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Original paper



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Yevgeny (Eugène) de Villeneuve in Moscow: unknown facts from his biography

Abstract

Based on archival primary sources from the Central State Archive of Moscow, the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art, and the Russian State Historical Archive, the article introduces new details about the life and work of Eugène (Evgeny) Frantsevich de Villeneuve (1803–1879?), a writer, historian, archaeologist, and director of the Feodosia Museum of Antiquities, the oldest museum in the Novorossiysk region. The publication sheds light on his first visit to Russia with his wife and their stay in Moscow in 1826–1827. The article identifies the writer's Moscow addresses, describes his social circle, the literary salon of Princess Zinaida Volkonskaya, his meeting in the Kremlin with Emperor Nicholas I and his wife Aleksandra Feodorovna, and the poetic dedications he wrote to Princess Sofya Urusova. Archival documents reveal that he attracted close attention from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Chief of Gendarmes. Particular attention is paid to the publication abroad of his first book (a diary

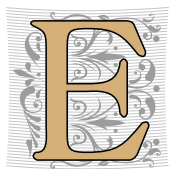
describing his stay in Greece and the Ottoman Empire in 1825–1826) as well as the publication of excerpts from this work in *Moskovsky Telegraph*. The article examines the most likely reasons why the Foreign Censorship Committee banned the distribution of the book in Russia. As a supplement, the article presents (for the first time in academic circulation) the texts of several documents from 1827–1828, including correspondence from the head of the Third Department Alexander Benckendorff to Moscow Military Governor-General Dmitry Golitsyn, letters exchanged between Golitsyn and the Moscow Chief of Police Dmitry Shulgin regarding de Villeneuve's stay in the city, and a memorandum by Foreign Minister Count Karl Nesselrode. The commentary on these documents and their translation from French were carried out by the author of the article.

Keywords:

Eugène de Villeneuve; Odessa; Moscow; French in the Crimea; France; Zinaida Volkonskaya; Censorship

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Yevgeny (Eugène) de Villeneuve — a philhellene, writer, historian, archaeologist, and member of the Odessa Society of History and Antiquities — became known in Russia as one of the finest curators of the Feodosia Museum of Antiquities, the oldest in the Novorossiysk region. The year 2026 marks 200 years since the Frenchman's first arrival in Russia and

his visit to Moscow, and the year 2027 is the 200-year anniversary since the publication of his first book, a diary describing his stay in Greece and Turkey in 1825–1826.

The Central State Archive of Moscow preserves several small documents from 1827, grouped under the heading: “Office of the Moscow Governor-General. Case concerning the collection of information about a certain Villeneuve”. These primary sources supplement the information about the years 1826–1827 in the life of the Frenchman that was already known from his Greek diary or from the travel diary of the French poetesse Adèle Hommaire de Hell. In addition, in the Russian State Historical Archive (РГИА), I was able to find a censor’s report on de Villeneuve’s diary. This primary source, in turn, clarifies the reasons for the ban on the book for the Russian public.

Pierre-François-Charles-Eugène de Villeneuve came from the nobility of the Kingdom of France and was of Roman Catholic faith. He was born in the small town of Saint-Sever-sur-Indre on the fifth day of Floréal in the 10th year of the French Republic (April 25, 1802)¹. The Frenchman did not possess a family estate and was raised in his father’s home under the supervision of the well-known professor of the Lycée of Bourges, de Thabault. Eugène entered service in the Royal Guard on March 18, 1819, and remained there until November 1, 1821².

Even in his youth, he had the opportunity to travel widely, but for a long time he could not find happiness or inner peace anywhere:

“My desire is simply to find a corner where minds shine in all their brilliance without fear of persecution, such a place where a virtuous man may count his days without fearing the unjust laws of oppressors and tyrants. I am still young, but I have already visited foreign lands and become acquainted with the southern states of America, England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. I wished to study people a little, but in all these countries I encountered only unjust

¹ Archives départementales de l’Indre (ADI). Sainte-Sévère-sur-Indre — État civil (Naissances) | 1793–1826. Cote: 3 E 208/07: Naissances au 10. Naissance de Pierre François Charles Eugène Devilleneuve. F. 5.

² Российский государственный исторический архив (РГИА). Ф. 733. Оп. 78. Д. 487. Л. 5.



Портрет Пьер-Франсуа-Шарль-Эжена де Вильнёва
на фронтисписе греческого дневника. 1827 г.
From open sources

and deceitful representatives of mankind, ready to persecute the unfortunate innocent and defend wealthy criminals”³.

