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RECEPTION OF THE PHILOSOPHY
OF THE GERMAN IDEALISM IN
RUSSIA**

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Using a dialogue between the Moscow Pastor Karl Albrecht Sederholm with Schelling as an example, and referring to many unpublished archive documents and manuscripts, this article analyses the role of Sederholm in the cultural transfer between Russia and Germany and the complex interaction between theological, philosophical, religious, political and personal factors in the reception of Schelling's and Hegel's ideas in Russia in the first half of 19th century.

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The present article analyses the role played by Karl Albrecht Sederholm (1789–1867) in the history of Russo-German cultural contacts in the second and third quarters of the 19th century. The special place occupied by Sederholm, a Moscow Protestant minister of Swedish origin, in Russian culture was a result his double role as a populariser of Russian culture in German-speaking circles and as an agent who made the ideas of contemporary German Idealist and Romantic philosophy known to the Russian intelligentsia. The present study offers a detailed analysis of just one aspect of Sederholm's work, namely, his involvement in the transmission of the Schelling's philosophical ideas to the Russian intelligentsia of 1820–40s. The reconstruction presented in this article is based on many unpublished archive documents and manuscripts found and translated by the author. All the sources are quoted in the author's English translation from German and Russian.

Along with Chaadayev and Alexandr Turgenev, Sederholm belonged to a small group of Russians who corresponded directly with Schelling, and this has been confirmed by document. To understand his role in the history of the reception of Schelling's ideas in Russia it is necessary to look into history of these contacts.

Already in 1984 a Russian translation of a letter from Schelling to Sederholm, found by the Moscow historian of literature Sakharov, was published by Gulyga in a biography of the philosopher written for the 'Life of Outstanding people' series³. Gulyga added a short explanation: 'a year earlier the evangelical minister Sederholm from Russia sent him his thoughts on the philosophy of religion. Schelling could not put his own work aside and delayed his answer. Later two more letters from Sederholm arrived, and he answered all at once'⁴. Gulyga has neither explained the reasons why Sederholm addressed Schelling, nor described Schelling's reaction to this communication. The relationship between Schelling and Sederholm took a quite dramatic turn, as we shall see, and as it unfolded over more than 20 years, and both philosophic and non-philosophic themes were intertwined. This drama can only be analysed with the use of unpublished documents and with a discussion of the philosophical context.

In his first letter, dated 23-27 August, 1826, Sederholm began with a preface where he related the causes that moved him to initiate the correspondence:

I am a Swede, the father of nine children, a minister of an Evangelical community near Moscow, a teacher of Latin in the local Academy of Medicine and Surgery, etc. I studied at Abo⁵ and have recently been granted a diploma of the doctor of philosophy by the University of Königsberg for the dissertation: *De philosophia christiana cum religione connectenda*. [On Christian Philosophy in its connection to religion]⁶. Since my university years philosophy has been the main object of my studies, however, my dear and worthy tutor has died, and besides, I

³ Гулыга А.В. Шеллинг. М., 1984. pp. 233–234.

⁴ Там же. pp. 232–233.

⁵ The city on the southwest coast of Finland, now Turku.

⁶ The manuscript of this dissertation is preserved in the archive of Sederholm (ОР РГБ. Ф. 107. Карт. 2. ед. хр. 3)

soon felt that I could go further in my search for truth only through knowledge of German literature⁷. So I went to Vyborg where, as I knew, was a German with a German love of science, the head of a local gymnasium, and there at 21 I learned German. I had served for a year at the school, and then left for Germany, to live there by means of scholarly pursuits, as far as it was possible. However, since I had nothing to live on, when I stopped at St Petersburg I was persuaded not to go to Germany, and to accept a parish in Southern Russia instead⁸. I have been here for the last 6 years. [...]

For the last 15 years, with limited time for leisure, I tried to further my education, mostly through my own reasoning. About 8 years ago a serious conflict between my belief and my reason arose. Rationalism ceased to satisfy me, and yet I could believe what the orthodox Evangelical Church believes. I tried to reach an understanding of its main doctrines, and in this I succeeded, thank God; so that personally I see clearly, without any artifice, the truth and necessity of these doctrines. You, however, would not think that I could have reached this firm and joyful persuasion without comprehending the one truth and thus uniting my religious views with my philosophical ones. Since this sun of one truth shone on me, the only purpose of my existence is to present it in life⁹.

Thus Sederholm presented himself to Schelling as an independent thinker who had seen the possibility of creating a new discipline. The style and rhetoric of this self-presentation combine bizarrely prophetic pathos and the realization of his election with self-depreciation:

Although *I* cannot speak of philosophy in *Your* presence without blushing from shame, I still have to express my deep conviction: we will not find the truth until we find it as one truth, and we will not find the true philosophy, that is, the true understanding of God and his manifestations in the spiritual world, until philosophy turns into religion, and religion – into philosophy. [...] It is only natural, therefore, that I dedicate my life and love to this lofty goal. I cannot do otherwise. This I believe it to be my sacred duty in the best possible way to take care to develop and relate my ideas, which benign fortune has let me find and which, as I know too well, are still foreign to my age.

