
The 300th Anniversary of the Russian Academy of Sciences

“‘Literary Heritage’ Has Been Such a Big Deal for All These Years...” *The 90th Anniversary of the Academic Series “Literary Heritage”*

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Abstract—This article is dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the “Literary Heritage” series, which, along with the “Literary Monuments” series, is one of the most authoritative Russian academic historical and literary publications. Unlike “Literary Monuments,” which specializes in the scientific publication of significant works of the entire world literature (see *Herald of the Russian Academy of Sciences* 90, No. 2 (2020)), “Literary Heritage” focuses on the publication of newly discovered documents on the history of Russian literature and social thought. This article shows that the first 50 years of the series’ existence were the period that formed a practical school of traditional textual criticism and commentary work. Through the efforts of prominent Russian and Western scholars who participated in the creation of the series’ volumes, “Literary Heritage” has become a fundamentally new type of Soviet documentary publication. Each of the volumes provided an encyclopedic completeness of information on the chosen topic, thanks to which these works became an important stage in the preparation of many academic collected works of Russian classics. “Literary Heritage” entered the 21st century with fundamental projects introducing into scientific circulation a large corpus of previously unpublished fiction, journalistic, and epistolary texts, primarily on the history of literature of the Silver Age. The next volumes dedicated to the works of I. Bunin, Z. Gippius, and Andrei Bely contain unique materials from the archives of Russia, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and the United States.

Keywords: history of literature, “Literary Heritage,” scientific edition, textual criticism, source studies, archive, history of science, academic edition.

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In August 2021, the authoritative academic archaeological historical and literary series “Literary Heritage” (LH) celebrated its 90th anniversary, after the decision on its founding was made by the Press Department of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks in June 1931. The initiators of the publication I.S. Zil’bershtein (1905–1988) and S.A. Makashin (1906–1989), who were in charge of LH for more than half a century, are rightfully considered the creators of the series. The unique publication of newly discovered documents on the history of Russian literature and social thought, equipped with the appropriate scientific apparatus, enjoys high prestige in our country and abroad. The

academic series LH was the first to accomplish scientific publications of thousands of lost artistic, journalistic, epistolary, and memoir works; biographical documents; archival reviews; and bibliographies of A.S. Pushkin, M.Yu. Lermontov, A.I. Herzen, N.P. Ogarev, L.N. Tolstoy, I.S. Turgenev, F.M. Dostoevsky, F.I. Tyutchev, A.A. Fet, I.A. Goncharov, A.N. Ostrovskii, N.S. Leskov, A.P. Chekhov, I.A. Bunin, A.A. Blok, V.Ya. Bryusov, M. Gorky, L.N. Andreev, A. Bely, Z.N. Gippius, and many other Russian poets and writers.

Over the course of its life, “Literary Heritage” has repeatedly changed—at the direction of, as a rule, governing instances—its departmental affiliation and has been included as a structural unit in various organizations [1–3]. Initially, the financing and publication of the series was undertaken by the Journal and Newspaper Association, headed by M.E. Kol’tsov, a writer, public figure, and corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences. On August 1, 1931, the LH editorial board began to work; Zil’bershtein

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Cover of the “Literary Heritage” series, 1931.

became its head and remained so until his death [1, p. 66]. The first volume of the series, still in the format of a journal publication and under the stamp of the Communist Academy and the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers, was published with a considerable delay (for censorship reasons) in the spring of 1932.

P.I. Lebedev-Polyanskii (1882–1948), a statesman and party leader, literary critic and academician, was LH editor-in-chief in 1934–1947. After the closure and liquidation of the Journal and Newspaper Association (the first 16 volumes of the series were published under its stamp) by the decision of the Organizing Bureau of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in May 1938, the publication was transferred to the Institute of Literature (Institute of Russian Literature/Pushkin House) of the USSR Academy of Sciences, whose director beginning in 1937 was Lebedev-Polyanskii. On June 28, 1938, at a meeting of the Presidium of the Editorial and Publishing Council of the USSR Academy of Sciences, in the presence of Academician Vavilov, it was decided to concentrate the publication of “all archival materials on the history of literature and social thought, as well as articles commenting on these mate-

rials, in the collections of “Literary Heritage,” transferred to the Academy of Sciences; LH was approved “as a body of the Institute of Literature of the Academy of Sciences” [4]. From this moment, LH officially acquired academic status, which was initially the focus of Zil’bershtein’s project.

