

War, peace and Franco-Russian relations: French translations of Tolstoy's "Sebastopol Sketches" in periodicals (1855–1885)

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Examining literary translation in periodicals can enrich the body of knowledge of both translation and periodical studies.* As products of different actors (editors, publishers, etc.) at intersecting times and places, periodicals struggle to make their worlds meaningful through the content they provide (articles, advertisements, columns, illustrations, etc.), and literary installments are but one of those different types of content (Beetham 1990). How they relate to the social and political contexts is therefore crucial to the process. This article examines French translations of Tolstoy's early war prose.¹ A significant number of early Tolstoy translations were published in periodicals, a translation locus hitherto largely neglected. In three stories, known as the *Sebastopol Sketches*, Tolstoy portrays the "Franco-Russian" Crimean War of 1853–1856. Showing how literature and contemporary politics interact in French translations of Tolstoy's war prose is compelling, not only as a way to probe how translation deals with potentially "explosive" content, but also as a way to explore the purposes these translations served and how this related to the context of their publication.

Periodicals harvest large amounts of translated literary content (e.g., 49 Turgenev translations in periodicals outweigh 17 book volumes in the 1854–1885 timeframe; Waddington 1980, 77–96). To disclose these *terrae incognitae*, scholarship needs to develop a sound understanding of the periodical as a locus of translation. Several topics are yet to be covered by translation historians, e.g. the extent to which periodicals employed translators remains an open question and provokes a series of new questions, not only topical ones (who was being translated, which texts were preferred) but especially those concerning the features of literary translation in periodicals and the way they contributed to the creation of meaning. As every issue of a periodical belongs to a series stretched over time, topics should be examined within a wider timeframe in order to grasp the dominant discourse of the era, and the periodical's contribution to these discussions.

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Only in the last decade has the field of translation studies started to explore translations in periodicals. This “medial turn” sets forth the investigation of the role that media forms have played in the history of translation. Pointing out the importance of both discursive techniques and the mediating of cultural transfer, Anne O’Connor (2019) calls for comprehensive research on translation in periodicals as even the scope of these translations remains guesswork. In their recent volume on translations in periodicals, Laura Fóllica, Diana Roig-Sanz and Stefania Caristia conceive of “literary translation as a historical product that serves a specific function within the target culture” (2020, 5), a definition that applies to translation *in globo* and is too broad to be operable. The praxis of translation in periodicals is highly contextual and needs to be read accordingly. This article, therefore, proposes a context-driven approach to disclose the – often implied – discourse in periodicals. Cast against the socio-political reality of the target text’s audience, I defend the hypothesis that topicality guides both the selection and translation strategies of literature in periodicals.

First, this article gives a concise overview of the conception and early publishing history of Tolstoy’s *Sebastopol Sketches*. Next, every translation is examined with regards to its publishing context, translator/editor, and the medium in which it was featured. The content analysis focuses on shifts in translation, primarily at the level of macro-structural equivalence.

THE SEBASTOPOL SKETCHES

In 1854, Lev Tolstoy was a 26-year-old artillery officer at the Crimean port of Sebastopol, besieged by French, British, and Ottoman troops as the Crimean War unfolded. A dispute over access to Palestine’s holy places that triggered the conflict was cast against geopolitical powerplay (Figs 2011, 2–48). At the time, Tolstoy was unknown as a writer, having published a few short stories anonymously. The Crimean campaign resulted in three stories published in 1855 and 1856 in *Sovremennik* (The Contemporary), now known as *Sevastopol’skie rasskazy* (Sebastopol Sketches, 1855, 1932). “Sevastopol’ v dekabre mesjace” (“Sebastopol in the Month of December”) takes the form of a tour around the besieged town with a narrator guiding the reader in the second person. The narrator travels to the city by boat, visits a lazaret, and finally makes his way to the core of the town’s defenses. “Sevastopol’ v mae” (“Sebastopol in May”) depicts the wartime lives of a group of officers. The patriotism of the first story switches to an overt cynical voice, which mocks the needless carnage and the officers’ vanity. “Sevastopol’ v avguste 1855” (“Sebastopol in August 1855”)² is the most action-packed story and features the final battle, culminating in Russian defeat. Facing censorship from both military and civil authorities, the *Sovremennik* publications differ considerably from Tolstoy’s manuscripts. In 1856 Tolstoy published a less censored version in the booklet *Voennye rasskazy* (War Stories; Burnašëva 2002, 387–404, 460–470; Layton 2008, 15–18). Written and published as the war was unfolding, the *Sebastopol Sketches* are closely tied to the topicality of the day. Lydia Ginzburg astutely remarked, “Tolstoi was a veteran of the Sevastopol’ campaign, yet he did not write memoirs about it. He –

