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Baturin versus Saint-Martin

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Theories of Saint-Martin have been fairly popular in the eighteenth century Europe and also in Russia. His popularity was probably the strongest in Masonic circles so that masons were called, not entirely justifiably, Martinists even though Saint-Martin himself had apparently no interest in masonry.¹ Pafnutii Baturin took upon himself to dismantle Saint-Martin's views expressed in his book, "On errors and the truth", which was also translated into Russian, the translation Baturin used.

Baturin was fairly frequently considered as one of the most important representatives of the Russian enlightenment. Kamenskii mentioned Baturin as having some imperfect ideas concerning social order and praised him for his sensualist epistemology.² Shchipanov considered him a representative of the 18th century enlightenment; however, in his view, Baturin's social ideas were naive because they were marked by abstract understanding of justice and virtue. At the same time, Shchipanov praised him as "an ardent enemy of mysticism."³ More recently, Moriakov hailed him as a representative of Russian enlightenment (русский просветитель), but limited his attention only to Baturin's idea of the origin of the state.⁴ Baturin was introduced as an author of one of the most profound criticisms of "the masonic mystical teaching" based on his "materialist sensualism"⁵ and as "a talented enlightener" who "condemned religious mysticism,

¹ A. E. Waite, *The life of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin the unknown philosopher and the substance of his transcendental doctrine*, Londyn 1901, s. 67.

² З. А. Каменский, *Философские идеи русского Просвещения (деистическо-материалистическая школа)*, Moskwa 1971, s. 121, 124, 286.

³ И.Я. Шипанов, *Философия русского просвещения*, Moskwa 1971, s. 77, 88.

⁴ В. И. Моряков, *Русское просветительство второй половины XVIII века*, Moskwa 1994, s. 72.

⁵ С. М. Некрасов, *Философско-этические идеи масонства в России, [w] Русская мысль в век Просвещения*,

and prejudices of any kind.”⁶ Malinov mentioned Baturin only once in his recent history of philosophy and erroneously at that since he considered Baturin to be an exponent of “the Ancient idea of self-knowledge.”⁷ There is none of it in Baturin’s writings. It is thus interesting to see why Baturin appeared to be so important in intellectual life of the 18th century and what his contribution was.

Baturin on Saint-Martin

Reading Saint-Martin frequently challenges common sense and patience. In the middle of a fairly sensible discussion he suddenly interjected statements which charitably can be called puzzling. For instance, in his description of the beginning of man, he said that the first man (there was no Eve) lived in the area that included 7 trees each having 16 roots and 490 branches (E 35/36).⁸ Whence these numbers? When summarizing the fall of man, he said that man went astray by going from four to nine and then he had to go from nine to four to regain his original state (38/38). Four? Nine? Only much later it appears that four is the number of perfection and nine the number of corporeality, of sensuality. This points to Saint-Martin’s numerological proclivity; numerological analyses follow later in the book and are the most obscure and incomprehensible parts of the book, particularly ch. 6 on science and mathematics. It is thus fairly easy to lose patience when reading this book and thereby overlook something which is philosophically sensible. After all, the book resonated in the whole of Europe and the book’s obscurities could hardly account for such a popularity. What was it, then?

There are at least three ways to analyze views such as Saint-Martin’s. One way is to stress the positive aspects and downplay what appears to defy rationality, to view what is obscure through the lens of what is clear. Another way is to stress the ridiculous and see what is reasonable as accidental, less important, and thus analyze what was clear from the perspective of the obscurity. And there is also a way of trying to balance the two to give equal weight to the obscure, ridiculous, and unacceptable and to the reasonable and sensible.

red. Н. Ф. Уткина, А. Д. Сухов, Moskwa 1991, s. 171.

⁶ V. Bogatov, A. Boldyrev, *The Russian Enlightenment of the Late Eighteenth Century*, [w] *A history of Russian philosophy*, red. V.A. Kuvakin, Buffalo 1994, vol. 1, s. 67-68.

⁷ А. В. Малинов, *История русской философии. XVIII век*, Sankt Petersburg 2012, s. 136.

⁸ The following references will be used:

C – Madame [Marie-Anne Lepage] Du Boccage, *La Colombiade, ou La foi portée au Nouveau Monde*, Paris: Bassompierre 1756.

E – [Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin], *Des erreurs et de la vérité*, Edimbourg 1775; a number after the slash is the page number from the Russian translation, *О заблуждениях и истинне*, Москва: Типография И. Лопухина 1785.

I – [Пафнутий С. Батуриин], *Исследование книги о заблуждениях и истинне*, Тула 1790, a number after the slash is the page number from the reprint of the book in: И.Я. Щипанов (ed.), *Избранные произведения русских мыслителей второй половины XVIII века*, Москва: Государственное издательство политической литературы 1952, vol. 2, pp. 393-532.

K – [Madame du Boccage], *Колумб в Америке*, Калуга: [Типография Батурина] 1786.

KPA – [Пафнутий С. Батуриин], *Краткое повествование об аравалянах*, Калуга: [Тип. Батурина] 1787.

S – A[ugust] G[ottlieb] Meißner, *Skizzen*, Karlsruhe: Schmieder 1782, vol. 1, 1-24, 63-86, 150-151, 153-162, vol. 2, 18-23, 30-32, 39-49; a number after the slash indicates a page number from [August Gottlieb Meißner, Пафнутий С. Батуриин], *Собрание разных правоучительных повествований и басен*, Москва: Типография Пономарева 1788.

Z – Записки П.С. Батурина (1780-1798), *Голос минувшего* 6 (1918), no. 1-3, 47-78, no. 4-6, 173-210, no. 7-9, 99-132.

Baturin wrote a book-long book review of Saint-Martin's *Errors* and this review definitely belongs to the second category of analyses: it is an incessant derision, mockery mixed with a generous amount of name-calling and *argumenta ad personam*.

