A Collection of Translations of Russian Folk Songs:
E. E. Lineva’s Visit to America (1892-1896)

James Bailey, University of Wisconsin, Madison
Mikhail Lobanov, Russian Institute for the History of the Arts, RAN, St. Petersburg, Russia

When Evgeniia Eduardovna Paprits-Lineva (1854-1919) emigrated with her husband for political reasons, they first went to England (1890 to 1892) and then to America where they lived in New York (1892-1896). Although she was a trained opera singer who had performed as a contralto in Moscow, Vienna, Budapest, Paris, and London, she may have taken an interest in folk songs before leaving Russia. While in New York she selected a group of Russians living there and organized them into a choir. Early on she must have met Henry E. Krehbiel who was music critic for the New York Tribune and at the time was giving public lectures about folk songs. Initially, this acquaintance led to joint lecture-concerts in Carnegie Hall at the end of November and beginning of December 1892. Lineva's choir was invited to perform at the International Exposition in Chicago in 1893 as part of the Russian contribution, which also included an exhibit of paintings by Russian artists. The choir, which found the means to travel to Chicago only after an American philanthropist, Charles R. Crane, helped sponsor the trip, turned out to be one of the most popular programs at the exposition and subsequently gave concerts in Milwaukee, Boston, and Philadelphia.

In connection with her choir’s performances, Lineva published a collection of translations entitled Russian Folk Songs as Sung by the People and Peasant Wedding Ceremonies Customary in Northern and Central Russia (Chicago, 1893). This volume, which is essentially a scholarly and not a popular publication, consists of “A Note on Russian Folk Music” by H. E. Krehbiel (pp. 5-9); a description of the Russian peasant wedding (pp. 10-25); translations of twenty seven Russian, seven Ukrainian, and five sacred songs; and a concluding essay entitled “Russian Folk-Songs” (pp. 53-63). It should also be pointed out that most of the songs have explanatory notes, sometimes rather extensive ones, and that the English in the songs, notes, and final essay reads quite smoothly.

Lineva's Chicago collection, bearing the French spelling of her name (Eugenie Lineff), has never caught the attention of Russian folklorists and consequently supplements knowledge about her work as a collector and investigator of Russian folk songs. After Lineva returned to Russia in 1896, she soon started recording folk songs with a phonograph and from that time published only songs that she herself had collected. When she tried to repay the money to Crane for the Chicago trip of her choir, he sent back double the amount to the Russian Geographical Society with the stipulation that the
money be used to collect folk songs. Lineva received these funds through the St. Petersburg Song Commission and, in 1901, used them for her expedition to collect songs in the Cherepovets District of the Province of Novgorod. In the introductions to the two volumes of songs and melodies that she brought out later,(5) Lineva expressed her appreciation to Krehbiel for introducing her to the phonograph, for her experience in America which inspired her to collect folk songs, and to Crane for financing her expedition in 1901.(6)

In the introductions to her two volumes, Lineva laid down several principles for collecting, editing, and interpreting the melodies of Russian lyric folk songs; these remain valid to the present day. Her main innovation was using the phonograph to record songs during a live performance by a choir. This allowed her to show how songs actually consisted of several voices, each of which represented a variation of the main voice, and each of which was developed continuously from the beginning to the end of the song. In this respect, Lineva followed Ju. N. Melgunov who first attempted to demonstrate the “polyphony” (mnogogolosie) typical of Russian lyric songs.(7) In addition, Lineva considered that folk songs often retained ancient beliefs and customs, that they were a national treasure, that they could not be explained through the European musical system, and that Russian composers should utilize folk songs to create national Russian music. She also pointed out that songs should be collected from the finest singers, that the melody and verbal text were subject to improvisation and existed in variants, and that the songs should be studied by chronology and by geographic regions. She distrusted earlier collections because they had been adapted to the European harmonic system and because the verbal texts and melodies were usually “edited, corrected, or improved.” She insisted on accurate transcriptions that could be obtained only through sound recordings.(8) Beginning in 1903, she became the secretary of the Musical-Ethnographical Commission and, through it, she helped organize “ethnographic concerts” of peasant singers. In 1906 she was active in founding a Folk Conservatory in Moscow where singers “from the people” were trained and where she herself taught courses about folk music for many years.(9) For these reasons, E. E. Lineva occupies a prominent place among the finest Russian folk song collectors and musicologists.