In 1939–1949, “Literary Heritage” was published as an organ of the Leningrad Institute of Russian Literature (IRLI) of the USSR Academy of Sciences. As a result of this institutionalization, “Literary Heritage” was able to expand its activities significantly: it was precisely the employees of the Pushkin House and the materials of its archives that provided the fundamental volumes dedicated to Lermontov, Nekrasov, and Belinskii and published in those years. As V.A. Manuilov said, summing up the results of many years of LH work under the auspices of the Pushkin House, “‘Literary Heritage’ has been such a big deal for all these years, such a big event in the history of our Soviet culture” [5].

In June 1949, the Department of Literature and Language (DLL) of the USSR Academy of Sciences applied to the Editorial and Publishing Council (EPC) of the Academy of Sciences with a request to transfer “Literary Heritage” to the DLL jurisdiction. On July 1 of the same year, EPC satisfied this request and approved the new editorial board of the series. In 1950–1960, volumes dedicated to V.G. Belinskii, A.S. Pushkin, M.Yu. Lermontov, and N.V. Gogol, the Decembrist writers, Herzen and N.P. Ogarev, V.V. Mayakovski, revolutionary democrats, Chekhov, and others saw the light of day.

The last change in the LH organizational affiliation took place after 1959, when the series was criticized in connection with the publication in volume 65 of the correspondence between Mayakovski and L.Yu. Brik. On March 31, 1959, the Central Committee of the CPSU adopted a resolution “On the Book *New about Mayakovski*,” in which the volume was characterized as “a gross mistake” committed by “politically immature persons”; other documents of the governing bodies adopted in connection with this resolution also noted that LH was published without proper scientific and censorship control. In a difficult situation, on March 18, 1960, the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences accepted DLL’s proposal to transfer LH to the jurisdiction of the Gorky Institute of World Literature (IMLI) and approved the new editorial board. Since then and to this day LH has remained a structural subdivision of IMLI of the USSR Academy of Sciences/RAS.

After the transition to the system of the USSR Academy of Sciences, the editorial board of “Literary Heritage” at different times was headed by Academicians Lebedev-Polyanskii and V.V. Vinogradov, and Corresponding Members of the USSR Academy of Sciences I.I. Anisimov, A.M. Egorin, F.F. Kuznetsov, and V.R. Shcherbina; the editorial board included

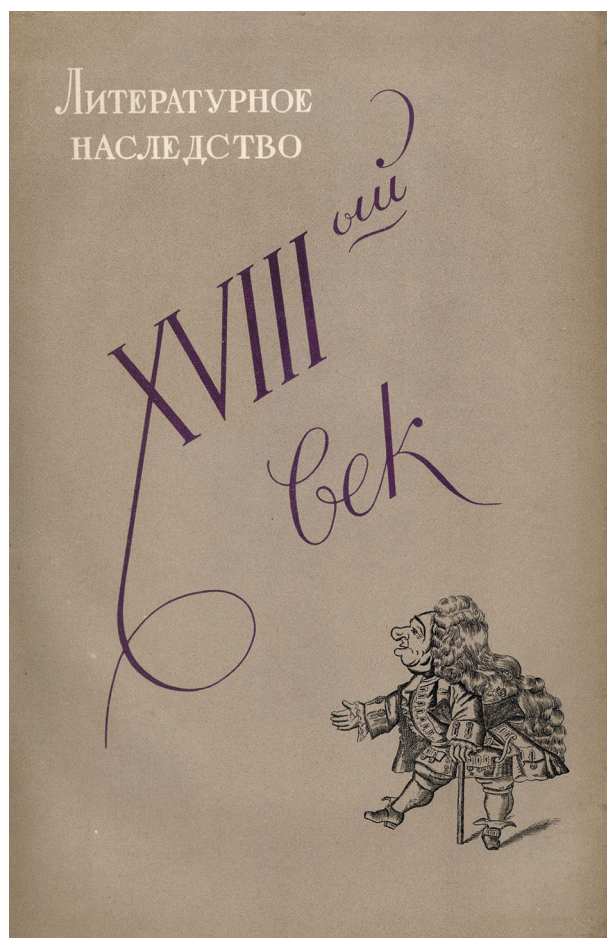
Academicians A.S. Bushmin and M.B. Khrapchenko and Corresponding Members of the USSR Academy of Sciences V.G. Bazanov, G.P. Berdnikov, D.D. Blagoi, N.N. Skatov, and L.I. Timofeev.