Pretty much a damning argument against any views is the presence of contradictions. Baturin was seemingly of this opinion and he tried to indicate any contradiction in Saint-Martin's book he could find. He made a good claim in a few instances, although some contradictions are apparent as being a result of insufficient explanation, a hasty wording, taking certain assumptions for granted, and the like. For example, Saint-Martin stated that the principle of evil was good before it became evil since it was generated by the supreme principle, which is goodness itself (E 28/28); also, goodness cannot bring about evil (13/14). Baturin saw here a contradiction since goodness cannot bring about evil (I 22/407). However, this derived principle was good, but not goodness itself which is the supreme principle. Evil was the result of the will of this derived principle, so, no contradiction.

Saint-Martin said that the body is the organ of all our sufferings and at the same time it guards us from dangers of the environment; Baturin found it inconceivable that these two statements can be upheld at the same time (I 40/414). He would find an answer by not stopping his quote too soon: "without this shield [the body], we would have been a subject of greater dangers" (stronger in the original: "without this shield, we would have been exposed infinitely more" to outside dangers, E 43/44). The body, in Saint-Martin's view is just an imperfect protection which is also a source of human suffering.

Although Saint-Martin constantly stressed the priority of the principle of good, Baturin constantly tried to find a contradiction of this priority with the statement that the principle of good and principle of evil are on equal footing and coeternal. Saint-Martin said, which Baturin quoted, that the principle of good "soars above all Beings" (E 130/126), and in the same fragment Saint-Martin also said that the principle of evil acts on temporal productions of the principle of evil, "with which it is imprisoned" ("locked up" in Russian, I 93/433). However, there is a problem with a tiny typo in translation: "avec lesquelles" was translated as "с которым" which would be a translation of "avec lequel"; the translation should be: "с которыми."⁹ The principle of evil is not imprisoned with the principle of good (the word "imprisoned" already should point to this), but with temporary productions of the principle of good. One letter missing in translation allowed Baturin to write a few pages of how simpleminded Saint-Martin was, although it was rather simpleminded not to notice the typo.

Baturin saw a contradiction in Saint-Martin's claim that mercury as a mediator between fire and water "brings them together and at the same time it separates them" (E 152/148). To Baturin it was the same as saying that *one* man can be at the same time in Moscow and St. Petersburg (I 131/446). It is a very poor analogy. It would be better to say that it is like making *two* enemies to approach one another close enough so that they could reconcile their differences, but not too close so that their enmity

⁹ The book is really an excellent translation, so maybe a typesetter is to blame: the original spelling is "с которымъ" (in pre-revolution spelling, all words ending with a consonant had ъ attached at the end); maybe the translator's (P.I. Strakhov's) manuscript was badly scribbled and и at the end of "с которыми" was taken to be ъ.

would not flare up. No contradiction between bringing together and separating at the same time.

Desperate to find “customary contradictions,” Baturin first quoted Saint-Martin saying that we recognize the existence in nature of a power above man but seldom can human efforts know and explain this power (E 211/205), and then his statement that man only needs himself to recognize this cause and thereby reach the first cause (212/207). How can one claim, asked Baturin, that it is enough to recognize the existence of this power to know it (I 174-175/461-2), in which Baturin misrepresented Saint-Martin who said that existence of the powers is recognized, but this does not automatically provide the knowledge of the essence of this power. Also, Baturin omitted part of the statement in which Saint-Martin said that if man is guided by his senses, he will not reach the truth, but if he uses his reason, then the path to knowing the first cause is open (E 212/206-207). Also, Saint-Martin said that this intelligent cause helps all beings in the world (212/207); why are they not getting help in knowing it, asked Baturin? (I 174/463). Saint-Martin could answer that this knowledge comes through books like his own.

It is supposed to be contradictory to state that God cares about humans and about their happiness (E 215/209) and that God being the first cause created other causes to organize the world (I 180/463). Saint-Martin just could say that God’s providential care is expressed by creating secondary causes; this – which Baturin seems to imply – does not mean that God would have to withdraw Himself from the world. In the same vein, when Saint-Martin stated that the first cause, God, gives His creations intellectual faculties, and the intelligent cause directs and enlightens them (E 218/213), Baturin saw in this an idea that God could not enlighten people, but some rather that some other agent did it (I 184/465). However, this intelligent cause is God’s creation presumably for, among other things, enlightening humans, so Saint-Martin’s God does that, although indirectly.

Baturin mentioned a lot of accomplishments of science of his times and rejected some of Saint-Martin’s pronouncements because they contradicted what science said. For example, when Saint-Martin said that the one body is not mixed into the essence of another body, Baturin saw in this a statement that contradicted the laws of nature (I 71/425; E 95/92) and for three pages described the process of digestion (I 72-74/425-425). Saint-Martin, however, made here a philosophical point that taking nourishment does not change the *essence* of a particular being: humanness of the human being remains the same after having lunch, cowness of a cow does not change after the cow has grazed grass for a day; the essence of the cow is not modified by grass or the essence of grass. Baturin simply confused philosophical and natural levels. In fact, Saint-Martin addressed the problem of digestion. He stated that taking nutrition by a body “is not receiving a new Principle for this body not an augmentation of its Being” and that the inner principle of nourishment is not united with the inner principle of the body being nourished (E 100/96-97). Baturin agreed that the material cannot be mixed with the immaterial (I 85/430), which is Saint-Martin’s lesser point, but still insisted on the importance of the physiology of digestion and of mixing material particles with the material body, which is unimportant for Saint-Martin’s discussion, and rebuked Saint-Martin for his ignorance of the digestion process (86/430). Saint-Martin’s point was that the immaterial is not mixed with the immaterial: principle with principle, essence with essence,

something that eluded Baturin altogether: "in the actions most hidden of corporeal Being, such as formation, birth, growth and dissolution, Principles never mix nor mingle with [other] Principles" (E 111/107).