the creator of worlds – transformed his military experience into the artistic revelations of the *Sevastopol' Stories*" (1991, 24). Even though the plot is subordinate to the descriptive approach in "December", one needs to bear in mind that Tolstoy was not a war correspondent.

Five translations fall within the scope of this paper: "Une journée à Sévastopol en décembre 1854" (Tolstoy 1855, orig. "Sevastopol' v dekabre mesjace"), "La littérature et la vie militaire en Russie" (Tolstoï 1856, orig. "Sevastopol' v dekabre mesjace" and "Sevastopol' v avguste"), "Sébastopol – mai 1855" (Tolstoï 1876, orig. "Sevastopol' v mae"), "Souvenirs de Sébastopol" (Tolstoï 1885a, orig. "Sevastopol' v mae"), and "Scènes du siège de Sébastopol" (Tolstoï 1885b, orig. "Sevastopol' v mae")³.

WARTIME PROPAGANDA (1855)

Barely a week after publishing the *Sovremennik* edition on July 1, 1855, "Une journée à Sévastopol en décembre 1854" was published in the Brussels newspaper *Le Nord*. According to Nikolai Gusev (1954, 562) Czar Alexander II inspired the French translation of "December". Founded by the Russian Foreign Department during the Crimean War, *Le Nord* was designed to uphold Russia's interests in the West, and operated from Belgium, a neutral state with a conveniently liberal press regime. As the Crimean War was the first war to be covered by news correspondents, the emerging mass press left its mark. Political leadership was forced to take public opinion into account; this explains the displeased reaction to the "hostile" paper by British and, in particular, French authorities. In France, newspapers faced restrictions, and the regime of Napoleon III was on its guard for any signs of public dismay (Case 1954, 25). Belgian officials referred to the constitutional freedom of the press, but according to the French envoy Adolphe Barrot, this could hardly apply to a newspaper sponsored by its adversary Russia, and he pleaded outright for the prohibition of the paper. Violating international laws would not go unpunished, he warned the Belgian home secretary. Belgian's king Leopold I agreed with Barrot, even though the freedom of the press was a sensitive issue in domestic politics, and the proposed ban on the newspaper lacked any legal basis. The authorities however were vigilant not to provoke the French and questioned the Russian ambassador, who was quick to deny Russia's involvement. Shortly before the maiden edition was published in June 1855, the home secretary took action after a previous warning did not have much effect. Taking advantage of immigration laws, three collaborators with *Le Nord* were expelled (Lademacher 1971, 189–192; Anckaer 2014, 93–94; Ronin 1991, 2–14). Against this troublesome background, "Une journée" appeared in *Le Nord*.

The version in *Le Nord* is 40% shorter than the *Sovremennik* publication. Most of the cuts are editorial: some paragraphs are summarized, and others are erased. This raises the question as to the extent to which those interventions are deliberately altering the text's message. When the narrator at the onset of the story travels by boat across the bay into the city, he passes by the sunken ships in the Sebastopol roadstead. These sunken vessels are a part of the Rus-

sian defenses, obstructing the entrance to the port. A sailor notices that one of the vessels is still equipped with cannons. In the translation, there is no sign of the barrier of sunken boats. Other geographical indications are purposefully altered:

На Северной стороне денная деятельность понемногу начинает заменять спокойствие ночи (L.N.T. [Tolstoy] 1855, 333).

[In the northern part of the city daytime activities slowly begin to replace the tranquility of the night.]⁴

This becomes:

Dans la Tchernaia l'animation du jour commence peu à peu à remplacer le repos de la nuit ([Tolstoy] 1855, 1).

