

## PUBLICATIONS

*Giulia De Florio*

### MARSHAK EDITOR OF GIANNI RODARI'S *CIPOLLINO'S ADVENTURES*. SOME PRELIMINARY ARCHIVE-BASED OBSERVATIONS

Samuil Marshak's brief account "Why Did I Translate Gianni Rodari's poems" [Marshak 1971] provides an interesting "inside look" at his translation practice in relation to the poems of the Italian children's poet. Nevertheless, the information it contains is far from exhaustive on the subject of "Marshak translator of Gianni Rodari". Moreover, Marshak was also the editor of other translations of the Italian writer's works, namely *The Adventures of Cipollino* by Zlata Potapova. When analysing Potapova's translation and Marshak's suggested changes—included in a typewritten copy kept in Marshak's archive — one can easily observe a number of translation strategies that underline not only Samuel Yakovlevich's close attention to the transfer of the verbal text and whole cultural system from Italian into Russian, but also his freedom to shift the emotional and logic accent of the text according to his own belief about what makes children's literature great. Such preliminary observations aim at providing a starting point to identify his approach to editing and translation of children's literature.

*Keywords:* Samuil Marshak, Adventures of Cipollino, Gianni Rodari, Marshak's editing, Marshak's archive

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*Giulia De Florio*  
University of Modena and Reggio Emilia,  
Italy  
giulia.deflorio@unimore.it

### *Introduction*

The history and reception of Cipollino in Soviet Union has been already analysed [Roberti 2020] [Roghi 2020, 91–100] and it is the object of study of Marina Balina and Dorena Caroli's article in this issue, which gives a detailed account of the ideas brought by the Italian onion-like little hero and the huge impact of this literary character on the Soviet public of children as well as adults.

Here I would like to point out a few mainly textual observations about the transformation from the Italian text (Source text or ST) to Potapova's final version (target text or TT) through Marshak's intervention. Firstly, I shall make some brief observations about the different versions of the book in Italian. Then, I will focus on the changes suggested by Marshak directly on the typewritten manuscript that is present in Marshak's archive. Finally, I will make some brief comments on Marshak's approach to editing and translation. I shall take into account only the first two chapters of the novel, though a complete analysis should include the whole text.

The aim is to provide a starting point for further consideration on Marshak's view of editing and translation in order to find similarities and differences in his own translation practice of children's literature from foreign languages into Russian.

### *The Adventures of Cipollino in Italy and Soviet Union*

The first appearance of Cipollino in Italy traces back to September 3 1950, when the Italian weekly journal of young communists *Il Pioniere* ("The Pioneer") publishes the first story of *Cipollino and his friends* (*Cipollino e i suoi amici*). In fact, vegetables and fruits depicted as sentient beings has already appeared earlier that year in the magazine *Vie Nuove* ("New ways"): in *L'orto ortolano* ("The vegetable garden") and *Il frutteto musicale* ("The musical orchard") for the first time the author includes some of the characters that will also appear in later works.

In the first issue of *Il Pioniere*, directed by Rodari from 1950 to 1953, the story of Cipollino "...takes the form of a comic strip illustrated by Raoul Verdini with Rodari's texts in 8-syllable quatrains. In 1952, Edizioni di Cultura Sociale published a fourteen-board story signed by *Giampiccolo*; in 1954 'Albi di Cipollino' were released, while twenty-two boards which had appeared in *Pioniere* between 1952 and 1959 were re-published in 1973 as *Ritornano i personaggi del 'Pioniere'*. Al-

*manacco del 'Pioniere' (The Return of the characters from 'Pioneer'. Almanac of 'The Pioneer')*. *Il romanzo di Cipollino ('The Tale of Cipollino')* was published in book form by Edizioni di Cultura Sociale: due to its success it has been republished many times, but each publication was preceded by a careful ideological and stylistic revision" [De Florio 2019, 31, note 10].

As noted by Boero, the major differences are to be found between the first edition of 1951 and the next one by Editori Riuniti of 1957, and concern mainly the formal aspect of the narration or the increase of paradoxical elements<sup>1</sup> [Boero 2010, 17–18].

Other publications concerning the adventures of Cipollino are *Cipollino e le bolle di sapone (Cipollino and the soap bubbles)*, published by Edizioni di Cultura Sociale in 1952 and written with the pseudonym of Giampiccolo, whereas in 1954 some illustrated stories of these characters are re-published in one book, which includes *Le avventure di Cipollino (The Adventures of Cipollino)*, *La giostra di Cipollino (The Carousel of Cipollino)* e *Cipollino e le maschere (Cipollino and the Masks)* [Roberti 2020, 17].

Interestingly enough, the little hero moves to Soviet Union very soon; apparently, Rodari gave his book to Potapova during his first trip to the USSR in 1951 as part of an Italian delegation of communists [De Florio 2019a]. Mario Alicata, the head of the Italian delegation, writes in his report on the trip that the guide and translator for the Italians was a young Italianist, a teacher at the Institute of World Literature in Moscow. At that time Zlata Potapova was working there. We can then assume that Rodari had given her the newly published *Libro delle filastrocche (The Book of Nursery Rhymes)* (1950) and *Il romanzo di Cipollino (The Tale of Cipollino)* (1951) during his first visit in Soviet Union.

