**Plutarch à la Russe: Ancient heroism and Russian ideology in Tolstoy’s *War and Peace***

**Alexei V. Zadorojnyi**

*I Plutarch’s* Lives *in* War and Peace

The significance of Plutarch in the *War and Peace* (henceforth *W&P*) has to be read backwards from the aposiopetic ending of the Epilogue, part 1. Tolstoy fades out the novel’s literary narrative via an eerie yet all too interpretable dreaming experience of Nikolenka Bolkonsky, the late Prince Andrei’s son. It would make sense to quote the passage in full:[[1]](#footnote-1)

Meanwhile, downstairs in young Nikolenka Bolkonsky’s bedroom, a little lamp was burning as usual. (The boy was afraid of the dark and they could not cure him of it.) Dessalles[[2]](#footnote-2) slept propped up on four pillows, and his Roman nose emitted sounds of rhythmic snoring. Nikolenka, who has just waked up in a cold perspiration, sat up in a bed and gazed before him with wide-open eyes. He had awoken from a terrible dream (*strashnyi son*). He had dreamt that he and Uncle Pierre, wearing helmets such as were depicted in his Plutarch (*v kaskakh — takikh, kotorye byli narisovany v izdanii Plutarkha*), were leading a huge army. The army was made up of white slanting lines that filled the air like the cobwebs (*podobno* [...] *pautinam*) that float about in autumn, and which Dessalles called *le fil de la Vierge*. In front was Glory (*slava*), which was similar to those threads but rather thicker. He and Pierre were borne along lightly and joyously, nearer and nearer to their goal. Suddenly the threads that moved them began to slacken and become entangled and it became difficult to move. And Uncle Nikolai Ilyich stood before them in a stern and threatening attitude.

‘Have you done this?’ he said, pointing out to some broken sealing-wax and pens.[[3]](#footnote-3) ‘I loved you, but I have orders from Arakcheev[[4]](#footnote-4) and will kill the first of you who moves forward.’ Nikolenka turned to look at Pierre, but Pierre was no longer there. In his place was his father — Prince Andrei — and his father had neither shape nor form, but he existed, and when Nikolenka perceived him he grew faint with love: he felt himself powerless, limp, and formless. His father caressed and pitied him. But Uncle Nikolai came nearer and nearer to them. Terror seized Nikolenka, and he awoke.

‘My father!’ he thought. (Though there were two good portraits of Prince Andrei in the house, Nikolai never imagined him in human form.) ‘My father has been with me and caressed me. He approved of me and of Uncle Pierre. Whatever he may tell me, I will do it. Mucius Scaevola burnt his hand. Why should not the same sort of thing happen to me? I know they want me to learn. And I will learn (*uchit’sia*). But some day I will have finished learning, and then I will do something (*sdelaiu*). I only pray to God that something may happen to me such as happened to Plutarch’s men, and I will act as they did (*chtoby bylo so mnoiu to, chto bylo s liudmi Plutarkha, i ia sdelaiu to zhe*). I will do better (*Ya sdelaiu lutshe*). Everyone shall know me, love me, and be delighted with me.’ And suddenly his bosom heaved with sobs and he began to cry.

‘*Êtes-vous indisposé*?’ he heard Dessalles’s voice asking.

‘*Non*’, answered Nikolai, and lay back on his pillow.

‘He is good and kind and I am fond of him!’ he thought of Dessalles. ‘But Uncle Pierre! Oh, what a wonderful man he is! And my father? Oh, father, father! Yes, I will do something with which even *he* would be satisfied […]’ (*W&P*, Epilogue 1.16.)

There is no mistake that to Nikolenka the stories of ‘Plutarch’s men’ set forth a major ethico-political paradigm. His Plutarchan fantasy is also steeped in familial awareness and personalized, home-born impressions of the inspirational source book(s) as such. In fact, the edition (*izdanie*) from which the images of helmet-wearing heroes have made their way into Nikolenka’s dream might be plausibly identified in the library of Tolstoy himself. *W&P*, like most of Tolstoy’s mature works, was written on the premises of his manor house at Yasnaia Polyana[[5]](#footnote-5) between 1863 and 1869. According to the modern annotated catalogue of his library there, Tolstoy owned:[[6]](#footnote-6)

1. two multivolume French translations of Plutarch:
2. *Les Vies des hommes illustres de Plutarque*, 15 volumes, trans. André Dacier (Paris 1811);
3. *Œuvres morales de Plutarque*, 5 volumes, trans. Dominique Ricard(Paris 1844);
4. bilingual editions of *Vie de Marius* and *Vie de* *Sylla*, trans. D. Ricard and with running vocabulary by É. Sommer (Paris 1844 and 1845);
5. German translation of *Pericles* and the *Elder Cato* (*Plutarchus. Ausgewählten Biographien* III), ed. E. Eyth (Stuttgart 1855).

A later addition to Tolstoy’s bookshelves was a Russian translation of *Theseus and Romulus* by Vasilii Alexeev(1891);[[7]](#footnote-7) the copy is signed ‘with deepest respect’ by the translator.

Of the above, the 1811 printing of Dacier’s eighteenth-century translation[[8]](#footnote-8) of the *Lives* is a clear favourite as *the* Plutarch that fires Nikolenka Bolkonsky’s imagination. It fits the dramatic date of the Epilogue (December 1820: *cf.* Epilogue 1.9 *PSS* XV.200) and, saliently, each *Life* in this printing of Dacier’s translation opens with an engraved medallion portrait, on a separate facing page, of the eponymous Greek or Roman hero. Seven individuals in total (three Athenians, Pyrrhus, and three Romans) are shown wearing helmets[[9]](#footnote-9). Besides, the library to which Nikolenka has access is connected to the library of Tolstoy’s family estate on the paratextual level. Nikolenka’s foster father Count Nikolai Ilyich Rostov (‘Uncle Nikolai’) is by the time of the Epilogue a country gentleman who enjoys and steadily expands his book collection yet adheres to a peculiar bibliophilistic self-discipline; Pierre Bezukhov notes with a smile that Nikolai ‘has made it a rule (*za pravilo postavil*) not to buy a new book till he has read what he had already bought’ (Epilogue 1.16).[[10]](#footnote-10) Pierre’s comment coincides nearly verbatim with a passage in Tolstoy’s abandoned memoirs, where Tolstoy’s father Nikolai Ilyich (!) is profiled as a book-collecting lord of the manor whose interests concentrated on French classics, historiography, and natural history:

My aunts used to tell me that my father had made it a rule (*postavil sebe zapravilo*) not to buy new books until he had read the previously bought ones. (*PSS* XXXIV.356.)

It is therefore within the bounds of possibility that Nikolenka Bolkonsky (born 1806, *W&P* II.1.9) and Count Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910) discovered Plutarch through the same 1811 edition of Dacier’s translation of the *Lives*. So the Plutarchan helmets worn by Nikolenka and Pierre in the dream are most likely styled after the engravings in the said edition. (Was Tolstoy in his childhood attracted to the images of those helmeted *hommes illustres* too?)[[11]](#footnote-11) While a complete Russian translation of the *Lives* by Spyridon Destounis (Дестунис) was potentially available to Nikolenka,[[12]](#footnote-12) the odds are that, like his literary creator,[[13]](#footnote-13) he appreciated Plutarch initially in French. This would be in perfect keeping with the contemporary socio-cultural norms, because the French language was the *sine qua non* of aristocratic education and speech (as *W&P* amply demonstrates) in imperial Russia. A fine snapshot of mass consumption of Plutarch in French by young Russian nobles is found in the *Memoirs* (*Zapiski*) of the prominent patriotic writer and publisher Sergei Glinka (1776–1847).[[14]](#footnote-14) Glinka recalls how during his school years at the elitist cadet corps in Saint Petersburg (he graduated on 1 January 1795) the students sang the Spartan choral couplets they had learned from Plutarch (*cf.* *Lycurgus* 21.3) in Amyot’s translation;[[15]](#footnote-15) effectively, their classical role-playing had to rely on Amyot’s rhymes.

Nikolenka aims to emulate the classical heroism of Plutarch’s *Lives*, apparently mediated through the French linguo-aesthetic interface, as a priority of his fast-approaching adulthood:

[...] some day I will have finished learning, and then I will do something. I only pray to God that something may happen to me such as happened to Plutarch’s men, and I will act as they did. I will do better. (*W&P*, Epilogue 1.16)

The heroic deeds that lie ahead of this fourteen-year-old Russian aristocrat can be foretold without difficulty from the context. Nikolenka dreams and soliloquizes in December 1820. Taken together with the exchange between Pierre, Uncle Nikolai, and Denisov (Epilogue 1.14) and then between Pierre and Natasha (Epilogue 1.16), his dream implies that under Pierre’s influence he is going to get involved with the reformist conspiracy which culminated in the abortive military coup in December 1825.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Albeit a failure, the Decembrist Uprising proved to be a watershed in Russia’s history. Palace revolutions were not unusual throughout the eighteenth century, but in 1825 a section of the empire’s elite (the bulk of the well-born and educated conspirators were army and Guards officers) attempted for the first time to challenge the framework of the absolutist regime itself.[[17]](#footnote-17) The ideological legacy of the Decembrists was thus immense — and directly relevant to the long gestation of *W&P*. Tolstoy’s master plan evolved from an unfinished novel (*PSS* XVII.7–37) presenting an elderly ex-Decembrist Petr (Pierre) Labazov who had returned to Moscow after three decades of Siberian exile,[[18]](#footnote-18) into a more panoramic tale of Russian aristocratic society in the ‘glorious age’ of 1812, preceded contrapuntally by a run of defeats at the hands of Napoleon.[[19]](#footnote-19) The end result was the *W&P* we know today.[[20]](#footnote-20) While the historical accuracy and objectivity of the Tolstoyan narrative are open to criticism,[[21]](#footnote-21) it is hard to fault his perception of 1812 as a liminal moment for the collective worldview of Russia’s gentry (*dvorianstvo*) and for the Russian discourse of power overall. The French invasion and the ensuing Russian victory catalysed questions about Russia’s stance *vis-à-vis* Europe, about patriotism and national identity, monarchical authority and especially the relationship between the nobles and the serfs (and other strata of commoners), and whether the flagrant social inequalities of serfdom were compromising both the country’s development and the very unity of the nation.[[22]](#footnote-22) In the wake of the Napoleonic wars *dvorianstvo* produced the Decembrists,[[23]](#footnote-23) however, it is crucial to bear in mind that the ideology of loyalist triumphalism thrived among the same generation of upper-class Russians.[[24]](#footnote-24) The paradoxical and far-reaching aftermath of 1812 for Russia was that the patriotic consciousness of the gentry as the politically predominant and culturally active caste began to split into the loyalist argument and the dissident argument; *W&P* leaves its surviving main characters on the eve of the schism.[[25]](#footnote-25)

Tolstoy seeks to embed his retrospective appraisal of the Russian aristocratic-cum-national psyche in the socio-cultural historicity of the early 1800s.[[26]](#footnote-26) Having said that, *W&P* is not of course an exclusively or even primarily political text; Tolstoy has a more sweeping didactic and indeed philosophical agenda, exploring the timeless values of life, death, and the human self[[27]](#footnote-27) through historically embedded fiction. Hence the use of Plutarch in *W&P* appears to be twofold. The *Lives* are alluded to for the sake of documenting the intertextual horizon of Russian aristocracy in the period covered by the novel.[[28]](#footnote-28) Yet behind such historicist attentiveness to reception looms Tolstoy’s conceptual disagreement with the template of heroism sustained by the Plutarchan and more broadly classical examples. Nikolenka singles out Mucius Scaevola (*cf.* *Publicola* 17.2–8) but otherwise does not differentiate between the heroes he read about (in Dacier’s translation?): for the young Bolkonsky, ‘Plutarch’s men’ and what ‘happened’ (*bylo*) to them is a unified reference. Obviously he is a naïve reader of biography, yet elsewhere in *W&P* the Tolstoyan narrator mentions Plutarch in similarly broad-brush terms when describing the reaction of a ‘patriotic’ group of aristocrats in Saint Petersburg to the news about vigorously declared commitment to the war effort among the Moscow nobles and merchantry (*cf.* *W&P* III.1.22–23) in the summer of 1812:

Anna Pavlovna’s circle […] was enraptured by this enthusiasm, and spoke of it as Plutarch speaks of the ancients (*i govorili o nikh, kak govorit Plutarkh o drevnikh*). (*W&P* III.2.6.)

Any unprejudiced reader of the *Parallel Lives* knows that Plutarch does not invariably celebrate the ‘ancients’.[[29]](#footnote-29) Moreover, to lump together under one barren heading ‘what happened to Plutarch’s men […]’ (Epilogue 1.16) the multifarious scenarios enacted across the *Lives* is unsubtle at the least — there is no ‘one size fits all’ helmet, so to speak, of a Plutarchan hero. The Tolstoyan focalizers (Nikolenka, the in-crowd of the Petersburg salon) are not allowed to delve into the differences: Tolstoy needs an integrated, centripetal assumption about Plutarch’s heroic narrative that can operate as a kind of shorthand within his (often ironic) transcript of the Russian high culture but equally as a ‘deep’ reference point for Tolstoy’s assault on the mainstream — in his eyes, that is — idea(l)s of achievement, excellence, and historical truth.

*II Russia’s Patriotic War of 1812 and ancient heroism*

First, let us fill out the cultural protocols of the Russian nobility in the early 1800s, when Plutarch was a voice to be reckoned with. The Plutarchan fixation of Tolstoy’s Nikolenka has solid anecdotal parallels from the period. Sergei Glinka’s *Memoirs* are, once again, rewarding. Glinka’s laudatory sketch of the chivalrous hussar commander Yakov Kul’nev (1763–1812)[[30]](#footnote-30) stresses his bona fide approximation to the asceticism of Greco-Roman heroes, fuelled by regular reading of Plutarch’s *Lives*:

As he was reviving in his person Epaminondas and Philopoemen and had established a soul kinship (*porodnias’ dushoiu*) with Fabricius, Kul’nev cherished his own poverty and called it ‘ancient Roman dignity’. […] He never parted with his Plutarch (*Plutarkh* *byl s nim nerazluchen*); it was with Plutarch’s *Lives of Great Men* that he would lie down to rest on his humble cloak or take a ride in the mail coach; it was therein that he acquired the intuition (*chuvstvo*) for making out grandeur amidst life’s daily needs and deprivation.[[31]](#footnote-31)

The *Autobiography* of General Alexander Diugamel’ (1801–80) dwells on his own childhood encounters (which in many ways mirror those of Tolstoy and his Nikolenka) with Plutarch’s heroes:

My father owned a good library, which contained a full collection of French eighteenth-century classics and excellent works on history. […] I read several times the *Lives* *of Famous Men* in French translation by Madame Dacier.[[32]](#footnote-32) Of all the renowned men whose lives Plutarch has portrayed for us, I fell in love especially with Aristides for his fair-mindedness and strict principles. From that time I told myself that Aristides is the ideal I should try to resemble […][[33]](#footnote-33)

Or consider the story about the aristocratic Nikita Mouraviev (1795–1843) who as a boy was reluctant to dance at a children’s soirée, because he feared that dancing might not be in line with the noble ancient benchmarks:

Quietly, he asked her [his mother]: ‘*Maman, est-ce qu’Aristide et Caton ont dansé*?’ His mother replied, *Je faut supposer qu’oui, à votre âge*. He stood up straightaway and proceeded to dance.

The pairing of Aristides and Cato is symptomatic enough, but the source[[34]](#footnote-34) goes on to affirm that Nikita from his youth was ‘imbued with learning and erudition especially in the history department, suffused with all the lofty deeds of men most glorious such as Plutarch has transmitted to us’; having grown particularly fond of Roman history, he found himself galvanized (literally, ‘catching fire’) by the patriotism (*luboviu k otechestvu*) of Cicero and Cato and the characters (*kharakterami*) of ‘Brutus, Gracchi, *etc.*’.[[35]](#footnote-35) Nikita Mouraviev turned out to be one of the masterminds of the Decembrist conspiracy.[[36]](#footnote-36) Whereas for Kul’nev and Diugamel’ the *Lives*are a matrix of ethical exemplarity, Nikita Mouraviev learns both ethics and civic virtue from Plutarch.[[37]](#footnote-37)

Enthusiastic reception of Plutarch amongst the educated nobles chimes in with a much bigger phenomenon of Russian elite culture during the Napoleonic wars. Ancient heroic themes were actively mobilized for patriotic discourse of, and around, 1812 as the urgency for ‘invention of tradition’[[38]](#footnote-38) escalated. The totality of this multigenre discourse[[39]](#footnote-39) can be broken down into three distinct, if not mutually closed off, intertextual avenues:

1. the biblical analogies that work from assimilation of Napoleon to Antichrist (Goliath, and so on) and of Moscow/Russia to *e.g.* Jerusalem;[[40]](#footnote-40)
2. the ‘native’ mythology of Slavdom, the Kievan Rus’, and the anti-Polish resistance in 1612. Medieval Slavic and Russian motifs suited the nascent Romanticism — perhaps the best-known example is the long poem *A Bard in the Camp of Russian Warriors* (1812) by Vasilii Zhukovskii, which became an immediate hit;[[41]](#footnote-41)
3. classical narratives of valour, above all in the face of foreign aggressors. In 1812 the Scythian tactics against the Persians were duly invoked as a precedent,[[42]](#footnote-42) but far more typical are references to the Greeks and the Romans as a foil to heroic Russian conduct, whether collective or individualized.