[In the Tchernaia daytime activities gradually replace the tranquility of the night.]

The northern part of Sebastopol, the Russian stronghold, does not equal the Tchernaia, which is located in the eastern part of the town. When the narrator climbs up to the fortifications surrounding the city from the south the description is consistent with Tolstoy's account, but not when distances are involved: 200 steps become 300 steps. This is an error perhaps, but in the following paragraph, Tolstoy's narrator takes "another 300 steps further", making a mistake unlikely. Sizing down the text does not necessarily mean that its message is deliberately altered and could be due to a desire to make it fit the newspaper's format. However, when the source text is replaced by new content or paragraphs are added, these are more likely to reflect *Le Nord's* intentions. The siege was still going on when the newspaper printed the translation, and Sebastopol's geography was quintessential to a successful siege of the town. This may explain why details providing information about the defense and the military situation are left out or deliberately blurred.

The content of *Le Nord* is the result of an elaborate editorial process, stretching the limits of domestic censorship at the time. A comparison of the *Sovremennik* and *Voennye rasskazy* texts shows that censors were primarily vigilant to uphold the military's image, excluding, for example, seemingly trite remarks about the "clumsy rowing" of some sailors. One week after the publication of "Une journée", the Parisian *La Presse* exposed the involvement of the highest political levels in the newspaper's editorial board:

It is at the chancellery of M. de Nesselrode, Minister of Foreign Affairs, where not only the correspondence but also the substantive articles published by the Brussels Russian newspaper *Le Nord* are drafted. Several attachés of the chancellery are responsible for this work [...]. These articles are not sent directly to the editors of *Le Nord* but are sent through the Russian Legation in Brussels (*La Presse* 1855, July 21).

Although *Le Nord* disavowed the allegations ("completely false"), the details and the fact that the report came from the newspaper's correspondent in St. Petersburg add to their credibility and Belgian newspapers were eager to republish the disclosing information (*Le Bien Public* 1855, July 24; *Journal De Charleroi* 1855, July 23).

The message the Foreign Department presents in *Le Nord* is not one of Russian victimhood. Leaving out the horrible details of a lazaret where surgery is performed attests to this. At that point the narrative is interrupted and – as if it were a staged play – the following is added: “[B]ut it is time to draw a curtain on these dismal scenes that have perhaps already shocked the delicate eyes of peace’s happy children.” In this addition the translator (or editor) reveals himself. He directly addresses the readership (“heureux enfants de la paix”) and is not using the expected second person “you” (“вы” in Russian), leaving the phrase out of sync with the rest of the story. In the penultimate paragraph, the translator/editor adds another remark. In the original, the narrator contemplates the patriotism that allows the defenders of Sebastopol to endure the hardships of the siege. The paragraph ends with the quote of admiral Kornilov who, during an inspection of the bulwarks, roared “If we have to, we’ll die, but we won’t surrender Sebastopol.” Soldiers allegedly called out “We’ll die, hurrah!” In *Sovremennik* the narrator subsequently comments:

только теперь рассказы про эти времена перестали быть для вас прекрасным историческим преданием, но сделались достоверностью, фактом. Вы ясно поймете, вообразите себе тех людей, которых вы сейчас видели, теми героями, которые в те тяжелые времена не упали, а возвышались духом и с наслаждением готовились к смерти, не за город, а за родину. Надолго оставит в России великие следы эта эпопея Севастополя, которой героем был народ русский... (L.N.T. [Tolstoy] 1855, 347–348)

[Only now have the tales of those days ceased to be just so many beautiful legends for you: they have become authentic, a fact. You will clearly understand, picture to yourself, the people you have just seen, those heroes who in those stern days did not lose heart but became even more exalted in spirit and gladly prepared to die not for the town, but their motherland. This epic of Sebastopol, the hero of which was the Russian people, will leave its deep impress on Russia for a long time to come...]