Sympathizing with the patriots of Hellas, the French romantic, like many young Europeans, set off for war-torn Greece to take part in the armed struggle of its people for independence from the Ottoman Empire. He departed from Nancy on December 26, 1824, and in March 1825 set foot on the island of Corfu. From May to September 1825, Eugène de Villeneuve served as a cavalry captain in the Greek army and, having visited Tripolitsa, Navarino, Napoli di Romania (Nafplio), Athens, the island of Hydra, and other places, personally communicated with many heroes of the revolution. It was in Greece, at the height of the war, that de Villeneuve met the love of his life — a young Greek woman, Angela Cazzaiti, who had barely turned 13 at the time, her elder sister, and their parents. After leaving service in the Greek army,

³ Вильнев Е.Ф., де. Дневник Эжена де Вильнева, ротмистра Греческой армии, составленный в Греции в 1825 и 1826 годах [пер. с фр., вступ. ст., коммент. А.В. Миргородского]. СПб.: Алетейя, 2024. С. 136.

in the spring of 1826 he married the young woman who had nursed him during an illness the previous year and whose family he had desperately tried to locate for several months.

An important diary entry was made by de Villeneuve in the roadstead of Smyrna on April 11 (23), 1826. In it, the participant in the Greek War of Independence first mentions his intention to visit Russia: “Having lived under the warm sky of Greece and the gentle heavens of Ionia, I shall now visit the snow-covered plains of Russia and set out for Odessa”⁴. From the report of the Moscow Chief of Police, Major General Shulgin, published in the Appendix, it follows that on May 13 (25), de Villeneuve, together with his beloved, received from the Russian chargé d’affaires in Constantinople, Matvey Minchaki, the passports necessary for the journey to Odessa⁵.

On May 20 (June 1), de Villeneuve and Angela said farewell to her parents, after which the newlyweds departed for Russia. On May 25 (June 6), 1826, their ship arrived at the roadstead of Odessa, and the following day the couple set foot on Russian soil for the first time⁶. This fact is now also confirmed by the Russian primary source published below — a secret document based on information from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Karl Nesselrode: “This foreigner arrived at the end of May of l[ast] y[ear] from Constantinople in Odessa with a young Greek woman whom he presents as his wife”⁷. After spending about two months in the city, which hosted the largest Greek diaspora in southern Russia, Eugène and Angela set off for Moscow, where they arrived on July 31 (August 12) with a permit issued by the Odessa city governor⁸.

In the old capital, Eugène and Angela not only became frequent guests in fashionable Moscow salons but were also granted an audience in the Kremlin with Emperor Nicholas I and his wife Aleksandra

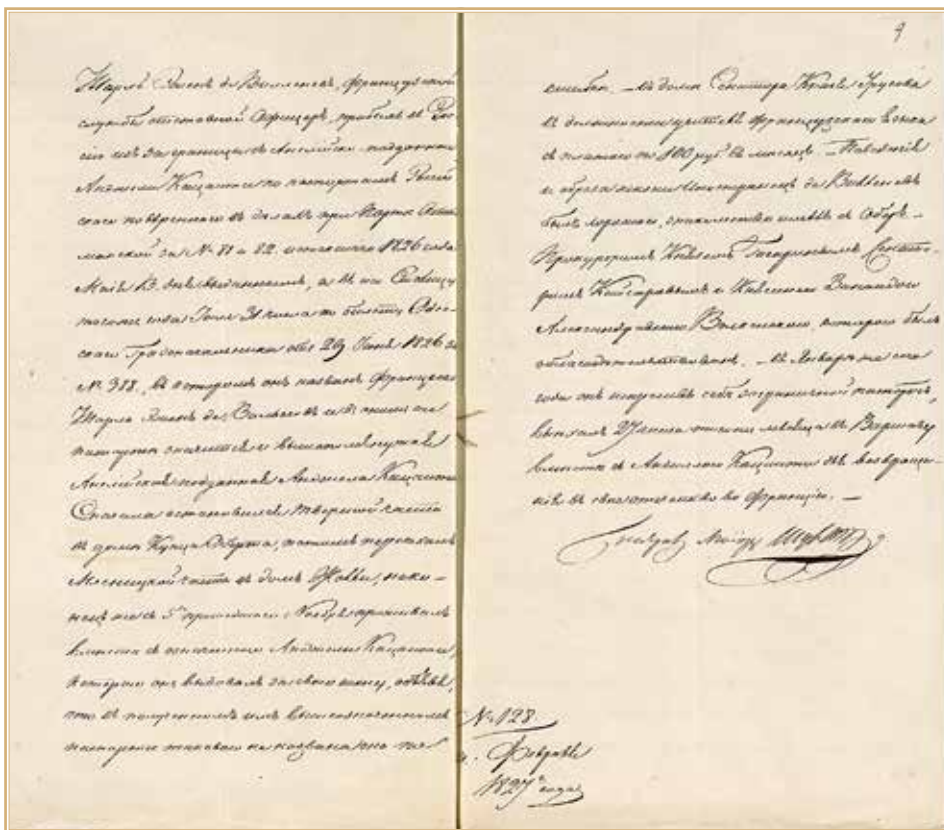
⁴ Ibid. С.156.