Poetry was in the van of Russia’s literary response to the ‘unforgettable year 1812’, so designated in the title of a two-volume poetic anthology published in 1814 by Moscow University Press (hereafter *Sobranie stikhotvorenii*).[[43]](#footnote-43) In several poems within *Sobranie stikhotvorenii* the commemorative dimension is studded with ancient names and place names as markers (better, .ZIP files) of ambitious cultural remembrance.

Visible to posterity is the importance of their deeds, the stelae of time have been read: Athens’ chiefs, citizens of Rome, Russia’s faithful sons, your examples resonate through the centuries! (II.49: Alexander Pisarev, *Love for the Fatherland, An Ode*.)

‘We’ll die or win!’ they [*sc.* Russian men] were avowing. In our midst, Sparta did emerge. (I.144: Anna Volkova, *A Russian Woman’s Sentiments Aroused by Victories of the Russian Army Against the Fleeing Foes of the Fatherland*.)

Ah the Russian Marathon — the village of Borodino! (I.120: Nikolai Ivanchin-Pisarev, *Inscription on the Field of Borodino*.)

Petr Korsakov (1790–1844) in his odic morality poem *The True Heroes’ Temple of Fame* draws up a sizeable roster of heroic Romans and Greeks (and one self-sacrificially loyal Persian) interspersed with Russian political celebrities from different eras:

There I descried Socrateses, Codruses, Zopyruses; Minin and Pozharskii effulged like a bright ray; there the names of Peter [*sc.* Peter the Great] and Lycurgus were entwined; there were revealed Fabius, Cincinnatus, and Rumiantsev; there Curtius, Leonidas, Horatius, Scipio were; there was the steadfast Germogen; thou, Bagration, wert there! There was the sage Olga, and with her, like lilies of paradise, the gloriously flourishing deeds of Catherine [*sc.* Catherine the Great]. There were Numa, Antoninus, Titus the magnanimous; there were Reguluses, Surovov, Aristides; I saw Scaevola, I beheld the Decii, Catos […][[44]](#footnote-44) (II.182.)

It is worth emphasizing that *Sobranie stikhotvorenii* consists to a large extent of poems previously published in journals or as stand-alone booklets; handwritten and oral circulation cannot be ruled out either. The Russian elite was busy formatting its patriotism into verse. Poetic loftiness was in high demand, which would be generally matched with well-tried stylistic solutions from the eighteenth century, *i.e.* archaic diction and more or less intensive classical texturing.[[45]](#footnote-45) In Korsakov’s *Temple of Fame* Russian history and antiquity have become a joint hero pool. The prevalent method of classicizing 1812 was, however, that of analogy between admired contemporaries and the cast of staple Greco-Roman characters. Panegyrical analogism taken to the point of overkill can be observed in the *Song in Honour of Count P. K. Wittgenstein’s Victories* by Petr Vzmetnev (1791–1877), published as a ten-page book in 1812.[[46]](#footnote-46) Vzmetnev’s *Song* (not included in *Sobranie stikhotvorenii* for whatever reasons) rates the German-born Russian general on a par with heroes of the Trojan War and *stratêgoi* of milestone Greek battles:

[…] the warlord victorious and sage, in swiftness akin to Achilles! Many heroes are immortal, yet these have exceeded the others hundredfold — Priam’s son by virtue of his defence of Troy, Miltiades with Marathon, Epaminondas with the battle of Leuctra, Themistocles with Salamis. No lesser is the glory in which our protector Wittgenstein has attired himself. (Lines 7–16.)

Similar fondness for Greek and Roman analogies spreads through contemporary prose accounts of 1812. In the two-volume miscellany of patriotic ‘anecdotes’ (*Anekdoty*) assembled by Filipp Sinel’nikov,[[47]](#footnote-47) the self-disregarding artillery captain Zakharov is introduced as ‘Russia’s true hero’ that ‘posterity shall call “Russian Regulus”’ (I.53–54); a peasant’s extraordinary prowess in a fight translates, predictably, into ‘Russian Hercules’ (II.65); an old peasant whom French torture could not break is ‘a new Curtius, lo and behold! […] in another image’ (I.25); the late General Bagration is ‘the immortal hero whose life resembled very much the adventures [*sic*] of the Homeric Achilles’, with the following epitaph in alexandrine verse proposed:

Under this stone is buried the Russian Achilles, as invulnerable as the ancient one; he used to smite Gothic and Osmanic Hectors alike; a quantity of Gaulic hundred-headed Hydras he had hurled to dreary Tartarus […] the Gaulic hydra touched his leg; Achilles is dead! and Europe has shuddered […] (I.111.)

The autobiographical yet essayistic and florid *Campaign Memoirs of a Russian Officer* (first edition 1820, second edition 1836; see n. 41, above) by the future writer of historical romances Ivan Lazhechnikov (1792–1869) are likewise keen on classical parallels: a soldier is praised for rescuing a wounded officer from the fire of Moscow ‘on his shoulders, like pious Aeneas did to his father Anchises’; the pithy command ‘Stand firm and die!’ that General Alexander Osterman-Tolstoi uttered during the desperate battle at Ostrowno is glossed as ‘heroic reply, worthy to be put next to the dictum of the ancient Horatius’;[[48]](#footnote-48) later in the book the same Osterman-Tolstoi is referred to as ‘the Russian Leonidas’.[[49]](#footnote-49)

The examples can go on. Tapping into the prestige of Greco-Roman history in order to enhance the patriotic legend of 1812 is a standard move in Russian literature of the time, the message being that Russia has met the optimum benchmarks of heroism and earned — in the words of Vzmetnev’s *Song*, ‘no lesser glory’ than the ancients — or indeed exceeded those benchmarks, for it is repeatedly asserted in poetry and prose that the Russians of 1812 have bested *even* the classical comparanda:

KUTUZOV: Neither Darius nor Xerxes endured in the midst of their misadventures a defeat such as the one through which the throngs of these villains were chastised. […] Amazed by the greatness of these battles, the world shall forget the fight at Salamis and the fight around the Plataean walls.(Grigorii Okulov, *Meeting of Suvorov with Kutuzov, or the News Delivered to the Realm of the Dead by the Prince of Smolensk,* in *Sobranie stikhotvorenii* II.167.)

Why should we seek examples in history? The Spartans, the Romans amaze no longer, since in our time the Russes (*Rossy*) have outshone the blaze of their glory and astonished the whole world with their heroism. (Verse caption to Ivan Tupylev’s print *The Russian Curtius*, 1813.)[[50]](#footnote-50)

Passing over the village of Borodino, which shall reverberate through the annals of all the centuries-to-come louder than Cannae and the fields of Pharsalus did in the History of centuries gone — the villages of Letashevka and Tarutino will not be inferior in glory to any of those famous places where the Persians and Macedonians, Greeks and Romans arranged bloody battles. (Sinel’nikov, *Anekdoty* II.40.)

The annals were lacking an example similar to the Greek Cynegirus — but only until our time. […] Cynegirus’ feat astonishes everybody. But now the whole world must give attention to another example which is immeasurably more glorious: N. N. was NCO of Poltavskii infantry regiment who lost his arm, torn off by a canonball, in the ferocious battle at Saltanovka […] (Sinel’nikov, *Anekdoty* I.55.)

Greece is proud of her sons who ardently loved her. Rome of old was glorious through suchlike men. We are assured — by Thermopylae and the siege of Rome — that they loved the fatherland with all their soul then. The brave Leonidas the Spartiate, the banished Camillus of Rome sacrifice themselves to the fatherland. But in their direct love for the fatherland the Russians have outshone the Roman and Greek heroes […] (Kondratii Ryleev, *Love for the Fatherland, an Ode* 1813.)[[51]](#footnote-51)

Rome was renowned (*slavilsia*) for one Lucretia; the ancient capital of the Russians can be proud of two. (Lazhechnikov, *Campaign Memoirs* 24.)

Feel the pride, oh Russia! your sons’ spirit has surpassed the grandeur of Greece and Rome. You have no more need to point towards the homeland of Leonidases and Scipios by way of example for your nurselings — you have transported it, along with these Heroes, onto your own sacred soil. About new and prodigious feats of valour your descendants shall not be saying anymore, ‘They fought and died like the Spartans at Thermopylae.’ No! our sons and grandsons shall say then, ‘They fought and won like the Russians at Kulm.’ (Lazhechnikov, *Campaign Memoirs* 175.)

The tendency to reflect on 1812 through the classical lens[[52]](#footnote-52) is also attested at the high end of Russian visual culture. Thus, the design and statuary of the Triumphal Arch erected in Moscow after 1830 are thoroughly classical.[[53]](#footnote-53) A series of twenty bronze medallions by the artist Fyodor Tolstoi (1783–1873) represents significant events of the war as classically stylized, mildly allegorical *mises en scène*;[[54]](#footnote-54) the complete album of Tolstoi’s medallions appeared in 1836, but the designs were published as an album already in 1818 and the images circulated through less expensive engravings, plaster or glass casts, and on printed crockery and crystal. Another specimen of small-scale pictorial classicism is the title-page illustration (by Ivan Ivanov) in Lazhechnikov’s *Campaign Memoirs*: against an ivy-draped altar decorated with fasces and inscribed ‘1812·1813·1814: to the Fatherland’ are deposited a crested Greek helmet and an open book on top of a shield and sheathed sword.[[55]](#footnote-55) Last but not least, a few among the Greco-Roman analogies and transmutations which are rife in contemporary writing achieved iconic status thanks to artwork, none more so than the ‘Russian Scaevola’. A short journal article from 1812 tells of a peasant who happened to be press-ganged into the French army and was branded on his forearm as part of the process. Having realized that he had been marked with the sign of Napoleon’s service, the man instantly chopped off the branded arm with his rustic axe. The peasant’s name and exact location are conspicuously absent from the tale. Rather, the resurgence of classical heroism[[56]](#footnote-56) is foregrounded in ethnic identity:

Need it be said that this new Scaevola (*sei novyi Stsevola*) was a Russian? (*Son of the Fatherland* IV.164.)[[57]](#footnote-57)

The episode entered the 1812 literary lore,[[58]](#footnote-58) but also provided a plot for patriotic cartoons, which Russian artists were diligently bringing out in 1813.[[59]](#footnote-59) Four different versions of the ‘Russian Scaevola’ print are known.[[60]](#footnote-60) Ivan Tupylev’s version was accompanied with an ideologically loaded epigram:

In vain does Porsenna thunder against Rome; it is saved by the fortitude of Caius Mucius alone. Who could destabilise the throne that is upheld by myriads of Scaevolas![[61]](#footnote-61)

The upbeat exclamation disguises entrenched anxieties of the Russian elite in 1812 about the people’s loyalty to the tsar and obedience to royal and feudal authority;[[62]](#footnote-62) the new Scaevola personifies patriotism and anonymous Russianness which are aligned with conservative social discourse of solidarity between the peasants and their masters. It seems that the target audience of Tupylev’s art were not simply literate but reasonably educated viewers, although on the whole Russian 1812 cartoons gravitate towards coarse folksiness.[[63]](#footnote-63) To stakeholders in the status quo of empire and serfdom, the Russian Scaevola must have been a reassuring fantasy. So it is not accidental that he was aestheticized for the unmistakably upper-class gaze too, in the shape of a classically postured statue by Vasilii Demut-Malinovskii (1779–1846).[[64]](#footnote-64) Upon completion (1813), the sculptor was promoted to Professor at the Imperial Academy of Arts.

In short, the mentions of Plutarch in *W&P* (III.2.6; Epilogue 1.16) are true-to-life indications of the ideological climate cultivated by the higher echelons of Russian society during the reign of Alexander I. Tolstoy captures the elite’s habit of adding a classical layer to their patriotic and nationalistic aspirations as well as interpretative pronouncements. It is apposite that a pugnacious and shrewd philosopher-critic from Tolstoy’s own generation, who queried the psychological side of *W&P* as anachronistic,[[65]](#footnote-65) was prepared to give a thumbs up to Nikolenka’s dream on account of its classicism:

[…] there is a whiff of the times (*veet epokhoi*) about the dream. — *Plutarch*, the *ancient helmets, military glory* […] Back then, they were not coerced to swot up on the classics in the original, so as to strengthen memory and will, yet they were *reading* — even though in French translations — for pleasure and to develop sensibilities and the mind. There is a whiff of the times […] about those Plutarchan helmets […] (282.)

It is equally important that long after 1812 the rhetoric of Greco-Roman heroism continued to mould patriotic locution for the educated Russian *mentalité*. The Crimean War energized classical references in contemporary journalism, but Tolstoy too forges a link with antiquity in his eyewitness story *Sevastopol in December*, finished towards the end of April 1855:[[66]](#footnote-66)

[…] when that hero worthy of ancient Greece (*etot geroi, dostoinyi drevnei Gretsii*), Kornilov, said, as he inspected the troops: ‘We are going to die, lads, but we’ll not surrender Sevastopol’, and our Russians, who are not capable of phrase-mongering (*nesposobnye k frazerstvu*), replied: ‘And die we will! Hurrah!’ […] (*Sevastopol in December* = *PSS* IV.16.)

The tone of the passage echoes the letter Tolstoy wrote from the besieged Sevastopol to his brother in November 1854 (*PSS* LIX.281): ‘Morale of the [Russian] troops is beyond description. In the ancient Greek era there was not the same amount of heroicalness (*vo vremena drevnei Gretsii ne bylo stol’ko geroistva*).’ Here Ensign Leo Tolstoy sounds not unlike Colonel Berg of *W&P* III.3.16, ranting about the Battle of Borodino before his in-laws:

‘I can tell you, Papa, that such an heroic spirit, the truly antique valour of the Russian army (*istinno drevnego muzhestva rossiiskikh voisk*), which they — which it’ (he corrected himself) ‘has shown or displayed in the battle of the 26th — there are no words worthy to do it justice. I tell you, Papa’ (he smote himself on the breast as a general he had heard speaking had done, but Berg did it a trifle late for he should have struck his breast at the words ‘Russian army’) […] ‘yes, those exploits of ancient valour (*da, muzhestvennye i drevnie podvigi*)’, he went on rapidly. […] ‘Altogether such heroism (*geroistvo*) as was displayed by the Russian warriors cannot be imagined or adequately praised!’

The outward similarity between these texts throws into relief the revisionist ideological programme of *W&P*. By making a smug and manipulative self-seeker such as Berg play the herald of ‘antique’ heroism,[[67]](#footnote-67) Tolstoy vitiates the moral and exegetical prerogative of the elite to inscribe their cultural tastes on the fabric of history and life itself. Berg’s monologue lacks authenticity because, as the narrator wryly interjects, he is plagiarizing the speech (‘[…] all that he remembered of the various tales he had heard those days’) and the very body language of others; it is understood that he did not fight in the front rank at Borodino.

Yet Tolstoy’s *ad hominem* attack on Berg dovetails with a more global elenctic task. In *W&P* the ethics and social anthropology of the Russian patriotic discourse are under properly Tolstoyan — that is, wholeheartedly axiological and well-nigh omniscient — interrogation. Regardless of the speaker’s hypocrisy or sincerity (is the unnamed general a more credible witness than Berg?!),[[68]](#footnote-68) the idiom of classicized heroism is disqualified anyhow because its staginess and clichéd pathos feel alien to historico-psychological experience, as *W&P*’s author wants it to be,[[69]](#footnote-69) with a dose of gritty realism for good measure. As will be demonstrated in the next section, *W&P* subverts the Russian gentry’s ‘invented tradition’ of benchmarking 1812 against Greco-Roman heroics. But it would not be an exaggeration to say that *W&P* itself aims for a comprehensive departure from the heroic ‘ancient’ narrative. Let me illustrate this through an instance of serendipitous, and therefore revealing, intertextuality. At Borodino, Prince Andrei’s regiment are ordered to remain stationary under enemy fire; so are the Spartans before the showdown at Plataea. The Plutarchan *Life of Aristides* offers a suitably statuesque tableau as well as fine apophthegmatic garnish (17.7–9):

[…] he [Pausanias] ordered the Lacedaemonians to place their shields on the ground in front of them and sit still. They were not to retaliate against a single enemy soldier, but to await his orders […] already missiles were reaching them and here and there a Spartan was struck. In the midst of all this Callicrates, said to have been the tallest and most handsome man at that time in the Greek army, was hit by an arrow. As he died he said that he did not grieve over his death (for he had left home precisely that he might lay down his life on behalf of Greece), but over the fact that he was dying without having struck a blow. In short, the self-control of those men, despite their awful situation, was astonishing (*enkrateia thaumastê*).[[70]](#footnote-70) They offered no resistance to the enemy when they attacked, but rather allowed themselves to be struck and to fall where they stood in their ranks as they waited for the signal from the gods and their general than the time was right. (Trans. D. Sansone.)

In the Tolstoyan depiction (*W&P* III.2.36) there is neither overt praise for the Russian soldiers’ heroic discipline, nor memorable last words of the dying. Instead the accent is on the mundane details that are meant to but cannot stave off the existential horror of war.

Without moving from that spot or firing a single shot the regiment here lost another third of its men. […] With each fresh blow less and less chance of life (*vsio men’she i men’she sluchainostei zhizni*) remained for those not yet killed. […] All alike were taciturn and morose. Talk was rarely heard in the ranks, and it ceased altogether every time the thud of a successful shot and the cry of ‘stretchers!’ was heard. Most of the time, by their officers’ order, the men sat on the ground. One, having taken off his shako carefully loosened and drew tight again its cords; another, rubbing some dry clay between his palms, polished his bayonet; another fingered the strap and pulled the buckle of his bandolier […] Some built little houses of the tufts in the ploughed ground, or plaited baskets from the straw in the cornfield. All seemed fully absorbed in these pursuits. When men were killed or wounded, when rows of stretchers went past, when some troops retreated, and when great masses of the enemy came into view through the smoke, no one paid any attention to these things. […] the liveliest attention was attracted by occurrences quite apart from, and unconnected with, the battle. It was as if the minds of these mortally exhausted men found relief in everyday, commonplace occurrences. […] Another time general attention was attracted by a small brown dog, coming heaven knows whence, which trotted in a preoccupied manner in front of the ranks with its tail stiffly erect till suddenly a shell fell close by, when it yelped, tucked its tail between its legs, and darted aside. Yells and shrieks of laughter rose from the whole regiment. But such distractions lasted only a moment, and for eight hours the men had been inactive, without food, in constant fear of death, and their pale and gloomy faces grew ever paler and gloomier.