In “Une journée” this becomes:

Et ces deux mots vous les avez traduits en fait à la face de l’Europe; et si la grande épopée de Sévastopol est destiné (sic) à vivre éternellement dans la mémoire du monde, c’est que vous en avez été les héros! ([Tolstoy] 1855, 2)

[And those two words (i.e., in Russian: we’ll die, hurrah!), you have translated them in the face of Europe; and if the grand epic tale of Sebastopol is destined to live forever in the memory of the world, it’s because you have been its heroes!]

Vladimir Ronin (1991, 15) and Caryl Emerson (2009, 1855) read the translation in *Le Nord* as a showcase of the patriotism of Sebastopol’s defenders but there is more nuance to the picture. The paragraph that is particularly seething with patriotism (“prepared to die for their motherland”) is toned down drastically and the events at Sebastopol are extrapolated to a European and global scale: the epic of Sebastopol and the heroic Russian people defending it now belong to the entirety of world history. This adaptation acquaints the readers of *Le Nord* with the war stage where the belligerent parties had realized that a total victory was unlikely.

During the first months of 1855, there had been negotiations in Vienna, while at the battleground each side tried to consolidate a strong position. By June 1855 Russian officials knew that Sebastopol could not be held and were worried that Austria might enter the war. Given the circumstances, a diplomatic way out was conceivable (Figs 2011, 395–448). The translation not only aligns with the newspaper's mission, but suggests the deployment of soft diplomacy as well. In the very same edition that features “Une journée”, there is a remarkable appeal to the Belgian king Leopold to mediate in the conflict. “No monarch would certainly be more dignified and more capable than H.M. Leopold I to fulfill this delicate and supreme mission” (*Le Nord* 1855, 1), the newspaper claimed. Having served as general of the Russian armies that faced Napoleon and being Queen Victoria's uncle, Leopold was well-placed for an intermediary role and had mediated between France, England, and Russia in the run-up to the Crimean War. By 1855, Leopold was particularly focused on good relationships with neighboring France, which was trying to recruit Belgium to the allied camp (Deneckere 2011, 500–527). France and Britain's pressure in the case of *Le Nord* had put the paper under scrutiny. When he was visiting Queen Victoria in July 1855, Leopold told the British foreign secretary Clarendon that he personally would rather have the press silenced, but the constitution was in his way. It is doubtful that the publication of “Une journée” had any significant influence; with the exposing of *Le Nord* as a tool of Russian propaganda its potential to sway public opinion had evaporated. In the eyes of the authorities, the paper had already discredited itself, and later in July, the Belgian state tightened the screws, imposing an interdiction on the sale of *Le Nord* in railway stations.

LITERATURE AND MILITARY LIFE (1856)

The Crimean War sparked interest in Russia and (consequently) its literature in both the United Kingdom and France (Figs 2019, 205–206). In Paris the leading *Revue des Deux Mondes* paved the way in its 1856 summer issue with “La littérature et la vie militaire en Russie”. The article merges the recently-ended war with the literature deriving from it and is built on the premise that novels are valuable historical documents “which neither flatter nor systematically belittle the Russian soldier and whose authors write under the influence of the events they have seen, retracing the customs of which by experience they know the great and the small sides” (Delaveau 1856, 775).

The article contains large excerpts from Tolstoy's “December” and “August” stories. Its author, Henri-Hippolyte Delaveau (1808–1862), was a Moscow-born French journalist and translator (see Baer and Olshanskaya 2013, 57). Delaveau's article is built around the central question “How are the czar's soldiers portrayed?” He believes that “the qualities and faults of the fierce fighters that France has encountered twice” match with “the gradual march of Russian literature along the path of severe analysis and the faithful reproduction of national mores” (776). Assuming that literature is a solid indicator of Russia's military physiognomy, he brings out the mindset of soldiers at the beginning and during the final days of the siege. Characteristic of Delaveau's text is a mixture of translation and paraphrase, the latter acting as a narrator summarizing