⁵ Центральный государственный архив города Москвы (ЦГА Москвы). Ф. 16. Оп. 31. Д. 228. Л. 3 об.

⁶ See: *Вильнев Е.Ф., де. Дневник Эжена де Вильнева*. С. 167–168.

⁷ ЦГА Москвы. Ф. 16. Оп. 31. Д. 228. Л. 1.

⁸ Ibid. Л. 3 об.



Сведения об Эжене де Вильнёве из секретного рапорта московского обер-полицмейстера генерал-майора Д.И. Шульгина. 1827 г.
 ЦГА Москвы

Feodorovna⁹. He describes this important event in his diary: “Princess Zinaida Volkonskaya¹⁰ spoke of my wife to the Empress herself and did so with such warmth that Her Imperial Majesty¹¹ wished to see the young Greek woman who had aroused such lively interest in the most intelligent woman in her vast dominions. Before Angela Caz-

⁹ On 22 August (3 September) 1826, the coronation of Emperor Nicholas I and his consort Empress Aleksandra Feodorovna took place in the Dormition Cathedral of the Moscow Kremlin, followed by several balls, ceremonial receptions, fireworks, etc., attended by members of the imperial family, as reported in the Russian press from August to October 1826.

¹⁰ Zinaida Aleksandrovna Volkonskaya (1792–1862) — princess, writer, poetess, and a prominent figure in Russian cultural life in the first half of the nineteenth century.

¹¹ Aleksandra Feodorovna (1798–1860) — wife of Russian Emperor Nicholas I (born Princess Frederica Louise Charlotte Wilhelmina of Prussia).

zaiti, raised in pastoral simplicity under the modest roof of a hut in Arcadia¹², the majestic gates of the Kremlin opened, and she had the honor of conversing with the Empress of all Russia, who generously bestowed her favor upon her. The Emperor himself deigned to listen to her story and, moved by the misfortunes of Angela Cazzaiti's compatriots, showed us signs of monarchic generosity"¹³.

A brief sketch of Eugène and Angela de Villeneuve's visit to Moscow appears in the diary of the poet Adèle Hommaire de Hell, who met them in Taganrog in 1839:

"..Immediately after their marriage, the passion for travel carried the young couple to the finest courts of Europe, where the young Greek woman was always received with delight thanks to her splendid Smyrniot attire and remarkable beauty. In Moscow, she so impressed the Empress, who happened to be in the city at the time, that the latter seriously raised the question of including her in her retinue as a lady-in-waiting. On the other hand, in all the salons people spoke only of the handsome Frenchman, who had turned the heads of all the Moscow ladies..."¹⁴

One of the receptions held on the occasion of the coronation of Nicholas I and Aleksandra Feodorovna is mentioned by de Villeneuve in poetic form. In this work, Apollo, conversing with the author and weary of the boredom of Olympus, descends from the heavens to attend an extraordinary celebration in honor of the august Emperor Nicholas. The setting is "the famous city washed by the waters of the Moskva River". There, the ancient Greek god of the sun and patron of the arts takes on the appearance of an ordinary mortal and visits the salon of "a countess¹⁵ as wealthy as King Croesus of old"¹⁶.

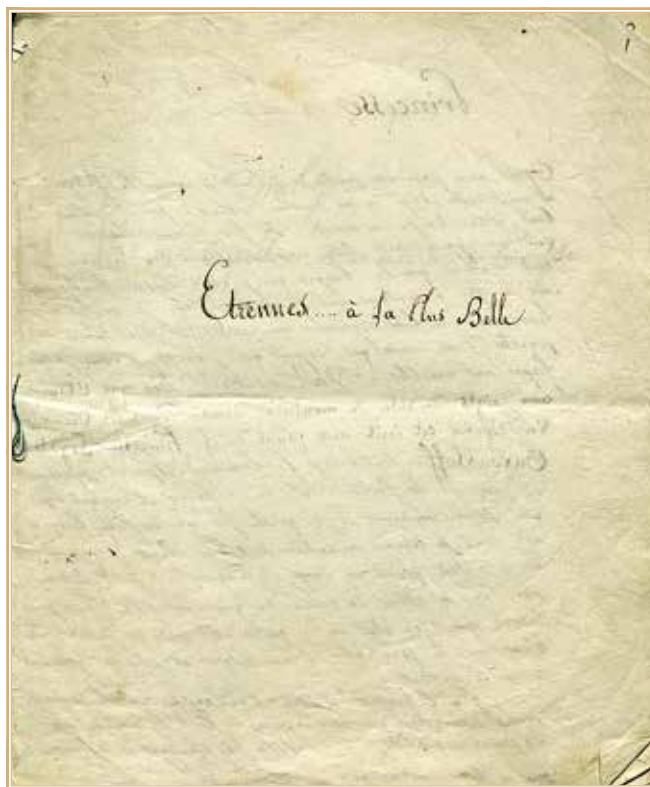
¹² Since Angela was born and raised in Smyrna, de Villeneuve here refers to *Arcadia* as a place of idyllic life (from the ancient Greek region of Arcadia), portrayed in poetry as a land of blissful pastoral existence.

