a blind man, when he recognises a beloved face by hardly touching it with his hands. As with the utterance of words or names the experience is tangible and the image is sensed rather than seen.

Modelled as a stern and strict craftsman, Salieri was able to hear 'the music of algebra as powerfully as living harmony' (он слышал музыку алгебры так же сильно, как живую гармонию).⁴⁴ Blok was able to hear the music of Russian history - "Блок слушал подземную музыку русской истории, там, где самое напряженное ухо улавливало только синкопическую паузу"⁴⁵ [Blok heard the subterranean music of Russian history, at the point where even the keenest hearing only caught a syncopated pause].

275-285. "Восьмистишия" is a collection of poems which record the

poet's creative process. VII expresses the idea that the essence is already contained in the form of sound, of music:

И Шуберт на воде, и Моцарт в птичьей гаме,
.....
Быть может, прежде губ уже родился шопот,
И в бездревесности кружились листья,
И те, кому мы посвящаем опыт,
До опыта приобрели черты.

Water is naturally associated with creation and with primeval life. Schubert's and Mozart's music is an 'incarnation' of something which is already present at creation.

To conclude this chapter let us draw together some of the threads. Mandelstam seems to move in emphasis from a sacramental concept of the word understood in terms of Christianity and Hellenism to an appreciation of language as a point of continuity, a 'state in time'. If language is to be alive and not to petrify, it is imperative to capture the 'barbaric native dialect' of the present, for it is thus constantly revitalised, gaining a timeless aspect. Although 'form' may not survive, the swallow and Eurydice may fall, the essence of the word survives as that which is akin to a ringing of the inner image, resonant in the blessed, meaningless word and unspoken in the name which guards its loved one. As musical notes convey something more than themselves, the word, poetry, embodies that which is pre-existent.

Notes for chapter four

1. II, p.223

2. II, p.226 Apparently "Иисус Навин" is the traditional Russian name for "Иехошуа Бин-нин". The Biblical account relates how Joshua asked God to stop the sun over Gibeon and so it delayed going down about a full day. A glimpse of timelessness in the divine intervention of the sun's course; its correspondence to the embodiment of eternity - the Eucharist, seen by the poet through the image of the golden sun; and Joshua as a figure who foreshadows Jesus, all make this an appropriate reference.

3. II, p.247

4. II, p.251

5. II, p.245

6. II, p.246

7. II, p.253

8. "Эллинизм, - это система в бергсоновском смысле слова, которую человек разворачивает вокруг себя, как веер явлений, освобожденных от временной зависимости, соподчиненных внутренней связи через человеческое я." (II, p.254)

9. II, p.254

10. Rosenthal, B. G. D. S. Merezhkhovsky and the Silver Age: The Development of a Revolutionary Mentality (1975) pp.18,58,61

According to Rosenthal, Merezhkhovsky discovered Nietzsche on a trip to Europe. Together with Minsky and other writers, he helped to popularise the German philosopher in Russia.

It appears that Merezhkhovsky and V. Ivanov accepted The Birth of Tragedy, for they looked upon it as a book which perceived 'consolation' in catharsis.

Nietzsche, however, wrote a preface sixteen years later repealing this view. Stylistically the book was no longer to his taste, "schlecht geschrieben, schwerfällig, peinlich, bilderwüthig und bilderwirrig, gefühlsam, hier und da verzeuckert bis zum Feminischen, ungleich im Tempo, ohne Wille zur logischen Sauberkeit" while the final consolation

he now vehemently renounced claiming that it led back to Romanticism and to Christianity: "Aber es ist sehr wahrscheinlich, dass es so endet, dass *ihr* so endet, nämlich "getröstet", wie geschrieben steht, trotz aller Selbsterziehung zum Ernst und zum Schrecken, metaphysisch getröstet, kurz, wie Romantiker enden, *christlich*... Nein!" It was this later Nietzsche whom Merezhkhovsky and Ivanov rejected.

11. Zelinsky, F. F. Религия Эллинизма, (Petrograd, 1922), p.128

12. II, p.246

13. II, p.273

14. II, p.224

15. II, p.348

16. *ibid.*

17. Mandelstam was greatly distressed that he was unable to secure a room for Khlebnikov in 1922. C. Brown remarks in his book Mandelstam: "The 1920s, an era normally contrasted to the 1930s in a favourable light as relatively free, were for Mandelstam oddly more melancholy than the age when his reasons for grief would be apparent to everyone." (p.104)

18. Though in "Буря и Натиск" Mandelstam approves of V. Ivanov's perception of Byzantium and Hellas as the cultural springs of Russian poetry, he does not necessarily favour the way in which Ivanov uses myth in his poetry.

"... благодаря отсутствию чувства меры, свойственному всем символистам, невероятно перегрузил свою поэзию византийско эллинскими образами и мифами, чем значительно ее обесценил."

(II, p.341)

19. II, p.343

20. Languages, whenever they are constrained by time and culture, petrify. Mandelstam makes this observation in reference to Western cultures that have locked their languages in from the outside and have surrounded them with walls of State and Church. The Russian language is an exception, for rather than being enclosed by walls, it surrounds culture and history as the sea would surround a continent.

"... русская культура и история со всех сторон омыта и опоясана

грозной и безбрежной стихией русского языка, не вмещающегося ни в какие государственные и церковные формы." (II, p.245)

21. II, p.263

22. Cooke, R. Velimir Khlebnikov A Critical Study, (1987), Cambridge University Press, pp.74-5,97,99

Cooke outlines Khlebnikov's changing attitude to the consonant. He traces how Khlebnikov's "language of consonants" eventually surpassed his vowel-centred theory on "internal declension". The initial consonant became semanticised but it was not only this initial consonant which assumed significance, for within words the Khlebnikov saw the interaction of the consonants. The notion arises of "the word as an arena of conflict, where one consonant could vie with another for supremacy". Cooke concludes that "ultimately language itself is seen by Khlebnikov as a determining factor in the unfolding of human destiny".

Mandelstam recognises the importance of consonants to the Russian language and his delight in their sound is evident in the play of verbs he uses: "Русский стих насыщен согласными и цокает, и шелкает, и свистит ими". (II, p.261)

23. Khlebnikov, V. Творения, ed. M. Polyakov, (Moscow, 1986), Советский Писатель p.624

In an essay, "Наша Основа" (1920), V.Khlebnikov uses the image of a hand holding seeds of several varieties of trees, which look indistinguishable until the trees are grown, in order to illustrate how languages in the future will spring up from the twenty-eight sounds of the alphabet.

"Но все это разнообразие листвы, стволов, веток создано горстью почти неотличимых друг от друга зерен. Весь лес в будущем - поместится у вас на ладони. Словотворчество учит, что все разнообразие слова исходит от основных звуков азбуки, заменяющих семена слова. Из этих исходных точек строится слово, и новый сеятель языков может просто наполнить ладонь 28 звуками азбуки, зернами языка."

Perhaps one of the ways in which Mandelstam and Khlebnikov differed in their opinion was concerning the origin of language. Whereas Mandelstam looked to music, Khlebnikov regarded language as having an intrinsic wisdom, comprehensible by scientific methods.

"По-видимому, язык так же мудр, как и природа, и мы только с ростом науки учимся читать его. Иногда он может служить для решения отвлеченных задач. Так, попытаемся с помощью языка измерить длину волн добра и зла. Мудростью языка давно уже вскрыта световая природа мира."

24. II, p.223

25. Taranovsky, in Essays on Mandelstam, regards the image of sailing in 98."Что поют часы кузнечик" as one of poetic sailing, of poetic

creation. In this poem, he comments, "we thus see for the first time the Mandel'stamian theme of *death as the penalty for poetic creation*. (p.81)

26. In 137."Звезда с звездой - могучий стык" the bird is associated with creativity:

Бросая грифели лесам,
Из птичьих клювов вырывая?

27. In 136."Нашедший Подкову" Melpomene, the Greek goddess of memory distinguishable by her headband, is a cure for 'forgetfulness'.

Она отмечена среди подруг повязкой на лбу,
Исцеляющей от беспамятства...