Although reviewers wrote about the concerts of Lineva's choir with enthusiasm, they provided no information about the works performed. Nevertheless, the collection Russian Folk Songs yields some clues in this regard. “When fate took me to America” (as Lineva recalled later), “the idea came to mind in New York to organize lecture concerts for the popularization of Russian national music.... But after I undertook the compilation of the program, I realized that I had little music. Then I turned
to several acquaintances in Russia...with a request to send me the best collections of songs.”(10) By “the best” she apparently had in view those in which the songs had been transcribed most accurately and reliably. Unfortunately, the songs that Lineva received and published in her American collection have been presented without the melodies and without their sources. Comparison of the translations with songs in earlier publications shows that Lineva relied largely on published materials, drawing mainly on the two collections of L. N. Melgunov who first had discovered the most feasible means of fixing the extremely complicated polyphony of Russian lyric folk songs.(11)

Lineva repeatedly paid tribute to Melgunov as a collector because he was the first to establish that each singer of a choir performs a variant (podgolosok) of the basic melody and that these variants are formed into an original harmony, a feat he accomplished without the aid of sound recording. (12) Melgunov took down the songs separately from each participant of the singing group, did not bring the voices together in a score, and presented all the vocal lines separately.(13) Somewhat later, the composer P. I. Blaramberg put together a choral score of these individual voices and published a small collection for a cappella singing which was much closer to the true character of a peasant song.(14) Melgunov's collections were also appealing because they offered a thorough recording of the verbal texts; for instance, the couplets always coincide with the melody whereas in other collections this coordination is often disrupted. Among the twenty seven Russian songs Lineva selected for her collection, she took ten or eleven from Melgunov's recordings; perhaps six were taken from Blaramberg's arrangements.(15)

Lineva also had at her disposal the collections of M. A. Balakirev, Rimsky-Korsakov, and K. P. Vilboe; in addition, she received from Russia a recent study prepared by N. M. Lopatin and V. P. Prokunin.(16) She had the older collection of Ukrainian songs prepared by Alois ledlichka (17) and, among the newer ones, the first issues of M. V. Lysenko's collection.(18) In all of these publications, the folk songs were presented according to the manner customary at that time, that is, in the form of a melody for a single voice with piano accompaniment, or, as with Lysenko, in an arrangement for chorus, but also with piano accompaniment. Although from her later work we know that Lineva strove for ethnographic authenticity, we do not know how her choir performed these “borrowed” songs during their concerts in America.

There also are other puzzles, one example of which is the well known “Dubinushka” (no. 19). Several songs on the theme of this barge hauler's refrain have been written by poets who have emphasized the liberation of the Russian people from oppression (“I have heard many songs in my native land...”) and were current in a populist and later in an intellectual milieu.(19) An authentic
“Dubinushka” with a peasant melody was published in the collection of Lopatin and Prokunin where only one couplet of the text is given. In Lineva's Chicago collection “Dubinushka” is presented in a traditional form, but with a longer text consisting of several couplets, something that has no parallel in musical publications before 1893. One may conjecture that this song was transcribed by Lineva in the 1880s before her emigration, or that it was known to one of the participants in the choir. Yet another riddle in Lineva's American publication concerns the origin of her version of the famous “Gloria” (slava, no. 20). This song as it is known from the eighteenth-century collection of Lvov and Prach,(20) traditionally accompanies fortune telling during the Christmas season. In the first part of the nineteenth century the poet V. A. Zhukovskii wrote a “Gloria” that celebrates the Russian sovereign using the solemn melody. In Lineva's collection, “Gloria” is transformed from a fortune telling song into a wedding song. Since such a change of genres rarely occurs in the Russian folklore tradition, one may presume that the work of some unknown poet served as an intermediary.