*W&P* goes to very great lengths here to get away from the classical, ‘Plutarchan’ (in the broadest possible sense!) mode of narrating ‘about the ancients’ (*cf.* *W&P* III.2.6). Such unspoken polarization cannot happen, however, without selective and crudely reductive reading of the ancient texts; thus, Plutarch’s *Life of Aristides* is by no means an unmitigated encomium of fifth-century Greeks — in fact, quite full coverage is given to their squabbles and confusion during the campaign of Plataea.[[71]](#footnote-71) Tolstoy appears to have missed certain opportunities to make Plutarch his writerly ally. Or maybe his discontent with how his own characters handle Greco-Roman material is simply too strong.

*III Tolstoy’s war against heroic ideology*

Across *W&P* and its extensive drafts there are a handful of nuggets of authorial sarcasm towards upper-class Russians who comment on contemporary warfare through classical parallels.[[72]](#footnote-72) The most blatant case is when an aristocrat (one A. B. Golitsyn) pays a compliment to the nation’s mettle — in grammatically garbled Russian:

This heroismus similar for ancient Rome is (*eto podobnoi drevnei Rimu geroistva*: *PSS* XIV.93 = *LN* 778.)

The well-known fact that after the outbreak of 1812 war the gentry switched, patriotically, from French to Russian in their day-to-day conversation is seized upon by Tolstoy and configured as a ‘double whammy’ of socio-cultural absurdity and empty interpretation; poor grasp of the national language[[73]](#footnote-73) cannot help discrediting the vapid classicism of Golitsyn’s insight.

Much earlier in the novel an overwrought poetic tribute to the Russian military undergoes ironic deflation. At the party organized by the Moscow noblesse in honour of General Bagration in 1806 the offering of a poem (classically saturated, for sure) visibly embarrasses the honorand:

[…] another committee-man, carrying a large silver salver which he presented to Prince Bagration. On the salver lay some verses composed and printed in the hero’s honour. Bagration on seeing the salver glanced around in dismay, as though seeking help. But all the eyes demanded that he should submit. Feeling himself in their power, he resolutely took the salver with both hands and looked sternly and reproachfully at the count who had presented it to him. Someone obligingly took the dish from Bagration (or he would, it seemed, have held it till evening and have gone in to dinner with it) and drew his attention to the verses. ‘Well, I will read them, then!’ Bargration seemed to say, and fixing his weary eyes on the paper, began to read them with a fixed and serious expression. But the author (*sochinitel’*) himself took the verses and began reading them aloud. Bagration bowed his head and listened:

Bring glory then to Alexander’s reign

And on the throne our Titus[[74]](#footnote-74) shield.

A dreaded foe be though, kind-hearted a man,

A Rhipheus at home, a Caesar in the field!

E’en fortunate Napoleon

Knows by experience, now, Bagration,

And dare not Herculean Russians (*Alkidov russkikh*) trouble […]

(*W&P* II.1.3, *cf. LN* 356–57.)

Tolstoy borrows the verses verbatim from his source.[[75]](#footnote-75) At the same time, he exercises sheer writerly freedom about Bagration’s facial expression and inner feelings. Another alteration of the source is letting the poet in on the scene, so that his recital can be comically thwarted:[[76]](#footnote-76)

But before he had finished reading, a stentorian major-domo announced that dinner was ready. […] Count Rostov, glancing angrily at the author who went on reading his verses, bowed to Bagration. Everyone rose, feeling that dinner was more important than verses […] (*W&P* II.1.3)

In the narrative of 1812 Tolstoy channels his distrust of the Greco-Roman timbre through the persona of Nikolai Rostov. As an already battle-seasoned cavalry captain, Nikolai finds himself unable to accept[[77]](#footnote-77) the vicariously reported tale of General Raevskii’s gallantry:

And the officer gave them details of the Saltanov battle, which he had heard at the staff. […] Zdrzhinsky, the officer with the long moustache, spoke grandiloquently of the Saltanov dam being ‘a Russian Thermopylae’ (*Fermopilami russkikh*), and of how a deed worthy of antiquity (*postupok, dostoinyi drevnosti*) had been performed by General Raevskii. He recounted how Raevskii had led his two sons onto the dam under terrific fire, and had charged with them beside him. Rostov heard the story and not only said nothing to encourage Zdrzhinsky’s enthusiasm, but on the contrary looked like a man ashamed of what he was hearing, though with no intention of contradicting it. Since the campaigns of Austerlitz and of 1807 Rostov knew by experience that men always lie when describing military exploits, as he himself had done when recounting them; besides that, he had experience enough to know that nothing happens in war at all as we can imagine or relate it. (*W&P* III.1.12; *cf.* *PSS* XIV.42 and *LN* 608.)

Nikolai says nothing because he does not want to undermine patriotic propaganda,[[78]](#footnote-78) but in his head he denounces the story at length as both unrealistic and unnecessarily classicized:

And besides, the fate of the Fatherland did not depend on whether they took the Saltanov dam or not, as we are told was the case at Thermopylae. So why should he [*sc.* Raevskii] have made such a sacrifice? And why involve his own children in the battle? (*W&P* III.1.12, *cf.* *LN* 609.)

It is in the manuscripts that Nikolai’s (and Tolstoy’s) misgivings about the classical paradigm are suggestively refocused on the figure of Mucius Scaevola:

First, he did not like it why Raevskii had led his sons into the gunfire. At the Saltanov dam the fate of the Fatherland was not being decided, as in the case of M. Scaev<ola>. (*PSS* XIV.42 = *LN* 767.)

R<ostov> understood that Raevsk<ii> with his sons at Salt<anovka> was a charade (*fars*), but kept silent. The deceit of Mucius Scaevola is still not exposed (*lganio Mutsiia Stcevoly do sikh por ne oblicheno*). (*PSS* XIII.37.)

The overly empiricist, hard-nosed rebuttal of the Raievskii story in the more advanced variants is topped up with caution against misgrafting classical examples, which appear (‘we are told […]’) to be sterling and valid *per se*, onto the current events.[[79]](#footnote-79) By contrast, the skeleton draft at *PSS* XIII.37 finds fault with the classical tradition of heroism as embodied in Scaevola; the textbook Roman hero is somehow a cheat.[[80]](#footnote-80)

Such vacillation sums up the attitude towards heroic antiquity in *W&P*. On the one hand, irony and negativity are levelled at the contrived patriotic rhetoric practised, although not unanimously,[[81]](#footnote-81) by the Russian elite. The Tolstoyan narrator refuses to remain neutral about this warping and falsification of experience through discourse, despite the fact that turgid language and apophthegmatic behavioural mannerism[[82]](#footnote-82)are well-documented ingredients in Russia’s 1812 experience. The historicity of classical reception succumbs to Tolstoy’s psychological and ethical critique. Greco-Roman heroism is persistently bracketed with hollow misconstrual of the present among the upper class. *W&P* is at its core a pro-aristocratic novel,[[83]](#footnote-83) but it is also retrospectively didactic and gives the Russian[[84]](#footnote-84) nobility a great deal of stick[[85]](#footnote-85) for a) suavely dishonest self-promotion, as well as for b) the internalized delusions of culture and ideology. Not that the border between a) and b) is clearly demarcated: Berg ought to belong under a), but Zdrzhinsky and A. B. Golitsyn are closer to b), while the hapless poet (*W&P* II.1.3) and the Petersburg aristocrats[[86]](#footnote-86) hailing the patriotic zeal shown at Moscow ‘like Plutarch speaks of the ancients’ (*W&P* III.2.6) generate humbug which seems to tick either box. In a manuscript passage Tolstoy spells out the incongruity between grandiose and classicizing (again, mediated through Plutarch) discursive expectations and the actual collective character of senior Russian commanders in 1812:

Fine generals and men, all of them […] were always writing in the style of Derzhavin[[87]](#footnote-87) about love for the Fatherland and the tsar and other suchlike nonsense (*vzdor*), yet essentially they were thinking most of the time about dinner and medal ribbons — a blue one or a red one. This is a human motive, which should not be condemned, but it should be stated plainly, otherwise the young generation are misled as they observe with bewilderment and despair the weakness inside their own souls, whereas in Plutarch and in their native history they see exclusively heroes. (*PSS* XIV.155–56 = *LN* 722.)

Tolstoy diagnoses a flaw in the reception procedures — a cyclic flaw to boot, considering how abuse of the classical intertext by contemporary commentators on 1812 is imbricated with the subsequent Russian mythus of 1812.[[88]](#footnote-88) For *W&P* protests not so much against stylistic veneer, but rather the notion of heroism that undergirds (as the Tolstoyan reasoning would have it) fallacious criteria of historical judgment and agency. *W&P*’s story and theoretical digressions (not to forget the formidable Epilogue, part 2!) cohere[[89]](#footnote-89) as a macro-statement of Tolstoy’s denial of the hero-centred mindset. Throughout the novel heroic greatness is debunked, more accurately de-sensationalized; the conventional grand (meta)narratives of courage, sacrificial patriotism, and military and political leadership collapse under Tolstoy’s gaze and dwindle down to melodramatic bluffing and/or post-factum spin,[[90]](#footnote-90) which are *de facto* projections of egotism.[[91]](#footnote-91) *W&P* acclaims unostentatious bravery but is hard on self-monumentalizing poseurs.[[92]](#footnote-92) Furthermore, Tolstoy maintains that the impact of individual leaders (‘great men’) on history is illusory: true causation resides rather in the aggregate of small-scale, ordinary actions, the ‘swarm-life’ of humanity.[[93]](#footnote-93)

Tolstoy’s text thus performs a sceptical and subversive audit[[94]](#footnote-94) on the parameters of elite ideology nationally (in Russia) and further afield. From the perspective of egotistic and theatrical self-styling, the worst culprit in the novel is Napoleon,[[95]](#footnote-95) yet it is apparent that Tolstoy evaluates the Russian military (cue: Nikolai on Raevskii) and civilians of 1812 against the same equation of flamboyant, catastrophic heroism with historically untenable travesty:

Those [*sc.* Moscow nobles and burghers] who departed, taking what they could and abandoning their houses and half their belongings, did so from that hidden, *latent* patriotism which expresses itself not by phrases or by killing one’s children to save the Fatherland, and by similar unnatural actions, but unobtrusively, simply, organically, and therefore in the way that always produces the most powerful results. (*W&P* III.3.5.)

The subversiveness behind the Tolstoyan negotiation of imperial Russia’s main patriotic legend was noticed by conservative (better: loyalist) contemporary critics of *W&P*, some of them 1812 veterans.[[96]](#footnote-96) Let us hear from the erudite General Avraam Norov (1795–1869). In his long essay first published in 1868, Norov objects both to *W&P*’s portrayal of Russian commanders of 1812 and the overall gainsaying of individual heroism in the novel:

[…] as if a whole cohort of our generals, whose glory is cemented in our military chronicles and whose names are still a byword among the new military generation, consisted of inept, blind instruments of chance […] If there are no men of action (*esli net deiatelei*), there is no history; all valour (*vse doblesti*) sinks into the abyss of oblivion, and all the zest for imitating this valour vanishes.[[97]](#footnote-97)

Signally, Norov’s counterclaims fall back on the heroic *onomasticon* of Greco-Roman antiquity. Bargation is assimilated to Leonidas (10–11), Kutuzov to Xenophon of the *Anabasis* (13, 26), and Barclay de Tolly to Fabius (18, 26). The defence of Smolensk awakens Homeric memories:

What inspirational images for the writer’s pen and the artist’s brush yield to us even the official dispatches on the heroic battles (*o geroiskikh bitvakh*) around the walls of Smolensk: [the battles] of Raevskii, Dokhturov, Paskevich, Neverovskii — those Ajaxes, Achilleses, Diomedeses and Hectors of our armed force […] (22.)

Norov, who as a junior artillery officer fought and was severely wounded at Borodino,[[98]](#footnote-98) comes across as an upstanding and true-to-form representative of the discourse which it is Tolstoy’s aim to puncture in *W&P*:

It is natural for us who were not living in those days to imagine […] that all Russians from the greatest to the least were solely engaged in sacrificing themselves, saving their fatherland, or weeping over its downfall. The tales and descriptions of that time without exceptions speak only of the self-sacrifice, patriotic devotion, despair, grief, and the heroism of the Russians. But it was not really so. It appears so to us because we see only the general historic interest of that time and do not see all the personal human interests that people had. Yet in reality those personal interests of the moment so much transcend the general interest, that they always prevent the public interest from being felt or even noticed. (*W&P* IV.1.4.)[[99]](#footnote-99)

For Tolstoy, individualistic heroism entails reciprocal corruption between the psyche and language,[[100]](#footnote-100) articulating and spreading itself through *braggadocio* and intertextual pomp. Greco-Roman exemplarity gets taken over for the wrong reasons, as a resource of spin. In *W&P* classical referencing is the refuge of the deluded (cue: Zdrzhinsky) and, more worryingly, of insincere people who would like to persuade the world and themselves that they are heroes, not scoundrels. This is the discursive trajectory of Berg (*W&P* III.3.16) but also, critically, of Napoleon. Tolstoy points out the classicizing component of Napoleon’s vanity[[101]](#footnote-101) and makes sure to derive explicit ethico-political censure from it:

In Africa [*sc.* Egypt] a whole series of outrages are committed against the almost unarmed inhabitants. And the men who commit these crimes, especially their leader, assure themselves (*uveriaiut sebia*) that this is admirable, this is glory — it resembles Caesar and Alexander the Great, and is therefore good. (*W&P*, Epilogue 1.3.)

The problem is not, however, entirely at the level of reception, because the idea of heroic falsehood can be extended into antiquity (‘the deceit of Mucius Scaevola’, *PSS* XIII.37). Infantile self-importance of political leaders has no bearing whatsoever on the real course of events ‘since the time of Alcibiadeses and Caesars’ (*PSS* XIII.72).[[102]](#footnote-102) Ancient heroes and authors, inclusive of Plutarch, are not just victims of readerly misappropriation; they are implicated in and, at the end of the day, responsible for the hero-centred ideology transmitted through culturally potent literature. It is by dint of the literary broadcast, Tolstoy insists, that the irrelevant, analytically void issue of heroism has endured to date.

The ancients have left us model heroic poems in which the heroes constitute the whole interest of the story (*istorii*), and we are still unable to accustom ourselves to the fact that for our living time [literally, ‘our human time’, *nashego chelovecheskogo vremeni*] histories (*istoria*) of that kind are meaningless (*ne imeet smysla*). (*W&P* III.2.19.)

The distinction between epic and historiography is blurred by Tolstoy here. In the manuscript, on the other hand, each genre was outlined more discernibly and evocatively:

The ancients have left us model heroic poems, in which the gods directed the heroes’ actions, decided their fates, lamented them, intervened on their behalf, and for a long time we have been carrying on with this form of poetry, although nobody believed in heroes any more. The ancients also left us model heroic history, where Romuluses, Cyruses, Caesars, Scaevolas, Mariuses etc. constitute the whole interest of history (*sostavliaiut ves’ interes istorii*), and we still cannot accustom ourselves to the fact that for our living time history of this kind is meaningless. (*LN* 674.)

With cavalier dilettantism, Tolstoy charts hero-centred discourse as a continuum that runs from the ancient epic (very likely, Homer and Virgil) through Greco-Roman bio-historiography[[103]](#footnote-103) to the modern ‘historians’; the latter have qualified rather than abolished the idea of history hinging on ‘great men’.[[104]](#footnote-104) But the roots of the error lie in antiquity.

All of this hardly bodes well for Plutarch, even if Tolstoy does not criticize him directly. The Plutarchan *Lives* furnish a sort of blueprint for patriotic discourse among the Petersburg aristocrats (*W&P* III.2.6); Plutarch is thereby sucked into the rhetoric which Tolstoy strongly repudiates.[[105]](#footnote-105) Worse, the *Lives* meet the requirements for hero-centred ‘history’ (*LN* 674). If such history should not be read as intellectually and culturally valid (*LN* 674*,* *ne imeet smysla*), what can we make of Nikolenka’s dream in the Epilogue? Are ‘Plutarch’s men’, whom the boy wishes to imitate and exceed, flawed and *a priori* spurious role-models?[[106]](#footnote-106) Has he been led astray by Plutarch?

The ultimate authority for Nikolenka, dreaming or awake, is his father, Prince Andrei — a character with appreciable and awkward (in the moral schema of *W&P*) heroic baggage. Back in book 1, Andrei is intent on consummating his love of glory (*W&P* I.3.12) through military heroism. Napoleon fascinates him in a paradigmatic way; Andrei compares himself, biographically and psychologically, to Napoleon’s career, in the hope that his own ‘Toulon’ is forthcoming.[[107]](#footnote-107) After Austerlitz, Andrei sloughs off this infatuation with Napoleon (*W&P* I.3.19) and heroic ambitiousness in general,[[108]](#footnote-108) but during the first months of the novel Andrei’s acumen and integrity are subsumed into the hero-centred ethos[[109]](#footnote-109) he is poised to act out.