28. In 25."Отчего душа так певуча" (1911) two kinds of inspiration are portrayed, one, "мгновенный ритм - только случай,/ Неожиданный Аквилон", which raises a cloud of dust but does not necessarily return, and the other, "широкий ветер Орфея", which goes to the sea's edges and helps the speaker to explore the mystery of life and of death - "Неужели я настоящий, И действительно смерть придет?" Mandelstam seems to accord with Pushkin in his delineation of two types of 'poet-innovators': "одно «чтоб возмутив бескрылое желанье в нас, чадах праха, снова улететь», а другое: «когда великий Глук явился и открыл нам новы тайны" (II, p.262). The North wind would seem to belong to the former, the wind of Orpheus to the latter.

29. Mandelstam appears to use 'снова' in the context of a moment which relates to the present, past and future, a recollection of something that has already been. In "Слово и Культура" Mandelstam describes this moment, one which does not hinge on memory but on the 'joy of recurrence' (радость повторения). Pushkin, Ovid and Homer are all 'rare presentiments'. Against this background Mandelstam can say - "Я хочу снова Овидия, Пушкина, Катулла, и меня не удовлетворяют исторический Овидий, Пушкин, Катулл".

Other notable examples of this specialised use of 'снова' occur in 104."Я изучил науку расставанья", with its dictum "Все было встарь, все повторится снова" and in 67."Я не слыхал рассказов Оссиана" the inheritance of the wandering dreams of other singers may come down to the great grandsons: "И снова скальд чужую песню сложит / И как свою ее произнесет".

30. Mandelstam refers to 'голубка Эвридика' in "О природе Слова", an essay first published in 1922. When the Europeans appreciate Annensky, "... они испугаются дерзости этого царственного хищника, похитившего у них голубку Эвридику для русских снегов" (II, p.252). Eurydice is symbolic of a whole culture. Annensky does not plagiarise Greek mythology and culture, but retaining his integrity uses it to enrich the Russian language and culture.

31. The reference to velvet imbues the Soviet night with a sense of luxury and softness - "В бархате всемирной пустоты". There is a peculiar combination of festivity, luxury, death and beauty in 110. "Венецкой жизни мрачной и бесплодной":

Черным бархатом завешанная плаха
И прекрасное лицо...

Perhaps the association of luxury, velvet, and death comes from a childhood experience depicted in "Бунты и Француженки" :

"Даже смерть мне явилась впервые в совершенно неестественном пышном, парадном виде... Черный бархат глушил вход и стены, обставленные серебром и тропическими растениями..." (II, p.54) The inclusion of 'пышно' in the theatre described in the final octave of 118. may also connote death and the luxurious Soviet night.

32. II, p.255

33. D. Segal in his article 'Микросемантика одного стихотворения' draws our attention to the significance of this alteration: "Этот семантический признак, общий для понятий тяжесть и нежность на мгновение приобретает личный, интимный характер не зависящий от того, чье же имя скрывалось под словом твое - сам характер местоимения утепляет, приближает стихи к читателю чтобы затем приобрести новое качество." (p.401)

34. Ronen, O. An Approach to Mandelstam, (Jerusalem, 1983), p.202

35. I, pp.447-448

36. The original draft, dated 8 August 32, in the Soviet edition reads:

Поучимся ж серьезности и чести
У стихотворца Христиана Клейста.

The description of Kleist which does not mention him by name reads:

Поэзия, тебе полезны грозы!
Я вспоминаю немца-офицера,
И за эфес его цеплялись розы,
И на губах его была Церера.
(266. "К НЕМЕЦКОЙ РЕЧИ")

37. II, p.227

38. II, p.254

39. II, p.404

40. III, p.190

41. II, p.315

42. II, p.231

43. II, pp.226-227

44. II, p.259

45. II, p.272

Born of Music

From an early age music figures in the poet's life. Nadezhda observes that for Mandelstam, "Главное в детстве - мать и музыка, архитектура города!"¹ [The key things in his childhood were his mother, music, and the architecture of the city.] As a boy he loved Tchaikovsky 'with sickly, nervous intensity' (болезненным нервным напряжением)² and was prepared to suffer torn clothes and scratched arms in order to gain access over the hedge to listen to one of the concerts. A. Lur'e recalls Mandelstam's unique relationship to music.

"Мандельштам страстно любил музыку, но никогда об этом не говорил. У него было к музыке какое-то целомудренное отношение, глубоко им скрываемое... живая музыка была для него необходимостью. Стихия музыки питала его поэтическое сознание."³

[Mandelstam loved music passionately but never spoke about it. He had some kind of chaste relationship with music which he kept deeply concealed... living music was a necessity for him. Music nourished his poetic consciousness.]

Music and poetry are again uttered in the same breath when at the age of seventeen Mandelstam wrote to his former tutor V. V. Gippius from Paris: "Живу я здесь очень одиноко и не занимаюсь почти ничем, кроме поэзии и музыки"⁴ [I am leading a very solitary life here, devoting myself almost exclusively to poetry and music]. He claims that he experiences religious sentiment more readily in the musical life of poets than in abstract terms such as society, God and man, towards which he has no particular feeling. As a result, he writes that he loves life, faith and love more strongly, continuing: "Отсюда Вам будет понятно мое увлечение музыкой жизни, которую я нашел у некоторых французских поэтов с Брюсовым из русских"⁵ [Hence you will understand my craze for the musical life which I have discovered in several French poets and also in Bryusov from among the Russian poets.] Mandelstam uses the word 'craze' (увлечение) to describe both his feeling towards the musical life of the poets and his attraction to Marxist dogma. Significantly he associates religious sentiment with his 'craze' for Marxism:

"Первые мои религиозные переживания относятся к периоду моего

детского увлечения марксистской догмой и неотделимы от этого увлечения."6

[My first religious experiences relate to the period of my childhood craze for Marxist dogma and are inseparable from this craze.]

In the poet's autobiographical work "Шум Времени", he attributes the birth of his desire for an all-encompassing harmony and unity, a sense of prehistoric life to Marxist theory and its proponents:

"Эрфуртская программа, марксистские пропилеи, рано, слишком рано приучили вы дух к стройности, но мне и многим другим дали ощущение жизни в предысторические годы, когда жизнь жаждет единства и стройности... Каутский... тот же Тютчев, то есть источник космической радости, податель сильного и стройного мироощущения, мыслящий тростник и покров, накинутый над бездной."7

[Oh Erfurt programme, Marxist propylaea you taught the spirit harmony far too early, giving me and many others a sense of life in prehistoric times, when life thirsts for unity and harmony... Kautsky ... is the same Tyutchev, source of cosmic joy and bearer of a powerful and harmonious vision, the thinking reed and the shroud thrown over the abyss.]

The desire for premythic harmony provides the impulse for "Silentium" (1910), which portrays the primal state before either Aphrodite, the word or music are born.

Она еще не родилась,
Она и музыка и слово,
И потому всего живого
Ненарушаемая связь,

Спокойно дышат моря груди,
Но, как безумный, светел день,
И пены бледная сирень
В мутно-лазоревом сосуде,

Да обретут мои уста
Первоначальную немоту,

Как кристаллическую ноту,
Что от рождения чиста!

Останься пеной, Афродита,
И слово в музыку вернись,
И сердце сердца устыдись,
С первоосновой жизни слито!

Critics have responded to this poem in different ways. R. Pshibylsky⁸ discerns the Romantic idea of the paradox "незвучного звучания", the Tyutchev an silence of the soul's music which, because of the inadequacy of words, remains uncommunicated and unarticulated. Aphrodite's role he regards neither as an expression of a philosophical system nor as an ideal of beauty but as the representation of the force of love, the source of creativity.

Taranovsky⁹ considers "Silentium" as a 'polemic with Tjutchev! In his view whereas Tjutchev speaks of the impossibility of genuine poetic creativity and communication with others, Mandelstam suggests that neither Aphrodite nor the word are necessary, for the highest spiritual experience is to merge with the original harmony of the universe. Behind the myth is the experience which man finds in the mute contemplation of the world and of its beauty.

More recently J. Malmstad¹⁰ argues that "Silentium" is primarily a dialogue with V. Ivanov. He directs our attention to the fact that the previous edition of 'Apollon', in which "Silentium" was first printed, contains Ivanov's "Заветы Символизма". This article opens with a reading of Tjutchev's "Silentium" which interprets the poem in the context of a language that has lagged behind spiritual growth so that when we express the internal world we lie. Our only hope is in the 'purely symbolic or mythological energy' which can express truth in thought. Malmstad regards Mandelstam's poem as an expression of a longing for prehistoric existence where there is neither duality nor myth, only the 'indestructible bond of everything living'. In this prehistoric existence the 'oneness' of Beauty and Love, two concepts also central to Ivanov, is possible. The most distinctive feature of the poem, Malmstad perceives as being the way it "follows Ivanov in taking the form of

mythic expression".