This ambivalent self-evaluation determines the specific relation to the addressee demonstrated by Sederholm: exaggerated respect bordering on obsequiousness is mixed here with the firm belief that his religious and philosophical mission, in the execution of which he seeks Schelling's help, is, pure and simple, of historical importance for the world:

⁷ It is important to clarify that the interest of young Sederholm to German philosophy has a specific context: a 'worthy tutor' mentioned here was a Finnish Kantian philosopher Gabriel Israel Hartman (1774 – 1809) who offered an original re-interpretation of the ideas of Kant and his early critics (Reinhold, Schulze etc.). About Hartman see: Handbuch Deutscher Idealismus / Hrsg. von Hans Jörg Sandkühler. Stuttgart; Weimar, 2005. S. 384--385; *Oittinen V.* Ein nordischer Bewusstseinsphilosoph. «Reinholdianische» Themen bei G.I. Hartman // Die Philosophie Karl Leonhard Reinholds / Hrsg. M. Bondeli u. W. Schrader. Fichte Studien Supplementa 16. Amsterdam; N.Y., 2003.

⁸ It is remarkable that of all Southern Russia Sederholm settled in Kharkov. In 1810s, the University of Kharkov was a major centre of the reception of German Idealism in general and of the philosophy of Schelling in particular. Two enthusiastic advocates of transcendental idealism taught there – a philosopher Johann Baptist Schad, and a lawyer and an amateur mathematician Ferdinand Karl Schweikart. Both studied under Schelling at Jena in 1799-1800 and implemented the conceptual tools of the philosophy of Schelling in their own work. On Schad, see the detailed works by Vladiir Abaschnik, for example: *Abaschnik V.* J.B. Schads Wirkungen in der Ukraine im ersten Drittel des 19. Jahrhunderts. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000; *Idem.* Johann Baptist Schad (1758 – 1834). Professor der Philosophie an den Universitäten Jena und Charkow. Köln, 2002.

⁹Sederholm an Schelling, 23—27.08.1826 // Archiv der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. NL Schelling 654.

God, who sees my heart and knows all my being, knows that I esteem You more than anyone else on the earth. You stand in front of me as a high priest of humankind, and God has pointed out Your spiritual influence to humankind. Oh, if only my spirit could rest in the light of this sun, perhaps then my life would in time become not devoid of meaning for humankind and my church.

But what could this support represent? Here the case takes an unexpected and quite unusual turn. It appeared that to complete his mission, that is, to develop a philosophy of religion that would reconcile faith and reason and would make the revival of Protestantism possible, Sederholm needed to live to Germany:

Germany, and not even my sweet fatherland, is the only country where I can further my studies as much as possible, and the place in Germany where Schelling is, is the centre where all the rays of my aspirations converge.

Thus, Sederholm's appeal to Schelling, apart from its philosophic motivation, had practical meaning: it was the protection necessary to get a job. Sederholm realized the ambiguity of his position and confessed his moral struggles to Schelling:

In fact, I need to go to Germany only to study, to nurture the seed, which had been entrusted to me. However, I have to earn my daily bread for myself and my family. Since I have a decent income here, it would have been a sin against my family, if I were to exchange this economic position for one less prosperous, and I cannot blame myself for this. [...]

Thus I need to look for a preferment, and it could be a rich living, or, more preferable for me, a professorship of dogmatic theology or religious philosophy, because I am not so strong in other fields of theology in order to aspire for a chair; besides, how could I possibly want to teach any other philosophical discipline where Schelling lived?

A confirmation of the fact that the daring thought to write to Schelling was sent to him from above, was found by Sederholm, in the spirit of Pietism, in meaningful coincidence: it was at that time when he got hold of the recently published travel notes by a Swedish Romantic poet Peter Ulrich Kernell, where the latter presented a detailed description of a hospitality offered to him by the Schellings in Erlangen: 'I saw You in Your house, listened to Your lectures, witnessed the love with which You received this happy youth! Perhaps, without this heartfelt testimony to Your humanity I would not have dared to address You with my wishes'.

How could Schelling make these wishes come true? Sederholm explained that he intended to send a personal petition addressed to Ludwig I, the King of Bavaria. The minister from Moscow attached a copy of the petition to the letter to Schelling, and the original was sent to Munich (both missives were delivered care of the Bavarian ambassador in St Petersburg, August von Giese). However, in the absence of published works necessary to apply for a professorship, Sederholm sent a second attachment, 'papers that contain a fragment of the carcass of my doctrine...' for the judgment of Schelling.

Nevertheless, the hope of being in indirect communication with the esteemed philosopher was of independent value for Sederholm, regardless of the success of his pragmatic appeal: ‘what I would like to achieve in any case, is to provoke Your interest in my work. Maybe You will accept my philosophy of religion, of which by now I have only written an introduction (9 manuscript pages). For I would never renounce it, not matter how unfavourable matters are’.

As we see, the letter demonstrated a number of different motivations: deep respect for Schelling as a philosopher, hope to find an ally and a patron in Schelling for his project of the philosophy of religion, an astute evaluation of the weight of Schelling’s recommendation for those in charge of university appointments, finally, even a knowledge of the closeness of the philosopher to the royal family of Bavaria. This combination of heterogeneous motivations was not specific to Sederholm but typical for an epistle addressed to a person who was a scholar and a patron at the same time.