¹³ Вильнев Е.Ф., де. Дневник Эжена де Вильнева. С. 171–172.

¹⁴ Hommaire de Hell A. Voyage dans les steppes de la mer Caspienne et dans la Russie méridionale. Paris: Imprimerie de Ch. Lahure et Cie, 1860. P. 55–56.

¹⁵ It may be assumed that this refers to the salon of Yulia Pavlovna Samoilova (1803–1875) — countess, long-time patron and model of the painter Karl Bryullov.

¹⁶ Российский государственный архив литературы и искусства (РГАЛИ). Ф. 1335. Оп. 1. Д. 35. Л. 5 об.



Стихотворения «Новогодние подарки самой красивой (Étrennes ... à la Plus Belle)» де Вильнёва, посвященные княгине С.А. Урусовой. 1827 г.
РГАЛИ

According to the report of the Moscow Chief of Police, Major General Shulgin, published in the Appendix, during their stay in the old capital, de Villeneuve and his wife changed three addresses. First, they lived in the house of the merchant Auber, then in the house of another Frenchman – the dentist Jolly – and finally with Senator Prince Urusov¹⁷, where Villeneuve gave lessons in the French language¹⁸.

It is likely that among the writer's pupils were the senator's children (the prince had eight sons and three daughters), including the “queen of Moscow beauties”, Princess Sofya Urusova. Enchanted, the poet addressed to the charming Urusova four enthusiastic poetic dedications in French, in a notebook entitled *New Year's Gifts to the Most Beautiful*

¹⁷ Aleksander Mikhailovich Urusov (1766–1853) — prince, archchamberlain, senator and privy councillor from 1824 onward.

¹⁸ ЦГА Москвы. Ф. 16. Оп. 31. Д. 228. Л. 3 об. — 4.

(*Étrennes ... à la Plus Belle*). All were signed concisely: “de Villeneuve, retired cavalry captain” and dated January 1827¹⁹.

It is possible that this fleeting infatuation hastened — or even caused — the departure of Eugène and Angela to Europe, and that this is what Adèle Hommaire de Hell referred to when she wrote: “In the end, for him this adventure ended like most others — exploding in life like a bomb and leaving nothing behind but ruins. How, despite all the danger, did he manage to return safe and sound? He himself cannot explain it”²⁰.

The strongest impression in Moscow on the writer was made by the personality of Zinaida Volkonskaya:

“I was introduced to Princess Zinaida Volkonskaya, who received us with unforgettable kindness. In general, the Russian nobility is educated, hospitable, and very liberal. The poetess and writer Princess Zinaida Volkonskaya is one of those extraordinary creations that nature, sparing in talents, produces so rarely. Beautiful, sensitive, and generous, her only happiness lies in alleviating suffering and patronizing goodness... Her palace is a temple of the arts, and she herself is its Minerva. I often attended the splendid receptions held in her house and always heard prayers raised for the freedom of Greece. Soon everyone learned that my wife was Greek, and after that we had no shortage of new invitations”²¹.

The Moscow circle of acquaintances of the French philhellene and his Greek wife also included Chief Prosecutor Prince Gagarin²², Senator Kaisarov²³, the architect Postnikov²⁴, and Prince Golitsyn²⁵.

The Frenchman’s enthusiastic travel notes about his stay in Moscow are of considerable interest, as they were published 16 years be-

¹⁹ РГАЛИ. Ф. 1335. Оп. 1. Д. 35. Л. 1–11 об.

²⁰ *Hommaire de Hell* А. Оp. cit. P. 56.

