



Strict Stress-Meter in English Poetry Compared With German and Russian

Marina Tarlinskaja

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This book investigates a verse form never before identified by Western scholars: the strict stress-meter. The main object of research, the English strict stress-meter, is typologically compared with its German and Russian counterparts. The conclusions are based on massive analyses of thousands of verse lines. The results make it possible to affirm that the strict stress-meter (called 'dolnik' by Russian scholars) is, on the one hand, an intermediary form between syllabotonic and accentual. On the other hand, the data show that poets treated this form as a meter in its own right; its quantitative 'thresholds' oppose it to both 'loose iamb' and accentual verse. Actual strict stress-meter verse is compared to its 'prose models' to find out where the poets followed their 'language givens' and where they deviated from ordinary speech tendencies. Thematic 'gravitations' of the strict stress-meter, as opposed to other meters (such as iambic and trochaic tetrameter, iambic pentameter and the ternary meter in several stanzaic variants), were also researched. Unmistakable thematic 'selectiveness' of the strict stress-meter is an additional proof that poets treated it not just as a variant of other meters, but as a verse form in its own right. The results increase our understanding of the history of European and American literatures.<

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