The whole drama of the situation becomes clear only when one looks into the large appendix, entitled ‘An Essay on Philosophy of Religion. Foundations’ and bearing an epigraph from Johannes von Müller: ‘Truth is with God, we are left with foresight’¹⁰. A reading of this text reveals that this was a surprising theological ‘transcription’ of the philosophy of identity by Schelling. There it is possible to find the concept of the self-perception of the absolute as self-identification, the thesis of the identity of all individual things in the absolute, and the concept of the fall from the absolute, and other motifs typical of Schelling. To solve theological problems, Sederholm utilized conceptual tools from early works by Schelling—‘Presentation of My System of Philosophy’ (1801), ‘Philosophy and Religion’ (1804), ‘Aphorisms as an Introduction to the Philosophy of Nature’ (1805). Now it becomes clear why he saw Schelling as a thinker who could encourage and support his plans.

Unfortunately, Sederholm could never have guessed in what an unfavourable light this project presented him to the eyes of Schelling. He did not seem to know that by 1826 Schelling had for more than 15 years rejected many of the principles of the ‘philosophy of identity’, changed his philosophical position a good deal, and radically transformed his categories: since 1821 he had worked intensely on his own project of philosophy of religion—the philosophy of mythology and revelation, based on completely different principles. So it could have said in advance, that the review by Schelling would hardly be supportive and consolatory to Sederholm.

Soon the pastor faced the first disappointment: from Giese he learned that the King had rejected his petition. But by that point nothing was known of Schelling’s attitude towards his project. The philosopher delayed his reply¹¹. Crushed by his failure and tormented by the uncertainty concerning the impression made on the ‘high priest of the humankind’, on 26 April 1827 Sederholm wrote another

¹⁰ Sederholm an Schelling, 23—27.08.1826 // Archiv der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. NL Schelling 654.

¹¹ It can partly be explained by external causes: in late 1826 – early 1827 Schelling was busy preparing for his move to Munich where he was to take on three important positions in Autumn of 1827.

anxious letter to Schelling¹². The enthusiasm of the first letter concerning the salutary truth open to him is replaced here by heavy suspicions that its ‘unexpected clarity and integrity’ was based on ‘some monstrous self-delusion’. Sederholm could not conceal his jealousy remembering Peter Ulrich Kernell who had been granted a warm reception by Schelling in Erlangen and exclaimed bitterly: ‘So it seems that I will never see the man who has become so dear to me in so much as he is revealed in his works!’

Even here confession is often replaced with a professional and business-like tone: Sederholm informs Schelling about the course of his work on the manuscript of the ‘Philosophy of Religion’, offers to introduce the German public to the life and philosophical works of his Swedish tutor Hartman, and shares his opinions on the recently read ‘Guide to the Blessed Life’ by Fichte.

Another month passed, and Schelling remained silent. On 20 May 1827, Sederholm wrote the third letter to the philosopher and desperately pleaded for an answer: ‘You would have made me so happy, the most honourable, You, who draw my heart irresistibly, if You only wished to communicate to me, as far as it is possible at this long distance. Fichte died, and I had not seen him, and had not contacted him in any way. I wanted to go to Germany to be closer to You, but nothing had come out of it. [...] It seems that all my plans are subject to misfortune. Allow the main undertaking of my life to take place by honouring me with your participation in it’¹³.

Knowing the full biographical and philosophical context we can imagine what trauma Sederholm experienced when he received the long-awaited response from Schelling, dated 1 August, 1827:

...In response to Your friendly trust I will say directly: Your main idea can be interpreted in a number of ways, and we have enough of these in Germany. *It cannot be said that it is mistaken but* (certainly, in my opinion) *it cannot be called correct*¹⁴. It seems to me, that this should stimulate You in further work. The huge distance that separates us, which, to judge by what You write, will not be overcome in nearest future, as well as numerous duties that I either already bear or will bear soon—all of this makes me abstain from detailed judgment and, as I have been long doing with close friends, refer You to my works, namely, to my treatise ‘On the Essence of Human Freedom’, which seems to be unfamiliar to You (it is more important than ‘Philosophy and Religion’, it is contained in Volume 1 of my ‘Philosophical works’ published by Krüll at Landshut in 1809; perhaps, it is included in the Swedish complete works), and to ‘Lectures on the Meaning of Mythology’ in three parts that will be published soon, this book will clarify our relations. God willing, I would have done everything necessary to help You move to Germany. But there is no hope for it, at least for now. Continue to write to me, if possible, I will try to be of use to You to the best of my ability and according to circumstance¹⁵.

Unfortunately, after the destruction of the Munich Archive it has not been possible to find out whether Sederholm took advantage of this gracious invitation to correspond. In any case, the story of the relationship between Schelling and Sederholm did not end here, for now the Moscow pastor had to

¹² Sederholm an Schelling, 26.04 1827 // Archiv der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, NL Schelling 654.

¹³ Sederholm an Schelling, 20.05 1827 // Archiv der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, NL Schelling 654.

¹⁴ The sentence is underlined by Schelling in the manuscript.