All three critics respond to the speaker's desire to be a part of the primal harmony. Each appears to give prominence to Aphrodite as the ideal or force of beauty and love.

Undoubtedly Aphrodite is inherent in the original harmony yet the context mentions neither beauty nor love, only creation. Central to stanza II is the birth of life or form. Its immanence is signalled by the abruptness of "но", disturbing the tranquillity realised in the first line. The light of day finds its response in the pale lilac of the foam which contrasts with the colour of the surrounding sea. Foam also has a natural association with the birth of Aphrodite. This process appears to mirror the contrast between Apollo, the god of light who brings form and lucidity, and Dionysus, the god of creativity and chaos. It is not, however, the tension between these 'gods' which is extolled but 'primal muteness'. This muteness is like a crystal note pure from birth. Clarity associated with crystal, counters a possible impression of amorphous chaos. Its purity from birth suggests that before the birth of Aphrodite another birth has taken place - that of the 'primal muteness'. It is not the myth with its inevitable divisions, that the speaker longs for, but the essence which existed when everything was one - the foam rather than Aphrodite. Perhaps it is not fair to speak of the poem as "taking the form of *mythic* expression". The injunction to the word to return to music would suggest that music is its original state, one of primal muteness.

In "Silentium" the sea appears to exist within the confines of its original vessel (В мутно-лазоревом сосуде). From this existence there is no desire to escape. In Tjutchev's "Silentium" the sense of enclosure is not that of being one with primal life, where internal and external are indistinguishable, but of enclosure within oneself which creates a barrier to communication with the outside world. Thus the speaker's cry is "как сердцу высказать себя? / Другому как понять тебя?". This contrasts with the purport of the exhortation in Mandelstam's "Silentium" for the heart to be modest as one who has merged with primal life (И сердце сердца устыдись / С первоосновой жизни слито!).

Through the lips the speaker finds that primal muteness paradoxically so full of sound. In many ways this resembles Mandelstam's creative

process which began with mutterings.

Music as the pulse of life, albeit the 'silent' music of primal muteness, echoes Schopenhauer's concept of music as an expression of the will, the ultimate reality behind the universe.¹¹ In Schopenhauer's view the rhythmical element is central to music and interestingly Mandelstam thought that in poetic composition rhythm preceded the formation of words. Whereas Schopenhauer maintains that music consists only of tones and notes, words remaining a foreign addition, "Silentium" suggests that the word is inherent in the essence. The concurrence of the word and music is found in V. Ivanov's writings, where music is the essence of a work of art, associated with the origins of language, religion and 'collectivism' (соборность):

"В каждом произведении искусства, хотя бы пластического, есть скрытая музыка. И это не потому только, что ему необходимо присущи ритм и внутреннее движение: но сама душа искусства музыкальная."¹²

[A hidden music is present in every work of art, even in the plastic arts. This arises not only out of the necessity of inherent rhythm and inner movement to the work but because the very essence of art is musical.]

For the majority of Symbolists music occupied an exalted position. Mandelstam's Acmeist manifesto shows a move away from the 'cult of music', although music continued to be essential to the poet. According to Mandelstam, the Logos was just as beautiful a form as music: "Для акмеистов сознательный смысл слова, Логос, такая же прекрасная форма, как музыка для символистов"¹³ [The Acmeists regard the conscious sense of the word, the Logos, to be as beautiful a form, as music is for the Symbolists]. The prominence that the Symbolists bestowed on music is not then conferred by Mandelstam on the Logos: "Логос требует только равноправия с другими элементами слова"¹⁴ [The Logos demands only to be considered of equal importance to the other elements of the word].¹⁵

More fundamental to Mandelstam than theories of music, is the imperative need to listen to language. His sharpest criticism does not fall on the Symbolists' love of grand themes, ones of cosmic and metaphysical nature, but on the way in which those themes were so poorly represented in language. Too many words resulted in a cheapening

of value, "... в общем русский символизм так много и громко кричал о «несказанном», что это «несказанное» пошло по рукам, как бумажные деньги"¹⁶ [... on the whole Russian Symbolism has ranted and raved about the 'unspeakable' so that the 'unspeakable' is handed around like paper money]. The Russian Symbolists listened so intently to what they imagined should be there, that they became alienated from what was already present: "Сразу взяли самую высокую напряженную ноту, оглушили сами себя и не использовали голоса, как органическую способность развития"¹⁷ [Immediately they adopted the highest pitched note, deafened themselves and did not use their voice as organic potential for development]. Mandelstam was no respecter of literary schools and he made a similar criticism with regard to the Futurist writer Igor Severyanin. Mandelstam's concern was less with the introduction of exotic words, than with the poet's insensitivity to the laws of the Russian language and his seeming inability to listen to how the word vegetates and grows (не слышна как растет и прозябает слово).¹⁸

The concept of Christianity as a timeless mystery inherent in the original harmony of the universe is set forth in "Пушкин и Скрябин", an essay which echoes some of the imagery and themes of "Silentium".

"Что-то случилось с музыкой, какой-то ветер сломал с налету мусикийские камыши, сухие и звонкие, мы требуем хора, нам наскучил ропот мыслящего тростника... Долго, долго мы играли с музыкой, не подозревая опасности, которая в ней таится, и пока - быть может, от скуки - мы придумывали миф, чтобы украсить свое существование, музыка бросила нам миф - не выдуманный, а рожденный, пенорожденный, багрянорожденный, царского происхождения, законный наследник мифов древности - миф о забытом христианстве."¹⁹

[Something happened to music, a wind swooped down and broke the dry, ringing musical reeds. Weary of the murmur of the thinking reed, we demanded a choir... For a long time we played with music, not suspecting its inherent danger, and while perhaps out of boredom, we invented a myth in order to beautify its existence, music sent us a myth, one which was not invented but born, born of foam and crimson, of royal origin, the legitimate successor of the myths of antiquity - the myth of forgotten Christianity.]

Mandelstam's longing for the harmony and unity of music manifests itself in a dialogue which the imagery conducts with Tyutchev's poem - "Певучесть есть в морских волнах". Here the speaker can hear the music of harmony in the sea's waves, in the elements and in the rustle of the reeds (стройный мусикийский шорох / Струится в зыбких камышах). Although he longs to be a part of this spontaneous harmony, he is alienated from it. His distress is voiced in the third stanza.

Откуда, как разлад возник?
И отчего же в общем хоре
Душа не то поет, что море,
И ропщет мыслящий тростник?²⁰

Mandelstam's use of the first person plural in 'we have invented a myth' (мы придумывали миф), refers probably to his own generation. Weary of the sound of the thinking reed the soul longed to be a part of the natural harmony. Incidentally, Pascal's thinking reed was regarded as a symbol of individualism which for many characterised that generation. It also echoes an earlier poem, 17. "Из омыта злого и вязкого", in which the speaker likens himself to a rustling reed growing out of an evil viscous pool, perhaps symbolic of his emergence as an individual. In an attempt to satisfy this demand for harmony, the Symbolists invented myths rather than seek what music offered. The invention of myths may allude to a trend amongst the Symbolists - 'мифотворчество', of which V. Ivanov was a proponent. An invented myth, however, touched only the external aspect of music - by beautifying its existence, but failing to penetrate or reveal its essence.

Mandelstam describes the birth of the Christian myth through allusion to the Hellenic myth of creation (рожденный, пенорожденный, багрянорожденный). As in "Silentium" the sea is a pervasive image of primal harmony and a source of creativity. Even though Christianity is in one sense born after the ancient world and is named as the 'legitimate successor of the myths of antiquity', clearly it is inherent in the essence of the world, in music.

Myth had a timeless aspect for Mandelstam, an essence not necessarily found in story. Working within a perspective of timelessness,

where the seeds of the present and future are embedded in the past, memory is a key concept and Mandelstam levelled the criticism against the Futurists that they had impoverished their work by throwing memory overboard and keeping only invention. Though Mandelstam's poetry is saturated with antiquity and one can identify recurring mythological figures, such as Persephone, there is no focus on the material of myth. The poet's attitude seems to be summed up by his remark relating to one of Ivanov's metaphors which envisages the symbol as the germ of myth and likened their relationship to that between the acorn and oak. Mandelstam does not deny the debt that all modern Russian poetry owed to Symbolism but exclaims: "О жёлуди, жёлуди, зачем дуб, когда есть жёлуди"²¹ [Oh acorns, acorns, who needs an oak when there are acorns]. Mandelstam was concerned more with the essence than the myth.