A different problem is presented by the song “I feel like sleeping” (spitsia mne, no. 7) which has not been published along with the music and appears in just three variants collected in the provinces of Orel and Kursk, the most well known and accessible one being in the P. I. lakushkin collection.(21) Although Lineva apparently took lakushkin's variant for her Chicago publication, we do not know what melody the Russian choir used for this song because it, like the other songs, is given without the melody. A similar question concerns the wedding song “Match Maker” (Svatushka, no. 23) which was recorded in the nineteenth century and has never been published with a melody. The English translation in Lineva's Chicago collection taken from a song in Pushkin's play “The Mermaid” (Rusalka).(22) Besides this, the lyric “Match Maker” was included by A. S. Dargomyzhskii in his opera by the same name and became a popular choral song.(23) Most likely, it is this operatic excerpt that appeared among the “folk songs” in the repertory of Lineva's choir.

Needless to say, the songs mentioned do not satisfy today's standards for an ethnographic concert. Despite these drawbacks, Lineva's collection has to be viewed within the context of the recording, publication, and study of folklore of its time. The fact of the matter is that, precisely in her later work, Lineva was to contribute much toward the establishment of more professional standards in the study and collection of folklore. Although she wanted to convey to the American public information about the history and traditions of the Russia of her time through song, the materials she received did not completely satisfy these demands. As a result, she was compelled to depart from ethnographic meticulousness. In spite of this, critics and the public perceived the concerts of the Russian choir as authentic folklore presented on the stage of the concert hall.

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The decision was taken to perform a theatrical version of the repertory at the disposal of the Russian choir at the Chicago Exposition. Lineva chose the wedding ceremony (24) as a scenario that could connect all the songs in the choir's repertory. In actuality, only a few wedding songs were sung by the choir and even those were taken mainly from the collection of Rimsky-Korsakov. Lineva probably did not have sufficient ethnographic materials to reproduce the wedding ritual adequately. One may therefore conjecture that, for the American public, she may have annotated the "wedding play" in detail and she may have created it partly according to her own observations, partly from information obtained from the people in her choir or other Russians living in America, and partly from her own invention. Although such an expediency violated the authenticity of the wedding ceremony, one nevertheless should not be too hasty to condemn the scenario. The conditions for changing the decorations, the costumes of the performers, and other stage props, and the desire to acquaint the American public with a maximum number of episodes from the Russian peasant wedding could have forced Lineva to depart from a conscientious reproduction and to combine elements from various local traditions into a single composite work. In her introductory remarks about the Russian wedding and in the scenario which is divided into acts and scenes, a peasant marriage is examined from the position of customary law, the economic interests of a patriarchal family, and a history of several marriage practices in Russia: marriage through abduction of a girl, the remnants of this custom, and the church blessing. In this regard, Lineva may have been familiar with the book of the woman historian A. Ia. Efimenko, Investigations of the Life of the People. Issue 1: Customary Law (25). As would become apparent in her later works, Lineva was an excellent observer of life, a trait that is also evident in her description of the peasant wedding in the Chicago collection. Many small details and ritual actions in the wedding ceremony have been inadequately discussed by Russian ethnographers, both before and after her work; consequently Lineva's volume can serve as an important source for studying the wedding ritual even today. For example, the bride ties a towel to the arm of the matchmaker as a silent token of her agreement to the marriage, or at the wedding feast the couple observes the old custom of kissing to make the shouted word "bitter" (gorko) sweet.

By the same token, small details of Lineva's scenario differ from the concluding parts of a real folk wedding. Thus in Lineva's essay and also in the scenario it is stated that the parents of the bride and the bride herself, having prepared the table for the arrival of the match makers, sit at the table in festive attire so as to appear at their best for the match makers. In reality the parents of the girl, even if they know that someone is seeking a match with their daughter, always try to pretend that they are not aware of the true meaning of the visit. According to ancient peasant views, match making
was shrouded in secrecy and was accompanied by fear of failure; only later was it gradually converted into a festive occasion for the parents on both sides to get acquainted. Lineva followed this development in her scenario when, in expectation of the match makers, young people with their songs are brought out on the stage as though they have been invited to an evening party. Having consented to the match maker's proposal, the bride began to weep and lament before all the guests. Such weeping usually took place only after the departure of the match maker and only in the presence of the members of the household.