¹⁵ Cit. in: *Гулыга А.В. Шеллинг. М., 1984. С. 233 — 234.*

make a principled philosophical choice. A large number of letters and papers by Sederholm show that during the next decade he watched the philosophical evolution of his idol carefully, if not jealously and often commented on it in his notes, articles and letters to third persons. A wide network of correspondents established by him in Germany during this time helped him to keep abreast of the latest developments in philosophy: among his correspondents at various times were the publisher Johann Friedrich Cotta (a long-standing partner of Schelling), the Dorpat¹⁶ professor of law Walter Friedrich Clossius, the poet Justinus Kerner, Alexander von Humboldt, and the right-wing Hegelian philosopher Johann Eduard Erdmann.

Since about the same time Sederholm began to communicate with Ivan Kireyevsky¹⁷ and other Slavophiles, there is no doubt that he shared information about Schellings philosophical evolution with the Slavophiles. Sederholm also contributed to the popularization of the ideas of Schelling in Russia in his capacity as a writer: in 1828 he published his translation of the memoirs by Kernell, which had appealed to him, in the 'Moscow Telegraph' of Polevoy¹⁸.

Not only did Sederholm learn news about Schelling from his German correspondents but he also kept in touch with the philosopher himself through them. Thus, on 9 January 1831 he asked Clossius about the details of the latest literary scandal, which involved Schelling, and, according to a number of contemporaries, complained about the latter's long silence: 'Who is this person accused of plagiarism by Schelling? Is it the half-mad Professor Kopp?'¹⁹ So much the worse for Schelling. Pity even this marvellous sun has to bear spots. What is the more regrettable is that Schelling does not want to write anything new anymore. Who will take the vacated throne of philosophy?'²⁰. Ten months later Sederholm received news from Clossius that Schelling had not forgotten about him. 'Greetings that you have passed to me from Schelling', wrote he on 26 November, 1831, 'brought a good deal of joy to me. He is the only star of the first magnitude in philosophical heaven since the death of Hegel. No matter that I could hardly agree with the latter's system, his death made a great impression on me'²¹.

¹⁶ Now Tartu, Estonia.

¹⁷ Ivan Kireyevsky (1806 – 1856) was a Russian literary critic and philosopher who is credited as a co-founder of the Slavophile movement.

¹⁸ Московский телеграф. 1828. № 7. С. 393 — 402. The translation entitled 'Schelling' was placed in the 'Miscellany' section without the name of a translator. I have established the authorship of Sederholm on the basis of his letter to a lawyer Clossius of 9 November 1828. The letter also showed that although Schelling in his letter had proclaimed himself directly against a publication of a German translation of Kernell's notes, Sederholm still wanted to make it known to German colleagues privately. Thus, in his letter to Clossius of 9 November 1828 he seemed to add a manuscript copy of a German translation, with the following explanation: 'Let me, esteemed Mr counselor, to ask You to forward the attached notebook to Mr Jesche. Perhaps, he would be interested to read something about Schelling, which is not already known to German public. If You read Russian, You would find in the Telegraph of this year a number of rather interesting comments on home life of Schelling etc. which I (only an introduction is written by another) translated from the same source'. (Sederholm to Clossius, 9 November 1828 // Handschriftenabteilung der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek, Cod. iur. 4" 136, 2098).

¹⁹ This is an obvious error: He meant Professor Christian Kapp from Erlangen, an implacable enemy of Schelling's philosophy.

²⁰ Sederholm an Clossius, 09.01.1831, Handschriftenabteilung der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek, Cod. iur. 4" 136, 2109.

²¹ Sederholm an Clossius, 26.11.1831, Handschriftenabteilung der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek, Cod. iur. 4" 136, 2108.

The last statement showed that while trying to define himself in relation to the evolving philosophical system of Schelling, Sederholm was in full agreement with him, at least, in one important aspect: in his categorical rejection of the system of Hegel. Anti-Hegelian arguments were among the few components of Schelling's developed doctrine, that became public knowledge in 1830s. The philosopher presented them in the 'Introduction to a Philosophical Work by Victor Cousin' published in 1834. Since readers, in accordance with promises made by Schelling, awaited impatiently the publication of his new work, the introduction to the work by Cousin provoked a good deal of interest both in Germany, and in other countries, including Russia²². It is known that Schelling strove to demonstrate that the 'Science of Logic' mixed the dialectical evolution of logical categories with the development of reality. Sederholm shared this evaluation and presented it in a witty literary form: his archive preserved two biting philosophical and satiric poems about Hegel—a 'Metaphysical juggler' (1829)²³, which presented the philosopher in the image of a street juggler-charlatan, and 'God Enchanted' (1838)²⁴, written in the name of God crying for help because an evil magician had tied him up with a web of categories and made to move according to his whims. Both satires are very close in tone and meaning to anti-Hegelian philippics that after 1827 became an integral part of Schelling's lecture courses.

The more Sederholm learned in 1830s about the new developments of Schelling's thought, the more he realized that, regardless of shared goal and agreement on a number of points, their philosophical ways were parting irrevocably. At the same time, Sederholm established himself as a thinker, since during this period he was active as a writer both in Russian and in German circles. Contrast between the Russian and German works of Sederholm is striking: the former were mostly popular and didactic works and were more an additional way to earn money (in Kharkov these were the collection of liturgical hymns, and a 'Lesser Catechism'²⁵, and in Moscow translations and short articles for magazines, anthologies of texts by Classical historians adapted for children etc.²⁶), while the works in German looked rather pretentious and revealed his greater ambition of writer and scholar.