By the anniversary year of 2021 for the series, the number of volumes published in it has long exceeded 100 and continues to grow; about ten more books are pending. The appearance of each new LH volume invariably has become a significant event in the national and world humanities. Thus, for the 50th anniversary of LH, about 450 articles and reviews of 90 volumes of the series were published [6, p. 25]; by the 80th anniversary the complete bibliography consisted of 955 publications; and currently it exceeds 1000. Most publications, overall, assessed highly individual books or the entire series [7, Vol. 1, pp. 349–406]. Such a result of LH's activities is quite natural, since prominent Russian and Western scientists and writers participated in the creation of the series volumes. Among them are M.K. Azadovskii, M.P. Alekseev, I.L. Andronikov, N.P. Antsiferov, V.F. Asmus, P.N. Berkov, S.M. Bondi, N.L. Brodskii, B.Ya. Bukhshtab, V.V. Vinogradov, M.L. Gasparov, E.G. Gershtein, L.Ya. Ginzburg, N.K. Gudzii, G.A. Gukovskii, N.N. Gusev, A.S. Dolinin, S.N. Durylin, V.E. Evgen'ev-Maksimov, V.M. Zhirmunskii, R.V. Ivanov-Razumnik, B.P. Koz'min, D.S. Likhachev, D. Lukach, A.V. Lunacharskii, Yu.M. Lotman, A. Mazon, Z.G. Mints, K.D. Muratova, Yu.G. Oksman, K.V. Pigarev, S.A. Reiser, D.P. Svyatopolk-Mirskii, E.V. Tarle, L.I. Timofeev, B.V. Tomashevskii, Yu.N. Tynyanov, N.I. Khardzhiev, M.A. Tsyavlovskii, K.I. Chukovskii, V. Edgerton, N.Ya. Eidel'man, B.M. Eikhenbaum, A.M. Efros, I.G. Yampol'skii, and others. All in all, the number of highly qualified researchers who took part in the publication had reached 1000 by 1981 [6, p. 25].

In 1947, when ten years had passed since the activity of the series under the IRLI brand, the chairman of the editorial board of the publication, Academician Lebedev-Polyanskii emphasized that “from the very first issues, ‘Literary Heritage’ had become a fundamentally new type of Soviet documentary publication.” The thought of Lebedev-Polyanskii was developed by Zil'bershtein,

To say that “Literary Heritage” has no prototypes in Russian culture, its older brothers, is to sin against the truth. In the same way as without “Literary Heritage,” no literary critic or historian can do without *Russian Archive* or *Russian Starina*—prerevolutionary publishing journals, a storehouse of intellectual and spiritual values of the Motherland, unspeakably developed in our publication-celebrant.

At the same time, Zil'bershtein emphasized the most important distinctive feature of LH: publications in the series are now supplied with the necessary scientific commentary, which turns documents “from



Volume “Literary Heritage” dedicated to the 18th century.

randomly found pearls into their regular collection, from information, sometimes hypothetical, to information that is the only possible, canonical” [6, p. 22; 10, p. 201].