the intermediary actions. Both sets of text are visually distinctive as the translation is printed in a smaller font and quotation marks are used. An outline of the stories shows that the translation (78%) is predominant. Notwithstanding the paragraphs linking up the translated chapters, Delaveau also inserts his own interjections. These suggest an interval in time (“some moments later”, 794–795) or explain the change of scene (“hardly had we set foot on the platform when the fierceness of the struggle was revealed in all its horror”, 790) and smooth the transitions in the fragmented text. As Delaveau wants to portray the Russian military for his readers, the text is selected accordingly, but selectively. The soldiers in the translation are brave, even in the face of death. Comments suggesting otherwise have been removed. In chapter 23, for instance, Vlang, a minor character, takes shelter when shells are falling and repeatedly urges his officer to do the same. The translation omits both. On the other hand, Delaveau avoids all paragraphs that are potentially offensive to French readers. Considering how well informed Delaveau is, it is remarkable that the second war story is not even mentioned. He must have realized that the authoritarian press regime of the Second Empire would not accept the harsh comments about Napoleon III in Sebastopol in “May”. When, at the end of the “August” story, the Russian army withdraws, soldiers cross the Sebastopol roadstead by boat. Tolstoy’s story ends as follows:

Почти каждый солдат, взглянув с Северной стороны на оставленный Севастополь, с невыразимою горечью в сердце вздыхал и грозился врагам (Tolstoy 1932, 119).

[When looking back at the abandoned Sebastopol from the North Side, almost every soldier heaved an inexpressibly bitter sigh and waved his fist at the enemy.]

The *Revue* ends with Tolstoy’s penultimate paragraph:

Personne ne sifflait mot sur le tillac, mais aux sifflemens de la vapeur et aux piétinemens des chevaux se mélaient parfois les ordres du commandant et les gémissemens des blessés (Delaveau 1856, 802).

[On the deck no word was whispered, but the whistles of steam and the trampling of horses from time to time mixed with the commander’s orders and the moans of the wounded.]

This is followed by Delaveau’s comment:

Ici s’arrête le récit de M. Tolstoï. Ce que l’auteur y met surtout en lumière, c’est l’influence exercée par une grande responsabilité sur l’homme de guerre (802).

[Here ends Mr. Tolstoy’s story. Above all, the author highlights the grave responsibility that weighs on men of war.]

The vengeful exclamations by the retreating soldiers in the original story contrast with the defeated soldiers in Delaveau’s translation. In the translation, the vindictive voice has been silenced.

SELF-CRITICISM (1876)

Between March 29 and April 6, 1876, *Le Temps* published “Sebastopol in May” as a *feuilleton*, a serialized story. Translator Charles Rollinat (1810–1877) was a washed-up musician who had spent years in Russia. Upon his return to France in 1874, he approached his old friend, the writer George Sand, and she was able to get him a position

at the *Revue des Deux Mondes* where Rollinat was “to translate, extract or summarize” from Russian (Genevray 2011, 160–161). The job at the *Revue* was a disappointment, however: Rollinat ended up compiling bibliographies. Sand now turned to *Le Temps*, one of the leading newspapers in Paris, where Rollinat published both articles and translations, including “Sébastopol – mai 1855”, which he translated in 1875.

Rollinat’s source-text was the *Voennye rasskazy*. With only one macrostructural change (chapter 4 begins halfway through Tolstoy’s 3rd chapter) the translation does not stray from the source text and taboos are absent. The translation contains harsh criticism that the authoritarian regime of Napoleon III would not have tolerated (cf. de Broglie 1979, 123), both of the French: “But at least it is consoling to know that it is not we (i.e., the Russians) who have started the war, that we are only defending our country” (Tolstoï 1876, April 6, 1) and its leader: “You’ll find that each one of us is a little Napoleon, in short, a monster, asking only wounds and bumps, always ready to fight and kill hundreds” (Tolstoï 1876, April 5, 1). The French 1870 defeat against Prussia had not only put an end to the Second Empire but left the nation in a state of collective defeatism, out of which was born, in Parisian salons, the idea of a Franco-Russian alliance. The concept was still premature, but the conditions were conducive to a more reflective approach to the Crimean War. Later that decade, hostility grew against the newly-formed German Empire in Russia as well. At the Berlin conference, settling the Russian-Turkish War of 1877, Russia was frustrated for not having gained more influence in the Balkans (Kennan 1979, 36–39). In both countries, grievances were focused on a common enemy: Germany.