In Mandelstam's second exile in Voronezh it is striking how the original impulse towards harmony is revived in a number of poems which focus on the myths of antiquity and Christianity. They also reflect the poet's early preoccupation with sound, music and the sea. 342. "Рождение Улыбки" was probably composed as late as December 1936 - January 1937.

Когда заулыбается дитя
С развилкой и горести и сласти,
Концы его улыбки, не шутя,
Уходят в океанское безвластье.

Ему невыразимо хорошо,
Углами губ оно играет в славе -
Радужный уже строчится шов
Для бесконечного познания яви.

На лапы из воды поднялся материк -
Улитки рта наплыв и приближенье -
И бьет в глаза один атлантов миг:
Явленья явного в число чудес вселенья.

И цвет и вкус пространство потеряло,
Хребтом и аркою поднялся материк,
Улитка выползла, улыбка просияла,
Как два конца их радуга связала,
И в оба глаза бьет атлантов миг.

The poet points us back to creativity originating in the primeval world. Associated with it: the child's spontaneous smile; the snail, a creature near the bottom of the ladder of evolution connected previously with human lips (улитки губ людских); and hearing. All three express an aspect of creativity. The second meaning of "улитка", cochlea, is defined as a spiral tube, shaped like a snail's shell, that forms part of the internal ear, converting sound vibrations into nerve impulses. 'Inner listening' and moving lips are hallmarks of what we know of Mandelstam's creative process. The poet hears the inner image (одного слова еще нет, а стихотворение уже звучит внутренний образ, это его осязает слух поэта)²², which is converted into his mutterings. This stage is recorded in 275.-285."Восьмистишия": "И вдруг дуговая растяжка / Звучит в бормотаньях моих". It is an interesting coincidence that the word myth is derived from the Greek μυθος, a fable, which belongs to the same family as μυζειν, to make a sound, and μυ, to mutter.

An ancient symbol of the bridge between the real and the ideal, the rainbow connects the arc images of the real child's smile with what may appear to be the ideal and primitive emergent life-form (аркою поднялся материк). Against a backdrop of an emerging continent, the rainbow is also appropriate in its allusion to the Biblical story of Noah, to whom it signified God's covenant of favour.

Oceanic anarchy denotes freedom and an expectancy of creativity to the child rather than chaos and disorder. Its smile creates the 'moment of Atlantis'. By choosing Atlantis, Mandelstam evokes a mythic but pre-Homeric era, which recaptures the atmosphere of primeval life. An apparent reversal of the myth changes the story from one of miraculous disappearance to one of miraculous return. Though only a 'moment', its reality is underlined by the word "явь" and the fact that it is numbered as a real phenomenon among the miracles of the universe.²³ "Бить", the

verb 'to beat', conveys the immediacy of such an experience by its violent and physical connotations and may also point to music in its most 'primitive' form - vibration. In the final stanza the moment of Atlantis beats in both eyes indicating the complete absorption that the vision demands and gives. Perhaps the poet's role of revealing the 'moment of Atlantis' to the beholder is analogous. Primal harmony contained within 'oceanic anarchy' is full of immanent creativity which the poet urges, in this instance through the child's smile, to be revealed.

385. "Гончарами велик остров синий" presents an unexpected vision of premythic harmony perceived from the depth of increasingly harrowing circumstances.

Гончарами велик остров синий -
Крит веселый, запекся их дар
В землю звонкую. Слышишь дельфиний
Плавников их подземный удар?

Это море легко на помине
В осчастливленной обжигом глине,
И сосуда студеная власть
Расколосась на море и глаз.

Ты отдай мне мое, остров синий,
Крит летучий, отдай мне мой труд,
И сосцами текучей богини
Напои обожженный сосуд.

Это было и пелось, синяя,
Много задолго до Одиссея,
До того, как еду и питье
Называли «моя» и «мое».

Выздоровливай же, излучайся,
Волоокого неба звезда,
И летучая рыба - случайность,
И вода, говорящая «да».

Crete carries all the positive connotations of the Hellenic world and is characterised by unsullied joy (веселье). Joy is also expressed by the dolphins, creatures noted from antiquity for their carefree play and favoured by Greek potters as decorative motifs. "Синий" is an adjective commonly used to describe the sea and in this context (остров синий) may attribute to Crete the depth and primal nature of the sea.²⁴ A mutually dependent and harmonious relationship exists between the potter and the island, the potter and the sea. Such a relationship is evident in 387."Флейты греческой тэта и йота - ", where the creativity of the potter is expressed through the wordless music of the flute moulding the sea:

А флейтист не узнает покоя -
Ему кажется, что он один,
Что когда-то он море родное
Из сиреневых вылепил глин.

It is as though the sea is contained in clay 'cheered by the kiln'. The intense coldness and power (студеная власть) of the sea's vessel is tempered by the unexpectedness of the verb "раскололась", which suggests that like a pot it too may smash. By forming clay vessels the potters seem to be participating in a primeval act of creation as when the 'vessel' was first formed that contains the sea.

Using his vessel, the potter can drink the milk of the gods. Direct contact between the divine and human recalls Ovid's "Golden Age", a state before humanity was separated from the gods. 'The ox-eyed sky' of the final stanza may allude to the goddess who fills the poet's vessel. 'Ox-eyed' is the Homeric epithet for the goddess Hera and it has been surmised that the primitive divinity of the cow or ox later became known in a more sophisticated Greek world as Hera. Perhaps the poet deliberately avoids naming one of the Homeric divinities to conjure up the timelessness of an era 'long before Odysseus'. The absence of distinction between 'my' and 'yours' may indicate not only the abundance of food but a state of primal and 'unconscious' harmony. In this era harmony is all-embracing - everything is sung. Consciousness of self is a mark of fallen man and of his expulsion from the garden of

harmony. The fact that stanza IV is in the past tense implies that this era has passed. Similarly the exhortation to the star, the flying fish and the water to recover and emanate, suggest that all is not as it could or should be. Through the poet's art, in the rich sound pattern of "дар-удар-да" and "летучий-текучей", in the resonance of the soft "c"s and "э"s, the ancient harmony still seems to ring.

Inherent in music is also the spirit of Greek tragedy:

"Дух греческой трагедии проснулся в музыке. Музыка совершила круг и вернулась туда, откуда она вышла..."²⁵ [The spirit of Greek tragedy awoke in music. Music came full circle and returned to its source...].

In Mandelstam's day it was not uncommon to link tragedy and music, echoing among others, Nietzsche's ideas on tragedy, in part set forth in The Birth of Tragedy. He regards music as central to tragedy and one of his criticism's of Euripides is that his tragedy was not begotten in music. The power that rescued Prometheus from the vultures, Nietzsche considers to be the Heracleian power of music which reached its highest form in tragedy and "endowed myth with a new and profound significance".²⁶ Evidently Mandelstam had read some of Nietzsche's works when he was younger. This is apparent from a letter that he wrote to Vyacheslav Ivanov from Montreux-Territet in 1909, in which he compares Ivanov's book on tragedy to Nietzsche's Zarathustra, suggesting that both are 'circular' and share a similar charm and style. In the light of this comment it is doubtful that Mandelstam would have modelled his tragedy on Nietzsche's works, though the latter's influence would have been felt by the poet in the literary climate of his day.

There were many theories circulating which advocated the return to Greek tragedy and to the conditions under which it flourished. Wagner, the original dedicatee of Nietzsche's Birth of Tragedy, had pioneered the way back to the forms of the ancient world through his music drama, compounded of myth and music, which he hoped would enable a return to the atmosphere of the theatre where Greek actors and audience became one, involved in a joint creative activity. Tragedy would blossom, in Wagner's estimation, as long as it was derived from the inmost being of the people, and provided that inmost being was truly the essence, the genuine and communal spirit. Myth he considered to be true for all time, content condensed to the utmost intensity. The poet's task was to

interpret.

V. Ivanov admired Wagner and undoubtedly his ideas were to some extent shaped by the composer's works.²⁷ Ivanov also looked to ancient theatre as a model and considered tragedy to be a potential vehicle by which the spectator could become a participant and myth could make possible a universal feeling and thinking as one.