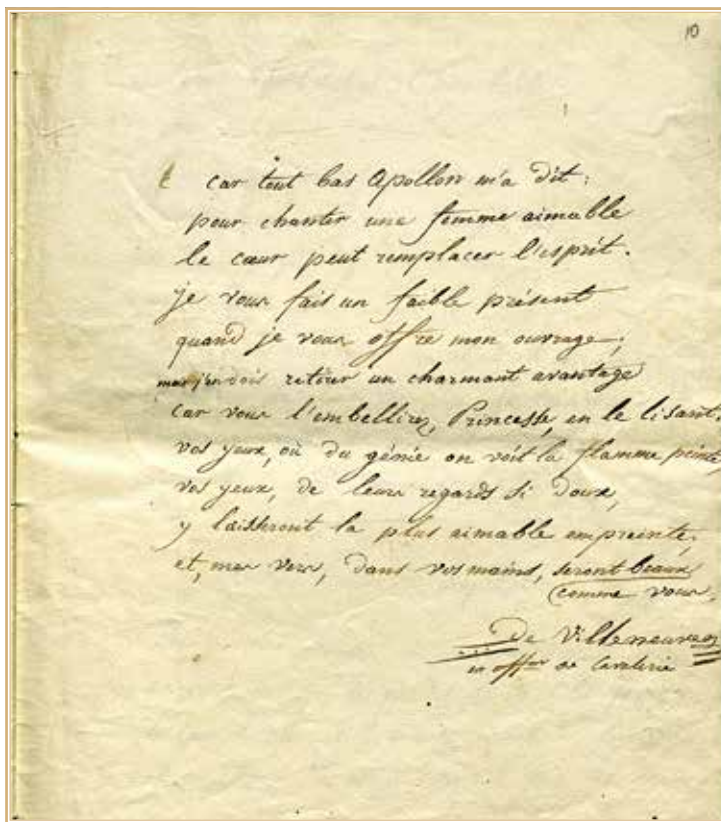
²¹ Вильнев Е.Ф., де. Дневник Эжена де Вильнева. С. 171–172.

²² *Pavel Pavlovich Gagarin* (1789–1872) — prince, Russian statesman, Chief Prosecutor of the Moscow Senate in 1818–1831.

²³ *Paisii Sergeevich Kaisarov* (1783–1844) — Russian infantry general, participant in the Napoleonic Wars, senator.

²⁴ *Aleksander Ivanovich Postnikov* (1766–1830) — Russian architect.

²⁵ *Pavel Alekseevich Golitsyn* (1782–1849) — prince, colonel, chamberlain, and master of the court of the Golitsyn family.



Автограф французского филэллина: «Де Вильнёв. Отставной ротмистр». 1827 г.
РГАЛИ

fore the appearance of Marquis Astolphe de Custine's *Russia in 1839* (*La Russie en 1839*)²⁶, which became an enduring symbol not only of French but of Western Russophobia in general²⁷.

At the beginning of 1827, de Villeneuve attracted the attention of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the head of the gendarmes. This was due to the fact that, according to available information, the Frenchman had presented himself as a “distant relative of the prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône Department, Count Villeneuve”²⁸. In essence, the aspiring writer brought suspicion upon himself of being an

²⁶ Custine A. *La Russie en 1839* par le Marquis de Custine. Paris: Librairie d'Amyot, 1843. 4 vol.

²⁷ See: Таньшина Н.П. Русофилы и русофобы: приключения французов в николаевской России. СПб.: Евразия, 2020. С. 8, 30–36.

²⁸ *Christophe de Villeneuve-Bargemont* (1771–1829) — count, French statesman, prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône in 1815–1829.

impostor: “To this Count Karl Vasilyevich [Nesselrode] added that, to his knowledge, none of Count Villeneuve’s relatives had traveled to Odessa, and that this circumstance not only gives reason to doubt the rank assumed by the said Villeneuve but even raises suspicion regarding the questionable intentions with which he arrived in Russia”²⁹.

De Villeneuve himself says nothing directly in his diary about his noble origins or connections with distinguished bearers of this surname; however, in official service records compiled later in Taganrog and Feodosia, it is stated that he “originates from the nobility of the French Kingdom”³⁰ or “from the nobility of the French nation”³¹. The accusation that the writer had appropriated another person’s name was also made later, in 1829, when he was living on the island of Poros³².

During his stay in Moscow and his travels across the country, the French philhellene quite accurately grasped the sentiments of the Russian elite regarding the ongoing war in Greece. In the *Supplementary Observations* to his memoirs, he predicted the forthcoming intervention of the Russian Empire in this conflict³³.

It is noteworthy that de Villeneuve first published an excerpt from his Greek diary precisely in Russia. In December 1826, the journal *Moskovsky Telegraph* published a fragment of his future book — a passage dedicated to the Greek military leader Odysseas Androutsos³⁴ — along with an address by the French writer to the journal’s editor³⁵. In January 1827, the journal printed a continuation³⁶: a Russian translation of another diary entry describing the circumstances of the death of Laskarina Bouboulina³⁷.

²⁹ ЦГА Москвы. Ф. 16. Оп. 31. Д. 228. Л. 1 об., 4.

³⁰ РГИА. Ф. 733. Оп. 78. Д. 487. Л. 5.

³¹ State Archive of the Republic of Crimea (ГАРК). Ф. 26. Оп. 1. Д. 20878. Л. 3 об.

³² L’Abeille Grecque. No.128. 12 (24) février 1829. Mardi. P. 3–4.

³³ Вильнев Е.Ф., де. Дневник Эжена де Вильнева. С. 172–176.

³⁴ *Odysseas Androutsos* (1788–1825) — military leader and participant in the Greek War of Independence.