By looking up to Napoleon, Andrei tends towards Romanticism[[110]](#footnote-110) rather than classicism, yet a rudimentary triangulation with Julius Caesar is on the cards as well. In a scene from the manuscript Andrei does not think twice about calling Napoleon ‘the new Caesar’ (*PSS* XIII.342). There is a copy of Caesar’s *Commentaries* (*Zapiski Tsezaria*) in Andrei’s study in Petersburg — it happens to be the volume Pierre, while visiting, picks to read at random (*W&P* I.1.5).[[111]](#footnote-111) Caesar’s *Commentaries* and Plutarch’s *Lives* are, respectively, the very first book and the last book that the Tolstoyan narrative (minus the treatise which is the Epilogue, part 2) chooses to spotlight. In other words, *W&P* depends on two classical authors for an intertextual arc of heroic tradition. From Caesar’s military *récit*, with its glaring Napoleonic relevance,[[112]](#footnote-112) to the Plutarchan biographies of exemplary statesmen: maybe a wholesome development, after all?

Not necessarily, because *W&P* envisages Plutarch’s *Lives* as an archetype of the celebratory account of heroism (*W&P* III.2.6; *PSS* XIV.155–56 = *LN* 722). So it is legitimate and perhaps imperative to read Andrei of Book 1 *sub specie Plutarchi* too; I find myself in agreement with Patricia Carden who thinks that Andrei’s outlook and experiences in 1805 add up to a case study in ‘the false view of heroism implicit in classical education’ and specifically ‘Plutarchan vision’ of heroic leadership and glory.[[113]](#footnote-113) As an admirer of ‘Plutarch’s men’, Nikolenka Bolkonsky is seduced by the high pathos and individualistic excellence, which, before his birth, haunted his warrior-father whom he admires still more eagerly. Nikolenka’s vision and tacit oath in the Epilogue could thus be intimating that a new cycle of folly (cue: Herodotus?!) has begun.[[114]](#footnote-114) Heroism is the common denominator for the father and son Bolkonsky in the sense of generational continuity (as among the Homeric aristocrats),[[115]](#footnote-115) but it also means that even the best and genuinely noble-minded heroic personalities are intrinsically infantile. The clues were given by Tolstoy already in the description of Andrei’s *aristeia* on the battlefield of Austerlitz:

Prince Andrei, feeling tears of shame and anger choking him, had already leapt from his horse and run to the standard. ‘Forward, lads!’ he shouted in a voice piercing as a child’s (*detski-pronzitel’no*). ‘Here it is!’ thought he, seizing the staff of the standard and hearing with pleasure the whistle of bullets […] (*W&P* I.3.16, *cf.* *PSS* XIII.535 = *LN* 337.)

Andrei’s dream of turning the tide of the battle by dramatic, banner-aloft leadership is somehow naïve and childish.[[116]](#footnote-116) The idea is soon brought back with added poignancy:

[…] where he had fallen with the flagstaff in his hand, lay Prince Andrei Bolkonsky bleeding profusely and unconsciously uttering a gentle, piteous, and childlike moan (*detskim stonom*). (*W&P* I.3.19, *cf.* *LN* 346.)

Andrei of Book 1 gets himself hurtfully, near-lethally entangled in the intertextuality of heroic performance.[[117]](#footnote-117) The Tolstoyan verdict keeps on crystallizing later in the narrative: regimental standards are just ‘pieces of cloth fastened to sticks’ (*W&P* III.2.39), and glory itself, of which Andrei used to be enamoured (*W&P* I.3.12), is but gossamer (Epilogue 1.16).[[118]](#footnote-118) Stories of heroism have a lot to answer for, then. The psychagogic effect of Plutarch’s *Lives* on Nikolenka is a more serious matter than it looks at first sight. To fall for the heroic narrative in good faith is all the more fatal.[[119]](#footnote-119) The Plutarchan *Lives*, as a particularly popular and efficacious heroic narrative,[[120]](#footnote-120) must be tackled with readerly vigilance.[[121]](#footnote-121) Still, Tolstoy’s authorial voiceover in the Epilogue stops short of condemning the boy for his susceptibility to heroism;[[122]](#footnote-122) to borrow Nikolenka’s phrase, he has much to ‘learn’ (*uchit’sia*), and learners ought to profit by their mistakes, hopefully. (Remember that Tolstoy himself used to endorse parallels with heroic antiquity during the Crimean War.[[123]](#footnote-123)) *W&P* does not view ‘Plutarch’s men’ as ideological demons to be exorcized from the Russian aristocratic consciousness, but rather as a prestigious, on-going provocation. Elizabeth Samet elegantly observes that,

Tolstoy refuses to banish altogether the heroes of antiquity from his text, because he recognizes that the invisible threads that bind his characters (and readers) to them can never quite be dissolved.[[124]](#footnote-124)

*IV Tolstoy vs Plutarch: a necessary contest*

The lurking yet fundamental antagonism between *W&P* and Plutarch’s *Lives* comes at a price. Bluntly, Plutarch is subjected to palpably tendentious, even unfair intertextual reception. The discriminating and discreet policies of his biographical pedagogy[[125]](#footnote-125) are either lost on Tolstoy or, more constructively, outweighed by the Tolstoyan disrelish for discourse that over-values select individuals (*W&P* IV.3.18 ‘special animals called “heroes”’). Plutarch proposes to examine ‘great natures’ against the norms of right and wrong (*Demetrius* 1.5–7);[[126]](#footnote-126) Tolstoy resists and decries the principle of individual greatness altogether, arguing that it is exegetically futile (*LN* 674)[[127]](#footnote-127) and can spiral into disastrous moral and material consequences — of Napoleonic proportions at the most extreme.

How well did Tolstoy know his Plutarch, to begin with? It is clear that the older, teacherly Tolstoy developed a liking for the *Moralia*; between 1904 and 1910 he culled and paraphrased a number of Plutarchan passages on vegetarianism and superstition for his own anthological projects.[[128]](#footnote-128) Plutarch is now part of his reading routine (*PSS* LVI.3, *cf.* LV.597) and, momentously, crops up among the texts that come to Tolstoy’s mind when he is after an ad-lib checklist of the world philosophical heritage.[[129]](#footnote-129) The vitriolic 1906 article ‘On Shakespeare and drama’statesthat the playwright fails to match up to characterization in the Plutarchan *Lives* which he is drawing on (ch. 4 = *PSS* XXXV.244).

The Tolstoyan reading of Plutarch during the *W&P* years is less generously attested. Our best if quirky evidence is a paratext, namely Tolstoy’s note jotted down on the verso of a page in the pre-proof manuscript, dated to 1868, of Book 3 (*PSS* XVI.185):

Goli[tsyn’s] name

From 6 to 9 — 1) ABC (with teaching guidance) 2) Russ. 3) Fr. 4) Engl. 5) fairy-tales

From 9 to 12 — 1) horses, 2) Uvarov) 3) Little Kyrgyz (*kirgizik*), 4) Kutuzov,

5) Tikhon, 6) History of 1812, Dolokhov.

From 12 to 15 — 7) Plutarch, 8) ~~Isakov~~ Humboldt, Luther, 9) Zoology, Kristof, biographies histories. Polish ~~stories~~

Hunts. Rides. Brawny shooters. ~~Warriors~~ Herd. [?] wolves [?]. Intestine. Biriuleva

The text has the appearance of a schedule, feasibly of Tolstoy’s reading and writing for a day. Plutarch features as item 7, in the 12–15 slot. The preceding rubrics 4–6 undeniably[[130]](#footnote-130) bear on *W&P*: Tolstoy must be a) researching the war, and b) writing up the fictional characters (Tikhon, Dolokhov); either operation would have room for the figure of Kutuzov. It is conceivable that Tolstoy read Plutarch — the *Lives*, rather than the *Moralia*? — for erudition’s sake or to select stories for adaptation in the compendium he was preparing for schoolchildren.[[131]](#footnote-131) But the proximity of Plutarch to *W&P*’s topics is striking nonetheless. Tolstoy found at least some time for Plutarch while working on *W&P*. (Less probably, the entry ‘7) Plutarch’ might refer to Nikolenka’s dream in the Epilogue.)

*W&P* lays bare the extraneousness and insincerity of the Russian elite’s idiolect of classical heroism. Yet Tolstoy does not stop there;[[132]](#footnote-132) his quarrel is with the hero-centred mentality at large and, by the same token, with the biographical approach to the past.[[133]](#footnote-133) The origins of the discourse of individualistic grandeur he locates in antiquity (*W&P*, Epilogue 2.1; III.2.19, *LN* 674). No Greek or Roman writer is rebuked *nominatim*, but Plutarch would have been the natural and authoritative candidate for Tolstoy to consult and confront in the domain of ‘ancient’ bio-historiography. Judging from the passages where Plutarch is mentioned, Tolstoy capitalizes on a simplistic, one-dimensional notion of the *Lives* as homage to ‘great men’. But in spite, or maybe because, of the Tolstoyan constraints, a fruitful intertextual debate between *W&P* and the *Parallel Lives* is sustainable. Tolstoy’s challenge to the heroic mytho-paradigm has a vast capacity for thinking with and against Plutarch (Plutarque, actually), for undercurrent polemics and architectonic subversion of the Plutarchan life-writing. Thus, we can see how Plutarch’s strategy of gauging and extrapolating character from small details and sayings[[134]](#footnote-134) is changed into a recipe for depreciation of ‘great’ statesmen:

Let me not get blamed for picking out the banal ~~comic~~ details when describing actions by men who are recognised as great […] If there were no descriptions trying to present the most vulgar details (*samye poshlye podrobnosti*) as great (*velikimi*), my descriptions would not have existed. In a biography of Newton, the details about his diet and how he happened to trip over cannot have any impact on his significance as a great man (*kak velikogo cheloveka*) — they are alien; but here it is the other way round. God knows, what would have remained of the great men, rulers, and warriors if one were to translate into plain language all of their agency. (*PSS* XIV.84 = *LN* 652.)

In *W&P* anecdotal close-ups serve not to illustrate and help comprehend the character of a historical person, but to shrink him; Tolstoy is done comprehending — he knows there are no great men and superheroes in life,[[135]](#footnote-135) only dangerously pretentious and/or overhyped egotists. Instead of Plutarch’s benign biographical portraiture (*Cimon* 2.3–5), the Tolstoyan narrator takes advantage of psychological, verbal, and physical shortcomings (*e.g.* Napoleon’s ugly nakedness, *W&P* III.2.26)[[136]](#footnote-136) with a view to trivialize and denigrate ‘great’ lives and dramatic occasions.[[137]](#footnote-137) Such almost cynical negativity is the antidote to the allure of heroes as the endemic discursive habit among the elite of ‘Russia’s glorious age’ (*PSS* XIII.55). But *W&P* generalizes on history, ethics, and truth beyond 1812. Critique of heroism calls for high-calibre and time-honoured intertextual adversaries. Plutarch’s *Lives* constitute a rich foil to the Tolstoyan claim that heroic narratives are culturally and morally problematic and, ultimately, a dead end of historical explanation.[[138]](#footnote-138) Some dead ends are well worth a visit though; after all, it is through the dream of Nikolenka that Tolstoy acknowledges Plutarch as the grand master of heroic literature.

