

“SALOMEYA” BY OSCAR WILDE AND POETRY OF N.S. GUMILEV: INTERTEXTUAL CROSSINGS

The play by O.Wilde “Salomeya” was originally forbidden to put on stage in both countries Great Britain and Russian Empire. However the scandalous play gained wide popularity as a piece of literary work, and was particularly liked by Russian poets of Silver Age. The translation of “Salomeya” made by V. and L. Andurson with the preface by K. Balmont (1903) were the first to appear in Russia. In 1907 “Salomeya” it was translated by baroness Radoshevskaya and S. Brik. In 1908 in Moscow the first translations of the play made by K. Balmont and E. Andreyeve-Balmont as well as by M. Likiardopulo were published in publishing house “Polza”. As it is known, Oscar Wilde wrote “Salomeya” in French and then translated it into English. Russian translations were made from French original.

“Salomeya”, as well as the creative activity of Oscar Wilde in general had a great impact on the poetry of N.S.Gumilev. Both in “Solomeya” and in poems by Gumilev there are images of magic birds - white peacock (poems “About lakes and white peacocks”, “Lakes”). The motif of beheading, central for “Salomeya” can be found in such poems by Gumilev as “Judith” and “Lost Tram” as well as in poems of those poets who were close to Gumilev (such as “Football” by O. Mandelshtam).

And finally the motif of dominating power of “evil moon” over a human soul is common for the poem “Salomeya” as well as early poetry of Gumilev.

Oscar Wilde compares tsarina Salomeya with the moon and she dies in the ray of the moon whereas Gumilev’s male characters being in love with the sun, sea and wind are afraid of the moon, associating it with the female bewitching nature. At the same time there is a female righteous essence, personified in Mashenka from “Lost Tram” which refers us to the image of Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. Gumilev’s eternal femininity has two images, two hypostasis – the evil one, bewitching, moon aspect of girl-witch and Sacred Image of Heavenly Bride, Mother, Most Holy Virgin. But eventually the pure face of the Most Holy Virgin overcomes.