"Юность Гете", written by Mandelstam in the spring of 1935 as a radio play, throws an interesting light on the writer's attitude to the ancient theatre. In his desire 'to forever satiate his soul, striving towards the fine arts'²⁸ Goethe turns to the classical world. Here he first experiences the Veronese amphitheatre, like an encounter with living antiquity, as alive as nature herself. Walking around an empty amphitheatre he comments to himself:

"... на амфитеатр надо смотреть не тогда, когда он пуст, а когда он наполнен людьми. Увидев себя собранным, народ должен изумиться самому себе - многогласный, многошумный, волнующийся - он вдруг видит себя соединенным в одно благородное целое, слитым в одну массу, как бы в одно тело."²⁹

[... you must look at the amphitheatre not when it is empty but when it throngs with people. When people see themselves all together they are impelled to marvel at themselves, at the number of different voices and noises and the excitement. Suddenly they see themselves united in one noble whole, fused into one mass, as if they formed one body.]

Tragedy and the theatre concur in 356. "Где связанный и пригвожденный стон" (19 January - 14 February 1937). In the poet's choice of what is considered by many to be the first truly tragic figure of Greek mythology - Prometheus, he focuses on the origin of tragedy.

Где связанный и пригвожденный стон,
Где Прометей - скалы подспорье и пособие?
А коршун где - и желтоглазый гон
Его когтей, летящих исподлобья?

Тому не быть - трагедий не вернуть,
Но эти наступающие губы,

Но эти губы вводят прямо в суть
Эсхила-грузчика, Софокла-лесоруба.

Он - эхо и привет, он - вежа, нет - лемех.
Воздушно каменный театр времен растущих
Встал на ноги - и все хотят увидеть всех
Рожденных, гибельных и смерти не имущих.

Critics have offered various interpretations. C. Brown includes this poem in a group of three behind which "there lies a single knot of associations: tragedy and martyrdom - the cosmic tragedy of Man as reflected in the myth of Prometheus, the universal martyr; the classical tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles...".³⁰

J. Baines³¹ regards 356. as martyrdom in the context of classical Greek tragedy. Prometheus, the one who suffered for having dared to do what others would not do, according to Baines' interpretation, an example of the way Mandelstam and his fellow poets should follow. Though Russia may not at present have the national consciousness of a people necessary for tragedy, the lips of the poet can capture the essence of the tragic element. If all the people of his time were to stand up then there would be communication and revival of the unity of values long since eroded and finally, to all appearances, totally obliterated by Stalin.

G. Freidin³² sets 356. in the context of Mandelstam's ode to Stalin, "Стихи о Сталине", which refers to Prometheus: "Знать, Прометей раздул свой уголек, / Гляди, Эсхил, как я, рисуя, плачу!". The reference to Prometheus serves as an evocation of the tragic cycle in the Ode, which in Freidin's view, is transformed into the Christian "mythic register" of redemption and forgiveness so that the stolen fire yields to the divine gift, the Holy Spirit. After quoting the first five lines of 356. Freidin remarks that Mandelstam wrote the poem "shortly after completing the "Ode" as if to exorcise the tragic pattern from his own life".

In a sense Mandelstam's poem does not concern the tragedy of Prometheus for neither Prometheus nor the punitive vulture are to be found, and besides tragedies do not return. Prometheus and the vulture can, however, be regarded as a pattern of tragedy which is re-enacted

through the ages by mankind. Thus the suffering of mankind is not confined to the performance of one myth, the archetypal tragedy of Prometheus. Mandelstam acknowledges that tragedy occurs not only in the context of the classical Greek tragic figures but in the smallest element. One fragment dated 1935-6 reads:

"Когда писатель вменяет себе в долг во что бы то ни стало «трагически вещать о жизни», но не имеет на своей палитре глубоких контрастирующих красок, а главное - лишен чутья к закону, по которому трагическое, на каком бы маленьком участке оно ни возникало, неизбежно складывается в *общую картину мира*, - он дает «полуфабрикат» ужаса или косности..."³³

[Unless the writer, who believes that it is his duty in some way to tragically hold forth on life, is equipped with deep, contrasting colours on his palette and a sensitivity to the law by which the tragic, in however small a context it may appear, inevitably forms a universal picture, he produces a half-baked product of terror or of inertia.]

With his lips the poet senses that law whereby he penetrates the essence of tragedy ("наступать" means; to tread, advance, attack or to come). This recalls the poet's creative process which begins with an inner listening to pre-existent and audible material, is transformed into a rhythmic muttering and then into words. Moving one's lips is a tangible action and one critic draws attention to the sense of physical labour conveyed by the occupations of Aeschylus and Sophocles as stevedore and woodcutter.³⁴ Mandelstam was drawn to the concept of craftsmanship partly because of its contact with the three-dimensional world. Such an ideal for the artist differs from the Wagnerian priest-artist who reveals art to the people. Mandelstam realised that his art was not for the masses and that to make it accessible to the people, as Mayakovsky had tried to do, would be costly. Neither did he see art as a means of salvation like Scriabin, who maintained that he was the messiah who could accomplish the synthesis of all arts and thus usher in the new world. Mandelstam's modest ambition was to emulate not the masters of Symbolism, Futurism or Imaginism, but the strict craftsman: "протягивающий руку мастеру вещей и материальных ценностей, строителю и производителю вещественного мира"³⁵ [extending a hand to the mastercraftsman of things and of material values, to the builder and

maker of the material world]. The material is already at hand and the maker has already created, only imitation remains. In the artist's building there is an echo of the children who have already been redeemed, and now all that is left is the game of hide-and-seek with the divinity and the imitation of Christ.

In the final stanza people achieve organic unity yet remain individuals. It is as if the unseen echo of another age is greeted by the present, and the ploughshare uncovers the depths of time.³⁶ Theatre and tragedy are tangible in the stone monuments which testify to their existence, while adjectives such as 'airy-stone' and 'growing times' counter the image of stone relics, imparting a transcendent and kinetic quality. As each person participates, they seem to experience the three stages of the life-death-life cycle; those born, those destroyed or destroying and those who need not face death. Death is not at the centre of Mandelstam's perception of tragedy, so it is reasonable to suppose that the third stage may be those who are made immortal, resurrected. Ultimately the poet's intention is not to restore Greek theatre or even the mythology of ancient tragedy but to pierce the essence, which points through 'Christian tragedy' to a state of universal harmony.

There is a long period during which Mandelstam's prose and poetry contain little Christian imagery. Naturally he faced the obstacle of censorship and perhaps this partly explains why much of the Christian imagery and references to religion were altered and omitted when he prepared a new edition of his prose, "О Поэзии", in 1928.

In the summer of 1930, the Mandelstams were given the opportunity to travel to Armenia. A record of this journey survives in his prose work "Путешествие в Армению" (1933) and in his cycle of poems entitled "Армения". Christian imagery re-emerges mainly as a result of his response to a tangible country and people. Evidently he appreciated the raw vitality of life in Armenia, the wild children and a sense of familiarity with the world of real things. It was a place where people lived according to the sundial rather than the clock, with the understanding that people's skulls were equally beautiful whether at work or in the grave. In his 'first sensual' encounter with an Armenian church the traveller's eye seeks form, an idea, but stumbles instead upon the

'mouldy bread of nature'. Once inside, he is startled to see a cupola recalling the one in Rome. In the deepened spheres of apses which sing like seashells there is a hint of the primal harmony within the church's walls. Four blind bakers, North, South, East and West stumble about, all unable to find themselves a space, their clumsiness perhaps adding a touch of humour and reality. Attention is drawn to an image of the underground ovens often used for baking bread. Through these tangible images appears to shine the symbolic meaning of bread and of the persecuted church forced underground.

The essentials of their language reach back to wordless and instinctive urges: "На самых глубинных стадиях речи не было понятий, но лишь направление, страхи и вождения, лишь потребности и опасения"³⁷ [The deepest levels of speech could not be comprehended by the mind but exist only as directions, fears and longings, as needs and anxieties]. A similar sense of reaching to origins is conveyed in a poem belonging to the Armenian cycle.

В библиотеке авторов гончарных
Прекрасной земли пустотелую книгу,
По которой учились первые люди.

Prior to written language exists the hollowed book of those first artists - the potters, a book which may echo the underground churches scattered through Armenia.