Sederholm started his literary career in Germany in 1825 with the publication of a German translation of the 'The Tale of Igor's Campaign'²⁷ (a typical Romantic endeavour, which had been

²² German-reading public in Russia could use a good number of copies of a German edition of the Cousin's work, with the 'Introduction', and Russian public could find out about its contents from an abbreviated translation by V. Mezhevich published in 1835 in the 'Telescope' magazine (*Шеллинг Ф. Суждение о философии Кузена // Телескоп*. 1835. № 1. Ч. 25. С. 88—114).

²³ ОР РГБ. Ф. 107. Карг. 2. Ед. хр. 7. Л. 13 об.

²⁴ ОР РГБ. Ф. 107. Карг. 2. Ед. хр. 7. Л. 3 об — 4 об.

²⁵ The 'Russian biographical dictionary' by A.A. Polovtsev says on Sederholm (Т. 6. Пг., 1916, С. 328 – 329): 'from the 'Memorial about the Imperial University of Kharkov (compiled by Voigt, 1859) we learn that in Kharkov Sederholm published a 'Collection of Sacred Hymns' in German (1816) and the "Kleiner Katechismus" (1818)'.

²⁶ Учебная книга латинского языка по методу Гамильтоновой, содержащая приуготовительные упражнения и избранные места из Цицерона, Юлия Цезаря, Курция Руфа, Тита Ливия, Саллюстия и Тацита, с буквальным междустрочным переводом. М., 1834; Карманная книга географии для детей. Перев. с нем. М., 1835; Поход Кира Младшего (с объяснениями и словарем). М., 1840; История древней философии, приспособленная к понятию каждого образованного человека. М., 1841 – 1842.

²⁷ *Sederholm K. Das Lied vom Heereszuge Igers, Sohnes Swätoslaws Enkels Olegs*. 1825.

inspired by the success of the ‘Poems of Ossian’ and followed in the footsteps of ‘The Cid’ by Herder and other German poetic renditions of epic tales)²⁸. In 1826 he tried to find a publisher for a religious utopia ‘The Church, a tale from the last quarter of the 20th century’ where he outlined the prospective for the future revival of Christian religion (the fact that he submitted the manuscript to the prestigious Cotta publishing house, and even hinted in the letter to the publisher that he could ask the opinion of Goethe himself about literary qualities of his translation of the ‘Tale’, which had already been published²⁹, spoke volumes about the level of Sederholm’s literary pretensions). In 1828 a collection of his poems in German was published in Moscow³⁰.

As Sederholm and Schelling moved apart the former positioned himself confidently in German context as a philosopher and a theologian. In 1829, his treatise ‘On the Possibility and Prerequisites of a Philosophy of Religion’ was published in German in Moscow;³¹ this was based on the ‘Essay...’ that Sederholm had earlier send to Schelling. In 1830 a collection ‘Studies, a series of philosophical treatises’ was produced by the Moscow University Press³²; in 1833 Sederholm published a religious and philosophical poem ‘Salvation’ in Germany³³.

Even a superficial study of these works leaves no doubt that their author wanted, no matter what, to follow the way Schelling had characterized as not quite mistaken, but not a true one. Sederholm was consistent in his defence of the principles of the theological re-interpretation of the philosophy of identity, and used these as a foundation for his Romantic synthesis of speculative metaphysics, natural philosophy, anthropology and religious ethics. He was in command of German philosophical and theological literature and absorbed all sorts of influences, which correlated to this general principle—mostly, the ideas of the two closest disciples and colleagues of Schelling: Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert and Henrik Steffens. It is not surprising that Sederholm vacillated between his slowly growing scepticism about the new ideas of Schelling—as far as he could understand these from information sent to him—and the hope that all misunderstanding would be clarified after the publication of a new work by the master, which, year after year, he promised to make public soon.

In these circumstances, Sederholm must have viewed the chance he got in 1837 to make his dream come true and visit Germany, as God’s true grace. Unfortunately, few details are known about this

²⁸ We learn from Sederholm’s letter to the publisher Cotta, that he sent copies of this translation to Goethe and Jean–Paul Richter for reviewing (Sederholm to Cotta, 31 March 1826 // Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, Cotta Br.).

²⁹ Regardless of Goethe’s opinion about the literary debut of Sederholm the new work by the Moscow pastor could have hardly met with his approval. An abbreviated re-telling of the story, present in the same letter to Baron Cotta, holds an intriguing detail: Sederholm’s utopia gave a key role in the future renewal of Christianity and revival of Christian Church to the publication of then unfinished second part of the ‘Faust’ (Sederholm an Cotta, 31.04. 1826 // Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, Cotta Br.). Taking Goethe’s difficult relationship with Christianity in general and orthodox Lutheranism in particular, it is hard to imagine that Goethe could have been inspired by such prognosis. Perhaps, the contents of the story was the reason it was never published. In April of 1827 Sederholm asked the Cotta publishing house to return a number of manuscripts to him, including ‘Schelling, from the travel notes of Kernell’ and ‘Fragments of the story ‘the Church’’ (Sederholm an Cotta, 10.04.1827 // Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, Cotta Br.), although I could not find these among the Sederholm papers at the Manuscript department of the Russian State Library.

