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## Reproducing *il primo quadro del mondo*: Fedor Iordan's Engraving of Raphael's *Transfiguration*, 1835-1850

In 1835, while in Rome as a pensioner of the St Petersburg Academy of Arts, Russian printmaker Fedor Iordan embarked on his monumental engraving after Raphael's *Transfiguration* (Fig. 1). Iordan remained in the Eternal City for almost fifteen years, diligently working on the plate thanks to the financial assistance from variably the Russian Academy, the public, and Tsar Nicholas I. As an academic pensioner sent abroad to improve his technical skills in printmaking, Iordan had been tasked with reproducing a painting from either the French or the Italian school in the traditional technique of engraving with a burin. Raphael's *Transfiguration*, the last work completed by the painter and referred to during this period as *il primo quadro del mondo* – or “the foremost painting in the world” – seemed like the right, even if ambitious choice for Iordan to showcase his European training and to make his mark. In his print, which measured an exceptional 95.5 x 66.7 cm – one of the largest single-board engravings at the time – Iordan expertly worked to translate Raphael's figures, light, and colours into the black-and-white linear form of the printmaking medium. Transforming the richness of the original into a large sheet of tonal greys, Iordan patiently and painstakingly followed every detail, every expression. Upon completing the engraving, Iordan returned to St Petersburg, where he was awarded the prestigious title of Professor in recognition of his work. And yet, the promise envisioned in the print appeared not to have been fully realised. Despite garnering accolades and celebratory dinners, Iordan's *Transfiguration* caused some hesitation among cultural figures and, for some artists, even disappointment.

This article aims to revisit the discourse surrounding Iordan's print to better understand its problematic place not only in Russian printmaking, but also in European printmaking and Russian art more broadly. Notwithstanding its notoriety, the engraving has received little critical attention. In scholarship on print-



Fig. 1 Fedor Iordan / Raphael; *The Transfiguration*; 1835-1850; engraving, etching; 95.5 x 66.7 cm; London; The British Museum

making and Russian art, in spite of Iordan's ubiquitous presence and prominence at the St Petersburg Academy, he is at most referenced in passing, with his lengthy memoirs mainly providing juicy gossip for historians working on other artists in Italy (Fig. 2). By scrutinising the production and reception of Iordan's *Transfiguration*, this article examines the reasons behind this oversight by exposing the larger issues the print had provoked. What effect did Iordan's experiences and encounters abroad – first in Paris, then London, and finally in Rome – have on his objectives and his ultimate development as a printmaker? What was initially perceived as so promising about his engraving? And why, for some, did it not live up to that

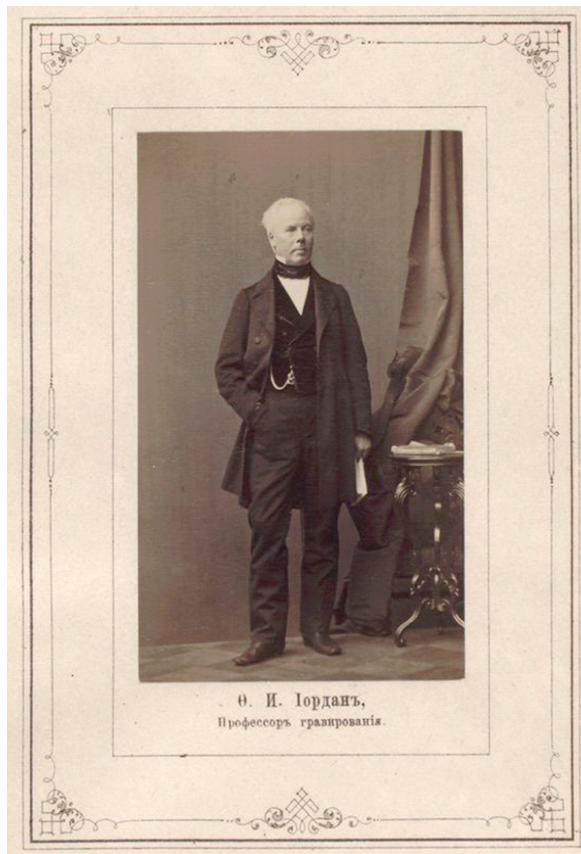


Fig. 2 Anon; Fedor Jordan; photography; published in *Album fotograficheskikh portretov avgustieishikh osob i lits, izviestnykh v Rossii*, St Petersburg 1865; Slavic and East European Collections; The New York Public Library

promise? I posit that Jordan's *Transfiguration*, having been started before the invention of photography but completed after, in many ways revealed and heightened the emerging polemical debates between the merits of traditional reproductive printmaking and the medium's shifting place among the arts. What is more, Jordan's engraving brought to light new questions regarding national identity that would dominate Russian artistic discourse in the ensuing decades. Analysing the issues raised by Jordan's *Transfiguration*, this article situates the artist's long studies and work abroad within the wider context of international printmaking and, most importantly, within the discussion of Russia's position in transnational artistic developments.