³⁵ Московский телеграф, ч. 12, 1826. С. 268–271.

³⁶ Московский телеграф, ч. 13, 1827. С. 165–168.

³⁷ *Laskarina Bouboulina* (1771–1825) — participant in the liberation movement, admiral of the Russian fleet, heroine of the Greek War of Independence.



Дневник, составленный в Греции в 1825 и 1826 гг. Эженом де Вильнёвом, ротмистром Греческой армии. Первое русскоязычное издание книги.
СПб.: Алетея, 2024 г.
From open sources

After de Villeneuve had already left Moscow³⁸, the journal published a third excerpt from his notes, devoted to a visit to the island of Hydra and to the heroism of Greek women³⁹. In May of the same year, while publishing excerpts from the notes of Count Pecchio⁴⁰, the editors of *Moskovsky Telegraph* quoted yet another small fragment from de Villeneuve's Greek diary, describing the ceremony of appointing Colonel Fabvier⁴¹ commander of the first regular regiment of the Greek army⁴².

³⁸ The writer and his wife left Moscow on 27 January (8 February) 1827.

³⁹ Московский телеграф, ч. 14, 1827. С. 155–158.

⁴⁰ *Giuseppe Pecchio* (1785–1835) — Italian philhellene, politician, economist, and historian. He visited Greece from March to June 1825 on behalf of the London Philhellenic Committee. In 1826 Pecchio published an account of this journey in Italian, English, and Greek.

⁴¹ *Charles Nicolas Fabvier* (1782–1855) — French political figure and philhellene, baron, participant in the Greek War of Independence.

⁴² Московский телеграф, ч. 15, 1827. С. 157, 161.

In August 1827, *Diary of Eugene de Villeneuve, Captain of the Greek Army, compiled in Greece in 1825 and 1826*⁴³ was published in Brussels. Nevertheless, the book remained inaccessible to Russian readers for a long time: the publication of excerpts from the diary in 1826–1827 in *Moskovsky Telegraf* did not prevent the book from being banned in Russia as early as 1828⁴⁴.

In St. Petersburg, among the reports of the Foreign Censorship Committee, which reviewed foreign printed works entering Russia, a written review No. 142 dated March 8 (20), 1828, concerning de Villeneuve’s Greek diary published in Brussels, has been preserved.

Attached to the censor’s review is a short but very important note in French, composed by Count Nesselrode, which preceded it, as it had been written two days earlier — on March 6 (18), 1828⁴⁵. It can be assumed that the reason prompting the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs to initiate the ban of de Villeneuve’s Greek diary was his indirect acquaintance with the writer a year earlier, when the latter had been in Moscow.

Be that as it may, as follows from the document published below, Count Nesselrode characterized the diary published in Brussels as a “entirely mediocre” (*très plat*) work and sought to guide the censor’s reflections in the desired direction by proposing that the book be banned for the public.

The written review of de Villeneuve’s diary was prepared by court councilor Vasily Sots⁴⁶, who served as a senior censor in the Foreign Censorship Committee. He considered the book “generally permissible”, noting that de Villeneuve’s remark about the Austrian Chancellor Prince Metternich was “noteworthy”. However, the censor still found several grounds (“three doubtful passages”) to prohibit the publication: twice the writer expressed positive views about Napoleon Bonaparte, including

⁴³ *Villeneuve E. Journal fait en Grèce, pendant les années 1825 et 1826 par M. Eugène de Villeneuve, Capitaine de cavalerie dans l’Armée Hellénique. H. Tarlier, Bruxelles, 1827.*

⁴⁴ See: Общій алфавитный списокъ книгамъ на Французскомъ языкѣ, запрещеннымъ Иностранною Ценсурою безусловно и для публики: съ 1815 по 1853 годъ включительно. СПб.: Тип. Эдуарда Праца, 1855. С. 182, 373.

⁴⁵ РГИА. Ф. 779. Оп. 4. Д. 77. Л. 244.

⁴⁶ *Vasily Ivanovich Sots* (1788–1841) — Russian writer, translator, censor.

recounting a story of how he received from a Cossack who participated in the Patriotic War of 1812 the cross of the Legion of Honor belonging to a Frenchman who had refused to surrender; the third objection concerned a passage in which he calls Sultan Mahmud II a “crowned brigand whose power, to the shame of all Europe, is basely called ‘Sublime’”⁴⁷.

At the very beginning of the report, written in Russian but with quotations in French, there is a resolution indicating the decision of the Main Directorate of Censorship regarding the book: “prohibited”⁴⁸. Thus, the Frenchman’s book was banned. The first complete edition in Russian of de Villeneuve’s Greek diary, compiled in 1825 and 1826, was published in St. Petersburg only in 2024. The translation of the book is preceded by an introductory article containing information about the early period of the writer’s life.