Written probably only a few days later, 370, expresses a longing to be part of the 'universal rapture', a return to the primal and wordless depths. This is only achieved by the path of individual suffering:

Я в львиный ров и в крепость погружен
И опускаюсь ниже, ниже, ниже
Под этих звуков ливень дрожжевой -
Сильнее льва, мощнее Пятикнижья.

Как близко-близко твой подходит зов -
До заповедей роды и первины -

Океанийских низка жемчугов
И таитянок кроткие корзины.

Карающего пенья материк,
Густого голоса низинами надвинься!
Всех наших дочерей дикарско сладкий лик
Не стоит твоего - праматери - мизинца.

Неограничена еще моя пора,
И я сопровождал восторг вселенский
Как вполголосная органная игра
Сопровождает голос женский.

Though buried in the depths of the lion's pit the speaker must descend still lower. The threefold repetition of "ниже" may allude to the lowest depth reached by Christ during his three days in hell. Daniel in the lion's pit can be seen as a prefiguration of this descent. Incidentally, descent to the depths of the sea also parallels Lamarck's theory which names the lowest rung on the evolutionary ladder as forms of marine life, (Обрасту присосками и в пену / Океана завитком вопьюсь). Only under the sounds of the leaven storm does the speaker find greater strength than that of the lions, and a might greater than that found in the Old Testament. Perhaps implicit in this allusion is the victory of Christ over physical death and a grace more saving than the moral weight of the law. For the speaker it is more specifically the sounds of the leaven storm that triumph. The first two lines of 346., "Дрожжи мира дорогие - / Звуки, слезы и труды - ", seem to identify the leaven with the creative work of the poet, a work which is not unlike the travail and pain of birth.

The physical immediacy of the pit and fortress fades as the call and its reality begin to dominate. Possibly also conceived as a metaphor for death, the call is to a primeaval state before commandments were established and in a sense before birth itself. A transition from what is initially a terrible predicament to an increasingly positive experience is mirrored in the phonetic design. Pit (пов) is countered by the call (зов), while the threefold reiteration of lower (ниже) is modified by

phonetically related words with positive connotations; the repetition of near (близко-близко), the string of the ocean-pearls (низка), the depths of the voice (низами), and the little finger of the Urmutter (мизинца). Depth which is experienced literally in the pit is transformed into the concept of the depth of time, the depths of the sea where precious pearls are found and the discovery of the Urmutter³⁸ in the depth of the voice. As a result of his response to her call the speaker finds that from his initial position of captivity he now moves into a 'timeless' state in which he can participate in the universal rapture. Notably it is not the speaker's own voice or music which is predominant. His role is to accompany a rapture which seems to be prehistoric, belonging to the original element of sound and not form. This vision of primal harmony returns to the ideas of "Silentium", to oneness with music. The path of suffering which the speaker travels to reach this state of harmony retraces the Christian way.³⁹

364. "Как светотени мученик Рембрандт" was inspired probably by a copy of Rembrandt's Golgotha in the Voronezh museum. Rembrandt and the poet are guilty of the same offence, of penetrating through their art "в немеющее время". As a result they must suffer, Rembrandt as the 'martyr of chiaroscuro' (светотени мученик) and the speaker as one crucified. The age is incapable of responding to this suffering and does not realise that in the imitation of Christ, even in His suffering, lies the hope of resurrection. Unlike the guards and soldiers at the crucifixion, no-one keeps watch. They are asleep under the storm, unaware of its significance:

Но резкость моего горящего ребра
Не охраняется ни сторожами теми,
Ни этим воином, что под грозою спят.

Простишь ли ты меня, великолепный брат,
И мастер, и отец чернозеленой теми

Here the speaker is both the crucified and the penitent. Rembrandt is master and brother, as well as a Christ figure, one who is able to grant pardon. Once again there is the sense of Christ being the cornerstone of

a timeless myth, a pattern imitated by the poet and Rembrandt.

The essence of the Christian myth is brought into relief in 377."Тайная Вечеря", a poem which depicts the poet's participation in the Last Supper. On the same day Mandelstam also wrote 376."Я скажу это начерно - шепотом".

Я скажу это начерно - шепотом,
Потому что еще не пора:
Достигается потом и опытом
Безотчетного неба игра.

И под временным небом чистилища
Забываем мы часто о том,
Что счастливое небохранилище -
Раздвижной и пожизненный дом.

Humility and a child-like approach characterise the speaker's attitude. His words are not properly articulated but said in a whisper, like an unfinished poem or a whisper which precedes the lips (прежде губ уже родился шопот). "Безотчетный" signifies something not subject to control, instinctive or unconscious. The sky seems to share the unconscious nature of primal harmony, and perhaps in its play echoes the game of hide-and-seek which, according to Mandelstam, we play with the Deity. 'Heaven's storehouse' recalls the images relating to faith in 124."Люблю под сводами седья тишины"; 'the granary of universal good' (Зернохранилища вселенского добра) and the seed of deep, full faith preserved 'in the cool granaries, in the deep corn-bins' (В прохладных житницах, в глубоких закромах). Mandelstam's use of 'happy' is not synonymous with either "веселье" or "радость" but is simpler and perhaps more childlike. This home is not nearly so tangible as a building, but is universal.

Although one critic⁴⁰ comments that 377."Тайная вечеря" is free from either a literary or liturgical medium, it appears that the collection of paintings in the Voronezh museum included one of the Last Supper. The scars may allude in part to the cracks in the painting:

Небо вечера в стену влюбилось -
Все изранено светом рубцов -
Провалилось в нее, осветилось,
Превратилось в тринадцать голов.

No particular time or place is specified. It is as if once again the canvas is blank, ready to be painted. Perhaps the image of the 'sky-supper' pictured on a wall or canvas follows the pattern of the omniscient God becoming incarnate through suffering in created life. The internal verbal rhymes "влюбилось", "провалилось", "осветилось" and "превратилось" seem to reflect a harmonious and decisive pattern of which the speaker becomes a part. He stands like a boy in front of the nocturnal sky and receives the blows of the battering ram. Christ too received the blows on a cosmic level, being crushed by man and God for the sins of the world.⁴¹ Universal participation in the suffering of the prelude to the passion is evident in the final lines:

Той же вечера новые раны,
Неоконченной росписи мгла.

From his early years, Mandelstam, delving deeper than myth, yearned for universal harmony, the primal music. Discerning in music the essence of Christianity and the essence of the spirit of tragedy, he experienced towards the end of his life with a heightened sensitivity, the depth of suffering and, as he perceived it, the difficult but joyful game.

Notes for chapter five

1. Вторая Книга, pp.482-3
2. II, p.70
3. In Осип Мандельштам (pp.300-301) Struve cites a quotation by A. Lur'e found in Воздушные пути, (II, New York, 1961)
4. II, p.484
5. *ibid.*
6. *ibid.*
7. II, p.87
8. Pshibylsky, R. 'Осип Мандельштам и Музыка', Russian Literature, II (The Hague, 1972), pp.103-125
9. Taranovsky, K. 'Два «молчания» Осипа Мандельштама', Russian Literature, II (The Hague, 1972), pp.126-131
10. Malmstad, J. E. 'Mandelstam's "Silentium": A Poet's Response to Ivanov', Vyacheslav Ivanov: Poet, Critic and Philosopher, ed. R. Jackson & J. Lowry Nelson (Yale, 1986), pp.236-252
11. Schopenhauer elucidates his concept of music in a chapter the translator has entitled 'On the Metaphysics of Music'.
12. Ivanov, V. 'Предчувствия и Предвестия', Собрание Сочинений, II (Brussels, 1974)
Like Mandelstam, Ivanov appreciated what was conveyed indirectly. The inexplicable and incomprehensible was necessary for the mind to fully perceive an ultimate sense: "Отсюда - устремление к неизреченному, составляющее душу и жизнь эстетического наслаждения и эта воля, этот порыв - музыка." (p.93)

13. II, p.321

14. *ibid.*

15. Here the Logos is associated more with the Greek meaning of reason and discourse than with the Word of St. John. A stanza of Gumilev's poem "Слова", included in the epigraph of "О природе Слова", points to the supremacy to the Word as the source of creation and as God Himself.

Но забыли мы, что осиянно
Только слово средь земных тревог,
И в Евангелии от Иоанна
Сказано, что слово - это Бог.

Significantly this stanza was inserted as an epigraph to Mandelstam's essay not by the poet but by the publisher, Madame Rakovskaya.