Jordan's life had been intertwined with the Russian Academy of Arts from an early age. Having been born in Pavlovsk, in 1809 the then nine-year-old Jordan entered the Academy under the patronage of Mariia



Fig. 3 Nikolai Utkin / Leonello Spada; Aeneas, Carrying his Father from Burning Troy; 1810; engraving, etching; 45.1 x 29.4 cm; London; The British Museum

Fedorovna.<sup>1</sup> At nineteen, Jordan was assigned to the engraving department, which was newly spearheaded by Professor Nikolai Utkin – a celebrated printmaker who had amassed international renown several years prior for, among other things, his print *Aeneas, Carrying His Father from Burning Troy* after a painting then thought to be by Domenichino (Fig. 3). While he was an academic pensioner in Paris in Charles Clément Bervic's studio, Utkin had been singled out by Napoleon for this engraving and was awarded the gold medal by the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture at the 1810 Salon.<sup>2</sup> He was further rewarded with a diamond ring by Tsar Alexander I for the high calibre of this print, and was praised as one of the few Russian artists able to compete with European masters in Konstantin Batiushkov's famously biting review of the Russian Academy in 1814.<sup>3</sup> Under Utkin's tutelage, Jordan progressed relatively quickly. He was awarded several silver medals for his drawings, the





Fig. 4 Fedor Iordan / Anton Losenko; Dying Abel; photographic reproduction; published in Nikolai Ivanovich Utkin: ego zhizn' i proizvedeniia by Dmitrii Rovinskiĭ, St Petersburg 1884; Slavic and East European Collections; The New York Public Library



Fig. 5 Joseph-Théodore Richomme / Raphael; La Ste Famille; c. 1822; engraving, etching; 49.8 x 35.5 cm; London; The British Museum

second gold medal for his engraving *Mercury and Argus* (after Petr Sokolov), and the first gold medal in

1827 for his print *Dying Abel* after Anton Losenko (Fig. 4).<sup>4</sup> For this engraving, Iordan also received a gold watch from Tsar Nicholas I and the right to study abroad as an academic pensioner.<sup>5</sup>

This role of pensioner came with clear instructions. Iordan was explicitly asked to learn about new print-making methods and practical aspects of his art form; these included innovative etching tools and roulettes as well as techniques such as aquatint, lavis, and crayon-manner, which were increasingly being practised in Western Europe.<sup>6</sup> The Academy advised Iordan:

“In these new times, the art of printmaking has made significant progress – follow its course, but avoid that dryness and coldness into which many print-makers fall while searching only for purity, forgetting the primary aspects of this beautiful and difficult art.”<sup>7</sup>

Iordan was instructed to focus on draughtsmanship and to choose a painting to reproduce either from the French or the Italian school, making the preparatory drawing from it in such a size as could be completed in engraving within three years – the allotted time for his pension.<sup>8</sup> With these directions and introductory letters in hand, Iordan left for Paris in August 1829. However, upon arriving and meeting his intended printmaking master Pierre-Alexandre Tardieu, who had come from a long dynasty of acclaimed printmakers and who had only recently been made an honorary member of the Russian Academy, Iordan had to report back that he chose to work with a different master as Tardieu turned out to be quite elderly. He wrote saying that instead he entered the studio of Joseph-Théodore Richomme, “considered the best by local printmakers”.<sup>9</sup> Having received the prestigious French Academy’s Prix de Rome for engraving in 1806, Richomme had become a well-regarded printmaker, known for his reproductions of Raphael’s paintings (Fig. 5).<sup>10</sup>

Immediately, Iordan began eagerly working on drawings and developing new prints. Following in his new teacher’s footsteps, he chose to engrave the heads of Raphael and Perugino after Raphael’s *The School of Athens*, and experimented in the etching



Fig. 6 Fedor Iordan / William Hogarth; The Idle 'Prentice Returned from Sea, and in a Garret with a Prostitute; 1833; plate 7 from The Works of William Hogarth: in a series of engravings: Industry and Idleness, vol. 1; engraving; 22.1 x 28.3 cm; Philadelphia, PA; Philadelphia Museum of Art

technique.<sup>11</sup> But, he soon noted that the French system of teaching printmaking greatly varied from that of his Russian professor's: he complained that the individualised approach was curtailed in favour of systemic, dry hatchings.<sup>12</sup> Less than a year after his arrival, the unanticipated political turmoil of the July Revolution forced the Academy to ask Iordan to relocate to London – which, while significantly more expensive than Paris, was undeniably acknowledged as the centre for contemporary printmaking.<sup>13</sup> Yet as Iordan wrote soon after the move, the specific art market in England stymied his aspirations:

“The art of printmaking in its remarkable effect, conditions conducive for working, and fidelity to those depicted, has been brought here [in England] to the highest degree of perfection; but unfortunately, according to local artists, the particular public taste for interior scenes does not allow printmakers to produce prints of historical subject matter.”<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, Iordan continued his studies, entering the studio of the reproductive printmaker Abraham Raimbach, starting another reproductive print after Raphael, *The Holy Family*, and trying his hand at the locally popular technique of steel engraving.<sup>15</sup> In the latter, he produced one of his rare “interior scenes”, a print after William Hogarth for an English publication of 1833 (Fig. 6). What is interesting here is that although