After de Villeneuve’s return to Europe, his connections with Russia did not end. In 1837, he returned to take up a position as a French language teacher in Taganrog. It was in this southern Russian city that a new stage of his life began — as a Frenchman in Russian service — and in 1842, Evgeny Frantsevich definitively chose Russia as his new homeland.

APPENDIX

Commentary by A.V. Mirgorodsky

1. Communication from A.Kh. Benckendorff, Chief of the Third Section of His Imperial Majesty’s Own Chancellery, to D.V. Golitsyn, Moscow Military Governor-General, dated February 11, 1827, No. 261

Secret

Most Gracious Sir,
Prince Dmitry Vladimirovich!

⁴⁷ *The Sublime Porte* — the name traditionally used for the sultan’s court in Constantinople during the Ottoman Empire.

⁴⁸ РГИА. Ф. 779. Оп. 4. Д. 77. Л. 243.

The Acting Head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁴⁹, by a communication of the 8th of this February, made me acquainted of information he had received concerning a certain individual calling himself *Villeneuve*, a former cavalry officer and a distant relative of the Prefect of the Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, Count Villeneuve⁵⁰.

This foreigner arrived at the end of May of l[ast] y[ear] from Constantinople in Odessa⁵¹ with a young Greek woman whom he presents as his wife⁵². After staying in Odessa for two months, he proceeded with her to Moscow with the intention of obtaining a position there as a teacher. In Odessa he wore the cross of the Legion of Honor⁵³.

To this, Count Karl Vasilyevich added that, to his knowledge, none of Count Villeneuve's relatives had traveled to Odessa, and that this circumstance not only gives reason to doubt the rank assumed by the said Villeneuve but even raises suspicion regarding the questionable intentions with which he arrived in Russia.

Informing Your Excellency of this, I consider it my duty most respectfully to request, Most Gracious Sir, that you issue the necessary instructions so that the most active measures be taken, discreetly, to observe this individual and to ascertain the true purpose of his arrival in Moscow.

⁴⁹ *Karl Vasilyevich Nesselrode* (1780–1862) — count, Russian foreign minister in 1816–1856.

⁵⁰ *Christophe de Villeneuve-Bargemont* (1771–1829) — count, French statesman, prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône in 1815–1829.

⁵¹ See: *Вильнев Е.Ф., де. Дневник Эжена де Вильнева*. С. 167–169.

⁵² *Angela (Angelica/Angelina) Cazzaiti* — a Greek woman from Smyrna, born in 1812. The marriage of de Villeneuve and Cazzaiti took place in Smyrna in the spring of 1826, and in June and October 1830 the necessary procedures were carried out to bring the marriage into conformity with French law, after which she adopted the surname Villeneuve. ADI. Sainte-Sévère-sur-Indre — État civil (Mariages) | 1827–1862. Cote: 3 E 208/11: Mariages. Année 1830. N° 3. Devilleneuve Pierre François Charles Eugène et Cazzaiti Angelina. F. 3–4.

⁵³ In his Greek diary, published in Brussels in 1827, the French writer recounts that he received the cross of the Legion of Honour in February 1827 while returning from Russia to Europe. See: *Вильнев Е.Ф., де. Дневник Эжена де Вильнева*. С. 174–175.

Awaiting your favorable reply regarding what may be discovered on this matter, I have the honor to remain with sincere and profound respect,

Your Excellency's
most obedient servant,
Benckendorff⁵⁴

No. 261

February 11, 1827

To His Exc[ellency] Prince D.V. Golitsyn⁵⁵

ЛГА МОСКВЫ. Ф. 16. Оп. 31. Д. 228. Л. 1–1об. Original. Autograph.

2. Moscow Military Governor-General D.V. Golitsyn to Moscow Chief of Police, Major General D.I. Shulgin⁵⁶, dated February 14, 1827, No. 17

Secret

February 14, 1827

No. 17

To the Moscow Chief of Police

Forwarding herewith, in copy, the communication addressed to me by Aide-de-Camp General Benckendorff under No. 261 concerning a certain individual calling himself Villeneuve, I recommend that Your Exc[ellency] make every effort to ascertain the true rank and

⁵⁴ *Aleksander Kbristoforovich Benckendorff* (1782–1844) — Russian statesman and military figure, cavalry general. In 1826–1844 he headed the Third Section of His Imperial Majesty's Own Chancellery (chief of gendarmes).

⁵⁵ *Dmitry Vladimirovich Golitsyn* (1771–1844) — Russian statesman and military figure, cavalry general, participant in the Napoleonic Wars, Military Governor-General of Moscow.

⁵⁶ *Dmitry Ivanovich Shulgin* (1784–1854) — Russian statesman and military figure, infantry general, member of the State Council.

name of this person, the purpose of his arrival in Moscow, and his activities. At the same time, I deem it necessary to add that even if this individual were to present to you any certificate issued by me or by any other person, this should in no way prevent you from establishing his true identity and maintaining surveillance over him.