*University of Liverpool*

1. Hereafter, *W&P* and Tolstoy’s 1868 article ‘Some words about *War and Peace*’ are cited in English from Mandelker = *Leo Tolstoy: War and Peace*, trans. Louise and Aylmer Maude, revised and ed. Amy Mandelker (Oxford 2010); at times I gently modify the translation for greater literalness. Other translations from Tolstoy and further Russian sources are my own, unless noted otherwise. *PSS* = Tolstoy’s Complete Collected Works (*Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*), also known as the Jubilee Edition, in ninety volumes (Moscow 1928–58). *LN =* volume XCIV of the *Literaturnoe nasledstvo* series, ed. I. S. Zil’berstein (Moscow 1983). All URLs correct at the date of last access (17/10/2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Hired from Switzerland, Nikolenka’s tutor Dessalles (Десаль) is described earlier on as a ‘narrowly intelligent, educated, virtuous and pedantic preceptor’ (*W&P* III.1.8). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Cf.* Epilogue 1.14. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Count Alexei Arakcheev (1769–1834), a reactionary statesman close to the Emperor Alexander I; see M. Jenkins, *Arakcheev, Grand Vizier of the Russian Empire* (London 1969); N. V. Riasanovsky, *A Parting of Ways. Government and the Educated Public in Russia 1801–1855* (Oxford 1976) 78–79. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See <http://www.ypmuseum.ru/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Data from Kotrelev = *Библиотека Льва Николаевича Толстого в Ясной Поляне. Библиографическое описание. Том 3: книги на иностранных языках*, ed. Н. В. Котрелев, 2 vols (Tula 1999) II 198–202. See generally <http://www.ypmuseum.ru/en/2011-04-13-17-30-44/2011-04-16-08-23-39/580-2012-03-02-11-15-36.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *Плутарх: Сравнительные жизнеописания*, vol. 1, fasc. 1 (Saint Petersburg). See Bulgakov = *Библиотека Льва Николаевича Толстого в Ясной Поляне. Библиографическое описание. Том 1: книги на русском языке*, ed. В. Ф. Булгаков, 2 vols (Moscow 1972–75) II 105; *cf.* Tolstoy’s letter to Alexeev in August 1890 (*PSS* LXV.152): ‘I would be most glad to read your renditions of Aesop and Plutarch and to let you have my opinion’. It would seem that Tolstoy never acquired the remaining twenty four (!) slim fascicles of Alexeev’s complete Russian translation of the *Lives*. Nor was he familiar, as far as we can tell, with the translation of five Greek *Lives* (*Жизнеописания Плутарха*, vol. I [Moscow 1862]) edited by the Moscow-based historian Vladimir Guerrier (Герье), although in 1901 he definitely engaged with Guerrier’s other scholarship: *PSS* LIV.97, LIV.249; Bulgakov, *Библиотека Толстого* I.183. See also n. 12, below.. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. On Dacier’s translation, see J.-L. Quantin, ‘Traduire Plutarque d’Amyot à Ricard’, *Histoire, économie et societé* 7 (1998) 243–59 (247–50); É. Foulon, ‘Le Plutarque de Dacier’, in *Plutarque de l’Âge classique au XIXe siècle*, ed. O. Guerrier (Grenoble 2012) 161–72. Unsurprisingly, the 1811 edition omits the dedicatory *Epistre au Roy*. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Themistocles, Camillus (vol. II: <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=f9EzAQAAMAAJ>), Pericles, Coriolan (vol. III: <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=_cwzAQAAMAAJ>), Aemilius Paullus (vol. IV: <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=AtEzAQAAMAAJ>), Pyrrhus (vol. VI: <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=LNEzAQAAMAAJ>), and Phocion (vol. X: <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=ZtAzAQAAMAAJ>). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *Cf.* Epilogue 1.8: ‘In winter […] he [*sc.* Nikolai Ilyich] spent his time reading. The books he read were chiefly historical, and on these he spent a certain sum every year. He was collecting, as he said, a serious library, and he was making it a rule (*za pravilo postavlial*) to read through all the books he bought’. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Curiously, a number of the portrait engravings (*e.g.* the helmet-wearing Themistocles) are missing from the volumes of Dacier’s *Les Vies* at Yasnaia Polyana: Kotrelev, *Библиотека Толстого* (n. 6, above) II.201–02 (somewhat vague on details). This should serve as a reminder that our knowledge of Tolstoy’s library has to factor in attrition and outright losses. In the nineteenth century the books would have been presumably at some risk from Tolstoy’s own children; for their drawings and scribbles see *e.g.* Bulgakov, *Библиотека Толстого* (n. 7, above) I.141 and Kotrelev, *Библиотека Толстого* (n. 6, above) I.616. It is exceedingly tempting to blame the missing engravings in the 1811 *Les Vies* *des hommes illustres* on the young Leo and his siblings, but there is no way to verify. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. *Плутарховы сравнительные жизнеописания славных мужей. Печатано по высочайшему повелению* (‘printed by Royal commandment’), 13 vols (Saint Petersburg 1813–21). Greek-born Spyridon Destounis (1782–1848) was able to combine scholarship with a successful diplomatic career in the Russian empire. Also, two Russian versions of Pierre Blanchard’s popular and eclectic *Le Plutarque de la jeuneusse* appeared almost simultaneously in 1809 and 1810: see Privalova = Е. П. Привалова, ‘Из истории “Плутархов” в России’, *Русская литература* 9.1 (1966) 140–45. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Tolstoy’s self-study of ancient Greek began in earnest in around 1870. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. On this noteworthy figure, see A. M. Martin, *Romantics, Reformers, Reactionaries: Russian Conservative Thought and Politics in the Reign of Alexander I* (De Kalb, IL 1997) 73–84; A. M. Martin, *Enlightened Metropolis. Constructing Imperial Moscow, 1762–1855* (Oxford 2013) 132–34, 188; Mirzoev = Е. Б. Мирзоев, *С. Н. Глинка против наполеоновской Франции: у истоков консервативно-националистической идеологии в России* (Моscow 2010) 19–35, 63–159. Glinka features briefly in *W&P* III.1.22. Tolstoy owned and used his *Memoirs of 1812* (*Записки о 1812 годе Сергея Глинки, первого ратника московского ополчения* [Saint Petersburg 1836]): Bulgakov, *Библиотека Толстого* (n. 7, above) I.187. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Glinka = С. Н. Глинка, *Записки Сергея Николаевича Глинки* (Saint Petersburg 1895) 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Zaidenshnur = Э. Е. Зайденшнур, *«Война и мир»* *Л. Н. Толстого. Создание великой книги* (Moscow 1966) 149–50; Kandiev = Б. И. Кандиев, *Роман-эпопея Л. Н. Толстого «Война и мир». Комментарий* (Моscow 1967) 335–48; Potapov = И. А. Потапов, *Роман Л. Н. Толстого «Война и мир». Современное и историческое в романе, проблемы, композиции, роль пейзажа* (Моscow 1970) 240–46; L. A. Trigos, *The Decembrist Myth in Russian Culture* (New York 2009) 33–34; D. T. Orwin, ‘*War and Peace* from the military point of view’, in *Tolstoy On War. Narrative, Art and Historical Truth in* ‘War and Peace’, eds R. McPeak and D. T. Orwin (Ithaca and London 2012) 98–110 (109). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See *e.g.* M. Raeff, *The Decembrist Movement* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ 1966) 28–29; Riasanovsky, *A Parting of Ways* (n. 4, above) 82–83, 96–100; Riasanovsky, *Russian Identities: A Historical Survey* (Oxford 2005) 125–29. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. *Cf.* the letter Tolstoy sent in 1861 to the London-dwelling Russian dissident Alexander Herzen, *PSS* LX.374. See K. B. Feuer, *Tolstoy and the Genesis of* War and Peace (Ithaca 1996) 39–48, 52–53; also Eikhenbaum = Б. M. Эйхенбаум, *Лев Толстой. Книга вторая: 60е годы* (Leningrad and Moscow 1931) 189–211; R. F. Christian, *Tolstoy’s ‘War and Peace’* (Oxford 1962) 2–4, 95–96; Krasnov = Г. В. Краснов, ‘Трансформация декабристских мотивов в творчестве Толстого’, in *Лев Толстой и русская литература*, ed. Г. В. Краснов (Gorky 1976) 3–12; Opul’skaya = Л. Д. Опульская, *Роман-эпопея Л. Н. Толстого «Война и мир»* (Моscow 1987) 34–36. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. The pivotal piece of evidence is Tolstoy’s self-commentary in a discarded foreword to an early draft of the future *W&P*: *PSS* XIII.54–55; English translation in Christian, *Tolstoy’s ‘War and Peace’* (n. 18, above) 21–22. See Opul’skaya, *Роман-эпопея* (n. 18, above) 49–56; A. B. Wachtel, *An Obsession with History: Russian Writers Confront the Past* (Stanford 1994) 133; R. Silbajoris, War and Peace*: Tolstoy’s Mirror of the World* (New York 1995) 31; Feuer, *The Genesis of* War and Peace (n. 18, above) 194–97; Trigos, *The Decembrist Myth* (n. 16, above) 29–32. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. With the usual caveats about the uncertainty as to which edition of *W&P* (not to ignore the early version of book 1 which was published 1865–66 under the title *1805*) contains the definitive text. After two almost identical complete editions in 1868–69, the novel was revised substantially twice in Tolstoy’s lifetime — in 1873, then in 1886. See Zaidenshnur = Э. Е. Зайденшнур, ‘История писания и печатания «Войны и мира»’, in *PSS* XVI (1955) 19–141 (102–35); Zaidenshnur, *Создание великой книги* (n. 16, above) 375–80; Christian, *Tolstoy’s ‘War and Peace’* (n. 18, above) 6–7; E. H. Lehrman, *A Guide to the Russian Texts of Tolstoy’s* War and Peace (Ann Arbor 1980) viii–xi; Feuer, *The Genesis of* War and Peace (n. 18, above) 8–9, 219–20. Given the intensity of Tolstoy’s work-in-progress approach to *W&P*, there is a particularly strong case for amplifying the printed version from the extant draft manuscripts and proofs: the main resource is *PSS*.XIII–XV; *LN* jigsaws a streamlined ‘first redaction’ of the novel — barring the Epilogue — out of *1805* and two key manuscripts which *PSS* has handled in a more piecemeal fashion and with some omissions. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Mel’gunov = С. П. Мельгунов, ‘На войне 1812 года’, in «Война и мир.» *Памяти Льва Толстого*, eds В. П. Обнинский, Т. П. Полнер (Моscow 1912) 178–209; Shklovskii = В. Б. Шкловский, *Матерьял и стиль в романе Л. Толстого «Война и мир»* (Moscow 1928) 61–71;Christian, *Tolstoy’s ‘War and Peace’* (n. 18, above) 80–83;Gulin = А. В. Гулин, ‘Исторические источники в «Войне и мире» (на материале одного батального эпизода)’, in *Отечественная война 1812 года и русская литература XIX века*, ed. В. Ю. Троицкий (Моscow 1998) 344–68;E. Tsimbaeva, ‘Historical context in a literary work (gentry society in *War and Peace*)’, *Russian Studies in Literature* 43 (2007) 6–48 (trans. L. Bliss);D. Lieven, *Russian Against Napoleon. The Battle for Europe, 1807 to 1814* (London 2010) 10, 14; D. Lieven, ‘Tolstoy on war, Russia and empire’, in *Tolstoy on War*, eds McPeak and Orwin (n. 16, above) 12–25;Scherbakov = В. И. Щербаков, ‘Война 1812 года в романе Л. Н. Толстого «Война и мир»’, in *1812 год и мировая литература*, ed. В. И. Щербаков (Моscow 2013) 235–318. See generally Eikhenbaum, *Лев Толстой. 60е годы* (n. 18, above) 260–61 and D. Ungurianu, ‘The use of historical sources in *War and Peace*’, in *Tolstoy on War*, eds McPeak and Orwin (n. 16, above) 26–41. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. *E.g.* Raeff, *The Decembrist Movement* (n. 17, above) 11–16; P. K. Christoff, *The Third Heart: Some Intellectual-Ideological Currents and Cross Currents in Russia 1800–1830* (The Hague and Paris 1970) 18–19, 33, 42–43, 45–46, 96–98; J. M. Hartley, ‘Is Russia part of Europe? Russian perceptions of Europe in the reign of Alexander I’, *Cahiers du Monde russe et sovétique* 33.4 (1992) 369–86 (374–75, 379–81); Martin, *Romantics, Reformers, Reactionaries* (n. 14, above) 124–25; A. Tosi, *Waiting for Pushkin: Russian Fiction in the Reign of Alexander I (1801–1825)* (Amsterdam and New York 2006) 306; D. Sdvižkov, ‘Selbstherrschaft der Liebe. 1812 als Roman’, *Historische Mitteilungen der Ranke-Gesellschaft* 25 (2012) 105–25; A. Schönle (2010), ‘Modernity as a “destroyed anthill”: Tolstoy on history and the aesthetics of ruins’, in *Ruins of Modernity* , eds J. Hell and A. Schönle (Durham, NC 2010) 89–103 (91–92); Bezotosnyi = В. И. Безотосный, *Россия и Европа в эпоху 1812 года: стратегия или геополитика* (Мoscow 2012) 204–06, 211; on the socio-cultural chasm between the serfs and the gentry, A. Etkind, *Internal Colonization: Russia’s Imperial Experience* (Cambridge and Malden, MA 2011) 108–11, 124–26. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. *Cf.* Raeff, *The Decembrist Movement* (n. 17, above) 24, 26; Shmidt = С. О. Шмидт, *Общественное самосознание российского благородного сословия. XVII-первая треть XIX века* (Моscow 2002) 115–18. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. The thesis that the Decembrist movement was enkindled by 1812 (and the follow-on campaigns in Europe, 1813–14) is canonical: *e.g.* Sivkov = К. В. Сивков, ‘Влияние войны 1812 г. на духовную жизнь России’, in «Война и мир.» *Памяти Льва Толстого*, eds В. П. Обнинский, Т. П. Полнер (Моscow 1912) 210–26 (223–26); Nechkina = М. В. Нечкина, *Движение декабристов*, 2 vols (Мoscow 1955) I.108–15; Raeff, *The Decembrist Movement* (n. 17, above) 19–21; D. Sorokine, *Napoléon dans la littérature russe* (Paris 1974) 120–22; Aurova = Н. Н. Аурова ‘«Мы были дети 1812 года…»: влияние войны 1812–1814 гг. на мировоззрение декабристов’, in *Отечественная война 1812 года в культурной памяти России,* ed. Л. В. Мельникова (Моscow 2012) 77–86; Parsamov = В. C. Парсамов, *Декабристы и русское общество 1814–1825 гг* (Моscow 2016) 36–41, 53. On the upsurge of patriotically intoned conservatism in post-1812 Russia, see Sorokine, *Napoléon*, 98–99; Boitsov and Il’iin = М. А. Бойцов, В. В. Ильин, ‘Отечественная война 1812 года в эпистолярном наследии современников (первая треть XIX века)’, in *Отечественная война 1812 года и русская литература XIX века* ed. В. Ю. Троицкий (Моscow 1998) 266–320 (291–92); further, Bezotosnyi, *Россия и Европа в эпоху 1812 года* (n. 22, above) 212–13; Martin, *Enlightened Metropolis* (n. 14, above) 218–19. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. As Ignatov = И. Н. Игнатов, ‘12-й год и великосветское общество. («Война и мир» Л. Н. Толстого)’, in *Отечественная война и русское общество, 1812–1912*, eds А. К. Дживелегов, С. П. Мельгунов, В. И. Пичета, 7 vols (Moscow 1912) V 11–42 (40–42) points out, the dispute between Pierre and Nikolai towards the end of *W&P* (Epilogue 1.14) exemplifies the now unstoppable ideological rift within the Russian elite. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Tsimbaeva, ‘Historical context’ (n. 21, above) finds many traits of the Russian high society in *W&P* to be historically implausible — but this is wholesale scepticism taken too far:see Ungurianu, ‘The use of historical sources’ (n. 21, above) 39–41. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. *E.g.* Christian, *Tolstoy’s ‘War and Peace’* (n. 18, above) 105 and 111; Silbajoris, *Tolstoy’s Mirror* (n. 19, above) 12–14. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. *Cf.* Lotman = Ю. М. Лотман, *Беседы о русской культуре. Быт и традиции русского дворянства (XVIII– начало XIX века)*, 2nd edn (Saint Petersburg 2008) 223–24. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. *E.g.* Ph. Stadter, ‘Should we imitate Plutarch’s heroes?’, in Ph. Stadter, *Plutarch and his Roman Readers* (Oxford 2015) 331–40 (esp. 334, 336–37); first published as ‘Sono da imitare gli eroi di Plutarco?’, in *Modelli eroici dall’ antichità alla cultura europea* , eds A. Barzanó, C. Bearzot, F. Landucci, L. Prandi, G. Zecchini (Rome 2003) 415–25 . [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Kul’nev fell in the 1812 war and was treated as a national hero. Glinka’s recollections of the man are beholden to this biographical teleology, *cf.* Glinka, *Записки* (n. 15, above) 62: ‘And Kul’nev, the hero of 1812 […]’ (*I geroi 12-go goda, Kul’nev* […]). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Glinka, *Записки* (n. 15, above) 62–63. Quoting Glinka’s passage more fully, Prikazchikova = E. E. Приказчикова, ‘Война 1812 года в контексте мифориторической культуры: мемуарно-автобиографический аспект проблемы’, in *1812 год в истории России и русской литературы*, eds Л. В. Павлова, И. В. Романова (Smolensk 2010) 117–28 (123) ponders over his choice of the classical ‘code’ to frame Kul’nev’s good qualities — at the expense, it seems, of culturally viable alternative explanations. Still, Kul’nev’s addictive reading of Plutarch (which ought to be factual!) bespeaks deference to the Greco-Roman paradigm. Glinka himself received Amyot’s translation of Plutarch (‘complete edition’, *polnoe izdanie*) in 1794 as a gift from the benevolent director of the cadet corps: Glinka, *Записки* (n. 15, above) 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Condonable memory lapse: André Dacier’s wife Anne Dacier was a prolific translator of classical literature. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. In *Russian Archive* (*Русский Архив*) XXIII.3 (1885) 181–82. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Epistolary memoir by Princess Varvara Olenina (1802–77); Russian text in Chulkov = *Декабристы*, ed. Н. П. Чулков (Моscow 1938) 484. Olenina wrote in 1869 at the request of the historian and publisher Petr Bartenev. Bartenev, who also happened to be founder (1863) and editor-in-chief of the *Russian Archive*, assisted Tolstoy with research for *W&P* (*PSS* XIII.44; XIV.415; LXI.61) as well as coordinating the first complete edition of the novel: Zaidenshnur, ‘История писания’ (n. 20, above) 102–25. The episode at the children’s party is frequently mentioned in Russian scholarship: *e.g.* Lotman = Ю. М. Лотман, ‘Декабрист в повседневной жизни’, in Lotman, *В школе поэтического слова: Пушкин, Лермонтов, Гоголь* (Moscow 1988) 158–205 (194 n. 3); Lotman, *Беседы о русской культуре* (n. 28, above) 63; Shmidt, *Общественное самосознание* (n. 23, above) 334; Prikazchikova, ‘Война 1812 года’ (n. 31, above) 121; Parsamov, *Декабристы и русское общество* (n. 24, above) 217. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. In Chulkov, *Декабристы* (n. 34, above) 484–85. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. He drafted an outline for a reformist constitution: see A. G. Mazour, *The First Russian Revolution. 