16. II, p.423

17. III, p.33

18. III, p.83

19. II, p.317

20. Unlike Mandelstam's confident affirmation of the forgotten myth of Christianity, Tyutchev's "Певучесть есть в морских волнах" ends on a note of despair and doubt. The final stanza reads:

И от земли до крайних звезд
Все безответен и поныне
Глас вопиющего в пустыне,
Души отчаянной протест?

21. II, p.230

22 II, pp.226-227

23. The variant of the line "Явленья явного в число чудес вселенья" reads "Под легкий наигрыш хвалы и удивленья". This connects the vision of the "Atlantis moment" more obviously with the music of the people - the folk tune.

24. The image of the sea is pervasive in Mandelstam's poetry. According to Kourboulis' concordance there is a marked increase in the frequency with which Mandelstam uses "океан" after 1931, by comparison with his earlier and almost exclusive use of "море". One of the four recorded instances of "океан" before 1931 concerns the ship in "Сумерки свободы" which attempts to steer its course across a vast and hostile ocean:

Как плугом, океан деля,
Мы будем помнить и в летейской стуже,
Что десяти небес нам стоила земля.

It is noticeable that in 385."Гончарами велик остров синий - " the sea (море) is associated with creativity and music, with the world of the past rather than the present oceanic anarchy.

25. II, p.230

26. Nietzsche, F. The Birth of Tragedy and the Genealogy of Morals, (1956), p.68

27. Although Ivanov shared Wagner's aspirations for unity, he did not believe that the musician had been able to fully realise them: "Вагнер остановился на полпути и не досказал последнего слова. Его синтез искусств не гармоничен и не полон". (op. cit. p. 98)

28. "... навсегда насытить свою душу, стремящуюся к прекрасным искусствам." III, p.78

29. III, p.79

30. Brown, C. 'Into the Heart of Darkness: Mandelstam's Ode to Stalin', Slavic Review, XXVI (1967), pp.585-6

31. Baines, J. Mandelstam: The Later Poetry, (1976), Cambridge University Press, pp.188-9

32. Freidin, G. 'Mandelstam's Ode to Stalin', The Russian Review, IV (1982), pp.418-20

33. III, p.192

34. Przybylski, R. An Essay on the Poetry of Osip Mandelstam: God's Grateful Guest, tr. M. A. Levine, (Ann Arbor, 1987), p.201

35. II, p.259

36. "Поэзия - плуг, взрывающий время так, что глубинные слои времени, его чернозем оказываются сверху." (II, p.224)

37. II, p.144-145

38. A second reference to the Urmutter in Mandelstam's poetry occurs in 394."К пустой земле невольно припадая". Here she is associated with a life force that is stronger than death, and like the spring brings renewal to the earth.

О тот, что эта вешняя погода
Для нас праматерь гробового свода,
И это будет вечно начинаться.

39. In Воспоминания. Книга Первая (p.192-3) Nadezhda comments that not long before Mandelstam wrote 370. he listened to the singer Marian Anderson on the radio. The previous day he visited a singer who had been exiled from Leningrad. After five years in a camp the singer's husband had been released and then suddenly re-arrested. Mandelstam told Nadezhda that his poem involves a merging of the two images, the woman from Leningrad and Marian Anderson.

Perhaps in the reference to the 'continent of punitive singing' the punishment given to the singer's husband and to her, indicates the price paid for creativity, though does not therefore point to its defeat.

40. N. Struve makes this remark in Осип Манделъштам: "Третья Евхаристия свободна от всякой церковной или культурной окраски". (p.167)

41. Rayfield's view of Christ in his article 'Mandelstam's Voronezh Poetry' presents a somewhat different response: "Mandelstam's Christ is very much the Jew fallen foul of Caesar and his minions, rather than the Christ who is to resurrect. Christ and Judas mirror Mandelstam and Stalin." (p.356)

Concluding Remarks

Modern 'myth criticism' has been shaped largely by developments in sociology, psychology and anthropology. One critic, A. C. Kern, conveniently sums up three common approaches to myth, as "intellectual constructions that fuse concept and emotion into images; or when considered psychologically as primordial patterns which arise from the collective unconscious of the race and so mysteriously move us when they appear in literary works; or perhaps when considered anthropologically as pragmatic charters of primitive faith and moral."¹

In Russian literature mythology rose to the fore in the Neo-Classical movement of the eighteenth century when Russian writers imitated classical models, borrowing from original sources and from the West. At the end of the nineteenth century another classical revival occurred under the auspices of the Symbolist movement. Myth was not only perceived as appropriate subject matter for poetry but gained meaning as a concept. Among others, V. Ivanov and D. S. Merezhkhovskiy expressed aesthetic and religious ideas through 'myth'.

Laying to one side V. Ivanov's theoretical writings, his poetry reflects a scholarly interest in the classics, incorporating stylistic devices from ancient texts and, in Mandelstam's opinion, an excessive use of mythological imagery. Ivanov did not use mythology to create allegories or simplistic explanation but relied on the reader's ability to decipher the text. This is a quality that Mandelstam valued in the work of the Symbolists; he did not like a text that was highflown simply in order to appeal to the reader's snobbery and satisfy a desire for cheap and easy stimuli:

"Великая заслуга символизма, его правильная позиция в отношении к русскому читательскому обществу была в его учительстве, в его врожденной авторитетности, в патриархальной вескости и законодательной тяжести, которой он воспитывал читателя."²

[The great merit of Symbolism, its proper place with regard to the Russian readership, lay in its teaching, in its innate authority, in its patriarchal preponderance and in its legislative gravity with which it educated the reader.]

Mandelstam was versed in classical literature although he did not

appear to adopt a scholarly approach. From Kablukov's diary it emerges that Mandelstam failed his examination in Latin literature because he chose to study only one of the two required authors.³ It is probable that much of the poet's exposure to myth also came from 'secondary' sources, such as Racine's play 'Phédre', and not necessarily the original Greek texts. His perception of Christianity probably was formed largely from literature. In a sense, the work of poets was his 'sacred text'.

Mandelstam possibly used myth and mythology with a 'lighter touch' than the early Symbolists. Knowledge of myth on the reader's part is assumed and the poet's reference to what appears to be extraneous details, can be perplexing. Mandelstam wrote little about 'myth' as a concept and from our discussion of 356. "Где связанный и пригвожденный стон" it appears that the myth of Prometheus need only return in essence and not literally.

The twentieth century is full of examples of self-conscious use of myth. If myth is held neither as truth nor as a 'sacred text', this raises the question as to its role. Thus some critics have viewed Mandelstam's deployment of myth in terms of need; as a shield against the turbulence of historical events, a way "to keep these experiences at a poetic distance by clothing what happens in a garb of classical history and mythology"⁴, or the purport of Freidin's interpretation which sees myth as a channel for self-presentation, the myth of incest as a means for the poet to join together the disparate elements of his world. In order to bring Mandelstam's position into relief, we will chose Hitler and Dostoevsky's character Raskolnikov, as examples of those who may be considered to resort to myth in order to meet their need for a sense of continuity, significance and coherence.

Hitler's love of Wagner's mythological world and the mythic conception of him own self that he could construct from it, has been attributed in part to his need to find significance in a world that he felt had misunderstood and thwarted him. His passion for Wagner is well-documented. It is recorded that he never missed a Wagner festival at Bayreuth and a memoirist maintains that it was while attending Wagner's opera *Rienzi* in Linz that Hitler was inspired to become a politician - his mission: to elevate 'his' nation to greatness and power. The historian, A. Bullock, sees Hitler in the tradition of German thinkers

including Hegel, who believed in the role of 'World-historical individuals', agents who carried out the plan of Providence and were exempt from ordinary codes of morality. This enabled Hitler to see himself as the glorious hero battling against the ignominious adversary, his people a nation of gods. Myth without a morality that acknowledges a higher 'authority', one that is fundamentally humane, shadowing the redemptive sacrifice, is clearly a potential danger.