³⁰ *Sederholm K. Gedichte. M., 1828.*

³¹ *Sederholm K. Über die Möglichkeit und die Bedingungen einer Religions-Philosophie. M., 1829.*

³² *Sederholm K.A. Studien. Eine Reihe philosophischer Abhandlungen. In zwanglosen Heften. Moskau, 1830.*

³³ *Sederholm K. Die Erlösung. Berlin. 1833.*

trip³⁴.

Nevertheless, we know the most important thing: on 9, 15, 16 and 18 of July 1837, Sederholm attended Schelling's lectures on the philosophy of mythology. His notes of these lectures survived³⁵. As if on demand, these lectures addressed the problems that made up the divergence point for Schelling and Sederholm: the character of the unity of God, the meaning of the Fall, the meaning of mythology in relation to revelation. According to the general rule, every person who wanted to attend lectures had to introduce himself to a professor and to acquire his permission to attend. Thus, there is no doubt that Sederholm and Schelling met in person. Considering the personality of Sederholm and the earlier history of their communications, as well as existing evidence, one can be confident that the visitor from Russia was also received by Schelling at home, and that they had a private conversation³⁶. Unfortunately there is no more detailed information about this meeting, neither in Sederholm's, nor in Schelling's papers. One thing is clear: it was this personal meeting that finally marked a break in the relationship between the two, and made obvious the principled divergence of their ways in philosophy. Soon the former follower and enthusiastic advocate of Schelling became his competitor in the field of religious philosophy.

An article 'The Contemporary State of Philosophy' written by Sederholm in January of 1838 under the impression of his German voyage and published two years later in 'Mayak'³⁷ bears witness to the influence of the personal meeting on his attitude to Schelling. In the article, its author not only confirmed the fact of the meeting but also provided some details of their conversation³⁸. In the introductory, historical part of the article, Sederholm exalted the achievements of the young Schelling who 'had imbued philosophy, in place of dead, ossified notions, with life itself, living truth'. Here the pastor demonstrated his solidarity with anti-Hegelian position: Schelling was named 'a true King of philosophical world'³⁹, and the author of the 'Science of Logic', 'a great usurper'⁴⁰, who 'from his former tutor, Schelling' borrowed 'the main idea of his system, i.e., the idea of the polarity of thought'⁴¹ and seized the 'throne of philosophy'⁴². There is no doubt that because of its

³⁴ Sederholm's passport survived among his papers (ОР РГБ. Ф. 107. Карг. 1. Ед. хр. 1).

³⁵ ОР РГБ. Ф. 107. Карг. 5. Ед. хр. 9. Л. 1 — 7. The notes were fully published by me in the article: Резвых П.В. Московский пастор слушает Шеллинга // Вестник Российского Университета Дружбы Народов. Серия «Философия». 2013. № 3. С. 102 — 114.

³⁶ The fact of personal meeting was confirmed by Sederholm himself in his article in the 'Mayak' (see below), and a suggestion that he paid Schelling a home visit is based on a note from Sederholm to Schelling's wife Pauline, dated of 20 June 1837 and kept in the Berlin archive of Schelling: 'a compatriot of the late Kernell dares to send a following small present from Russia with all due respect to madam Counselor von Schelling and would be happy if what is offered in good conscience would be received favourably. Munich 20 June 1837' (Archiv der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. NL Schelling, 1051). Such note could not have been written had not Sederholm been introduced earlier to Madam Schelling.

³⁷ Маяк современного просвещения и образованности. 1840. Ч. V. С. 29 — 44.

³⁸ What the conversation was rather long is shown by the author's intention to present a more detailed report of it later. 'I will leave the story of my meeting with him, and how I found him, till other occasion', promised Sederholm and explained in a footnote: 'as soon as I put my travel notes in order, I would offer their fragments to the editors, if they will' (Ibid. С. 42). Unfortunately, the above-mentioned travel notes have not been found among the Sederholm papers so far.

³⁹ Ibid. С. 41.

⁴⁰ Ibid. С. 39.

⁴¹ Ibid. С. 40. Thus Sederholm supported the accusations of plagiarism, addressed by Schelling to Hegel at numerous occasions in

anti-Hegelianism the article was seen as appropriate for the 'Mayak', where biting pamphlets against the 'Otechestvennye Zapiski⁴³' and acerbic parodies of the style of 'Hegelians' were published regularly. However, the main part of Sederholm's article where the overview of the state of contemporary philosophy was presented, is dominated by author's mood of disappointment.

... we only know that in place of the 'negative' philosophy of Hegel, as Schelling justly calls it, he was to establish a 'positive' philosophy, and, besides, to connect it with Christian religion, 'without prejudicing either the one, or the other', as he says in the abovementioned letter; finally, we also know that he takes free will to be the foundation of the new system; but how he would manage to build it on this foundation is not known to us. Meanwhile, his personal attitude to his own doctrine is bizarre, it is strange that at the moment of full dominance of his system, when he reigned supreme over his age, which adored him more than any other thinker ever, he suddenly withdrew into the depth of this office and abandoned the sceptre of philosophy. He will not fulfil his destiny in this way, the wheel of the history of human mind is left immobile because of him⁴⁴.