THE RUSSIAN ARMY THROUGH A CRIMEAN LENS

In April 1885, *Le Figaro* published, in its literary supplement, “Souvenirs de Sébastopol” (Memories of Sebastopol). Presenting the “May” story as an 1885 memoir of the Crimean War was a shift in the perception of the story that testifies to the gap in time. Mikhail Ackinasi (Michail Aškinazi, 1851–1914) prompted the translation: “One of our Russian friends sends us the following pages, unpublished [sic] in France, by count Tolstoy.” Aškinazi’s translation drifts away from the source text, condensing it from 16 down to six chapters (chapter 1 is followed by 11, then 7, 8 and 14–16). The omission of major plotlines leads to inconsistencies: in chapter 16 the character Praskuchin suddenly appears to be dead while the omitted chapters 11 and 12 describe his death in close detail. In 1902 Aškinazi (by then he had adopted the “French” nom de plume Michel Delines) published a complete translation (*Souvenirs du comte Léon Tolstoï*) which suggests that the jumbled translation in *Le Figaro* had been an editorial choice. The newspaper introduced the translation as a “most strikingly realistic account” of the siege of Sebastopol which “will be read with all the more interest as at this moment the Russian army has just come to the fore of public curiosity” (Tolstoï 1885a, 57). The fashionable and conservative *Le Figaro* echoes the debate on the Franco-Russian alliance, which by 1885 had outgrown the salons and was a daily topic in the press, promoted by the influential socialite Juliette Adam and her sympathizers. Later on, the Adam circle had embraced antisemitism and grew intolerant towards Russian emigrants (largely revo-

lutionaries in exile), denouncing them to the Russian political police (Hillis 2017, 55–72). When the military alliance was finally signed, Delines published the book *Russie: nos alliés chez eux* (Russia: Our allies at home, 1893). The theme suited him well. Previously he had written *Les influences françaises en Russie* (French influences in Russia, 1884), *La France jugée par la Russie* (France judged by Russia, 1887), and *Nos amis les russes* (The Russians, our friends, 1887). Before emigrating in 1878 he got involved in the revolutionary movement in Odessa, and throughout his life, he was an advocate for the Jewish cause. His novels about revolutionaries (*Les victimes du tzar* – The Czar's victims, 1881) and the persecution of Jews (*La chasse aux juifs!* – The hunt for Jews!, 1887) both seem to be autobiographical. In the light of his biography, the extent to which he supported the uneasy marriage between Russian autocracy and French revanchism remains questionable.

Only months later, the *Revue des Deux Mondes* published another translation of the “May” story. The translator of these “Scènes du siège de Sébastopol” (Scenes from the siege of Sebastopol) is “une Russe” (a Russian woman), in reality the noblewoman Irina Paskevič (1835–1925). Together with translations of the two other stories the Paskevič translation was published as *Memories of Sebastopol* in book volume by Hachette the following year. The translation in the *Revue* is the only one without macrostructural interventions. As a magazine with a layout similar to a book, the *Revue* was less prone to the constraints faced by other periodicals. The translation is introduced by Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé (1848–1910), whose articles on Russian literature in the *Revue* had been drawing a lot of attention. Tolstoy, de Vogüé emphasizes, was an officer during the war and wrote the sketches “from his recollections (*memoires*)” (481) which implicitly vouches for their accuracy as an autobiographical rendering but distorts the simultaneousness of the sketches, written at the time of the war. In his articles on Russian literature and the collected volume, the seminal *Le roman russe* (Russian novel, 1886), de Vogüé makes a strong case for Russian literature as a much-needed rejuvenation of French culture. A veteran of the disastrous 1870 campaign and a former Russia-based French diplomat, de Vogüé received hardly any attention for his para-literary motives, although he did not hide them and merely left his purposes implicit. “For literary reasons [...] – and for reasons of another order that I will pass over in silence because everybody knows what I mean – I am convinced that we should try to bring the two countries together” (1886, vii). Needless to say, that de Vogüé refers to the ongoing courtship dance between the two nations.