Fig. 7 Karl Briullov; The Last Day of Pompeii; 1830-1833; oil on canvas; 456.5 x 651 cm; St Petersburg; State Russian Museum

Iordan was explicitly forbidden by the Academy to work for financial gain or on anything outside his assignment (and the print after Hogarth certainly was both of these), his early prints, seen as trials that could improve his – and by extension Russian – printmaking were applauded by the Russian institution; they even secured him an extension for his pension for another three years, until 1835.<sup>16</sup>

In time, the tension between the local English art market and the Russian Academy's desire to see a classical French or Italian painting reproduced led Iordan to start looking elsewhere. In August 1833, he wrote to Utkin that he wished to go to Italy, saying that it would be equally beneficial in terms of training as staying in England, but it would allow him to see first-hand “the most famous paintings”, and to make drawings from originals that he could later use for engravings, “as the French printmakers do”.<sup>17</sup> (Here he was referencing the established practice of the French recipients of the Prix de Rome in engraving, who made numerous preparatory drawings for later prints while studying in Italy.<sup>18</sup>) Utkin and the Academy heeded Iordan's plea; and in late 1833, he first set out for Bologna where he met his friend Karl Briullov, then moved on to Florence, and finally, in early 1834, went to Rome, as he remembered: “like a Jew to his holy land”.<sup>19</sup>

When he arrived in Rome, having settled into a light-filled apartment on via Sistina, not far from Café Greco and the Spanish Steps, Iordan promptly set about studying those “most famous” works at the





Fig. 8 Fedor Iordan / Raphael; *The Holy Family*; 1833; engraving, etching; 35.5 x 28 cm; St Petersburg; State Russian Museum



Fig. 9 Johann Friedrich Wilhelm Müller / Raphael; *The Sistine Madonna*; 1808-1816; engraving, etching; 87 x 67 cm; Philadelphia, PA; Philadelphia Museum of Art

Vatican. Ecstatic for having seen the masterpieces, he wrote to Utkin, deciding that for his assignment he would reproduce Guercino's *The Incredulity of St. Thomas* of 1621. However, according to Iordan's memoirs, upon hearing this decision, Briullov protested and suggested that the printmaker focus instead on Raphael's *Transfiguration*.<sup>20</sup> With only eighteen months of his pension remaining, Iordan was sceptical: for one, he would be unable to gain access to the original to make the preparatory drawing, as it was constantly swarmed with artists; and secondly, the Italian master's work was significantly more complicated. Briullov objected, and Iordan recalled that the painter promised to secure him a space near the original. To Iordan's amazement, using his freshly acquired fame from the monumental *The Last Day of Pompeii*, Briullov succeeded (Fig. 7). Iordan relented, and with the unprecedented intention of rendering the final engraving as a large print, began to work on the preparatory drawing that would take him a year and a half to complete.

Although it appears that Iordan's choice for both the painting and the intended size of the print were inspired by Briullov and *that* artist's recent success, there were other additional factors that must have influenced the decision. Having begun his pension with an esteemed printmaker known for his reproductions of Raphael's paintings, and having just received a diamond ring from Tsar Nicholas I for his rendition of the Italian artist's *The Holy Family*, Iordan had obvious reasons to reproduce this master in particular (Fig. 8).<sup>21</sup> Moreover, during this period Raphael in general was firmly established as the apex of all art at the Russian and European academies – so the choice to reproduce Raphael's painting was not surprising. But the decision to make the engraving on such a large scale and the selection of the specific work was more nuanced. It must have stemmed from Iordan's awareness of some of the most celebrated European contemporary reproductive printmakers: namely German Johann Friedrich Wilhelm Müller, whose large rendition of *Sistine Madonna* was considered the epitome of a reproductive print, and Raphael Morghen, who had made two famed engravings after *Transfiguration*, one bigger than the next (Figs. 9 and 10). In fact, in his decision, Iordan seemed to engage not only



Fig. 10 Raphael Morghen / Raphael; *The Transfiguration*; 1801-1811; engraving, etching; 80 x 53.2 cm; London; The British Museum

in the cult of Raphael, which heralded draughtsmanship (and which was seen as the true test in the skill of a printmaker), but also with revered, recent European printmakers and reproductive printmaking practices. Likewise, he was responding to the concurrent shift toward monumentally-sized painting in Russia: from the already-mentioned Briullov to Fedor Bruni's *The Brazen Serpent* completed in 1840, and certainly, Aleksandr Ivanov's *The Appearance of Christ before the People* of 1837-1857, which measured 5.4 by 7.5 m (Fig. 11). Jordan was actively involved in discussing these aspirations and projects with the painters themselves: he had known all three from his time as a student in St Petersburg, and developed close friendships with Bruni and Ivanov while they too were working in Rome. In his memoirs, Jordan even recalled that he and Ivanov had committed to their respective monumental projects at the same time, with Ivanov ordering his large canvas simultaneously to Jordan purchasing the 1.5 pood, or 24 kg,

copper plate.<sup>22</sup> While Jordan's claim to the synchronisation of these actions has been disproven by historians, the fact that he positioned his work so carefully alongside Ivanov's painting speaks volumes about his original ambitions. Jordan had clearly been aspiring to participate in contemporary European reproductive printmaking practices while bridging his work with emerging objectives in Russian painting, thereby perhaps elevating Russian printmaking in both the Russian and international contexts.