Over the 90 years of its existence, LH has undergone significant changes. The structure of the volumes of the series was developed gradually; in the practice of the series, two types of publications were formed: combined, that is, mixed volumes, and thematically uniform. In the first years of its existence, unpublished texts by Marx and Engels on literature, art, and aesthetics (vols. 2 and 3, 1932), as well as a number of previously unknown literary works by Plekhanov and Lafargue, saw the light of day (vols. 7/8, 1933). The same thematically mixed volumes were the first to publish such important monuments of Russian literature and social thought as all five (and not three, as before) of Chaadaev's *Philosophical Letters* (vols. 22/24, 1935); a cycle of materials characterizing Dostoevsky's relations with government circles in the 1870s (vol. 15, 1934); a collection of unpublished letters by Tyutchev, which fully revealed the poet's activities as an outstanding politician and diplomat (vols. 19/21, 1935); and a diary of V.F. Odoevskii 1859–1869 (vols. 22/24,

Lunacharskii, “Russian Writers at Goethe’s in Weimar” by Durylin, “Balzac in Russia” by Grossman, “Creative Diaries of Dostoevsky” by L.M. Rozenblyum, and others.

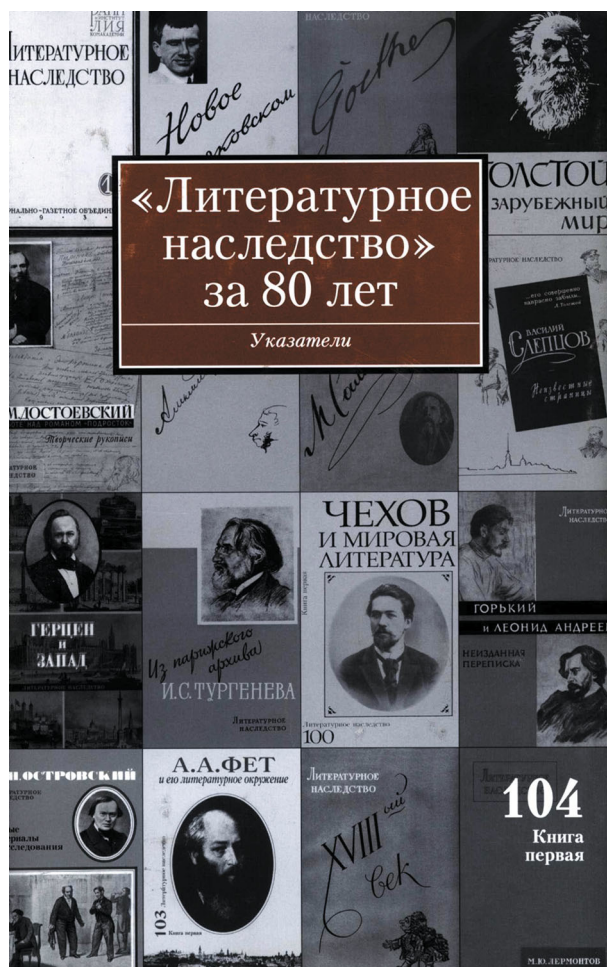
From the first years of its existence, the editorial board of the series paid considerable attention to the publication of works on the international literary ties of Russian literature. “Goethe and Russian Culture” (vols. 4–6, 1932), “Russian Culture and France” (vols. 29–34, 1937 and 1939); later volumes—*Leo Tolstoy and the Foreign World* (vol. 75 in 2 books, 1965); the monograph by Academician Alekseev *Russian–English Literary Ties: (18th Century–First Half of the 19th Century)* (vol. 91, 1982), and the study *Chekhov and World Literature* (vol. 100 in 3 books, 1997–2005) on the reception of the work of the Russian writer in the literatures of Europe, Asia, and America—this is not a complete list of comparative publications in the series.

At the end of the 20th century, the series was going through a crisis caused primarily by financial and personnel problems. The decline in work in those years is explained, paradoxically as it may seem, by the rise of the documentary-source study trend in Russian literary criticism. For many years LH was actually the only regular, although not periodical, series in the Soviet Union for the publication of historical and literary documents. In the changed conditions, many publishing houses began to publish valuable materials concerning the life and work of Russian writers (bibliographic dictionaries, chronicles of literary life, annals of the life and work of writers, author’s encyclopedias, nonperiodical series with the subtitle “Research and Materials,” etc.), which were previously often published in LH.

Today we can say with confidence that the crisis has been overcome over the past two decades. The composition of the LH editorial board is being renewed, and the team of authors who collaborate with the series is being replenished. In 2016, for the first time since its foundation, the editorial board of the series included major foreign Slavic philologists: S. Gardzonio, R. Davis, J. Malmstad, D. Rizzi, R.D. Timenchik, and M. Shruba, which undoubtedly raises its international prestige even higher.