Baturin criticized Saint-Martin for his claim that the motion of material bodies is found not in corporeality but in the immaterial principle of beings (E 379/376-377); Baturin's answer was the reference to the law of gravity (I 299/505).¹⁰ However, it would be interesting how Baturin would answer the ontological question concerning the law of gravity: is this law a material entity or immaterial? What exactly is its ontological status?

Baturin also discovered some apparent contradictions, pronounced some invectives, and then said that, in fact, Saint-Martin noticed the contradictions and quoted Saint-Martin's qualifications, which altogether void Baturin's criticism (e.g., I 57/419-420; 58-59/420; 321/513; 339,344-346/519,521-522). What was the point of raising it?

Some statements defied Baturin's comprehension. Saint-Martin said that when people had the full use of their faculties, everyone would be a king (E 293/289). How can that be, asked Baturin (I 227/480). Saint-Martin did answer it: such a situation would mean that no one rules over anyone else. Also, such a situation will never happen in this life (293-294/289-290); consequently, it will be possible in the spiritual sphere in the future life.

Saint-Martin said that Fire is not the same as material fire, Air is not the same as air with which we breathe, so he distinguished entities from two different levels (the action of Air is "of different order and a different class" than the action of water, earth, and fire, E 142/138). After a lecture on chemistry of atmospheric air, Baturin simply said that "his imaginary immaterial principle ... is, in fact, a body," the air of physics, although Saint-Martin's point was that there are two kinds of air, physical and what can be termed metaphysical (I 105/437). And then Baturin could not restrain his derision when he read that Air is "a coachman (*char* = vehicle, in the original) of life of elements" (E 139/135, I 109-110/438). It seems, however, that, notwithstanding Saint-Martin's metaphysics, saying that air, atmospheric air, that is, is a vehicle of life would be quite an acceptable, even pretty, metaphor.

When Saint-Martin used sulfur, mercury, and salt as elements to be found in the human body, Baturin castigated him for his lack of scientific acumen since science explained various physiological phenomena in terms of phlogiston (I 75/426, 115/441). Baturin probably did not realize that phlogiston was just as metaphysical a construct as the three elements used by alchemists and that it was even ascribed a negative weight. Making science to have the last word can be philosophically perilous.

Some of Baturin's criticism is unjustified. When Saint-Martin considered principles forming minerals as not belonging to minerals, Baturin exclaimed, "What a strange teaching! Forces that form an entity do not belong to it!" (I 42/414). Why strange? Would Baturin consider, say, water that erodes a rock to be part of this rock? Saint-Martin briefly remarked that the suffering of animals was the result of the fact that the earth was not virgin and thus it was, along with its fruits, exposed to all evils that followed the loss of virginity (E 74/71). Baturin went on for two pages about the possibility that the pure earth element can be found in the depth of the earth, the depths that humans did not reach yet (I 49-51/417). Obscure as Saint-Martin's statement is, Baturin's criticism

¹⁰ Shchipanov considered this answer to be satisfactory, Шчипанов, *dz. cyt.*, s. 145-146.

has nothing to do with Saint-Martin's point, since even if pure earth can ever be reached by deep enough mining, the surface is not virgin and this is enough for Saint-Martin to substantiate the problem of the suffering of animals.

Baturin was dissatisfied with the definition of animals as owing their existence to "the maternal warmth" (in the original: "the warmth of the female of their kind," E 56/55), in which Saint-Martin apparently forgot that without fatherly action the female warmth is useless (I 41/414). However, this fact can be considered so obvious that it was not even worth mentioning, and interestingly, after Saint-Martin stated that animals are not permanently rooted to the ground, Baturin ridiculed him for stating the obvious: "What an important discovery!" (cf. similar impatience expressed in the exclamations, "everybody knows that..." (70/424, 178/463); "as though anyone doubted that!" (106/437)). Moreover, Saint-Martin did say in his description of the creation of man that only man had a father; other creations had mother and father (E 35/35).

Baturin was appalled that Saint-Martin criticized some philosophical systems for making virtue a foundational concept (E 230-1/225-6). "Who would think that there is a writer defiling virtue that consoles the unfortunate?" asked Baturin (I 182/464). However, he took Saint-Martin's statement out of context by disregarding the fact that Saint-Martin spoke about morality "limited to the sensory corporeal [realm]" and thus changing with times and space (E 230/225) and that in his view this virtue "should not be neglected under any pretext," but limiting oneself to temporary values is insufficient (231/226).

Some of Baturin's criticism is just sophomoric. Saint-Martin said that the military represents "most accurately the primal state" (E 291/287). Baturin quipped that instead of making efforts to restore one's faculties to their original state, one should join the military (I 228/480). First, this would not dispense with efforts needed for the requisite restoration; secondly, Saint-Martin said that "it would be the greatest absurdity to take this comparison literally" (E 293/289), and yet Baturin who at every turn considered what Saint-Martin said to be absurd, himself was not far from it.

When Saint-Martin said that there is discontinuity in bodies (E 391/388), Baturin ridiculed this by saying that, e.g., in a group of people all limbs could be mixed up (I 302/506). He was talking past Saint-Martin, since the latter considered bodies to be composed of spherical atoms which can only touch one another at one point, so there is a discontinuity on the atomic level with parts of the body having enough cohesion without separating themselves too easily from the body.

Saint-Martin said that the body of man was formed in the body of woman, thus earth is the true principle of a female body just as it is of the male body. Baturin ridiculed this into a conclusion that because everything goes back to the source, so man should dissipate into a woman, not into earth (I 81/428). This appears to be Baturin's deliberate distortion since it is fairly obvious that Saint-Martin meant dissipation of bodies into their principal elements, and surely woman is not such an element for the male body, but earth.