The Council of the Academy, although wary of Jordan needing to extend his pension, was galvanised by the prospect of his grand project. In a subsequent letter to Prince Volkonskii, the president of the Academy Aleksei Olenin explained the institution's support:

"[Raphael's *Transfiguration*] is a matter of particular importance, for, if Jordan could one day produce a print after this painting, then, judging by his talent and art, he could bring honour to the Academy and the nation, especially since there is no print after this painting that is satisfactory or excellent as of yet."<sup>23</sup>

The fact that Jordan made his own preparatory drawing, and did so on such a large scale, had already exceeded previous conventions: both Müller and Morghen had used intermediary draughtsmen for their respective works. Similarly, that Jordan intended to engrave the whole of the massive plate himself was uncommon in European practices; in his memoirs, he recollected how other artists in Rome assumed he would invite other printmakers to complete portions, such as the sky or drapery, and how they were amazed to learn otherwise.<sup>24</sup> The promise envisioned in Jordan's *Transfiguration* was echoed in the Russian press. In the article "Russian Artists in Rome", published in the *Library for Reading* in 1835, the author declared that having seen the preparatory drawing in progress, Russia should expect in Jordan "the future foundation of printmaking in our nation, which has hitherto been mostly limited to the engraved works of N[ikolai] Utkin."<sup>25</sup>

Predictably, the Academy's concern was realised, and within a year Jordan asked for the first of numerous extensions. Initially he sent a request to stay





Fig. 11 Aleksandr Ivanov; *The Appearance of Christ to the People*; 1837-1857; oil on canvas; 540 x 750 cm; Moscow; State Tretyakov Gallery

in Rome so as to complete the first stage of the print – specifically to etch the contours of the figures and establish correct facial expressions (this use of etching as a supportive technique was a typical practice in reproductive printmaking).<sup>26</sup> Upon reviewing the impression submitted by Jordan of the etched top half of the image, the Council permitted him to stay two more years, stating that not to permit Jordan to complete at least the etching with immediate access to the original “would be contradictory to the aim of the endeavour, and to the responsibility of the Academy in encouraging talents that are great for the glory of the nation”.<sup>27</sup> Published reports repeated this sentiment. That year, in 1837, *The Artistic Newspaper* wrote that Jordan was making progress on the engraving, and that “the glory of adequately rendering in engraving the most significant of the works by the immortal Raphael – will be the glory of a Russian”.<sup>28</sup> The report continued, “the Russian engraver is going into battle with the most famous printmakers in the world and is giving hope for his victory.”<sup>29</sup> Having exhausted his allotted stipend however, the Academy forwarded Jordan 3000 rubles from its own budget.

But the extension and money were not enough. By late 1838, following yet another request to remain, the Academy suggested to Jordan that he advertise a subscription for his final engraving as a way to ensure the financial viability of his project and cover his costs in the meantime. In addition, in 1838 Jordan accepted a commission to engrave a portrait of Grand Duke Mikhail Pavlovich (which he completed within less than a year, and which the Academy appeared not to

mind). In 1842, four years later, the Academy asked the tsar to help pay for Jordan’s stay in Rome, noting that Karl Briullov himself commended the preparatory drawing and stated that “it was completed to such a level of perfection, that few, if any other printmakers in Europe could possibly compete”.<sup>30</sup> During his trip to Rome in 1845, Tsar Nicholas I visited Jordan to check on the progress, as a result of which he paid for a subscription of five impressions before lettering. This onslaught of petitions and commentary suggests that not only did Jordan’s endeavour drag on for significantly longer than either he or the Academy anticipated, but also that, throughout the long process, the Russian institution, the public, and even the tsar, were actively invested in the success of this print. The Academy clearly saw in the monumental engraving an opportunity and a promise for itself to gain international recognition for its achievements, and for Russian art in general.