I shall await from Y[our] Ex[cellency] a detailed report on the findings.

ЦГА МОСКВЫ. Ф. 16. Оп. 31. Д. 228. Л. 2–2 об. Original.

3. Report of the Moscow Chief of Police, Major General D.I. Shulgin, to the Moscow Military Governor-General D.V. Golitsyn, dated February 21, 1827, No. 128

Secret

To the Moscow Military Governor-General,
General of Cavalry and Knight,
Prince Golitsyn I

From the Moscow Chief of Police,
Major General Shulgin II

Report

In execution of Your Excellency's directive of February 14 of this year, No. 17, with the attached copy of the communication from General Benckendorff No. 261, I have the honor to report that I have collected information concerning a certain individual calling himself Villeneuve, and the following has been established:

He is a French subject, a native of the town of Saint-Sever; his French name is Charles Eugène de Villeneuve⁵⁷, a retired officer of

⁵⁷ Пьер-Франсуа-Шарль-Эжен де Вильнев (*Pierre-François-Charles-Eugène de Villeneuve*), after accepting Russian citizenship, became better known as Евгений Францевич (Петр Франциск Карл Евгений) де Вильнев.

French service. He arrived in Russia from abroad with Angela Cazzaiti, a British subject⁵⁸, on passports issued by the Russian chargé d'affaires at the Ottoman Porte⁵⁹, Nos. 81 and 82, dated May 13, 1826⁶⁰. He arrived in this capital on July 31 of the same year on the basis of a permit from the Odessa city governor⁶¹ dated June 29, 1826, No. 388, in which he is named Francisco Charles Eugène de Villenov; in the same passport the aforementioned British subject Angela Cazzaiti is also listed. At first, he stayed in the Tverskaya district in the house of the merchant Aubert⁶², then moved to the Myasnitskaya district to the house of Jolly⁶³; finally, from November 5 of last year, he resided together with the said Angela Cazzaiti — whom he presented as his wife, explaining that she had not been indicated as such in the above-mentioned passport due to an error — in the house of Senator Prince Urusov⁶⁴, in the capacity of a teacher of the French language, with a salary of 100 rubles per month.

The foreigner de Villeneuve conducted himself well and maintained a respectable way of life; he was acquainted with Chief Prosecutor Prince Gagarin, Senator Kaisarov, and Princess Zinaida Aleksandrovna Volkonskaya, by whom he was patronized. In January of this year, having obtained a foreign passport, he departed on the 27th

⁵⁸ The Greek woman's parents — Anastasios Cazzaiti and Elena Castelli Cazzaiti (née Tombazis) — were British subjects.

⁵⁹ *Matvei Yakovlevich Minchaki* (1769–1852) — active state councillor, diplomat, Russian chargé d'affaires in Constantinople in 1824–1827.

⁶⁰ According to the writer's diary entries, the newlyweds arrived in Odessa on 26 May 1826. See: *Вильнев Е.Ф., де. Дневник Эжена де Вильнева*. С. 167–169.

⁶¹ *Fyodor Petrovich Palen* (1780–1863) — count, Russian diplomat, and Governor of Odessa from 1826 to 1827.

⁶² This refers to the house of the Frenchman Nicolas (Nikolai) Aubert in Moscow's Tverskaya district (architect M.F. Kazakov). Present-day address: Glinishchevsky Lane, 6.

⁶³ This refers to the house of the Frenchman Charles (Karl) Jolly in the fifth quarter of Moscow's Myasnitskaya district, on Rozhdestvenskaya Street. Present-day address: Trubnaya Square, 2.

⁶⁴ This refers to Senator Urusov's Moscow house on the corner of Spiridonovka Street, where Alexander Pushkin was a frequent visitor in the spring of 1827. Present-day address: Sadovaya-Kudrinskaya Street, 26/40, building 3.

of that month for Warsaw together with Angela Cazzaiti in order to return to his homeland, France⁶⁵.

Major General Shulgin

No. 128

February 21, 1827

ЦГА МОСКВЫ. Ф. 16. Оп. 31. Д. 228. Л. 3–4. Original. Autograph.

4. Note by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count K.V. Nesselrode, dated March 6 (18), 1828

(translation from French)

Re: No. 142

The excerpts presented here demonstrate that this book is written in a very poor spirit. I therefore consider that it should be prohibited. This will not be a great loss for the public, as it seems to me entirely mediocre.

With all due regards,
Nesselrode

March 6, 1828

Received from the Acting Head of the Ministry on March 6, 1828.
M.D.

РГИА. Ф. 779. Оп. 4. Д. 77. Л. 244. Original. Autograph.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.

⁶⁵ See: *Вильнев Е.Ф., де. Дневник Эжена де Вильнева*. С. 174–178.



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