Saint-Martin complained that scientists (he called them observers, which meant about the same as empiricists) limit their attention to the perceptible level only and isolate their findings from larger, metaphysical context (E 145/141). He wanted to see that "the intellectual law and the corporeal law progress the same way, each in its own class and by action proper to it" (148/144), to find the connection between the empiri-

cal and the metaphysical (146/141-142), which only invoked Baturin's scorn and crude name-calling (I 120/442). The observers "being buried in the sensory [realm] lost touch with what is not from there" (E 151/147). This is what Saint-Martin wanted to rectify; he wanted to create a unified framework which encompassed both the empirical and extra-empirical realms. The world for him was one and the same principles – numerological principles as they were – which were to be found everywhere, on each level of reality. For example, he claimed that there were only three elements, not four as traditionally thought, since nature shows that there are only three dimensions, three divisions in the extended being, three figures in geometry, three innate faculties in each being, three temporal worlds, three degrees of expiation for man, three degrees in true masons (135/131-132), three parts of man (142/139), three actions in the behavior of temporary entities (181/176), and three fundamental and fixed and indispensable parts of speech (474/470). In this was Saint-Martin's appeal; in this was an attempt to find the union of different levels of the universe through all-encompassing laws and the one original Principle, the first cause, who was God, although Saint-Martin not once named this Principle God in his *Errors*. The reader of Baturin's book will not learn from it why Saint-Martin became so popular and his audience so receptive. The reader only learns that Saint-Martin was a moron promoting idiotic views for which he should be locked for life in the lunatic asylum. That was the level of argumentation replete in Baturin's treatise where inventing new invectives is the major accomplishment. Baturin was immersed in the empirical realm so much that he did he did not see the broader picture Saint-Martin attempted to paint. And yet, in isolated places, Baturin very briefly indicated that the idea of the existence of the extra-empirical sphere was not altogether alien to him.

On the title page, Baturin put a fragment of Lomonosov's translation of a psalm: "Although a military battalion of the enemy rises against me, / I won't be afraid. / Let the enemy rise their weapons, / I have trust in God" (Ps. 27[26]:2-3). Does it mean that for Baturin, writing his book was entrusted to him by God? Baturin constantly ridiculed Saint-Martin as a prophet, and a false prophet at that. Did he see himself as a true prophet combating a false one? By his isolated statements he pointed to his belief in God. So, he mentioned the Most High Creator, the Creator of worlds who gives laws to His creation (I 11/403; 170/460; 267/494), the omnipotent God who is the source of everything (335/518), and that "people sense the necessity of the most high Creator who created everything and rules over all" (179/463). Baturin also allowed for the possibility that God created an infinite number of worlds (99/435). These are very generic theological statements with nothing specific about Christianity or Orthodoxy. In fact, there are somewhat puzzling omissions. Saint-Martin's view on evil being the result of freedom and will Baturin ascribed as taken from the teachings of Brahmans (19/406). However, this is also, so to say, a standard Christian explanation of the emergence of evil, which Baturin did not even mention. When Saint-Martin said that secondary principles have their source in the primary Principle, Baturin saw in this an Indian teaching of principles flowing from a deity and the teaching of divine creation of spirits to rule over natural entities (61/421). Closer to home, Christianity maintains that God created nature and all natural laws, which Baturin did not mention. Also, Baturin saw "similarity with the godless system of Spinoza," since incorporeal principles of matter are ruling over matter (63/422). If someone believes that God created the principle of gravity that, of course, determines the behavior of material bodies, does it make such a person a pantheist? At

least, this shows Baturin's rejection of pantheism. In fact, he commanded Fénelon, "a man famous for his honesty and purity of morals" for his successful criticism of this "fatal error of a schismatic Jew" (69/422). Also, Saint-Martin would probably be surprised to see that his principles are equated with spirits. Baturin said that when speaking about the fall of man, Saint-Martin transformed the sacred Scriptures to show that he had more knowledge than the sacred writer who by God's revelation spoke to the humankind about its creation by the most high hand, about the blessing of the first man and about his sin (28/409-410). This would indicate that Baturin considered the Bible to be the revealed word of God. There is also an interesting statement that "no reasonable reader would accept an insolent statement that the deity in each instant is occupied for us in creation not unbecoming of him. It is enough that by his generosity he created all objects and creations included in them" (76-77/427). This is stated in the context of making up for things that cease to exist and thus need to be replaced by other things. Such replacement, and thus the process of continuous creation Baturin apparently found unbecoming of God, which would mean that creation took place only once, at the beginning of time, and then new things come into being due to natural laws, whereby no intervention of God is necessary. This comes close to an endorsement of deism, a rejection of providential care of God over His creation, and yet we read that it is absurd to suppose that the Most High Creator of worlds could not or did not want to direct His creation. God is omnipresent and rules over all (185/465). However, how can Baturin make such serious theological statements? He berated Saint-Martin's delusions concerning an insight into the supranatural realm, but are Baturin's own theological pronouncements any different? Unless he would refer to ecclesiastical authorities, which he never did, or to the authority of the Bible, which he implicitly did make. But why believe the Bible? Baturin did not even attempt to address the question. He only stated that there are many "people of profound reason, broad learning and intense reasoning" who have found "everywhere the wisdom of God and in the knowledge of man - the necessity for him to be virtuous" (10/403). What would make such people to be special and not the likes of Saint-Martin? Baturin also made an impatient statement to the effect that the existence of God does not need any discussion: "of course, there is the good principle not posited by anyone and created by no one" and "all creation proclaims its existence" (269/495), in which he made a weak reference to the popular physico-theological argument deriving the existence of God from harmony and orderliness of natural laws. This seems to be confirmed by Baturin's opening methodological statement that "only those truths do not require any proof which we either get to know physically or we have an idea about them through common sense which assures us about their existence as much as the sensory perception" (3/400). Also, in his *Brief history of the Arabs* he said that today the motion of celestial bodies is explained with two forces, central attraction and the fundamental motion in straight line, and observations agreeing with calculations "increase our admiration of supreme wisdom of the Most High" (KPA 124). Thus, physical proofs and common sense are the only avenues to arrive at the truth. Would common sense include any innate truths? Baturin was silent on the issue.