Thus, the conversation with Schelling finally persuaded Sederholm that the 'high priest of the humankind' could not remain so. Is it possible that a somewhat cold reception by Schelling added to Sederholm's disappointment (his complaints about Schelling's reticence is evidence for this)? Apart from the philosophical differences that became evident in the course of the conversation, a confessional factor might have played a role here. A zealous Lutheran, all his life Sederholm remained faithful to the idea that he had arrived at in 1826, that his philosophy of religion would help revive the 'Evangelical Church'. As for Schelling, he was a Protestant, but in his lectures on the philosophy of revelation of 1830–40s, he was consistent in stating the limited and dependent character of Protestantism. It is quite natural, therefore, that Sederholm, a confessional apologist, who took part in German religious and political debate⁴⁵, and Schelling, who consciously avoided clergy and was even afraid of them, did not become allies.

Only five years after the meeting with Schelling, on 14 May 1842, Sederholm wrote to the poet Justinus Kerner:

Now I am preparing for the completion of the main opus of my life. I am working on a book, which may be entitled: Results. The System of an Implemented Union of Christianity and Philosophy [*Resultate. System der durchgeführten Einigung des Christenthums und der Philosophie*]. I would rather call it *Eureka* [*Heureka*], since I have found it. God granted me this joy. Schelling had been working on the same task for several decades. It is amusing to me that I am his rival, let the future decide who revealed more of eternal truth to our age, the famous

the late 1820s – early 1830s.

⁴² Ibid. Cf. quoted words about the empty throne of philosophy from the letter to Clossius.

⁴³ A Russian literary magazine published in Saint Petersburg on a monthly basis between 1818 and 1884. The literary criticism of the magazine was influenced by the aesthetics of German idealist philosophers.

⁴⁴ Маяк современного просвещения и образованности. 1840. Ч. V. С. 42 – 43.

⁴⁵ The Sederholm papers include a great number of articles about the re-organization of Protestant communities, responses to confessional theological controversies, for example, 'On supreme unity of the Evangelical Church (ОППГБ. Ф. 107. Капт. 2. Ед. хр. 18), 'Concerning Schelling' (Капт. 5. Ед. хр. 8) etc.

German, or an unknown Swede. With God's assistance, I do not have to be afraid of this comparison. I can talk about this openly, because there is no merit of mine. I have not made the truth; I have only found it. I was lucky⁴⁶.

Three years later the planned work was published in Germany under the title 'Eternal Facts. An Outline of an Implemented Union of Christianity and Philosophy' (1845)⁴⁷. I will not analyse it here in any detail; it will suffice to say that it was not a crude rendering of the philosophy of identity but rather a professional and clearly formulated philosophical and theological system, which had some of Schelling's concepts as integral parts (apart from these, Sederholm also incorporated the realistic doctrine of reason, or 'noethics' by his first tutor, Hartman, the Romantic psychology of Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert, and the natural philosophy of Lorenz Oken into his project). At the same time, a number of passages in the book contained veiled criticism of the principles of the philosophy of revelation. It can even be said that Sederholm defended young Schelling from Schelling's later ideas. In any case, Schelling was one of the most important internal interlocutors for the author. It is no surprise that Sederholm took care to ensure that Schelling received a copy of the 'Eternal Facts': the book is mentioned in the catalogue of the philosopher's private library⁴⁸. Of his reaction to it, however, nothing is known.

Sederholm continued his polemics against the later ideas of Schelling for the rest of his life, both in philosophical and poetical work. In his manuscript notes of 1840–1850s, one can often find quotes from articles by Schelling published in his later years (for instance, from the 'Introduction to the Works by Steffens' of 1846 where Schelling criticized contemporary theology⁴⁹). A heavy volume of 'Spiritual Cosmos' by Sederholm published in Leipzig in 1859⁵⁰ (that is, after the death of Schelling) was full of criticism addressed to the 'Philosophy of Revelation'. Sederholm responded to Schelling's idea of the contraposition of negative and positive philosophy with a biting epigram in the style of 'Xenias' by Goethe and Schiller:

Schelling

Dein System ist der Leda gedoppeltes Ei; doch gebrütet
Ward des Sterblichen Frucht; reife denn, Same des Zeus⁵¹.

[Schelling

Your system is Leda's double egg; but a fruit born of a mortal,
Should be hatched; until then, grow, Seed of Zeus.]

⁴⁶ Sederholm an Justinus Kerner, 14.05.1842 // Handschriftenabteilung der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek, Kerner KN 6186.

⁴⁷ Sederholm K. Die ewigen Tatsachen. Grundzüge einer durchgeführten Einigung des Christenthums und der Philosophie. Leipzig, 1845.

⁴⁸ Müller-Bergen A. Schellings Handbibliothek. Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt, 2008. S. 246.

⁴⁹ ОП РГБ. Ф. 107. Капт. 3. Ед. хр. 25. Л. 21 – 22.

⁵⁰ Sederholm K. Der geistige Kosmos. Leipzig, 1859.

⁵¹ ОП РГБ. Ф. 107. Капт. 5. Ед. хр. 9. Л. 57.