In 1849, after the unrest in Rome in which Jordan was forced to take up arms, the Academy finally demanded that the printmaker return to St Petersburg. Before he left in 1850, he had his engraving printed in Italy. On seeing the end result, the Council of the Academy reported that no other print, neither by Dorigny nor by Morghen was so worthy or so faithful a reproduction of “the most important work by the eternal Raphael” (Fig. 12).<sup>31</sup> The Council awarded Jordan the title of Professor, praising him “as a Russian, who with his hard work brought honour to his art and glory to his teaching institution, the Imperial Academy of Arts”.<sup>32</sup> The reviewer for the *Library for Reading* wrote that

“with the power of extraordinary patience and talent, he [Jordan] overtook all of his predecessors in the art of printmaking and enriched Russian art with such a work, the likes of which we never had and few of which can be found abroad”.<sup>33</sup>

For the engraving, Jordan was also granted honorary memberships to the Berlin Academy of Arts, the Florence Academy, and the Urbino Academy.<sup>34</sup>

Despite this kind of public recognition, Jordan’s print did not please everyone. For one, according to the later memoirs of Jordan’s student, upon receiving



Fig. 12 Nicolas Dorigny / Raphael; The Transfiguration; 1705; etching, finished with engraving; 78.9 x 51.1 cm; London; The British Museum

the engraving Tsar Nicholas I observed, “Good, but sieve-like.”<sup>35</sup> In contrast to Morghen’s celebrated versions with their varied cross-hatchings, Jordan’s final state of *Transfiguration* used a uniform system of solid, smooth, and steady lines. The resulting visual effect was more sculptural, relief-like, rather than painterly. In addition to the tsar’s comment, other, more disparaging remarks followed. In an 1850 letter, Ivanov informed Nikolai Gogol that he had finally seen Jordan’s engraving, as the latter had exhibited it at a local shop in Rome before returning to St Petersburg. Ivanov wrote:

“I was disappointed that it was not only not better than Morghen, but not better than any of the other prints that exist in the world. But I have come to peace with Jordan, since he is not a native (*korennoi*) Russian.”<sup>36</sup>

In another letter, Ivanov elaborated on this idea:

“I do not think that all the invigorating changes in printmaking would heartily welcome his momentous work. His art is not native (*korennoi*), but rather a subordinate passion; his character is not adapted to the ambitions of our times, and finally, his heart – it’s not Russian.”<sup>37</sup>

Ivanov’s disappointment and the issues he raised, however privately, of native-ness, of character, of Russian-ness, indicate that in the time Jordan took to engrave his masterpiece, something significant was beginning to change in the understanding and in the aims of art.

Others, too, were forced to ask questions after seeing Jordan’s *Transfiguration*. At the 1851 dinner celebrating the work of both Ivan Aivazovskii and Jordan, historian Mikhail Pogodin gave a public speech honouring the engraving. While other, earlier versions after *Transfiguration* were exhibited next to Jordan’s print, Pogodin observed,

“Foreign artists unanimously judged [Jordan’s] aspirations, laughed.[...] How dare *quello Russo Moscovito* attempt to broach Raphael’s *Transfiguration*, especially as he had wanted to engrave it all himself [...] External circumstances were not more kind to the artist. The art of printmaking was falling [...]”

Pogodin continued,

“[But Jordan] decidedly surpassed everyone... Only Morghen could try to compete [...] But now we are faced with a question about the work: what place does the art of printmaking hold among the arts?”<sup>38</sup>

In raising *this* question, Pogodin voiced another shift that was beginning to occur, not only in Russia, but elsewhere in Europe: photography was starting to encroach on printmaking’s territory. With the possibility now to accurately reproduce any work of art – and do so quickly – artists and critics were driven to question the merits of traditional printmaking. Jordan would write in 1854:



“I am very frightened by photography, which is making great strides here [in Florence], and local portraitists are sitting around completely without jobs; now it is punishing portraitists, but then it will start on engravers [...]”<sup>39</sup>

With Raphael’s *Sistine Madonna* becoming one of the earliest paintings to be photographed, reproductive printmaking as an art form and as had been practised by Iordan, Müller, and Morghen, appeared to be under fire.

The issue that Iordan’s *Transfiguration* additionally seemed to raise, was what should mark the quality of a reproductive print: was it how *faithfully* the printmaker reproduced the original – as Iordan had done – or how subtly the printmaker *reinterpreted* the original? More and more, artists and critics, in Russia and elsewhere, began to doubt the very value of copying and the very ubiquity of the copy – the very practice of academic training – not only in prints, but also in painting and sculpture. And while the impact of evolving reproductive technology on changes in artistic education is outside the scope of this article, it is important to note that it was following this period that questions about originality came to the fore at the Academies.<sup>40</sup> Undoubtedly, reproductive printmaking continued to reign throughout the nineteenth century, and debated between printmaking’s merit as an art form, and its place among other arts, continued to be played out in the press, and by artists and printmakers alike. The leading nineteenth-century Russian critic Vladimir Stasov, for example, would go on to dedicate one of his first major articles to the conflict between printmaking and photography in 1856.<sup>41</sup>

But within the confines of the immediate historical context, Iordan’s experiences abroad and his *Transfiguration* more than anything else signified a major change in the artistic discourse in Russia. While Iordan had arrived in the Eternal City, ambitious and eager to follow in the footsteps of European masters, and while he succeeded to an extent in creating a well-crafted print, his choice of painting and his style of engraving did not withstand the test of time. In the almost fifteen years it took Iordan to complete his work, the atmosphere and ideas on art *outside* of Rome, and in particular in Russia, had changed. As