Saint-Martin used science to prop up his metaphysical arguments, although the science he used was not always up-to-date. His common sense was quite obviously rather different from Baturin's. The former concentrated on the supernatural realm and analyzed - convincingly or otherwise - this physical and social world from the perspec-

tive of the supernatural. Baturin was an empiricist with scientific leaning and he viewed the supernatural realm from the perspective of the physical world. He was insensitive to philosophical issues and his rare theological statements are, as it were, suspended in the air with rather weak, if any, connection with Baturin's empiricism.

All in all, Baturin's book did not get much traction.¹¹ One reason is that it was published in the provincial city of Tula and the major centers of masonry were in the capitals of Russia. Secondly, the potential readership. Someone sympathetic to Saint-Martin's approach would find the constant barrage of insults that fill the book off-putting. It is difficult to win someone over to one's case by insults. Frequently, it was all that was used as an argument: after a quotation, Baturin stated that "only someone as stupid as the false prophet who wrote it would believe it" – or some other iteration on that theme. On the other hand, those who were of Baturin's worldview would not need Baturin's book to see how unacceptable for them Saint-Martin's theory was just after reading a few pages. Also Orthodox believers would put away Saint-Martin's work quickly discovering theories they would find heretical, for example, the account of the creation of man or his numerological ruminations.

There are very few philosophical and theological statements found in Baturin's *Examination of the book On errors and truth* and only very few additional philosophical and theological statements of Baturin can be found elsewhere.

Translations

Baturin published two translations, one from German, one from French.

One translation is the *Collection of various moral stories and fables*, which includes five short stories and eleven brief fables by August Meißner and three fables by Baturin himself (Z 176); the latter occupy only seven pages in the book. Both stories and fables speak about human virtues such as modesty, endurance, not needing too much, refraining from boasting, careful choice of friends, and the like, and Baturin's own fables speak about keeping promises and love which may often lead to unhappiness. Translation is mostly exact, with occasional modifications and additions.¹² No philosophy here and no theology, unless we observe that "God" is always spelled as "god" (S 1.13/17, 1.63/71, 1.68/78),¹³ replaced by "most high" (with small letters, 1.80/95), "the sun" (2.48/60), or "deity" (2.20/36), or the phrase about a king as "the beloved of the supreme Being" was left out altogether (2.21/38). The word "spirit" was also rooted out and replaced by "reason" (2.22/39). One story consists of various anecdotes about one Persian king, Nushirvan. Two anecdotes were left out. Was it possibly that one of them was excluded because it included such statements of the king as "The greater Lord than me, the Creator of this universe (2.37) ... I am inferior to him as to my power and worth; and should his commandments be inferior to mine? (2.38).¹⁴ In one anecdote, the king said, "The

¹¹ In Рупин's opinion, the book came out too late to have any influence, А[лександр] Н. ПЫПИН, *Русское масонство, XVIII и первая четверть XIX века*, Piotrogród 1916, s. 281.

¹² At least one modification somewhat changes the punch line: cf. Meißner: "How many new sects boasted about creating literature and taste. And gone is their memory from the annals!" and Baturin: "How many people we see who only boast about their merits and then they fall into the abyss of nothingness due to unexpected events" (1.162/117).

¹³ Only once the spelling uses the capital G, but only because "God" is the first word in a sentence (S 1.77/90).

¹⁴ Baturin included anecdotes, except for two, only from vol. 2 of Meißner's *Skizzen*. There are also some in vol. 3, none of them translated by Baturin. It may very well be that he did not have access to this volume.

Eternal Being ["being" in Baturin], forgive me, as I am breaking now my oath, the solemn oath, not to shed blood on the day that gave me life; etc." (41/69). Was it included because the king defied God by breaking his promise and executing his own justice? At one point, Baturin remained true to the theological original; in a story that was a letter written by a preacher who often consoled those sentenced to death, the preacher wrote that it was very difficult to prepare to death a poor wretch to be stricken by avenging justice (63/70) since if he did not repent, then, what a sadness (63/71); if he repented, what a joy it would be to see him at the first step to eternity to lead us to the throne of the One who was, is, and will be (64/72). Did Baturin consider this Christian message of the preacher to be also his own?

Another translation published by Baturin is the *Columbus in America* that Baturin described as "an abbreviation excerpt" from the *Colombiade or the faith brought to the New World* (1756) by Boccage (Z 176). Abbreviation it is: Baturin's text is about a third of the ten cantos densely printed on 200 pages of the original. However, it is not just an abbreviation. First, the style is changed: beautiful and elegant rhymed verse is transformed into choppy, undistinguished prose. Second, the setup was changed.

Boccage/Baturin story shows Columbus with his crew setting to sail to America, getting to the island of Isabel on which Columbus fell in reciprocated love with the princess Zama, then reached the Hispaniola island on which the queen Vascona fell in love with him, but since he rejected her advances, the scorned woman unleashed the fury of a war which ended with her death and Columbus' victory. Boccage called Columbus a new Ulysses (C viii, 82), which points to Homer's framework Boccage used in her poem. In Homer's epic poems, the action takes place on two intertwined levels, natural on earth, and supernatural in the world of the gods, where the gods quarrel with themselves but also constantly intervene, not to say meddle, in terrestrial events. Boccage used the same framework, which is already reflected in the title of her poem: it is not just a voyage of an adventurer who enflamed the hearts of Indian royalties, but the story of bringing new faith to the New World, which took place under the constant providential supervision of God and constant meddling of the deities worshipped by Indians, the deities that were simply demonic forces straight from hell. These forces did their best to hamper Columbus' progress and inciting amorous feelings in the hearts was but a means designed to obstruct this progress. Amorous affairs were not just frivolous events, but tools used by supernatural forces to influence historical and social events. This supernatural aspect of the poem was almost completely wiped out from Baturin's rendition, which is already reflected in the title: the grand original title turns into something rather pedestrian, matter-factual, as though Baturin wanted to say, "Only the facts, Madam" (incidentally, the name used for the author of the original was Madam Duboccage).