Mandelstam's concept of myth may at first sight appear to be without the value judgements associated with a conventional morality. His pantheon of mythic figures does not depict extremes of good and evil. Although Mandelstam did not like contrived synthesis, he appreciated the 'strongly contrasting colours of tragedy', the duality of some dear yet hostile principle he saw in his former tutor V. V. Gippius; "двойственность этого начала составляла даже его прелесть"⁵ [its charm lay even in the duality of this principle]. In order to make moral choices, divisions must be marked out. Perhaps only in the separation of the sheep and goats, the friends and enemies of the word, does Mandelstam draw divisions. Morality is seen by the poet in the context of language. Sin is identified as the abuse of language, a distortion of its inherent nature. He does not invoke an 'external' authority, for his sense of rightness is found in the nature of the 'material' world; "Зодчий говорит: я строю - значит - я прав. Сознание своей правоты нам дороже всего в поэзии..."⁶ [The architect says: I build, therefore I am right. The consciousness of one's own rightness is dearer than anything else to poetry].

Both poet and dictator had an interest in architecture, perhaps conscious of its potential for human expression of the spirit. Hitler was the instigator of the monumental and massive architecture of the Third Reich. In the early twenties Mandelstam sensed the shadow cast by the approaching monumental forms of social life, uncertain whether it would be 'the wing of approaching night' or his native city. Instinct for social architecture, the structuring of life in grandiose monumental forms beyond man's immediate need was not, in the poet's opinion, an idle whim but rooted in human societies. However he recognised its danger:

"Если подлинно гуманистическое оправдание не ляжет в основу грядущей социальной архитектуры, она раздавит человека, как Ассирия

и Вавилон."⁷

[If a truly humanistic justification does not lie at the basis of the future social architecture, it will crush man just as Assyria and Babylon did.]

Such a justification would value each individual as Man. Behind Hitler's 'justification' for his actions lay perhaps an element that Thomas Mann detected in Wagner's performances: "ein Anspruch, eine Selbstverherrlichung und mystagogische Selbstinszenierung... Es ist da, in Wagners Bramarbasieren ewigen Perorieren, Allein-reden-Wollen, über alles Mitreden - Wollen eine namenlose Unbescheidenheit, die Hitler vorbildet, - gewiss, es ist viel ›Hitler‹ in Wagner..."⁸ That 'nameless presumptuousness' may provide the clue to an understanding of the basis of Hitler's mythic thought.

Anderson interprets Dostoevsky's Преступление и Наказание in the light of myth.⁹ Raskolnikov is presented as an individual who seeks a higher significance than ordinary experience, a continuity between the conception of self and a 'sphere of sacral importance'. Society and environment are squeezed into the protagonist's vision and what appears as extraneous is brushed aside as he acts out his 'mythic cognition'. According to Anderson, Raskolnikov oscillates between 'ego expansion' thereby becoming the new lawmaker, a 'World-historical individual', and 'ego dissolution', a way of confession and submission. Both approaches release him from the passive role in an externally defined 'reasonableness' and satisfy his need to project a sense of cosmic value. Questions of morality in Anderson's opinion are not appropriate to mythic thinking. I would add that by quoting the passage of Lazarus's resurrection from the New Testament, the author seems to point to a cosmic reality and authority greater than that shaped by the protagonist.

Markedly different from Hitler's or Raskolnikov's approach to myth is the poet's relation to it. He neither forces reality into a mythic conception of himself nor, as Freidin implies in A Coat of Many Colors, does he choose myth primarily in order to project himself. The sequel is not of the poet's projection of his experiences or desires through an arbitrary choice of myth, but the existence of myth as an inherent and living experience of the universe and the poet's recognition of it in his

own time and space. As such, myth does not signify merely literary models or material from another age. Each myth that Mandelstam uses is part of his life. The figure of Persephone is an obvious example; she is experienced in the seasons and becomes pertinent as the queen of the dead, the ruler of dying Petersburg. A similar notion is found in Mandelstam's prose with regard to authors. No memories of the authors remain, only rare presentiments, "редкостных предчувствий: Пушкин, Овидий, Гомер".¹⁰ This experience is associated with the lover who in the silence becomes tangled up in tender names and suddenly remembers that all this has already been, with the result that 'the profound joy of recurrence seized him, a dizzy joy' (глубокая радость повторения охватывает его, головокружительная радость).¹¹ In a depiction of the exiled Ovid preparing for his departure in 104."Tristia", the phrase rings out:

Всё было встарь, всё повторится снова,
И сладок нам лишь узнаванья миг.

Joy also characterises the comparison of the poet apprehending the ringing inner image of a poem to a blind man, who recognises a dear face even though he hardly touches it with his fingers and 'tears of joy, of the true joy of recognition' (слезы радости, настоящей радости узнаванья)¹² well up in his eyes. Both the lover and the blind man experience moments which are intimate, highly personal and 'unconscious' yet these moments also attain a suprapersonal nature. Perhaps the poet's own creative life, whereby he composed poetry by listening to its pre-existent, audible form, reinforced a sense of inherence in literature and myth. In this way myth does not provide an organising factor by which reality can be manipulated, for continuity is found in the recognition of recurrence of an experience shared by man and inherent in the universe. These moments resemble Eliot's conception in 'Little Gidding' that "history is a pattern of timeless moments".

14."Silentium" begs the question of whether the poet wanted myth at all. His original role is that of a listener, a part of the 'unbreakable bond' (Ненарушаемая связь). A. Lure's impression of Mandelstam's 'paradise' is helpful:

"не... в мелочах быта, а в абсолютном, музыкальном самоизживании творимого образа или идеи... Больше всего, Мандельштаму была необходима *повторность*..."¹³

[not... in the petty details of life but in the absolute, musical effacement of self in the created image or idea... Above all else the notion of recurrence was essential to Mandelstam].

Mandelstam sought neither self-aggrandisement nor recognition from myth, but discerned a universal harmony beyond time, space and visual appearance.

As has been suggested earlier, once the young poet had rejected the secular Judaism at home his desire for religion was not immediately shaped and fulfilled by Christianity or Hellenism. His deep longing for universal unity and prehistoric harmony intuited in Marxist dogma and Tyutchev's work, appears to have been the most intense 'religious' experience of his early years. Faith did not seem to provide a way of unity, on the contrary it caused him to feel divided within himself. The poet increasingly realised his need for an acropolis. He sought his acropolis, a point which would combine the tangible and transcendent, in Rome, in the visual forms of architecture and finally in the word.

Hellenism and Christianity were important not as an acropolis but as inherent truths which gave meaning to suffering. There is no sense of chronological progression and development, of Hellenism giving way to Christianity, rather both are perceived as originating from the essence of the universe.

At the heart of Christianity lies the paradox of the pre-eternal crucified Christ. Nadezhda comments on the nature of Mandelstam's Christianity:

"Христианство Гумилева и Ахматовой было традиционным и церковным, у Мандельштама оно лежало в основе миропонимания, но носило скорее философский, чем бытовой характер."¹⁴

[Gumilev's and Akhmatova's Christianity was traditional and Orthodox while for Mandelstam it formed the basis of his world view, the emphasis placed more on the philosophical than on the everyday aspect.]

For Mandelstam the concept of Christian redemption was crucial in his understanding of his role as an artist.¹⁵ Certain that redemption was already a fact of the universe, there was freedom for the artist, a sense

of having passed from the law to grace. All that remained was the imitation of Christ. As one who 'imitated' there was no need to construct a mythic role for himself, to herald himself as a poet-prophet, or to prize the innovative nature of his work. With childlike humility the poet looked towards what is inherent in the universe.

Notes for the concluding remarks

1. Myth and Symbol, ed. B. Slote, p.153
2. II, p.231
3. Morozov, 'Kablukov's diary', p.149
4. Nilsson, N. A. 'Osip Mandelstam and his poetry', Scando-Slavica, IX (1963), p. 46
5. II, p.483
6. II, p.321
7. II, p.354
8. Mann, T. Essays: Band 3 Musik und Philosophie, ed. H. Kurzke, (Frankfurt, 1978), Fischer p.144
9. Anderson, R. B. 'Raskolnikov and the Myth Experience', Slavonic East European Journal, No.1, XX (1976), pp.1-17
10. II, p.224
11. II, p.225
12. II, p.226
13. I, p.400
14. Вторая Книга, pp.482-3
15. Art and literature helped to point Mandelstam to Christianity. During his exile in Voronezh little could be offered in the way of cultural stimulation. Mandelstam made the most of what was available and items housed in the museum appear to have inspired a number of his poems, including one of Rembrandt's painting of the Last Supper:

"Картина Рембрандта находилась в Воронеже, сейчас она, кажется, в Эрмитаже. О. Мандельштам часто ходил ее смотреть" (Книга Третья, р.241)

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