Yet another reason for Lineva's divergence from ethnographic authenticity in her scenario is the fact that the wedding ceremony could last several days, and even several weeks. For public performances, Lineva's choir had to compress episodes that would take place on different days in reality. In order to justify the presence of the bride's girlfriends in the episode about match making, the author has them "express" their scorn to the match maker because he has taken away their friend, and to perform their laments over the bride. Although this part does not correspond to events in an actual wedding ritual, the ensuing parts of the scenario more closely approach an authentic ritual. The scenes about how the bride is handed over to the "travelers" (poezzhane - the groom's entourage) and about how she is accepted in the home of the groom's parents are ethnographically accurate, although they have been delineated more clearly in the stage version than they are in real life.

The essay "Russian Folk Songs," which is cited in the conclusion of the Chicago collection, supposedly appeared in Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly, but we have not succeeded in finding it. One has an impression that Lineva wrote it about herself in the third person. This work is important for studying her biography because it contains facts which have not been included in other works about her life. Thus only from this source is it possible to learn that choir directing had attracted Lineva since childhood. At fourteen she was chosen assistant director of the church choir in Saint Catherine's Institute for Noble Girls where she was educated, and after finishing this institution, she served as choir director for two years. In the second half of the 1880s she was director of the student choir at Moscow University for five seasons - right up to her emigration to England and then to America. Thus her creation of a Russian choir in America should be perceived in light of these formerly unknown facts as a direct continuation of a vocation which had always appealed to her. Most biographical works about Lineva, by contrast mention only her career as an opera singer, her last appearances taking place in the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow during the 1882-1883 season. What she did as a musician after this time and before her departure to England becomes known from the Chicago collection.
E.I. Kann-Novikova delineates the second half of the 1880s as the beginning of Lineva's interest in Russian folk songs and the beginning of her folklore collecting activities. Unfortunately, none of Lineva's field materials relating to this period have been discovered and published so we do not know whether such materials exist, whether they have been preserved, or whether the biographer is correct. The information in the essay in the Chicago collection confirms Kann-Novikova's statement. Lineva began her fieldwork when she joined a group of wandering pilgrims (kaleki perekhozhie) who begged for alms and sang religious songs (dukhovnye stikh). As early as the 1880s she had occasion to visit various places in Russia and Ukraine, and had an opportunity to hear different local styles of singing. However, the songs in the Chicago volume apparently were transcribed by other collectors, thus demonstrating that before her departure from Russia she had probably not taken down folk melodies or at least had no transcriptions worthy, in her opinion, of being published. Lineva began her publication activities only after she had returned to Russia and engaged in fieldwork with a phonograph, beginning in 1897.

One may postulate several reasons why E. E. Lineva and H. E. Krehbiel became acquainted. Krehbiel (1854-1923) served for forty three years as music critic of the New York Tribune, he was the author of many books about music, and he was an early advocate of the need to study folk songs seriously. During the 1890s he gave a series of lectures about folk songs and eventually published a volume entitled Afro-American Folk Songs: A Study in Racial and National Music (New York, 1914). Following the idea of Dvorak that Afro-American folk songs were created largely in America and that they should be drawn upon by American composers, Krehbiel contributed to a still continuing debate over the nature of Afro-American music, its sources, and its originality. Like Lineva, he regarded folk songs as "musical ethnography" and he pleaded for accurately recorded verbal texts and melodies. Since Krehbiel and Lineva shared many of the same attitudes toward folk songs, their collaboration was not accidental.

