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Byron, Pushkin, and Decembrist Exiles: Fyodor Glinka’s “Maiden of the Karelian Forest”

This talk stems from a larger project that argues that a particular interpretation of Lord Byron was foundational to Decembrist mythology. The Decembrists’ focus on the poet as a freedom fighter, and their interpretation of Pushkin’s Byronic “southern poems” as an extension of what they understood as English poet’s freedom-loving life’s work, led writers like Kondraty Ryleev to develop a subgenre of the “southern poem” that was specifically Decembrist. Here, I will also consider Fyodor Glinka’s “Maiden of the Karelian Forest” (1832), in which the author reimagines the exile narrative established by Pushkin’s “Prisoner of the Caucasus” (1820-1) from the purview of his own post-uprising exile to Petrozavodsk.