Stepan Shevyrev already remarked in his 1841 article “Russian Artists in Rome”, “It is high time for us to instill our native soul and life into these ideal and graceful forms learnt by Russian artists in Raphael’s birthplace.”<sup>42</sup> These issues of national character, of the Russian spirit, as confided by Ivanov and Shevyrev, began to garner increasing attention. And although historians have perhaps excused Iordan’s *Transfiguration* as simply a symptom of its era or as a failed attempt by an artist to change, adapt, and develop with his times, as an object – made after an Italian master, by a Russian printmaker, in Rome – it raised significant questions for Russian art. As an engraving, with its thousands of incised lines, it threw emerging issues into relief.

## Endnotes

- An earlier version of this article was presented at the Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies convention in November 2015; I am grateful for the invaluable feedback from my panellists and the audience. I would also like to thank Sylva van der Heyden for encouraging me to think about Iordan’s engraving in the first place, and Pavel Mardilovich for commenting on drafts of this article.
- For more on Iordan, see Dmitrii Rovinskii, *Podrobnnyi slovar’ russkikh graverov XVI-XIX vv.* [The detailed dictionary of Russian engravers of the XVI-XIX centuries], St Petersburg 1895, vol. 1, p. 431-446; Nikolai Sobko, *Zhizn’ i proizvedeniia F. I. Iordana* [The life and works of F. I. Iordan], in: Vestnik iziashchnykh iskusstv, vol. 2, 1884, p. 65-85, 208-227, 264-280; and, Fedor Iordan, *Zapiski rektora i professora Akademii khudozhestv Fedora Ivanovicha Iordana* [Notes of rector and professor of the Academy of Arts Fedor Ivanovich Iordan]. First published in *Russkaia Starina*, March-October 1891, reprinted Moscow 1918, St Petersburg 2012.
  - Dmitrii Rovinskii, *Nikolai Ivanovich Utkin, ego zhizn’ i proizvedeniia* [Nikolai Ivanovich Utkin, his life and works], St Petersburg 1884, p. 11-12, 144-145; Galina Printseva, *Nikolai Ivanovich Utkin 1780-1863* [Nikolai Ivanovich Utkin 1780-1863], Leningrad 1983, p. 33-34.
  - Konstantin Batiushkov, *Progulka v Akademiiu khudozhestv* [A stroll to the Academy of Arts], in: Sochineniia, Moscow 1955, p. 339.
  - Rovinskii 1895, *Podrobnnyi slovar’*, vol. 1, p. 431.
  - Sobko 1884, *Zhizn’ i proizvedeniia*, p. 69.
  - Anon, *Instruktsiia Pensioneru Imperatorskoi Akademii khudozhestv Fedoru Iordanu* [Instructions for the Pensioner of the Imperial Academy of Arts Fedor Iordan], in: *Zapiski rektora i professora Akademii khudozhestv Fedora Ivanovicha Iordana*, by Fedor Iordan, St Petersburg 2012, p. 308-311.
  - Anon 2012, *Instruktsiia Pensioneru*, p. 310: “Искусство гравирования в новейшее время сделало большие успехи -- наблюдайте ход его, но избегайте той сухости и холодности, в которую впадают граверы, ищущие одной чистоты, не заботясь о преимущественнейших частях сего прекрасного и трудного искусства.” (Translations are the author’s own unless otherwise stated.)
  - Anon 2012, *Instruktsiia Pensioneru*, p. 310.
  - Iordan’s report to the Council of the Academy, as quoted in Sobko 1884, *Zhizn’ i proizvedeniia*, p. 72: “признана тамошними мастерами за самую лучшую”.