The association with Charles R. Crane (1858-1939) also resulted from several coincidences. According to the work of L. J. Bocage, Crane was the son of a wealthy Chicago manufacturing family, began traveling around the world at an early age, and visited Russia or the Soviet Union twenty four times, first in 1884 and last in 1937. His interest in Russia may have begun because Samuel Smith, his wife's uncle, lived in Russia, helped build the railroad between St. Petersburg and Moscow, and eventually settled in Russia permanently. Although he never learned to speak Russian, Crane took a deep interest in Russian liturgical music, long supported a Russian choir in St. Nicholas Cathedral in New York, and made a gift of Russian church bells to Harvard University. Crane was a
noted political leader and philanthropist who supported many activities; for instance, he organized a series of lectures on Slavic culture at the University of Chicago in the 1900s, inviting Maksim Kovalevskii, Pavel Miliukov, and Thomas Masaryk to take part. For many years he supported the teaching and research activities of one of the early American Slavists, Samuel Harper, who worked at the University of Chicago. During one of his trips to Russia, Crane was introduced to Nicholas II, became friends with Prince Georgii Lvov, and met many members of the Provisional Government in 1917. Crane was twice nominated ambassador to Russia, but declined both times. He founded and endowed the Institute of Current World Affairs in New York City and left three volumes of memoirs along with ten volumes of letters. One would expect that more information about his acquaintance with Lineva, her concerts which he attended assiduously, and perhaps her Chicago collection of Russian folk songs can be discovered in Crane's papers. In his study of Crane's activities, Bocage includes nothing about Lineva, but mentions that Crane attended a concert of Russian folk songs in Moscow in June 1917. One would like to believe that Crane and Lineva met once again, since she was living near Moscow at this time.

Lineva's small volume of English translations of Russian folk songs reveals several surprising incidents in the history of Russian folkloristics as well as of American-Russian cultural relations. At the same time many intriguing gaps remain that can be filled only by extensive study of the materials of H. E. Krehbiel and Charles R. Crane in American archives. One is also inclined to speculate whether Krehbiel, who introduced the phonograph to Lineva, may have recorded some of the songs performed by her Russian choir. In several ways, the Chicago collection indicates that Lineva had already formed most of her basic ideas about the characteristics of Russian lyric folk songs by this time.

Notes

4. In archival materials Shevchenko discovered reviews about the performances of Lineva's choir and included translations of them in her article "K istorii."
5. See appendix 1 for a bibliography of pertinent collections of folk songs. Lineva’s two volumes contain only a small selection of the several hundred songs that she collected in her field work.


8. Besides the introductions to her two collections, Lineva also elaborated her ideas in her paper “Über neue Methoden des Folklores in Russland,” *III. Kongress der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft: Bericht*, Vienna, 1909, pp. 233-44.


11. See appendix 2 for the possible sources that Lineva drew upon for the songs in her Chicago collection.


13. In Melgunov’s collections all songs are given in an arrangement for piano. The composer and choir director N. S. Klenovskii did this for the first volume and the composer P. I. Blaramberg for the second.


15. After Melgunov learned about the invitation of her choir to the Chicago Exposition, he planned to come to Chicago and laid out for her the publication in America of his autobiography and memoirs, in particular those about Franz List. But this was not fated to take place; during her stay in Chicago Lineva learned about Melgunov’s death. See her article: “Iu. N. Melgunov.”


23. Curiously Lineva at a later time heard a version of “Svatushka” that folk singers had transformed from the chorus in Dargomuzhi’s opera. See: E. Lineva, “Zhiva li narodnaia pesnia?” [Is the folk song alive?], *Russkie vedomosti*, no. 31, January 31, 1903, p. 3.


26. In the essay being examined from the Chicago collection (p. 59) some hitherto unknown but curious facts have been communicated about the biography of Lineva as a singer. For instance, her
performance without accompaniment of the folk lyric “Luchinushka” so pleased English listeners that she started thinking about organizing a Russian choir.

33. Bocage, p. 131.

APPENDIX 1. COLLECTIONS OF FOLK SONGS

M. A. Balakirev, Sbornik russkikh narodnykh pesen, sostavlennyi M. A. Balakirevym [Collection of Russian folk songs, compiled by M. A. Balakirev], St. Petersburg, 1866.