At the beginning, when Columbus was crossing the Atlantic, "Teule, who on the Styx from Aeolus takes the power, / Carries to the feet of Satan hatred that he inspires; (C 7) / Fire comes from his eyes, from [his] bloodied tears; / The Terror and Death march at his sides; / For the Scepter, in his hands is the key of Tempests." This "Demon of Winds" says to Satan: "Our grand Enemy," i.e., God, conquered already a half of the globe and now "He wants to extend his conquest to the new World, / To transmit there his laws and see himself worshipped." Therefore, Columbus has to be stopped (8). "Deliver to Winds these audacious people, said Satan; / May all the Elements be unchained

against them." A tempest was unleashed: "God permits Hell to test these Heroes: / The Calm in this instant turns into Torment." In despair, Columbus "implores his God. / Sovereign Creator, who, present in each place, (9) / Keeps all stars, airs, the earth in equilibrium / ... Would you like to ruin our vessels in this abyss? / If our discovery is lost forever, / Who will bring your Laws on this unknown wave? / ... Great God! Only your support keeps this enterprise: / Have us touch the land of our promised travel" (10). God heard the pleading, the ocean quieted and the ships safely reached the shores of an island. The first sentence in Baturin states, "The Castilian fleet reaches the limits of the new world" (K 1). The grand supernatural opening of Boccage is absent.

Baturin for the most part removed such supernatural elements or reduced them to a minimum. For example, when an Indian sage thought that his people was the only one on earth, he asked Columbus if he was from "the Worlds / Where Death leads us by its profound routs?" (C 17). Baturin's sage just asked, "Where do you come from" (K 7). Columbus said that he was not born in heaven, but that "everything is submitted to God who guides me. / The bright Star of the Day, the Candle of Night, / The Earth and her children are the work of this God" (C 21). Baturin omitted this answer.

When the sinking of the fleet did not succeed, on orders from Satan, Zemes, another deity worshiped by Indians (C 57), found the Son of Venus [Amor/Eros] (58) and told him to come to Zama and Columbus "to pierce them with the arrows which bring into their souls / Furor of desires and forgetting of the[ir] duty" (59). Amor caused that Zama enflamed Columbus' spirit "Not by moderate fire that Nature approves, / But by ardent fires of which Reason whispers / Which nothing can extinguish and which make [you] neglect/disregard / Friendship, duty, shame, and danger. / Hell triumphs" (C 61). None of it appeared in Baturin.

Columbus introduced himself to a local Cacique/king: "believe that the wisdom / For the good of [your] People led me to your Fields. / On the shores where the Sun paints for you its rising fires, / Of the Prince whom I serve everything praises [his] Power; / Only the eternal Being is the God to whom he burns incense, / From his sacred Cult I bring here the Laws. / Ferdinand ... / Offers you to exchange the Treasures of the two Worlds" (C 95); only a faint reflection of this is found in Baturin's rendering: "The providence brought me to these shores for your benefit to proclaim to you the one God, to enlighten [you in] your ignorance, to open to you a common way of living with us" (K 52-53).

Queen Vascona "seduced by Hell to destroy the Iberians" was inflamed by passion for Columbus (C 103). No mention was made of the hellish agency in Baturin (K 62).

Third: another difference between Baccage and Baturin is that Baturin not only cut off many parts of the original, but he also modified some parts and added some parts of his own. Modifications are sometimes gratuitous since they do not enhance the text nor add anything of substance. For example, Serrano, whom Columbus found alone on an island, told his story (C 50): a ship was captured by a barbarian chieftain; Serrano learned their language and the chieftain wanted to use Castilians' martial skills for piracy; the Castilians agreed if, after some time, they would be freed. A son of the captain of Castilians was supposed to be kept as a hostage, but his father took his place, after which a ship with Castilians on it set to a voyage (51). Baturin's version states: a ship with Serrano was captured, the chief pirate demanded large ransom (K 25) which was

unavailable for Castilians. They were kept for a year. Serrano learned their language and was asked by the chief to teach Spanish ("the European language") to his son and with the son of the captain of Castilians to accompany him in his voyage for education; the captain remained as a hostage (26).

Sometimes, however, modifications are significant. The fleet is sailing after leaving the island of Isabelle and "a menacing monster cracks open the liquid plane; / From its flattened flanks comes out a human face" (C 78); "the Author supposes that the Demon takes all kinds of forms to harm the Castilians," as Boccage commented in a footnote (78 note 6). The monster said it would guide them to a treasure (79), but instead, it caused a shipwreck. After the wreck, "an angel, who supported him [Columbus], / Carried him to the land and shows him on the wave / Ten of his Companions ready to reach the Port." On the shore of what would be called Hispaniola [Haiti], there were hostile Indians throwing spears at them. "At that frightful spectacle, the dismayed Admiral, / Left to the Heaven his unfortunate fate. / The Eternal, whose hand has always been his resource, / Sped up the wave that carried them," upon which they reached the shore and mainly through the heroism of Columbus, they defeated the Indians (82). A prayer of gratitude to God followed (83). In Baturin's rendering, there is no monster and when hostile Indians started throwing spears, Columbus had a brief pep talk upon which all present regained courage and defeated the Indians. No divine intervention, no prayer following the victory (K 45-46).