At the present stage, the LH editorial board faces mainly traditional tasks, but it solves them in radically changed conditions, when the old ideological postulates, leading to disproportions in the problem-thematic strategy of the series, have lost their force. Whole layers of Russian literature have become available for publication after the prohibitions of censorship authorities on research topics were lifted.

In the 21st century, “Literary Heritage” entered fundamental projects, introducing into scientific circulation a large corpus of previously unpublished fiction, journalistic, and epistolary texts that allow a deeper study of creative biographies and more fully



Volume *Literary Heritage at 80 Years*.

comprehend the theoretical views of the leading writers of the 19th century: *Unpublished Leskov* (vol. 101 in two books., 2000), *I.A. Goncharov: New Materials and Studies* (vol. 102, 2000), *Chekhov and World Literature* (vol. 100 in three books, 1997–2005), and *A.A. Fet and His Literary Environment* (vol. 103 in two books, 2008).

Blok’s volumes previously released by LH, the main preparatory work on which was carried out back in Soviet times, were and remain the pride and adornment of the series (vol. 89, 1978; vol. 92 in five books, 1980–1993). Nevertheless, the Silver Age took its rightful place in the program of “Literary Heritage” only in the last decade, about which it seems useful to say a little more.

A volume of “Literary Heritage” (vol. 84 in two books, 1973) was previously devoted to Bunin, the largest figure in both Russian prerevolutionary literature and the literature of the Russian emigration, as well as the Nobel laureate. The volume *I.A. Bunin: New Materials and Studies* (vol. 110 in four books, book 1, 2019) introduced unknown texts of the writer

and his unpublished correspondence into scientific circulation for the first time. The source base for this significant project is manuscripts from the Russian Archives in Leeds (Great Britain); scientists from Russia, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy continue to work on the preparation for printing of unique materials from the emigre part of Bunin’s archive. The second book of this volume will be published in 2022.

For the first time *Epistolary Heritage of Z.N. Gippius* (vol. 106 in two books, 2018–2021) became the center of attention of the LH authors; it was collected not only from the archives of Moscow and St. Petersburg but also from Great Britain and the United States. The published letters allow us to determine the place of Gippius in the literature of modernism and also provide a clue to understanding the spiritual, ideological, and religious quests of an entire era.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the series publications devoted to Andrei Bely published in recent years. The volume *Andrei Bely: Autobiographical Vaults* included two fundamentally important works: “Material for a Biography” and “A Perspective to the Diary,” which contain valuable materials about the life and creative work of the writer (vol. 105, 2016). The volume *Andrei Bely: Rod of Aaron: Works on the Theory of the Word 1916–1927* systematized and introduced into scientific circulation the little-known corpus of the writer’s poetry (vol. 111, 2018). Finally, at the end of 2020, the result of cooperation with scientists from Germany (University of Trier; with the support of the German Scientific Society DFG) was the preparation and publication of the philosophical and culturological treatise by Andrei Bely *The History of the Formation of a Self-Conscious Soul* (vol. 112 in two books, 2020), which is considered with sufficient reason by many literary scholars as the greatest achievement of Russian Symbolism in general.

Over the 90 years of its existence, LH did not stand still, but “developed along with the entirety of Soviet literary criticism as one of its constituent parts”; the views on the tasks and nature of the series were not frozen, established once and for all; they changed along with domestic criticism and the science of literature “in search of a correct assessment of complex cultural phenomena” [1, p. 70; 11, p. 161]. Today, referring to the first 50 years of its history, it is obvious that this time was a period of formation in the conditions of Soviet reality of “the practical school of traditional textual and commentary work,” through which a new generation of literary historians passed [1, p. 70]. Without escaping mistakes and delusions in the first difficult years, which the legendary LH creators Zil’bershtein and Makashin mentioned, the series’

editorial board has nevertheless always achieved impressive accomplishments. Today, when “Literary Heritage” is alive and developing, we would like to hope that the series will celebrate its 100th anniversary with new and no less significant projects.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that he has no conflict of interest.

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