10. For more on Richomme, see Stephen Bann, *Parallel Lines: Printmakers, Painters and Photographers in Nineteenth-Century France*, New Haven / London 2001, p. 184-185; and, Susanne Anderson-Riedel, *The Sojourn of Engravers at the French Academy in Rome, 1806-1824, Artistic Voyage and Its Influence on Nineteenth-Century Engraving*, in: *The European Print and Cultural Transfer in the 18th and 19th Centuries*, ed. by Philippe Kaenel and Rolf Reichardt, New York 2007, p. 271-291.
11. Sobko 1884, *Zhizn' i proizvedeniia*, p. 72
12. Printseva 1983, *Utkin*, p. 150.
13. See for example Aleksei Olenin's letter to the Ministry of the Imperial Court, dated 9 August 1830, in Iordan 2012, *Zapiski*, p. 315.
14. *Raport F. I. Iordana v Sovet Imperatorskoi Akademii khudozhestv ot 3 noiabria (22 oktiabria) 1830 goda* [Report of F. I. Iordan to the Council of the Imperial Academy of Arts from 3 November (22 October) 1830], in: Iordan 2012, *Zapiski*, p. 317: "Гравировальное искусство по удивительному своему эффекту, приятству работы и верности изображаемых лиц доведено здесь до высшей степени совершенства: к несчастью, по словам здешних артистов, особенный вкус публики к домашним сценам не позволяет граверам производить исторические эстампы."
15. Sobko 1884, *Zhizn' i proizvedeniia*, p. 74-79.
16. Sobko 1884, *Zhizn' i proizvedeniia*, p. 75.
17. *Fragment pis'ma F. I. Iordana k N. I. Utkinu ot 1 avgusta 1833 goda* [Excerpt from F. I. Iordan's letter to N. I. Utkin from 1 August 1833], in: Iordan 2012, *Zapiski*, p. 329-330: "знаменитейшие произведения"; "как то делают французские граверы".
18. See Anderson-Riedel 2007, *The European Print*, p. 271-291.
19. Iordan 2012, *Zapiski*, p. 138: "я отправился в Рим как еврей в обетованную землю".
20. Iordan 2012, *Zapiski*, p. 143.
21. Iordan 2012, *Zapiski*, p. 334.
22. Iordan 2012, *Zapiski*, p. 144-145, p. 159.
23. Sobko 1884, *Zhizn' i proizvedeniia*, p. 210: "дело особой важности, ибо если бы Иордан мог когда-либо произвести эстамп с сей картины, то, судя по таланту и искусству его, он пренес бы честь Академии и отечеству, тем более, что вполне удовлетворительно-превосходного [sic] эстампа с таковой картины доселе еще не имеется".
24. Iordan 2012, *Zapiski*, p. 161.
25. Timofeev, *Russkie khudozhniki v Rime* [Russian artists in Rome], in: *Biblioteka dlia chteniia*, vol. 11, 1835, p. 87-88, as quoted in Sobko 1884, *Zhizn' i proizvedeniia*, p. 210: "будущую опору гравирования в нашем отечестве, почти ограничивающемся доселе в этом случае одними гравюрами произведениями Н. И. Уткина".
26. Iordan began working on the plate in September 1836. See footnote 404 in Iordan 2012, *Zapiski*, p. 159.
27. *Vypiska iz zhurnala Soveta Akademii ot 11 maia 1837 goda* [Extract from the journal of the Council of the Academy from 11 May 1837], in: Iordan 2012, *Zapiski*, p. 344: "было бы противно и пользе самого дела, и обязанности, лежащей на Академии ободрять дарования, превосходные для славы Отечества".
28. Anon, in: *Khudozhestvennaia gazeta*, September 1837, p. 193, as quoted in Sobko 1884, *Zhizn' i proizvedeniia*, p. 215: "слава передать в гравюре важнейшее из творений бессмертного [sic] Рафаэля достойным образом – будет слава Русского [sic] [...]"
29. Anon, in: *Khudozhestvennaia gazeta*, September 1837, p. 193, as quoted in Sobko 1884, *Zhizn' i proizvedeniia*, p. 215: "русский же гравер входит в состязание с знаменитейшими граверами в свете и дает надежду победить их". The progress of the print was commented on in the following publications: in 1837 in *The Art Newspaper*, in 1841 and 1842 in *The Muscovite*, in 1842 in *The St Petersburg Register*, and in 1846 in *Illustration*.
30. *Fragment protokola zasedaniia Soveta Imperatorskoi Akademii khudozhestv ot 17-19 noiabria 1842 goda* [Excerpt from the minutes of the Council of the Imperial Academy of Arts meeting from 17-19 November 1842], in: Iordan 2012, *Zapiski*, p. 348: "сделан с таким совершенством, с каким едва ли в состоянии сделать другой какой-либо гравер в Европе".
31. *Vypiska iz zhurnala Soveta Akademii ot 2 iunია 1850 goda* [Extract from the journal of the Council of the Academy from 2 June 1850], in: Iordan 2012, *Zapiski*, p. 348-349: "важнейшее творение бессмертного Рафаэля Санцио".
32. *Vypiska iz zhurnala*, in: Iordan 2012, *Zapiski*, p. 349: "как русский, принесший трудом своим честь художеству и славу образовавшей его Императорской Академии художеств".
33. David Matskevich, in: *Biblioteka dlia chteniia*, vol. 104, 1850, p. 90-92, as quoted in Sobko 1884, *Zhizn' i proizvedeniia*, p. 267: "силою необыкновенного [sic] терпения и таланта, он опередил всех своих предшественников в гравировальном искусстве и обогатил русское художество таким произведением, подобного [sic] которому еще у нас никогда не было и каких найдется немного и за границею".
34. Sobko 1884, *Zhizn' i proizvedeniia*, p. 270.
35. Ivan Pozhalostin, *Venok graveru Ivanu Petrovichu Pozhalostinu, k 175-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia* [Wreath to engraver Ivan Petrovich Pozhalostin, for 175th anniversary of his birth], Riazan' 2012, p. 95: "Хорошо - да решето."
36. *Pis'mo A. A. Ivanova k N. V. Gogoliu, vesna 1850 g. Rim* [Letter from A. A. Ivanov to N. V. Gogol, spring 1850. Rome], in: Iordan 2012, *Zapiski*, p. 354: "мне досадно было, что оно не только не лучше Моргена ... (но) и не лучше всех гравюр, какие находятся в свете. Но я замирился внутренне с Иорданом на том, что он не коренной русский." It should be noted that both Gogol and Ivanov were supporters of Iordan's endeavour during the latter's stay in Rome. In his will Gogol wrote that upon his death, his portrait should be engraved only by Iordan, whose work on *Transfiguration*, the writer claimed, had surpassed any previous printmaker. He wrote that because of the high price and the small number of print connoisseurs in Russia, he doubted that Iordan's monumental engraving could be distributed to garner him enough in return for all the work he had put into it – but Gogol believed the engraved portrait of himself would. As such, the writer urged people to buy only those portraits of himself that would be signed by Iordan, and asked those who had the finances not to buy his portrait but rather the print after *Transfiguration*, "which, according even to foreigners is the wreath of printmaking and is the glory of Russia". See Gogol's will in Iordan 2012, *Zapiski*, p. 361: "который, по признанию даже чужеземцев, есть венец гравировального дела и составляет славу русскую".
37. Aleksandr Ivanov's letter to Nikolai Gogol, dated 5 June 1850, as quoted in Sobko 1884, *Zhizn' i proizvedeniia*, p. 224: "не думаю, чтобы живительная перемена были в гравюрном мире и с самым счастливым приветием всю картину один [sic] труда. Его искусство не коренное, а починенная страсть; его характер не уработан под стать наступившей эпохи нашего времени, и наконец, его сердце – не русское."
38. Mikhail Pogodin's speech as quoted in Sobko 1884, *Zhizn' i proizvedeniia*, p. 267: "Иностранные художники единогласно осуждали его намерение, смеялись, [...] как дерзнул *quello Russo Moscovito*, братья за Рафаэлю Преображение, тем более, что он хотел гравировать всю картину один [...] Не меньше не благоприятны были для художника и внешние обстоятельства. Гравировальное искусство падало само по себе и унижалось в обществе. [...] Он решительно превзошел всех... Один Морген может идти в сравнение [...] Но теперь предстоит нам вопрос о самой работе: какое место занимает гравировальное искусство между искусствами?" (Italics in the original.)
39. *F. I. Iordan – A. P. Briullovu* [F. I. Iordan – A. P. Briullov], in: Arkhiv Briullovkykh, edited by I. A. Kubasov, St Petersburg 1900, p. 166: "...Сильно меня пугает фотография, которая здесь делает большие успехи, и портреты здешние сидят вовсе без работы; теперь она карает портретистов, а потом возьмется и за граверов [...]"
40. Paul Duro, *The Lure of Rome: The Academic Copy and the Académie de France in the Nineteenth Century*, in: *Art and the Academy in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Rafael Cardoso Denis and Colin Trodd, Manchester 2000, p. 133-149.
41. Vladimir Stasov, *Fotografiia i graviura* [Photography and printmaking], in: *Russkii Vestnik*, no. VI, December 1856, p. 359-400, 555-576; reprinted in Vladimir Stasov, *Sobranie sochinenii V. V.*