In 1892, the French and Russian governments became allies. The next year, *Le Nord* moved from Brussels to the French capital (Sergeeva 2001). Adopting the baseline “Organe de la politique et des intérêts franco-russes” (Tribune of Franco-Russian politics and interests), *Le Nord* became one of the most ardent champions of the alliance.

CONCLUSION

The French translations of the *Sebastopol Sketches* reveal a pattern of engaging with the topicality of the era, ranging from an act of soft diplomacy targeted at public opinion and/or policymakers during the Crimean War to attempts to amplify the Russophile noise of the 1880s. As the context was explicit for contemporary read-

ers, the intertextuality is often subtle and limits itself to paratextual references: an introductory note or a title fitting to the interests of the day, for example.

Abridged translations are not uncommon in periodicals, inadvertently helping to reconstruct the context. Not only is the choice of what is selected for translation revealing, but perhaps even more essential and telling are the deliberate choices to deselect certain texts. In 1855, diplomatic and military motives constrain *Le Nord*. Delaveau in 1856 aims to show Russian soldiers “in real life” but the image is distorted and limited to heroism, implicitly acknowledging France’s military success as a glorious victory over fierce enemies. By omitting the “May” story, Delaveau avoids criticism of France and its emperor, Napoleon III. In 1876, a change of regime and the softening distance of time made a confrontation with the Crimean War’s unsettling truths no longer impossible, creating the possibility of catharsis. In the 1885 translations in *Le Figaro* and the *Revue des Deux Mondes* the military conflict of the past is cast in a time of increasing rapprochement. The (de)selection mechanisms applied are far-reaching at first sight. One could argue that Delaveau wrote a review article, rather than crafting a translation. Adding sentences to smooth transitions (or, more delicately, using paraphrase or interjections), restructuring plot elements, and highlighting distinct features all belong to the cut-and-pasting connected with media processes but are nevertheless not alien to the periodical translator’s toolbox. These practices of *transediting* relate to contemporary translation of news items (Schäffner 2012, 866–869). Identifying text-surgical methods such as addition, substitution or deletion can help to understand the functionality of a translation at a given time and place.

Its subject, the Crimean War, made Tolstoy’s text relevant to editors, at certain times. Therefore, as the examples show, the selection works at two interdependent levels: the text is selected as a function of its topicality and the translation is carefully groomed to match the prevailing discourse. One could argue that Tolstoy’s hyperrealist war prose was primarily conceived as non-fictional content and managed likewise. Delaveau (791) described the “August” story as “meticulous as a diary” and by 1885 the stories are perceived as memoirs. The *Sebastopol Sketches*, however, are by no means an exception to the shifting labels: Turgenev’s *Zapiski ochotnika* (A huntsman’s sketches) were presented as *Mémoires d’un seigneur russe* (Recollections of a Russian lord, 1854).

The results of this case study suggest that source texts are predominantly treated as journalistic content, which is adapted to fit the format, the readerships’ sensitivities, and (covert) purposes in alignment with the dominant discourse.

NOTES

¹ For the transliteration of Russian names, the ISO R-9 standard is used, except for Tolstoy (instead of *Tolstoj*).

² Henceforth I use the abbreviations “May”, “August”, “December”, “Une journée”.

³ Unless otherwise stated, all translations from French are my own.

⁴ Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Russian are my own.

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War, peace and Franco-Russian relations: French translations of Tolstoy's "Sebastopol Sketches" in periodicals (1855–1885)

Fiction in periodicals. Russian-French translation. Leo Tolstoy. "Sebastopol Sketches". Crimean War. Franco-Russian alliance.

French translations of Tolstoy's Crimean war prose (published in periodicals between 1855 and 1885) were designed to reflect the dominant discourse of the era. These translations of the *Sebastopol Sketches* reveal a pattern of engaging with the topicality in this period, ranging from an act of soft diplomacy to the amplification of the Russophile noise of the 1880s. This article proposes a context-driven approach to reconstruct the discourse (often only implied). An analysis of macrostructural equivalence shows a pattern of (de)selecting practices similar to processes used in contemporary mass-media: adding sentences, using paraphrases or interjections to smoothen transitions, restructuring plot elements, and highlighting distinct features.

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