O. I. Blaramberg, 12 russkikh pesen iz sbornika Melgunova polozheny na golosa P. I. Blarambergom [12 Russian songs from the collection of Melgunov set to voices by P. I. Blaramberg], Moscow, 1888.


Aloiz ledlichka, Sobranie malorossiiskikh narodnykh pesen [Collection of Little-Russian folk songs], chast 1, St. Petersburg, 1860.

E. Lineva, Velikorusskie pesni v narodnoi garmoznatsii [Great-Russian songs in their folk harmonization], vyp. 1-2, St. Petersburg, 1904-1909.

M. Lysenko, Zbirnyk ukrains'kikh pisen' zibrav i u noty zaviv M. Lysenko [Collection of Ukrainian songs transcribed and set to music by M. Lysenko], pershii vypusk, Kyiv and Odesa, 1890; druhyi vypusk, Kyiv, 1891.

N. M. Lopatin and B. P. Prokunin, Sbornik russkikh narodnykh liricheskikh pesen [Collection of Russian folk lyric songs], chasti 1-2, Moscow, 1889.


N. M. Melgunov, Russkie pesni neposredstvenno s golosov naroda zapisannyie i obiasnennyie [Russian songs transcribed directly from the voices of the people and with explanations], vyp. 1, Moscow, 1879, vyp. 2, St. Petersburg, 1885.

N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov, Sbornik russkikh narodnykh pesen [Collection of Russian folk songs], chast 1, St. Petersburg, 1876, chast 2, St. Petersburg, 1877.

K. Vilboa, Russkiie narodnye pesni, zapisannyie s narodnogo napева i arranzhirovannyie dlja odnogo golosa s akkompanemtentom fortepiano K. Vilboa [Russian folk songs transcribed from the folk melody and arranged for single voice with piano accompaniment by K. Vilboa], St. Petersburg, 1860.

APPENDIX 2. SOURCES OF THE SONGS IN LINEVA’S COLLECTION

Lineva no. 1 - Melgunov I no. 1 or 2, Balamberg no. 9; Lineva no. 2 - Melgunov II no. 7; Lineva no. 3 - Melgunov I no. 4; Lineva no. 4 - Balakirev no. 3; Lineva no. 5 - Melgunov I no. 8; Lineva no. 6 - Melgunov I no. 9 (a or b); Lineva no. 7 - Iakushkin II no. 93; Lineva no. 8 - Vilboa no. 59; Lineva no. 9 - Lopatin and Prokunin no. 83; Lineva no. 10 - Melgunov II no. 15 (a or b); Lineva no. 11 - Melgunov I no. 7; Lineva no. 12 - Lopatin and Prokunin no. 86; Lineva no. 13 - Melgunov I no. 18; Lineva no. 14 - Lopatin and Prokunin no. 57; Lineva no. 15 - ?; Lineva no. 16 - Melgunov II no. 14;
Lineva no. 17 - Balakirev no. 36 and Melgunov I no. 29; Lineva no. 18 - Melgunov I no. 30; Lineva no. 19 - ?; Lineva no. 20 - ?; Lineva no. 21 - Balakirev no. 8, 2nd variant of text; Lineva no. 22 - Rimskii-Korsakov no. 91; Lineva no. 23 - Pushkin "Rusalka" and Dargomyzhskii "Rusalka"; Lineva no. 24 - Rimskii-Korsakov no. 56; Lineva no. 25 - Rimskii-Korsakov no. 75; Lineva no. 26 - Vilboa no. 41; Lineva no. 27 - Rimskii-Korsakov no. 88; Lineva no. 28 - Ledlichka I no. 38; Lineva no. 29 - ? (very popular); Lineva no. 30 - ?; Lineva no. 31 - Lysenko I no. 38; Lineva no. 32 - Lysenko I no. 11; Lineva no. 33 - Lysenko II no. 6; Lineva no. 34 - Lysenko I no. 13; Lineva no. 35-37 - ?; Lineva no. 38 - words by Kheraskov and music by Bortnianskii; Lineva no. 39 - Lord's Prayer.