Indians have gold that they don't value (98/56). "Teule and Boia, Demons that on this Hemisphere / Error elevates to the rank of the Gods that are revered" (C 98), to protect their cult from the Castilians, call from hell Avarice (99), "the Demon of Gold." "Our Warriors forgetting the order of the Admiral, / Their plans, even the Heaven, and the infernal abyss, / They had a burning for the riches on Indies" (100). No hellish forces are at play in Baturin's rendering, just greed, which is expressed stronger than by Boccage: "You, who praise yourselves that you exposed your lives to so many dangers on the ways of the sea to proclaim the true faith: you yourselves defiled the message of this sacredness, you darken its light and set on these virgin shores for all generations traces of vile and inhuman tyranny in place of the sign of piety!" (K 56-57). Plunder and slaughter ensued (C 100; K 57).

An Indian king Canarie, who sided with Columbus, said that Vascona's "cruel law orders that today / I deliver to her altars, to expiate for her crimes, / A hundred Solders destined to serve as victims" (C 126); Baturin: "I should always in the case of need to add to her army a hundred of my chosen men and armed soldiers" (76). Is this a deliberate change or mistranslation? It is also possible that Baturin did not want to include cultic elements associated with the battle.

An envoy was sent to Columbus with an ultimatum to leave. Columbus responded that God would defend them with His thunder, by which he meant the use of firearms (C 127). Baturin set the answer on a different plane: "answer her that only I have power given from above to subdue Kingdoms and, therefore, hasten, poor wretches, to bow down now before the thunder of my arms," which is much more aggressive and self-righteous than in the original (K 92).

Columbus, seeing death around him after the battle, prayed to God: "Change their bellicose thirst into love of peace / So that your name be announced/proclaimed

here at the news of your kindness" (C 147). Baturin, however, made Columbus worry that he would return to Europe empty-handed, covered with shame (K 98-99).

Zama told her story when trying to find Columbus: "My heart, that already tasted the law of your God, / Knew that in vain it wanted to be with you without following it, / Easily I paid my homage; a loyal Priest / Offered me in sacred water to the Being you serve: / Zulma [her servant] followed my fate; angelic Concerts / Heard over waves celebrated the fête" (C 149). Baturin made the conversion less a matter of her sincere religious desire, more a matter of love of Columbus; it was a priest who "tried to persuade" her to conversion, not her own heart, and who said that without it her union with Columbus would be impossible; so, as she said to Columbus, "I was afraid that you despised me, I unhesitatingly agreed to his proposal and he quickly made me the participant of your sacredness"; no angelic celebration followed (K 104).

Zama died from poison, and in despair, Columbus exclaimed: "Oh, Heaven! / It is to ravish my bewildered soul / That you allowed me to see her on this fatal day? / Kill us together, or rather may your blows / Today only on me drain your wrath" (C 151). Baturin made this exclamation well nigh blasphemous: "Oh! Evil-creating deity: how long won't you be satiated with our tears? How long will you be insensitive to our wailings? To increase my suffering, you returned her to me so that I could see her die! Be glad, evil fate! Because of my suffering pour this cruelty upon me" (K 107). Zama's parting words, not reported by Baturin, were: No crying, "My soul that is already tasting charms of Heaven / Experiences happiness in the hope of its gifts. / Do you want to earn it? Tame your passions, / Serve your God, follow his laws; do it so that one day in the glory / Our reunited Destinies crown your victory" (C 152).

This demythologising tendency of Baturin can be interpreted as an expression of his general view of religion in life of a representative of the Enlightenment age. When Boccage saw a good or bad event, she ascribed it both to the human and to the supernatural agencies, divine or demonic. In particular, when Columbus' companions succumbed to greed that resulted in slaughter of Indians, they were just as guilty as the demon of avarice is, meaning that they were partially exonerated. Baturin apparently found such approach unacceptable. For him, humans are entirely responsible for their actions and thus the slaughter of Indians was their fault and theirs alone, no demonic influence can be called upon as an excuse. With this, Baturin saw Columbus in a rather dim light as a vainglorious man seeking fame and riches using religion as a cover for his conquests and occasionally lashing out at heaven if the events did not develop his way. This surely is not Boccage's Columbus, who was pious and submitting himself entirely to God's guidance, even if he sometimes did not understand God's decisions. Importantly, this does not mean that Baturin was areligious or antireligious. There are two theological fragments in Baturin that he added to Boccage's account.

At one point, Columbus said to an Indian king that in Italy, "On the Throne where once reigned Idolatry / The holy Pontiff presides over our faith" (C 26). Baturin repeated it and said more: "on the throne, where before idolatry ruled, now of our law holy Pope presides. He is the archpriest of the most high God, whose creations are the sun, moon, and other luminaries; heaven, earth, and all living beings on it; and this God, whom we serve, is God over all Gods; he subdues for us all tongues; he guides us safely through the crests of angry sea waves; he arms us against our enemies with lightning and thunder. A hundred of ours defeat a thousand and a thousand overthrows King-

doms [cf. Lev. 26:8]. We are called Christians, that is, the chosen of the son of the most high God" (K 8). Moreover, only Europe is a Christian part of the world and is better than other parts where everything is established by a supremely wise order; rulers care about their subjects; evil is prevented by the laws. The youth are educated, people know astronomy and the treasures of the earth (9). Was that Baturin's heartfelt believe in the existence of the universal God? If so, what can we say about the response of the king who said that if this is truly God ruling over all, why did He teach only the Europeans and only them did He allow to submit other nations? Their Indian deity "illuminates without exception the entire universe, equally warms up and feeds all, does not shed blood, does not judge with a flaming sword and makes us without exceptions [His] sons" (K 10-11). It is interesting that the king referred here to the words of Christ about the Light that illuminates each person coming into this world (J. 1:9) and about God making the sun to rise on the evil and the good and sending rain on the just and the unjust (Mt. 5:45). If this is Baturin's statement of faith, he believed in the universal God of peace who gives the light of wisdom to each person and accepts each person. What this acceptance means, we do not learn from Baturin. Does it mean disregard for the human sin? Letting every person to the paradise after death? Not impossible, although this view was rejected by the Eastern church as the heresy of Origen.