*Stasova, 1847-1886* [Collected works of V. V. Stasov, 1847-1886], St Petersburg 1894, vol. 1, p. 1-50.

42. Stepan Shevyrev, *Russkie khudozhniki v Rime. (Iz putevykh zapisk 1840 goda.)* [Russian artists in Rome. (From travel notes of 1840)], in: *Moskvitianin*, no. 11, 1841, p. 160: "Пора бы уже нам, в эти идеально-изящныя формы, которыя [sic] усвоены Русскими художниками на родине Рафаэля, внести свою родную душу и жизнь."

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Fig.1, 3, 5, 10 and 12: London; The British Museum

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Fig. 6 and 9: Philadelphia, PA; Philadelphia Museum of Art

Fig. 7 and 8: St Petersburg; State Russian Museum

Fig. 11: Moscow; State Tretyakov Gallery

## Summary

Fedor Iordan (1800-1883) spent more than twenty years in Europe studying printmaking as a pensioner of the Russian Imperial Academy of Arts: first in Paris, then in London, and finally, from 1835 in Rome, where he embarked on his monumental engraving of Raphael's *Transfiguration*. Scrutinising the production and reception of this print – which took fifteen years to complete and afforded the artist an opportunity to remain in Italy – this essay reconsiders Iordan's work within the wider context of international printmaking and, within the emerging debates about Russia's position in transnational artistic developments and its national distinctiveness.

## Author

Dr Galina Mardilovich is an independent art historian specialising in Russian printmaking and the role of prints in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian art. Her work has been published in *Print Quarterly*, *Art History*, and *The Burlington Magazine* among others. She is currently co-editing a volume on new approaches to Russian and Eastern European art.

## Title

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