1825: The Decembrist Movement. Its Origins, Development, and Significance* (Berkeley 1937) 86–94; Raeff, The *Decembrist Movement* (n. 17, above) 103–18. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. On the Decembrists’ worship of ancient republicanism, see further Volk = С. С. Волк, *Исторические взгляды декабристов* (Моscow and Leningrad 1958) 155, 159, 162–63; С. С. Волк, ‘На путях исторического познания’, in *Декабристы и русская культура,* ed. Б. С. Мейлах (Leningrad 1975) 58–79 (64-66); Christoff, *The Third Heart* (n. 22, above) 58–59; A. Kahn, ‘Reading of imperial Rome from Lomonosov to Pushkin’, *Slavic Review* 52.4 (1993) 745–68 (763); Frolov = Э. Д. Фролов, *Русская наука об античности (историографические очерки)* (Saint Petersburg 1999) 120; Knabe = Г. С. Кнабе, *Русская античность: содержание, роль и судьба* *античного наследия в культуре России* (Moscow 1999) 132–34. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. After E. J. Hobsbawm, ‘Introduction: inventing traditions’, in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds E. J. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (Cambridge 1983) 1–14. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Fomenko = И. Ю. Фоменко, *Отечественная война 1812 года и эпоха наполеоновских войн в русской книге первой четверти XIX века* (Мoscow 2012) is a valuable bibliographical guide. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Sivkov, ‘Влияние войны 1812 г.’ (n. 24, above) 221–22; Gasparov = Б. М. Гаспаров, *Поэтический язык Пушкина как факт истории русского литературного языка* (Saint Petersburg 1999; first published 1992) 84–85, 88–92, 94–100; Vasilik = В. B. Василик, ‘Образ Наполеона-Антихриста в русском общественном сознании первой трети XIX века’, in *Проблемы войны и мира в эпоху Нового и Новейшего времени. (К двухсотлетию подписания Тильзитского договора)*, ed. Т. Н. Гончарова (Saint Petersburg 2008) 127–39; Mel’nikova = Л. В. Мельникова, ‘Православная Россия против «безбожной» Франции. Антинаполеоновская пропаганда и формирование образа врага’, in *Отечественная война 1812 года в культурной памяти России. К 200-летию победы России в Отечественной войне 1812 года*, ed. Л. В. Мельникова (Моscow 2012) 16–33 (19–28); Mel’nikova, ‘Orthodox Russia against “godless” France: the Russian church and the “Holy War” of 1812’, in *Russia and the Napoleonic Wars*, eds J. M. Hartley, P. Keenan, D. Lieven (New York 2015) 179–95 (182–89); L. Berezhnaya, ‘Apokalyptische Gestalt oder “Feind Russlands”? Napoleon in russischen Karikaturen zu Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts’, in *1812 in Russland – Erzählung, Erfahrung und Ereignis*, ed. M. Winkler (Leipzig 2012) 71-96 (71-79);Nikonova (2012) = Н. Е. Никонова, ‘Образы Наполеона в «Собрании стихотворений, относящихся с незабвенному 1812 году» (в рамках проекта по переизданию антологии»)’, in *Текст, книга, книгоиздание* (Тоmsk 2012) II 78–90 (83, 85–87); further, Sdvizhkov = Д. А. Сдвижков, ‘1812 год и общая память Священного союза’, in *После грозы. 1812 год в исторической памяти России и Европы*, ed. Д. А. Сдвижков (Моscow 2015) 209–36 (216–20). *Cf.* *W&P* III.1.18, III.2.2, and IV.1.1; Apostolov = Н. Н. Апостолов, *Лев Толстой над страницами истории. Историко-литературные наблюдения* (Моscow 1928) 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. On the poem and its impact, see Sorokine, *Napoléon* (n. 24, above) 27–28; Sakharov = В. И. Сахаров, ‘Oтечественная война 1812 года и русская поэзия первой трети XIX века’, in *Отечественная война 1812 года и русская литература XIX века*, ed. В. Ю. Троицкий (Моscow 1998) 116–31 (121–23); Zorin = А. Л. Зорин, *Кормя двуглавого орла... Литература и государственная идеология в России в последней трети XVIII - первой трети XIX века* (Моscow 2001) 269–70; Mel’nikova = Л. В. Мельникова, ‘«И славили Отчизну, меч и слово…»: 1812 год в русской поэзии’, in *Отечественная война 1812 года в культурной памяти России. К 200-летию победы России в Отечественной войне 1812 года*, ed. Л. В. Мельникова (Моscow 2012) 112–27 (113–15). Neither Zhukovskii nor his contemporary readers could steer altogether clear of classicism: one of the Russian commanders (Leontii von Bennigsen) is saluted in the *Bard* as ‘our Nestor’. *Cf.* the *Campaign Memoirs* of the novelist Ivan Lazhechnikov = И. И. Лажечников, *Походныe записки русcкoго офицера*, 2nd edn (Моscow 1836) 69: ‘Often in our military community we read and discuss *A Bard in the Russian Camp*, the latest composition by Mr Zhukovskii. Nearly all of us already know this piece by heart. Now I believe and have a sense of how Tyrtaeus used to lead the Greek ranks to victory’. Tolstoy had Lazhechnikov’s *Memoirs* at his disposal while working on *W&P* (*PSS* LXI.42) and was, of course, conscious of Zhukovskii’s famous poem: *PSS* XV.52 (n. 88, below); Zaidenshnur, *Создание великой книги* (n. 16, above) 349 and 399; Bulgakov, *Библиотека Толстого* (n. 7, above) I.296, II.156. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. In November 1812 the fortnightly patriotic journal *Son of the Fatherland* (*Syn Otechestva*) published an essay on Darius’ campaign in Scythia (vol. IV, pp. 125–41), cobbled together from Herodotus by Karl Ludwig Struve, a classicist based at Dorpat (today’s Tartu, Estonia) see Parsamov = В. C. Парсамов, ‘Культурные рефлексии 1812 года (идеологема народной войны)’, in *Studia Russica Helsingensia et Tartensia X*: «*Век нынешний и век минувший»: культурная рефлексия прошедшей эпохи*, 2 vols (Tartu 2006; <http://www.ruthenia.ru/document/541833.html>) I 9–27 (16–18); on Struve, see M. A. Wes, *Classics in Russia 1700–1855. Between Two Bronze Horsemen* (Leiden, New York, and Köln 1992) 125–27. The poem *To the Fatherland* by Alexander Voeikov (1778 or 1779–1839) ascribes the defeat of Cyrus the Great to ‘the Scythian tsarina’: *Sobranie stikhotvorenii* (n. 43, below) I 95; also n. 72, below. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. *Собрание стихотворений, относящихся к незабвенному 1812 году*, 2 vols (Моscow 1814). On the structure and ideological thrust of *Sobranie stikhotvorenii*, see Kiselev = В. С. Киселев, ‘Идеологический контекст «Собрания стихотворений, относящихся с незабвенному 1812 году»’, in *Текст, книга, книгоиздание* (Тоmsk 2012),= I.5–51, II.239–49; Guzaïrov = T. Гузаиров, ‘Становление поэтического канона официальной истории: «непамятные» события в «Собрании стиховторений, относящихся к незабвенному 1812 году»’, *Новое Литературное Обозрение*, 118 (2012), at <http://www.nlobooks.ru/node/2898>. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Olga: Grand Duchess of Kiev, tenth century. Patriarch Germogen (Hermogenes), Kuz’ma Minin, and Prince Dmitrii Pozharskii variously distinguished themselves during the Polish–Muscovite war in the early 1600s. Petr Rumiantsev and Alexander Suvorov: celebrated eighteenth-century commanders. The charismatic General Petr Bagration (1765–1812) was the most high-profile Russian casualty of 1812. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. *Cf*. Sidorov = Н. П. Сидоров, ‘Отечественная война в русской лирике’, in *Отечественная война и русское общество, 1812-1912*, ed. А. К. Дживелегов, С. П. Мельгунов, В. И. Пичета, 7 vols (Моscow 1912) V 159–72 (170); Sakharov ‘Oтечественная война 1812 года и русская поэзия’ (n. 41, above) 118–19; Gasparov, *Поэтический язык Пушкина* (n. 40, above) 107. For fuller and nuanced overview of the aesthetic currents in Russian poetry during this period, see Gasparov, *Поэтический язык Пушкина* (n. 40, above) 20–75. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. *Песнь на победы графа П. К. Витгенштейна* (Saint Petersburg: V meditsinskoi tipografii 1812); Fomenko, *Отечественная война 1812 года в русской книге* (n. 39, above) 37–38. General Pet(e)r Wittgenstein (1769–1843) commanded Russian troops and militia who fended off the French advance on Petersburg. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Ф. М. Синельников, *Анекдоты достопримечательнейших происшествий, случившихся в течение нынешней войны с французами*, 2 vols (Saint Petersburg 1813); Fomenko, *Отечественная война 1812 года в русской книге* (n. 39, above) 185–87. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Or maybe ‘Horace’, if Lazhechnikov is thinking of *Odes* 3.2.13, rather than Horatius Cocles. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Lazhechnikov, *Походные записки* (n. 41, above) 172, 170, and 282; *cf.* Lazhechnikov, 177: during the Battle of Kulm Osterman-Tolstoi and his colleague General Alexei Ermolov carried themselves like ‘fiery’ Leonidas and ‘cool’ Miltiades, respectively. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. In Vereschagin = В. А. Верещагин, *Русская карикатура. II: Отечественная война. Теребенев, Венецианов, Иванов* (Saint Petersburg 1912) 152. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. A notable poet in 1820s and leader of the Decembrists league in Petersburg, Kondratii Ryleev (1795–1826) was one of the five conspirators sent to the gallows after a closed trial; see P. O’Meara, *K. F. Ryleev: A Political Biography of the Decembrist Poet* (Princeton 1984). The manuscript of this early poem by Ryleev remained unpublished until 1930s. In the rest of the ode Russian heroism is applauded diachronically, leading up to 1812. *Cf.* the bullish atavistic harangue in Alexander Voeikov’s poem *To the Fatherland*: ‘Oh Russ! […] Imitate not Rome — but your great forefathers. Behold before you, the mirror of their deeds. The manliness of the Slavs has been inspiring of old’ (*Sobranie stikhotvorenii* I.95). In a twist of patriotic classicism, another poem by Voeikov prophesies that Plato and Cicero are going to extol the deeds of Kutuzov (*To Prince Golenischev-Kutuzov of Smolensk*, in *Sobranie stikhotvorenii* I.130). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. *Pace* Vishlenkova = E. Вишленкова, *Визуальное народоведение империи, или «увидеть русского дано не каждому»* (Moscow 2011) 226–28. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. <http://www.museum.ru/1812/english/Memorial/arka/index.html>; more close-up images can be easily accessed online. Interestingly, the corresponding Triumphal Arch in Petersburg (Narvskie Vorota) is just as classical in its overall design, however, the warrior-statues ended up wearing stylized armour of Kievan Rus’ rather than ancient Greece, when the original wood-and-alabaster arch of 1814 was rebuilt in stone and copper during the reign of Nicholas I: see <http://www.saint-petersburg.com/monuments/narva-gate/> or <http://enlight.ru/camera/273/index_e.html>; Nekrasova and Zemtsov (1969) = М. А. Некрасова, С. М.Земцов, *Отечественная война 1812 года и русское искусство* (Моscow 1969) 82–86. On the cultural and political implications of the postponed (until 1830s) boom in monumental commemoration of the victory over Napoleon, see Sdvizhkov = Д. А. Сдвижков , ‘Империя в наполеоновском наряде: восприятие французского неоклассицизма в Российской империи’, in *Imperium inter pares: роль трансферов в истории Российской империи*, eds М. Ауст, Р. Вульпиус, А. Миллер (Моscow 2010) 67–104 (74–77, 95). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. See <http://www.museum.ru/1812/memorial/Medals/> under Section В (Отдел В). [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. See <https://www.prlib.ru/item/438705>. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. The apocryphal peasant’s motivation can be more cogently traced back to the religious strand of Russian anti-Napoleonic propaganda (n. 40, above): what this ‘Scaevola’ abhors is being branded with the symbol of Napoleon the Antichrist. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Compare how in Pushkin’s unfinished novel *Roslavlev* (*c*. 1831–36) set in 1812 the patriotic Polina magnifies the story for the purposes of geopolitical generalisation: ‘[…] not any more shall Europe dare to contend, ever, with the folk (*s narodom*) who chop off their own arms and burn down their own capital city!’ [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. *E.g.* recycled verbatim by Sinel’nikov, *Anekdoty* (n. 47, above) I.57–58. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. See generally Vereschagin, *Русская карикатура* (n. 50, above); Kuz’minskii = К. С. Кузьминский, ‘Отечественная война в живописи’, in *Отечественная война и русское общество, 1812–1912*, eds А. К. Дживелегов, С. П. Мельгунов, В. И. Пичета, 7 vols (Моscow 1912) V 192–325 (203–24); S. M. Norris, *A War of Images: Russian Popular Prints, Wartime Culture, and National Identity, 1812–1945* (De Kalb, IL 2006) 11–35; Vishlenkova, *Визуальное народоведение империи* (n. 52, above) 158–212; Berezhnaya, ‘Apokalyptische Gestalt’ (n. 40, above); Vishlenkova (as Višlenkova), ‘Feiger Feind, edles Volk. Russische Karikaturen im Krieg von 1812’, in *Mythos Erinnerung. Russland und das Jahr 1812*, eds A. Ananieva and K. Gestwa (Berlin 2013) 51–60;Podmazo = А. А. Подмазо, ‘«От великого до смешного»: российские сатира и фольклор на тему войны 1812–1814 гг.’, in *Отечественная война 1812 года в культурной памяти России. К 200-летию победы России в Отечественной войне 1812 года*, ed. Л. В. Мельникова (Моscow 2012) 127–47 (139–42). [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Vereschagin, *Русская карикатура* (n. 50, above) 153–54. The most popular image is by Ivan Terebenev: <http://dlib.rsl.ru/viewer/01005113669#?page=1>. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. In Vereschagin, *Русская карикатура* (n. 50, above) 154 ~ Rovinskii = Д. А. Ровинский, *Русскиe народныe картинки*, 5 vols (Saint Petersburg 1881) IV 445. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. *Cf.* Mel’gunov, ‘На войне 1812 года’(n. 21, above) 304–05; Semevskii = В. И. Семевский, ‘Волнения крестьян в 1812 г. и связанные с отечественной войной’, in *Отечественная война и русское общество, 1812-1912*, eds А. К. Дживелегов, С. П. Мельгунов, В. И. Пичета, 7 vols (Моscow 1912) V 74–113; Martin, *Romantics, Reformers, Reactionaries* (n. 14, above) 123–24; Martin, *Enlightened Metropolis* (n. 14, above) 182–83; Popov (2012) = А. И. Попов, ‘Социальная политика Наполеона в России 1812 года’, in *Французский ежегодник. 2012: 200-летний юбилей Отечественной войны 1812 года*, ed. А. В. Чудинов (Моscow 2012) 118–42; Sdvižkov, ‘Selbstherrschaft der Liebe’ (n. 22, above) 116–19. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. This is not to deny that as simulation of Russian grass-roots art and vernacular idiom by the insiders of high(er) culture the 1812 cartoons were consequential for the evolving idea of Russian peoplehood: see Vishlenkova, *Визуальное народоведение империи* (n. 52, above) 159–62, 166, 170–71, 176, 195–97. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. <http://virtualrm.spb.ru/en/node/11916> or <http://www.artpoisk.info/artist/demut-malinovskiy_vasiliy_ivanovich_1779/russkiy_scevola>. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Konstantin Leontiev = К. Н. Леонтьев, ‘Анализ, стиль и веяние: о романах гр. Л. Н. Толстого. Критический этюд’, in *Cобрание сочинений*, 9 vols (Moscow 1912) VIII 219–351; first published 1890. Compact discussion of Leontiev’s critique: D. Ungurianu, *Plotting History: The Russian Historical Novel in the Imperial Age* (Madison 2007) 115. There is no shortage of scholars who acknowledge *W&P*’s anachronistic psychology more positively: *e.g.* Ermilov = B. B. Ермилов, *Толстой-художник и роман «Война и мир»* (Моscow 1961) 346; I. Vinitsky, ‘The worm of doubt: Prince Andrei’s death and Russian spiritual awakening of the 1860s’, in *Anniversary Essays on Tolstoy*, ed. D. T. Orwin, trans. T. J. Portice (Cambridge 2010) 120–37. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. O. Maiorova, *From the Shadow of Empire. Defining the Russian Nation Through Cultural Mythology, 1855–1870* (Madison 2010) 35–36. On the Crimean War as indispensable background to *W&P*, see Shklovskii, *Матерьял и стиль* (n. 21, above) 54; Eikhenbaum, *Лев Толстой. 60е годы* (n. 18, above) 256, 346–47; Feuer, *The Genesis of* War and Peace (n. 18, above) 80–81, 107, 150–55; more cautiously, Sorokine, *Napoléon* (n. 24, above) 260–62. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. ‘Antiquity’ for educated Russians in the early 1800s is an intertext consisting of the Romantic medievalist repertoire alongside Greco-Roman tradition. For instance, this is how the *Memoirs* (*Zapiski*) of General Nikolai Mouraviev-Karskii (1794–1866) describe the mood of heroic mimesis among the young officers in Petersburg on the brink of 1812 war: ‘They were thrilled by the thought that in combat against the enemy they were going to become similar to the heroes of antiquity (*upodobiatsia geroiam drevnosti*). Narratives about the ancient knights’ feats (*povestvovania o podvigakh drevnikh rytsarei*) and examples of martial valour, absorbed by reading the life of heroes (*pri chtenii zhizni geroev*), serve to arouse the martial spirit among young men’ (*Russian Archive* XXIII.9 (1885). 30). Here ‘knights’ are juxtaposed with the ‘life’ (sing.) of heroes (pl.). The latter phrase could be taken as a vague allusion to Plutarch, yet the next sentence brings up two Russian generals reading together, on the eve of the Battle of Borodino, Macpherson’s *Poems of Ossian* (‘Fingal’s songs’). For Tolstoy, ‘the ancients’ are largely Greco-Roman (*W&P* III.2.19 and esp. *LN* 674), yet China and the Old Testament are on his radar too (*PSS* XV.185). [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Elsewhere in *W&P* the performative gesture of striking one’s chest accompanies patriotic words uttered by dubious characters, such as the calculatedly ‘hot-tempered’ officer at Alexander’s headquarters (III.1.9, ‘group’ 8, number 2) and the nobleman in the Moscow assembly whom Pierre knows for a debauched cardsharp (*W&P* III.1.22, *cf.* *LN* 625). But Kutuzov strikes his chest too (III.2.16 ‘I’ll make them eat horse-flesh!’), as does the swaggering yet amiable French Captain Ramballe during a promise of friendship to Pierre (III.3.29). On *W&P*’s recurrent details as ‘isotopes’ of the narrative, see Silbajoris, *Tolstoy’s Mirror* (n. 19, above) 75, 79, 85, 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. *Cf.* Tolstoy’s declaration that *W&P* ‘is what the author wished and was able to express (*chto* *khotel i mog vyrazit’ avtor*) in the form in which it is expressed’ (*Some Words About* War and Peace = *PSS* XVI.7 ~ Mandelker, *War and Peace* [n. 1, above] 1309). [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Dacier translates as ‘*la fermeté des Spartiates fut encore plus admirable*’. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. On Plutarch’s coverage of the Persian wars, see esp. C. Pelling, ‘*De malignitate Plutarchi*: Plutarch, Herodotus and the Persian Wars’, in *Cultural Responses to the Persian Wars: Antiquity to the Third Millenium*, eds E. E. Bridges, E. M. Hall, P. J. Rhodes (Oxford 2007) 145–64; J. Marincola, ‘Plutarch, “parallelism” and the Persian-War *Lives*’, in *Plutarch’s* Lives*: Parallelism and Purpose*, ed. N. Humble (Swansea 2010) 121–43. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. The novel is also sceptical about references to the Scythians (n. 42, above): see III.2.1 and esp. Denisov’s grumble in III.2.15 (‘Yes, it’s Scythian war. It’s all very well — only not for those who get it in the neck’, literally, ‘who huff and puff with their own flanks’, *kto svoimi bokami otduvaetsia*). [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Zaidenshnur, *Создание великой книги* (n. 16, above) 87; further, Silbajoris, *Tolstoy’s Mirror* (n. 19, above) 94; Feuer, *The Genesis of* War and Peace (n. 18, above) 48–49. Identity of ‘A. B Golitsyn’ (*cf.* *W&P* III.1.20, III.2.17, and *PSS* XIV.54): Tsoffka = В. В. Цоффка, ‘Князь Б.В. Голицын на страницах романа Л.Н. Толстого «Война и мир»’,in*Отечественная война 1812 года. Источники. Памятники. Проблемы: Материалы III научной конференции (Бородино, 1994 г.)* (Borodino 1995), at <http://www.museum.ru/museum/1812/Library/Borodino_conf/1995/Coffka.pdf>. See also n. 84, below. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Assimilations of Alexander I to ‘good’ Roman emperors (*in primis* Titus or Augustus) peak in Russian poetry, understandably, around 1814: Gasparov, *Поэтический язык Пушкина* (n. 40, above) 102–04. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. The acerbic *Memoirs* of Stepan Zhikharev (1787–1860) = С. П. Жихарев, *Записки современника с 1805 по 1819 год. Часть 1: Дневник студента* (Saint Petersburg 1859); *cf.* *PSS* LXI.176; see Bulgakov, *Библиотека Толстого* (n. 7, above) I.293–94; Apostolov, *Толстой над страницами истории* (n. 40, above) 100–04; esp. Shklovskii, *Матерьял и стиль* (n. 21, above) 142–51. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. According to Zhikharev, *Записки современника* (n. 75, above) 329, the text of the ode was handed out to the guests by the syndics: ‘I gained three copies of that highfalutin piece by Nikolev which, naturally, could not do without Titus, Caesar, Alcidas, and the other heathens (*prochikh nekhristei*)’. In Tolstoy’s manuscript (*LN* 356–57) Nikolev steps in to recite the poem; he was anonymized for the printed version of *W&P* by the scholarly editor Bartenev who argued (*PSS* LXI.175) that the real Nikolai Nikolev (1758–1815) was blind and therefore unable to ‘read’ his poetry from the written page; Tolstoy unhappily agreed the correction (*PSS* LXI.176). Note that the lines cited by Zhikharev, *Записки современника* (n. 75, above) formed the original ode’s ending (*poslednie stikhi*), whereas in Tolstoy the self-same text creates a diegetic *trompe l’oeil* of an interrupted poem. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. *Cf.* G. S. Morson, *Hidden in Plain View: Narrative and Creative Potentials in “War and Peace”* (Stanford 1987) 113, 244–45. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. *W&P* III.1.12 = *LN* 609: ‘He knew that this tale redounded to the glory of our arms and so one had to pretend (*delat’ vid*) not to doubt it’; *cf.* *PSS* XIV.42. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Scherbakov, ‘Война 1812 года в романе Л. Н. Толстого’ (n. 21, above) 246–47; Gulin, ‘Исторические источники’ (n. 21, above) 355–59, esp. 358. General Raievskii himself is recorded contradicting the Saltanov dam and scoffing at the Romanness ascribed to himself by the public opinion: see Batiushkov = К. Н. Батюшков, *Сочинения* (Moscow 1934) 374–75. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Grammatically, ‘of Mucius Scaevola’ has to be subjective genitive governed by the action noun *lganio* (‘deceit’, ‘fibbing’). [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. See examples cited by D. Sdvizhkov, ‘The “Maid of Orleans” of the Russian army: Prince Eugen of Württemberg in the Napoleonic wars’, in *Russia and the Napoleonic Wars*, eds J. M. Hartley, P. Keenan, D. Lieven (n. 40, above) 119–35 (124). [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Lotman, *Беседы о русской культуре* (n. 28, above) 208–09; Prikazchikova, ‘Война 1812 года’ (n. 31, above). [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Christian, *Tolstoy’s “War and Peace”* (n. 18, above) 95–96; Feuer, *The Genesis of* War and Peace (n. 18, above) 145. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. There is a touch of xenophobia about Tolstoy’s predication of a tie-in between patriotic bombast and ethnic un-Russianness, *cf.* ‘Some Words about *War and Peace*’ (*PSS* XVI.12 ~ Mandelker [n. 1, above] 1313): ‘All who have had experience of war know how capable Russians are of doing their work at war, and little fit they are to describe it with the boastful falsity indispensable for that purpose. Everyone knows that in our armies the duty of writing up reports and dispatches is generally carried out by men of foreign birth (*inorodtsy*)’. In the logic of *W&P* it matters that Berg is of German extraction or that Zdrzhinsky is Polish: see esp. *LN* 608; Gulin, ‘Исторические источники’ (n. 21, above) 355–57; generally Lieven, ‘Tolstoy on war’ (n. 21, above) 13–14. Some Russian aristocrats, such as A. B. Golitsyn, are guilty of utmost socio-cultural foreignness, but the virtuous ones are remedial. *Cf.* the reaction of Princess Marya to Julie’s letter (*PSS* XIV.169 = *LN* 655): she ‘knew Russian no better than her friend Julie did, yet her Russian instinct was telling her that something was not right with this letter’. Julie’s letter (also *W&P* III.2.2), written in Russian because she detests ‘everything French’ now, is linguistically strained and, *inter alia*, lavishes praise on General Raevskii for his heroism at Saltanovka; *cf.* also her words at *PSS* XIV.93 = *LN* 778, immediately before A. B. Golitsyn’s remark. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. *E.g*. Apostolov, *Толстой над страницами истории* (n. 40, above) 250; Potapov, *Роман Толстого «Война и мир»* (n. 16, above) 13–15; Khalizev and Kormilov = В. Е. Хализев, С. И. Кормилов, *Роман Льва Николаевича Толстого «Война и мир»* (Moscow 1983) 65–70. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Anna Pavlovna’s parties as a stage for specious sociality in *W&P*: Silbajoris, *Tolstoy’s Mirror* (n. 19, above) 71–72 and 100. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Gavrila Derzhavin (1743–1816), an eminent poet. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. In *PSS* XV.52 the narrator tilts at the poet Zhukovskii’s *Bard* (1813)and Greco-Roman exemplarity as the aesthetic nexus by which idealistic young officers are beguiled prior to the inevitable disenchantment: ‘It is pleasing indeed to think how one gallops in front of the regiments, etc., and if only one remained heroic in the sense of the Gracchi, etc*.* […] Among the sincere, natural and honest military men […] who enlisted at a young age for the love of the Fatherland and for glory, ready for a sacrifice — who has not felt painfully disappointed since he could not find those heroes of Greece among his comrades-in-arms and his superiors and, crucially, failed to find within himself what had been described to him in others. “Either the people have changed, or I am a no-gooder,” everyone of us was thinking and, failing to find in oneself the martial valour which the bard in the camp of the Russian warriors had described to us, we would all stop believing in any martial valour.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Scholarship now favours holistic exegesis of *W&P*’s literary and philosophical ambit: *e.g.* Bocharov = С. Г. Бочаров, *«Война и мир» Л. Н. Толстого*, in *Три шедевра русской классики*, eds С. Бочаров, В. Кожинов, Д. Николаев, 2nd edn (Моscow 1971; first published 1963) 7–104 (25–27); G. S. Morson*,* ‘*War and Peace*’*,* in *Cambridge Companion to Tolstoy*, ed. D. T. Orwin (Cambridge 2002) 65–79 (65–66); Wachtel, *An Obsession with History* (n. 19, above) 99–106; Wachtel, ‘History and autobiography in Tolstoy’, in *Cambridge Companion*, ed. Orwin (n. 89, above) 176–90 (181–82); J. Love, *The Overcoming of History in* War and Peace (Amsterdam and New York 2004) 4–5, 8–17. *Cf.* *PSS* XV.241: ‘[…] without these ruminations there would have been no descriptions’ (‘*esli by ne bylo etikh rassuzhdenii, ne bylo by i opisanii*’). [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Scherbakov ‘Война 1812 года в романе Л. Н. Толстого’ (n. 21, above) 247–51, 308, esp. 249: ‘Any testimony that relates a spectacular feat (*podvig*) arouses in him [*sc.* Tolstoy] an overwhelming suspicion and a compulsion to lower (*prizemlit’*), to invert the scenario, to come up with a trivial explication for the said feat […]’; see generally Ranchin = А. М. Ранчин, *Перекличка камен. Филологические этюды* (Moscow) 115-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. On the perils of egotism in *W&P*, *cf.* Love, *The Overcoming of History* (n. 89, above) 182: ‘Tolstoyan evil […] is delusion, the state of understanding in which the subject, my *I*, claims that it determines the world, that it writes the law’. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. *E.g.* Khalizev and Kormilov, *Роман Толстого «Война и мир»* (n. 85, above) 19–20, 77, 79–80; Opul’skaia, *Роман-эпопея* (n. 18, above) 30, 73–74; Silbajoris, *Tolstoy’s Mirror* (n. 19, above) 113–14; Lomunov = К. Н. Ломунов, ‘1812-й год в «Войне и мире» Л. Н. Толстого’, in *Отечественная война 1812 года и русская литература XIX века*, ed. В. Ю. Троицкий (Моscow 1998) 321–43 (336–37); Love, *The Overcoming of History* (n. 89, above) 91. Tolstoy’s life-long preoccupation with courage: D. T. Orwin, ‘Courage in Tolstoy’, in *Cambridge Companion to Tolstoy*, ed. D. T. Orwin (Cambridge 2002) 222–36; Orwin,‘Leo Tolstoy: pacifist, patriot, and *molodets*’, in *Anniversary Essays on Tolstoy*, ed. D. T. Orwin (Cambridge 2010) 76–95. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. *W&P* III.1.1, III.3.1 and Epilogue: Part Two, *passim*. See *e.g.* Christian, *Tolstoy’s “War and Peace”* (n. 18, above) 94–95; L. Jepsen, *From Achilles to Christ: The Myth of the Hero in Tolstoy’s* War and Peace (Tallahassee, FL 1978) 69; Morson, *Hidden in Plain View* (n. 77, above) 5, 126–28, 218–21; Opul’skaia, *Роман-эпопея* (n. 18, above) 110–11; Maiorova, *From the Shadow of Empire* (n. 66, above) 146–48. Vladimir Bibikhin = В. В. Бибихин, *Дневники Льва Толстого* (Saint Petersburg 2012) 195 raises the stakes in the debate by arguing (alas, too cursorily) that within *W&P* acts of individual heroism, such as Bagration’s bravery at Schön Grabern I.2.18) and the last-ditch counterattack Andrei leads at Austerlitz (I.3.16), have veritable historical clout: Andrei’s charge saves Kutuzov who in 1812 will save Russia — this is ‘[…] the *determinant* heroism (*reshaiuschego podviga*), more important than Toulon’. According to Bibikhin (if I read him right), heroic contributions to history are not negated by Tolstoy absolutely, his problem is rather with individualism as rationalistic encroachment on life’s organic commonalities. For ‘Toulon’ in book 1 of *W&P*, see n. 107, below. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Which also prefigures Tolstoy’s later radical rebellion against social and intellectual hierarchies: see, *e.g.*, Pertsev = В. H. Перцев, ‘Философия истории Л. Н Толстого’, in «Война и мир.» *Памяти Льва Толстого*, eds В. П. Обнинский, Т. П. Полнер (Моscow 1912) 129–53 (150–51); Ermilov, *Толстой-художник* (n. 65, above) 338; Zaidenshnur, *Создание великой книги* (n. 16, above) 369; Khalizev and Kormilov, *Роман Толстого «Война и мир»* (n. 85, above) 90; Maiorova, *From the Shadow of Empire* (n. 66, above) 144, 153. Tolstoy himself repudiated *W&P* on aesthetic and eventually on socio-ethical grounds: *PSS* LXI.247, LXII.8–9, and the peasant Vasilii Morozov’s recollections in *Из архива Н. Н. Гусева.**Новые материалы о Л. Н. Толстом*. *From the N. N. Gusev archive. New materials on Leo Tolstoy*, ed. Donskov = А. А. Донсков(Ottawa and Moscow 2002) 208. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. See *e.g*. Pokrovskii = К. В. Покровский, ‘Источники романа «Война и мир»’, in «Война и мир.» *Памяти Льва Толстого*, eds В. П. Обнинский, Т. П. Полнер (Моscow 1912) 113–28 (126–28); Sorokine, *Napoléon* (n. 24, above) 259–305; Jepsen, *From Achilles to Christ* (n. 93, above) 74–75; H. Gifford, ‘Tolstoi and historical truth’, in *Russian Thought and Society, 1800–1917: Essays in Honour of Eugene Lampert*, ed. R. Bartlett (Keele 1984) 114–27 (119–21); R. F. Gustafson, *Leo Tolstoy: Resident and Stranger* (Princeton 1986) 228–29; Kagarmanova = М. Ш. Кагарманова, *Человек и история в художественной системе романа-эпопеи Л. Н. Толстого «Война и мир»* (Sterlitamak 2002) 37–47; Love, *The Overcoming of History* (n. 89, above) 158–62, 182–83; Scherbakov, ‘Война 1812 года в романе Л. Н. Толстого’ (n. 21, above) 255–56, 258. Love, *The Overcoming of History* (n. 89, above) 63 is right that Tolstoy’s Napoleon is ‘deeply ensnared in his position as a “great man”’ — psychologically and morally entrapped, that is, but *cf.* Shklovkii, *Матерьял и стиль* (n. 21, above) 180–91 on the hostile Tolstoyan montage and esp. 170 on the ironically biased translation of *un grand signe* as ‘great sign’ (*velikii priznak*) in *W&P* III.1.6 (‘“*La vibration de mon mollet gauche est un grand signe chez moi*”, he remarked at a later date.’). *Cf.* the text to n. 136, below. For Tolstoy’s pejorative reading of the story of Bonaparte at Pont d’Arcole, *cf.* *PSS* XLVIII.60 (diary, March 1860) and *PSS* XIII.617–8; see P. Carden, ‘Tolstoj and the Plutarchan tradition’, in *American Contributions to the Tenth International Congress of Slavists (Sophia, September 1988): Literature*, ed. J. G. Harris (Columbus, OH 1988) 83–95 (86–87); Scherbakov ‘Война 1812 года в романе Л. Н. Толстого’(n. 21, above) 249–50. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Ungurianu, *Plotting History* (n. 65, above) 109–18. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. А. С. Норов, *Война и мир (1805–1812) с исторической точки зрения и по воспоминаниям современника. По поводу сочинения Толстого «Война и мир»* (Моscow 1914) 3–4, 46. For spot-on analysis of the veterans’ resistance to the Tolstoyan devaluation of great men, see Ungurianu, *Plotting History* (n. 65, above) 116. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Based on the Plutarchan declamatory essay ‘Glory of the Athenians’ (*Moralia* 345d-351b) , I wonder whether Plutarch would have ranked Norov’s war experience (*ergo*, his writing?) above *W&P*! [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. *Cf.* *PSS* XIII.73: ‘When Raevskii ~~Tuchkov~~ an officer fell at Borodino, having been shot through the chest, and realized he was about to die: do not assume that he rejoiced over the salvation of the Fatherland, the glory of the Russian arms and the humiliation of Napoleon. No, he was thinking about his mother, about the woman he had loved, about all the joys and wretchedness of life […] Whereas Kutuzov, Napoleon, the Grand Armée and Russian valour — all this seemed to him pathetic and paltry by comparison with those interests of human life […]’ The passage is aptly contextualized by Carden, ‘Tolstoj and the Plutarchan tradition’ (n. 95, above) 90–92. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. The ‘deep’ philosophy of *W&P* is concerned with the epistemic limitations of narrative and of rational systems *tout court*: W. Gareth Jones, ‘A man speaking to men: the narratives of *War and Peace*’, in *Leo Tolstoy’s* War and Peace, ed. H. Bloom (New York 1988) 65–86 (65–70, 76); Morson, *Hidden in Plain View* (n. 77, above) 84–114; Morson, ‘*War and Peace*’ (n. 89, above) 67–78; Silbajoris, *Tolstoy’s Mirror* (n. 19, above) 65; Love, *The Overcoming of History* (n. 89, above) 19–29, 32–39, esp. 40–57. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. On the banks of Niemen, Napoleon fantasizes about Russia as ‘a realm analogous to the Scythia into which Alexander the Great had marched’ (*W&P* III.1.2, *cf.* *PSS* XIV.16 = *LN* 580). [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Tolstoy pushes the point by means of wordy allegory of a child who sits next to the coachman and thinks that he is in fact in control of the coach (*PSS* XIII.71–72); the image is distilled into a more compact simile in *W&P* IV.2.10 (Napoleon ‘acted like a child who, holding a couple of strings, inside a carriage, thinks he is driving it’). [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. *Cf. W&P* Epilogue 2.1: ‘The ancient historians all employed one and the same method to describe and seize the apparently illusive — the life of a people (*zhizn’ naroda*). They describe the activity of individuals who ruled the people, and regarded the activity of those men as representing the activity of the whole nation. The questions, how did individuals make nations act as they wished and by what was the will of these individuals themselves guided […] were solved for the ancients by a belief in the direct participation of the Deity in human affairs’. Love, *The Overcoming of History* (n. 89, above) 125 sounds the alarm: ‘It is not clear on what basis Tolstoy makes these generalizations about ancient historiography; they in fact seem to apply better to Homeric epic than they do either to Herodotus and Thucydides or Sallust and Tacitus’. Some classicists, in their turn, would demur at Love’s estimation of the Greek and Roman historians. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. *W&P* Epilogue 2.1, 2.4–5, and esp. *W&P* IV.3.18: ‘When it is impossible to stretch the very elastic threads of historical ratiocination any farther, when actions are clearly contrary to all that humanity calls right or even just, the historians produce a saving concept of “greatness” (*velichie*). “Greatness”, it seems, excludes the standards of right and wrong. For the “great” man (*dlia velikogo*) nothing is wrong; there is no atrocity for which a “great” man can be blamed. […] *Grand* is the characteristic, in their conception, of some special animals called “heroes”’. Sibajoris, *Tolstoy’s Mirror* (n. 19, above) 104–05. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. This is the core thesis of Carden, ‘Tolstoj and the Plutarchan tradition’ (n. 95, above),who lays stress on the inherent correlation, for Tolstoy, between the ‘Plutarchan’ pattern of heroism and Napoleonic egotism. She concludes that Napoleon’s heroic affectation originated from a too literal reading of Plutarch (at 94, ‘Napoleon, reading literally took away the lesson that words are the reality’). [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. As noted above, the only ancient figure Nikolenka identifies by name is Mucius Scaevola — who is also the only classical hero Tolstoy explicitly accuses of falsity: *PSS* XIII.37; further, Carden, ‘Tolstoj and the Plutarchan tradition’ (n. 95, above) 85–86. Scaevola’s invisible presence as ethico-political *exemplum* can be inferred more than once in *W&P* — notably, there is Pierre’s plan to assassinate Napoleon; Natasha confides in her brother Nikolai (II.1.1) that she has burnt her own arm with ared-hot ruler (*lineika*) as proof of her friendship with Sonya (*cf.* *PSS* XXXIV.364). [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. *PSS* XIII.262–63 n. 4 and XIII.340–41: Andrei ‘remembered everything he knew of Napoleon’s story (*iz istorii*). ~~And he searched in his own life for circumstances similar to those~~. […] “If I struggled within myself […] as the bullets began whizzing near us, Bonaparte must have felt the same at Toulon.”’ Andrei’s “Toulon”: *W&P* I.2.12, I.2.17, I.3.12, I.3.15; *PSS* XIII.342, 348, 373 n. 1, 383. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. On Andrei’s evolution in *W&P*, see Ermilov, *Толстой-художник* (n. 65, above) 187–95, 216–27, 249–61, 291–304; J. Hagan, ‘A pattern of character development in *War and Peace*: Prince Andrej’, *Slavic & East European Journal* 13.2 (1969) 164–90 (168–90); Sorokine, *Napoléon* (n. 24, above) 278–79; Jepsen, *From Achilles to Christ* (n. 93, above) 28–29, 38–53; Gustafson, *Tolstoy: Resident and Stranger* (n. 95, above) 62–72; Love, *The Overcoming of History* (n. 89, above) 162–71; Love, ‘The great man in *War and Peace*’, in *Tolstoy on War*, eds R. McPeak and D. T. Orwin (n. 16, above) 85–97 (86–89); G. Rosenshield, ‘Injury, pain and change in *War and Peace*: the cases of Nikolai Rostov and Prince Andrei Bolkonsky’ *The Russian Review* 74 (2015) 642-64 (650-56, 658-63). [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Often labelled (somewhat misleadingly) ‘hero worship’ by critics, *e.g.* Potapov, *Роман Толстого «Война и мир»* (n. 16, above) 207; Morson, *Hidden in Plain View* (n. 77, above) 265. For the cognizance of the phenomenon of hero worship among the Russian elite around 1812, see, *e.g.*,Lazhechnikov, *Походные записки* (n. 41, above) 230. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. *Cf.* A. Schönle, ‘Sublime vision and self-derision: the aesthetics of death in Tolstoy’, in *Anniversary Essays on Tolstoy*, ed. D. T. Orwin (Cambridge 2010) 33–51 (43). For Napoleon in Russian Romanticism, see Sorokine, *Napoléon* (n. 24, above) 125–36, 150–53; M. Wesling, *Napoleon in Russian Cultural Mythology* (New York 2001) 35-66. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. ‘Pierre […] went into Prince Andrei’s study like one quite at home, and from habit immediately lay down on the sofa, took from the shelf the first book that came to his hand (it was Caesar’s *Commentaries*) and resting on his elbow, began reading it in the middle’. *Cf.* *LN* 97 and *PSS* XIII.226–27. On the metapoetics of Pierre’s haphazard reading, see Morson, *Hidden in Plain View* (n. 77, above) 164; E. D. Samet, ‘The disobediences of *War and Peace*’, in *Tolstoy on War*, eds R. McPeak and D. T. Orwin (n. 16, above) 160–74 (164). On books and reading in *W&P*, see generally Petrovskaya = Е. Петровская, ‘Что читают герои Л. Н. Толстого? (Книги и чтение в «Войне и мире»)’, in *Лев Толстой и мировая литература. Материалы III Международной научной конференции*, ed. Г. Алексеева (Tula 2005) 21-32. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Tolstoy made up his mind about Napoleon’s ethico-political descent from Caesar already in 1857 when he wrote in his diary: ‘If there were no story (*istorii*) of Caesar, there would have been no Napoleon’ (*PSS* XLVII.205). Caesar’s book on Prince Andrei’s bookshelf must hint at his emulation of Napoleon; for the historical Napoleon’s interest in Caesar, see *e.g.* R. Poignault, ‘Napoleon Ier et Napoleon III lecteurs de Jules César’, in *Présence de César*. *Hommage au doyen M*. *Rambaud*, ed. R. Chevallier (Paris 1985) 329­­–45 (329–36); L. Polverini, ‘*Imitatio Caesaris*. Cesare e Alessandro, Napoleone e Cesare’, in *Modelli eroici dall’ antichità alla cultura europea*, eds A. Barzanó, C. Bearzot, F. Landucci, L. Prandi, and G. Zecchini (Rome 2003) 403–14 (408–11); more guardedly, C. Nicolet, ‘Caesar and the two Napoleons’, in *A Companion to Julius Caesar*, ed. M. Griffin (Malden, MA and Oxford 2009) 410–17 (411–14); further, O. B. Hemmerle, ‘Crossing the Rubicon into Paris: Caesarian comparisons from Napoleon to de Gaulle’, in *Julius Caesar in Western Culture*, ed. M. Wyke (Malden, MA 2006) 285–302 (286–91). [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Carden, ‘Tolstoj and the Plutarchan tradition’ (n. 95, above) 88, further 86, 89–90. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Ermilov, *Толстой-художник* (n. 65, above) 144; Carden, ‘Tolstoj and the Plutarchan tradition’ (n. 95, above) 93; Samet, ‘The disobediences of *War and Peace*’ (n. 111, above) 173–74. More optimistic interpretations of the cyclicity as suggested by the dream: Bocharov, *«Война и мир» Л. Н. Толстого* (n. 89, above) 103; Jepsen, *From Achilles to Christ* (n. 93, above) 82–83. Considering that Nikolenka would end up among the Decembrists, it is curious that none of the helmet-wearing Plutarchan heroes in Dacier’s translation (n. 9, above) are the revolutionaries’ favourite personages, such as Brutus, Gracchi, or the Younger Cato; perhaps Nikolenka does not yet think politically — to him the heroism of ‘Plutarch’s men’ is, in the first place, ethopoetic; *cf.* Prikazchikova, ‘Война 1812 года’ (n. 31, above) 127. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Tolstoy read Homer fondly, both in Russian translation and in Greek: *cf.* esp. *PSS* LXVI.67–68; see D. T. Orwin, ‘Tolstoy and Homer revisited’, *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 27 (2015) 3-16. More *apropos*, he drew parallels between *W&P* and the *Iliad* in his diary (September 1865, *PSS* XLVIII.284) and many years later in conversation with a fellow writer: Gorky = А. М. Горький, *Собрание сочинений*, 30 vols (Моscow 1951) XIV 284. See Jepsen, *From Achilles to Christ* (n. 93, above) 12–21; yet several critics have argued for *W&P*’s parodic engagement with Homeric epic: Silbajoris, *Tolstoy’s Mirror* (n. 19, above) 110–13; esp. Zhuravlev = А. Н. Журавлев, ‘«Это как Илиада»? (К вопросу о жанровой природе романа Л. Н. Толстого «Война и мир»’, in *Владимир Даль и современная филология: материалы международной конференции 22–23 ноября 2001 г.*, 2 vols (Нижний Новгород 2001) II 230–34. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. M. Price, ‘Forms of life and death: *War and Peace*’, in *Leo Tolstoy’s* War and Peace, ed. H. Bloom (n. 100, above) 123–30 (126): ‘a wonderful naivety about his action’. It is in any case rash to assume that ‘childlike’ is an unreservedly favourable epithet throughout *W&P*, as claimed by Makedon = Т. А. Македон, ‘Художественные функции эпитета «детский» в романе Л. Н. Толстого “Война и мир”’, in *Интерпретация литературного и культурного текста: традиция и современность*, ed. П. Н. Толстогузов (Birobijan 2004) 71–75. The allegory of the child in the coach (n. 102, above) . cannot be so easily overlooked. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Andrei’s foremost model is Napoleon at Pont d’Arcole (*W&P* I.1.4, I.3.15; *PSS* XIII.221, 265 and esp. IX.449 = *LN* 195) — an episode that Tolstoy likes to traduce, *cf.* *PSS* XV.84 and n. 93, above. The closest Plutarchan parallel for both Andrei’s and Napoleon’s banner moment is Sulla at Orchomenus (*Sulla* 21.3 ‘Sulla himself leapt of his horse, grabbed a standard, and pushed his way into the ranks of the enemies […]’, trans. R. Waterfield), but *cf.* also Caesar in *Caesar* 52.9, with C. Pelling, *Plutarch: Caesar* (Oxford 2011) 402. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Yet see Bocharov, *«Война и мир» Л. Н. Толстого* (n. 89, above) 42–43 for a positive assessment of Andrei’s love of glory as a facet of the aristocratic ‘aesthetics’ of statesmanship; *cf.* Orwin, ‘*War and Peace* from the military point of view’ (n. 16, above) 109: ‘Tolstoy does not reject the desire for glory itself as low or inauthentic; it is the natural expression of the love of honor that distinguishes the true aristocrat and officer’. Plutarch’s *Lives* are of course transfixed with the complexities and risks of *philotimia*: F. Frazier, ‘À propos de la *philotimia* dans les *Vies*. Quelques jalons dans l’histoire d’une notion’, *Revue de philologie, de littérature et d’histoire anciennes* 62 (1988) 109–27; T. Duff, *Plutarch’s* Lives*: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (Oxford 1999) 83–87; B. Buszard, ‘Caesar’s ambition: a combined reading of Plutarch’s *Alexander-Caesar* and *Pyrrhus-Marius*’, *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 138 (2008) 185–215; A. Nikolaidis, ‘Aspects of Plutarch’s notion of *philotimia*’, in *The Lash of Ambition. Plutarch, Imperial Greek Literature and the Dynamics of* philotimia, eds G. Roskam, M. De Pourcq, L. Van der Stockt (Leuven 2012) 31–53; C. Pelling, ‘Plutarch on Roman *philotimia*’, in *The Lash of Ambition*, eds G. Roskam *et al.* (n. 118, above) 55–67. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. *Pace* Petrovskaya, ‘Что читают герои Л. Н. Толстого?’ (n. 111, above), 27. See also n. 116, above. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Сompare the unease of the poet and essayist Petr Viazemskii (1792–1878) in a letter to Bartenev (1871) about the drastic rehabilitation of the Decembrists in the Russian press from the 1860s onwards: ‘Such images, like Plutarch (*vrode Plutarkha*) can have strong influence over the young minds’ (in Chulkov, *Декабристы* [n. 34, above] 496). The voice of Viazemskii, who took part in the 1812 war, was loud among the contemporary negative reviewers of *W&P*: Lomunov, ‘1812-й год в «Войне и мире»’ (n. 92, above) 327–33; Scherbakov, ‘Война 1812 года в романе Л. Н. Толстого’ (n. 21, above) 260; generally Ungurianu, *Plotting History* (n. 65, above) 109–18; Podmazo = А. А. Подмазо, ‘Война вокруг «Войны и мира» Л. Н. Толстого’, in *Отечественная война 1812 года в культурной памяти России. К 200-летию победы России в Отечественной войне 1812 года* , ed. Л. В. Мельникова (Моscow 2012) 159–66. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Which leaves Plutarch hoist with his own critical petard, in terms of his programme for teenaged students of poetry: ‘[…] introducing the young man to poems, let him not harbour the following preconceptions (*doxas*) about those grand and great names (*tôn kalôn ekeinôn kai megalôn onomatôn*), that the men were wise and righteous, superb kings and paragons of every virtue and properness. For he will be greatly harmed if he embraces everything […] (*De aud*. *poet*. 25d–e)’. See Plutarch: *How to Study Poetry* (*De audiendis poetis*), eds R. Hunter and D. Russell (Cambridge 2011) esp. 5–9; A. V. Zadorojnyi, ‘Safe drugs for the good boys: Platonism and pedagogy in Plutarch’s *De audiendis poetis*’,in *Sage and Emperor: Plutarch, Greek Intellectuals, and Roman Power in the Time of Trajan (98–117 A.D.)*, eds Ph. Stadter and L. Van der Stockt (Leuven 2002) 297–314; D. Konstan, ‘“The birth of the reader”: Plutarch as a literary critic’, *Scholia* 13 (2004) 3–27. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Orwin, ‘*War and Peace* from the military point of view’ (n. 16, above) 109: ‘There is irony but no sarcasm in this tender closing portrait of Nikolenka Bolkonsky’. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. *PSS* IV.16, LIX.281. There is, nevertheless, already the message that true heroes have nothing to do with verbal bravura (*PSS* IV.16 *nesposobnye k frazerstvu*), as well as the trademark Tolstoyan fusion of the sublime with the bathetic: the Russian soldier who typifies the heroic defenders of Sevastopol is ‘small, lice-ridden, withered somehow’ (*PSS* LIX.282). [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Samet, ‘The disobediences of *War and Peace*’ (n. 111, above) 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. See C. Pelling, *Plutarch and History: Eighteen Studies* (Swansea 2002) esp. 237–51; Pelling, ‘Do Plutarch’s politicians never learn?’ in *The Statesman in Plutarch’s Works*, eds L. de Blois, J. Bons, T. Kessels, D. M. Schenkeveld, 2 vols (Leiden and Boston 2004) I 87–103; Duff, *Plutarch’s* Lives*: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (n. 118, above) *passim*; Duff, ‘Plutarch’s readers and the moralism of the *Lives*’, *Ploutarchos*, n.s. 5 (2007/2008) 3–18; A. V. Zadorojnyi, ‘Mimesis and the (plu)past in Plutarch’, in *Time and Narrative in Ancient Historiography: The “plupast” from Herodotus to Appian*, eds C. Krebs and J. Grethlein (Cambridge 2012) 175–98 (177–83). [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Duff, *Plutarch’s* Lives*: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (n. 118, above) 47–49, 60–65. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. *Cf.* Epilogue 2.3: biographies ‘are like paper money’ without real security behind it. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Vegetarianism: *PSS* XL.371–2, XLI.420–1, XLII.74–5, 445–46, XLIII.317, XLV.110. Superstition: *PSS* XLII.56. This material deserves more painstaking research — I am troubled by the fact that so many pages in the five-volume *Œuvres morales de Plutarque* (1844) in Tolstoy’s library were never cut: Kotrelev, *Библиотека Толстого* (n. 6, above) II.200. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. *PSS* LV.286 (‘Brahmin wisdom, Chinese [wisdom], Buddhism, Stoicism, Socrates, Christianity; […] Plutarch, Seneca, Cicero, Marcus Aurelius, the medieval thinkers, then Pascal, Spinoza, Kant […]’), LXXV.168, LXXXVI.11, *cf.* XXX.75. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. And possibly also ‘Goli[tsyn’s] name’ and ‘2) Uvarov’; for the latter, *cf.* Zaidenshnur, ‘История писания’ (n. 20, above) 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Tolstoy’s *New* *ABC* and the four-part *Russian Reader* (*Russkaia kniga dlia chtenia*), both targeting peasant children, were published in 1874–75: *PSS* XI. Some potentially Plutarchan material was incorporated into the *Russian Reader* through second-hand sources: *cf.* *PSS* XXI.649. It is still salient that the earliest Tolstoyan mention of Plutarch occurs in his draft notes on the education of children (*PSS* VIII.381, March 1860). Tolstoy includes Plutarch (without doubt, the *Lives*) in the mini-index of texts typically used by educators, although not pedagogical in the true sense: ‘Lack of [educational] theory is to some degree offset through the practice of: useless and harmful publications; supplementing what is useful orally or in writing; guidance from random unpedagogical books, artworks, *belles lettres* and historical monuments (the Bible, fairy tales, chronicles, Plutarch, etc.)’. In a pedagogical article published in 1862, Tolstoy contends that history should be taught to children by way of interesting narrative, rather than factologically or biographically (*PSS* VIII.106 ‘Cyrus, Alexander of Macedon, Caesar and Luther are not requisite for any child’s progress’) — a far cry, as yet, from *W&P*’s nihilism towards ‘great men’. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Compare and contrast the ideological journey of Sergei Glinka. In the early 1800s it dawned on Glinka that classical and French culture inhibited the Russian gentry’s Russianness — as he later put it, ‘[T]he gigantic phantasm of ancient Rome was blocking out (*zaslonial*) our native country from us’ (Glinka, *Записки* [n. 15, above] 63); see Martin, *Romantics, Reformers, Reactionaries* (n. 14, above) 75. Glinka’s solution was to propagate heroic tales (*anekdoty*) based on Russian history. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. As argued by Carden, ‘Tolstoj and the Plutarchan tradition’ (n. 95, above). Tolstoy’s own indebtedness to the biographical model of history is evident in the diary entry he wrote in March 1865 (*W&P* is well underway): ‘I’ve become engrossed in the history of Napoleon and Alexander [*sc.* Alexander I of Russia]. The idea of writing a psychological history (*psikhologicheskuiu istoriiu*) of the romance [or: novel?] of Alexander and Napoleon has swept over me like a cloud of joy and the awareness of the opportunity to do a great thing’ (*PSS* XLVIII.60; trans. R. F. Christian). [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. As announced famously in *Alexander* 1.2; see Duff, *Plutarch’s* Lives*: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (n. 118, above) 15–17. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Tolstoy’s intertextual dialogue (whether congenial or polemical) with the pertinent nineteenth-century literature such as Stendhal or Carlyle, falls outside the remit of my study; for stimulating *sunkriseis* between Tolstoy’s and Carlyle’s ideas on heroism, see D. T. Orwin, ‘Tolstoy and patriotism’, in *Lev Tolstoy and the Concept of Brotherhood*, eds A. Donskov and J. Woodsworth (Ottawa 1996) 51–70 (63–70), and esp. I. Stambler, ‘Heroic power in Thomas Carlyle and Leo Tolstoy’, *The European Legacy: Toward New Paradigm* 11 (2006) 737–51. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. See Sorokine, *Napoléon* (n. 24, above) 267–91. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. The ironic accompaniments to Nikolenka’s dream are ‘sounds of rhythmic snoring’ made by the ‘Roman nose’(!) of his tutor Dessalles (Epilogue 1.16). [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. Yet *cf.* n. 91, above. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)