There is another theological addition. Distressed by losses, Columbus exclaimed to God, "Where is your just judgment? Where is your truth? The all-seeing eye! You turn away your face from those who, not sparing their lives, dared to proclaim your holy name on these distant shores to a godless nation; your chosen children have today return back with ridicule and shame from enemies of your law." Serrano, his interpreter, interrupted it and said, "Columbus! Don't blame heaven with injustice and don't bring thereby upon yourself its wrath"; do you want to earn God's favor by capturing so many innocent people? (K 116); "Aren't they people like us? ... Did your superstition grow to such an extent that you consider blood of an idolater to be an offering pleasing to God? God looks not how someone imagines him, but he looks only at the heart of someone praying to him [cf. 1 Sam. 16:7]. He blesses a Spaniard and doesn't reject a Hottentot, he accepts a Jew, he enlightens a man from Kamchatka; they are all creations of his hands [Col. 1:12] and all are equal for him. Believe me, Columbus! Who well serves society, he doesn't have to answer to anyone in what way he serves God. All sects without exception have as their object [one and] only God and all morals are directed to one end - not to do evil to the neighbor; the one egocentric view about following the just faith only leads to quarrels. To this should be added the essential benefit of sectarians who always based their advantages/profits on national simplicity. ... let us enter into ourselves and see, didn't you sprinkle the altar of fame erected in your soul with the blood of the innocent? ... Aren't you more cruel than these idolaters?" Columbus interrupted and agreed with Serrano, but he answers that "who for reaching it [fame] doesn't spare his own life, he does not consider the price of blood of the entire world" (117-119).

What Baturin advocated was a belief in a universalist God, a generic God, a creator of all things and apparently also of the moral code, in particular, the silver rule: don't do to others what you wouldn't have them do to you. This rule - possibly with the addition of the golden rule - would form the foundation of the civic life. If someone followed these rules, the specifics of their religious faith were unimportant. So, Baturin was against the egoistic aspect of religion: my religion is better than yours; he was

against its parochial character.

When speaking about God's universal acceptance, Baturin very likely alluded to the New Testament statements that there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither man nor woman (Gal. 3:28), Neither Greek, nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian (Col. 3:11). However, thereby he would disregard the qualifications expressed in the preceding verses: among those baptized in Christ there is no difference (Gal. 3:27), among those who put off the old man with his deeds and were renewed in the knowledge of God (Col. 3:9-10). Rom. 10:12 speaks about no difference between the Jew and the Greek since there is the same Lord above them, but says nothing about the universal acceptance. Also, the New Testament appears to indicate that the children of God are only people who accepted Christ as their savior (J. 1:12, Rom. 8:16, 1 J. 3:1-10). By making his universalist claims, Baturin tried to erase differences between religions – and thus avoid conflicts between them – but in this way, it remains unclear what would happen with the most distinguishing aspect of Christianity, namely the person of Christ and His religious significance.

Baturin's universalist claims are seen in the fact that he never once in his writings mentioned Christ by His name or by His messianic title. He mentioned once the Trinity but only as part of beliefs of one Arab group (КРА 77). In his memoirs he described in detail, for example, how one woman tried to seduce him to save her husband from a sentence Baturin was to give, but there is nothing at all about Baturin's own spiritual life. This seduction attempt reminded him about a story from the *Cheti-Minei* (Z 186) which was a book on the lives of the saints, which would indicate his familiarity with this then very well-known work. He mentioned an order to convert Uniates and their churches to Greek-Russian Orthodoxy. He said, it was a harder task than others (105), but there is nothing about why the task was so hard. Also, he once obliquely dismissed Orthodox seminaries by staying about one official that he was educated in a seminary in which they do not teach good manners and where seldom there are situations that would sow in the heart the seed noble feelings (128). All of it seems to indicate that Baturin distanced himself from the religion of his country, preferring a more generic understanding of religion. He believed in his God whom he considered providentially present in the world and caring for His creation, and in this light, all rites and particularism of religion were of much lesser importance.¹⁵ However, there is a vast disconnect between his theological statements and his empiricism and scientism, once again indicating his insensitivity to philosophy as expressed throughout his criticism of Saint-Martin.

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¹⁵ Therefore, considering Baturin a deist, as claimed by Shchipanov, Щипанов, *dz. cyt.*, p. 142 (it was even stated that his views were "materialist, but expressed in a deistic form," Bogatov, *dz. cyt.*, p. 68; almost identically Некрасов, *dz. cyt.*, p. 172), is unjustified.

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Streszczenie

Adam Drozdek

Baturin kontra Saint-Martin

W artykule przedstawiono obszerną krytykę Pafnutiego Baturina pracy Saint-Martina „*O błędach i prawdzie*”. Krytyka, której towarzyszą tyrady inwektyw, jest bardzo tendencyjna i często błędnie interpretuje wypowiedzi Saint-Martina. W szczególności pokazuje ona brak wrażliwości Baturina na zagadnienia filozoficzne i teologiczne. Jego empirycystyczne nastawienie wyraźnie ujawnia się również w jego tłumaczeniu opowiadań i bajek Meißnera, a w szczególności w jego poetyckim tłumaczeniu powieści Boccage, „Kolumbiada lub wiary przyniesiona do Nowego Świata”.

Резюме

Адам Дроздек

Батурина а Сен-Мартен

В статье представляется критику Батурина работы Сен-Мартена, *О заблуждениях и истинне*. Критика, которая сопровождается вспышками ругательства, является пристрастной и часто искажает утверждения Сен-Мартена. В частности, она показывает нечувствительность Батурина к философским и богословским вопросам. Его эмпирическое предубеждение также ясно из его перевода рассказов и басен Мейснера и, в частности, из его перевода поэтического сочинения Дю Бокаж, *Коломбьяда или вера принесена в Новый Свет*.