After taking all this material into consideration one cannot fail to see Sederholm in a different way. This man was integrated into the German context by personal, institutional and confessional ties, and a long-term dialogue with Schelling played an important role in his life; at the same time he was also a part of a similar network of Russian contacts: he taught at a military school and an academy of medicine and surgery, wrote for literary magazines, took part in a number of social movements (for example, in the work of the prison committee and of the Moscow branch of the Biblical society⁵²). If one is to look at Russian acquaintances of Sederholm, it would not come as a surprise that their circle included Russian correspondents and visitors of Schelling (Turgenev⁵³, Haass⁵⁴, Chaadayev⁵⁵, Loder⁵⁶, Kireyevsky⁵⁷, Pogodin⁵⁸), and other Russian intellectuals who played important roles in the literary life of 1820–40s, including the debates on ‘Schellingism’ (Polevoy⁵⁹, Khomyakov, Golubinsky⁶⁰, Kachenovsky⁶¹, Kalaidovich⁶², Stroev et al.). It was these figures, like the above-mentioned, who were mediators, on the one hand, and on the other, active participants of Russian intellectual debate. They formed the communicative environment for the Russian perception of the ideas of Schelling.

It seems that Sederholm who was positioned on the border of these two cultural worlds but initially did not belong to either, together with his professional philosophical and theological qualification was an ideal mediator between Schelling and Russian intellectuals. In fact, however, his role in the reception of the ideas of Schelling was much more than that of just a mediator. Sederholm had own philosophical ambitions and parted ways with his former idol, so that his disappointment in later Schelling certainly influenced the opinions of his Russian acquaintances. A more detailed evaluation of

⁵² The Sederholm archive preserves a text of his speech delivered by him in 1815 at the celebration of the 2nd anniversary of the Moscow branch of the Biblical society (ОППГБ. Ф. № 107. Карг. 1. Ед. хр. 3).

⁵³ Sederholm knew A.I. Turgenev through the Biblical society, since Turgenev was elected its secretary in 1813, and through the work of the prison committee. See: Steinberg R. Die Anfänge der Strafvollzugsreform in Rußland in den Jahren 1818-1829. Frankfurt a.M. 1990. S. 144 – 145.

⁵⁴ Sederholm seemed to be a close friend of the ‘holy doctor’; Haass was even a godfather of one of the sons of the pastor. They were linked by shared religious and public service, namely, care of the prisoners. Since 1839 Sederholm became a minister for Lutheran prisoners and in this capacity worked together with the prison committee, chaired by Haass till the end of his life. See: Steinberg R. Die Anfänge der Strafvollzugsreform in Rußland in den Jahren 1818-1829. Frankfurt a.M. 1990. S.156 – 157.

⁵⁵ Sederholm’s personal connection to Chaadaev is confirmed by the pastor’s letters to Clossius: Sederholm an Clossius, 18.03.1832, Handschriftenabteilung der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek, Cod. iur. 4" 136, 2110; Sederholm an Clossius 11.05.1833, Handschriftenabteilung der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek, Cod. iur. 4" 136, 2115.

⁵⁶ For references to meetings with Loder see: Sederholm an Clossius, 25.11.1827, Handschriftenabteilung der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek, Cod. iur. 4" 136, 2091; Sederholm an Clossius, 12.04.1828, Handschriftenabteilung der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek, Cod. iur. 4" 136, 2093; Sederholm an Clossius, 30.10.1831, Handschriftenabteilung der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek, Cod. iur. 4" 136, 2107.

⁵⁷ Upon the advice of V.I. Sakharov, Ivan Kireevsky even attended Sederholm’s lectures (*Сахаров В.И. Под сенью дружных муз.* М., 1984. С. 114).

⁵⁸ Sederholm was connected to Pogodin by familial ties: a historian’s daughter Alexandra Mikhailovna was married to one of Sederholm’s ten sons, General Albrecht Karlovich Sederholm who served at the Caucasus (см.: *Барсуков Н.П. Жизнь и труды М.П. Погодина.* Кн. 17. СПб., 1903. С.150); cf. Also reference to M.P. Pogodin in the correspondence of Karl Sederholm and Clossius (Sederholm an Clossius, 18.02.1828, Handschriftenabteilung der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek, Cod. iur. 4" 136, 2092).

⁵⁹ See: Sederholm an Clossius, 18.02.1828, Handschriftenabteilung der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek, Cod. iur. 4" 136, 2092

⁶⁰ The ‘Russian Biographical Dictionary’ by A.A. Polovtsev says in its article on Sederholm (Т. 6. Пр., 1916. С. 328): ‘he knew all intellectuals of Moscow and conversed with Khomyakov, Kereevsky and Golubinsky’.

⁶¹ Sederholm an Clossius, 18.02.1828, Handschriftenabteilung der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek, Cod. iur. 4" 136, 2092

⁶² Sederholm an Clossius, 18.02.1828, Handschriftenabteilung der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek, Cod. iur. 4" 136, 2092

the level and character of this influence is a task for the future, but material that has already been uncovered so far makes it possible to assume that the perception of later Schelling by Slavophiles was shaped by the critical position of Sederholm, among others.

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