A year later, the journalist Paolo Robotti confirms the common acquaintance: in an article that appeared in newspaper "l'Unità" [Robotti 1952], he states that professor Zlata Potapova had published in "Literaturnaja Gazeta" an article about the huge success of Cipollino in Soviet Union. Indeed, in her article in the "Literaturnaya Gazeta" of 27 November 1952 [Potapova 1952], *The first victories of Cipollino (Pervye pobedy Cipollino)*, Potapova talks at length about *The Adventures of Cipollino* and the Italian current situation, which she seems to know very well.

Let us also note that Marshak's first translations of Rodari's poetry appears in "Literaturnaya Gazeta" a few days before Potapova's article, on 22 November 1952 [Marshak 1952]. In his introduction Marshak describes how he became acquainted with Rodari's work thanks to

Potapova. Most likely, having received the books from Gianni Rodari, Potapova approached Marshak and they decided to “split” their work: he would translate the poems, she — the prose, under his supervision.

*Samuil Marshak, the editor*

“Marshak the editor” is a very intriguing topic that still has not been fully disclosed. It is well acknowledged, though, that in the 1920s and 1930s his activity both as an editor (and a translator and poet himself) had a huge impact on the evolution of the “new children’s literature”: as Ainsley Morse rightly observes “his influence as an editor of children’s literature in the 1920s–1930s meant that something like this style was reproduced by many of his disciples, becoming a standard for Soviet children’s poetry” [Morse 2021, 80]. Marshak covered all the stages of editing, from the selection of the books to be published to their revision together with the authors. Lidiya Chukovskaya, daughter of the most famous critic, poet and translator of children’s literature Kornei Chukovsky, recalls in her essay the work of Marshak as editor<sup>2</sup> of the Leningrad-based section of the publishing house Detgiz [Chukovskaya 2011, 188–392] where she worked from 1928 to 1936 together with Tamara Gabbe, Zoia Zadunaiskaya e Aleksandra Lyubarskaya.

Since he fought with all his might for children’s literature to be considered true art, he spared no criticism or judgement to improve the final result of any story which was supposed to be read by children. The care and scrupulousness he put into each editorial project was well known to all the authors he had worked with over the years. He strongly believed that precision, clarity and simplicity of words should be the keys to the creation of the best children’s books, as Tolstoy and other major classics have demonstrated when addressing children through literature<sup>3</sup>.

Marshak’s work on Potapova’s translation belongs to a later period of his literary activity: in 1937 he fled from Leningrad after the brutal closing of Detgiz in 1937, the persecution of illustrators close to Vladimir Lebedev’s circle of artists, the arrest and execution of many collaborators [Blyum 1996]. Being actively involved in the Second World War satirical propaganda thanks to his collaboration with the collective of artists Kukryniksy (made of Mikhail Kupriyanov, Porfirii Krylov and Nikolai Sokolov) and to the publication of war poetry, Marshak was able to keep and even consolidate his prominent role as a leading figure in Soviet children’s literature, who could still provide orientation in the evolution of the genre. His interest in Gianni Rodari’s production has certainly helped the Italian writer become so successful in the Soviet Union.

*Archive material: The Adventures of Cipollino*

In Marshak's archive a typewritten copy of Potapova's translation with Marshak's handwritten edits is kept<sup>4</sup>. The archive also contains a second typewritten version of *The Adventures of Cipollino*, in which, after Potapova had accepted almost all the editing from the previous version, some final "touches" by Marshak were added.

Even at a quick glance it is very easy to understand how carefully and thoroughly Marshak edited the first draft. I shall not take into account all the interventions made in the text<sup>5</sup> by Marshak, but only the most significant ones that allow us to draw some conclusions about Marshak's general approach to the translation of children's texts.

As it has been already noted by scholars of children's literature translation, in translated texts the range of vocabulary is usually comparatively narrower, the information load is lower and the average sentence length is shorter [Laviosa 2002, 60–62]. In other words, it is common to activate "the tendency to simplify the language used in translation" [Baker 1996, 181–182]. In Potapova's version this is not the case and even Marshak's intervention in this respect is very limited. Sometimes Marshak tends to simplify the lexical choice or the syntaxis by eliminating some parts of the sentence, but there are a few interventions of this kind<sup>6</sup>:

р. 2 И строго воззрился на старика > и строго посмотрел на старика.

р. 5 Сам поймешь, как настанет время > Сам поймешь, когда придѣт время.

р. 8 Тебе виднее, ты арифметике учился! Значит правильно > Тебе виднее, ты арифметике учился! ~~Значит правильно~~.

They can be dictated by the search for conciseness which helps the reader (especially a young one) to focus on what is being narrated: р. 1 Что ж поделаешь: коль родишься луком, слѣз в доме не оберешься > Где лук — там и слѣзы. On the other hand, it is far more common to find in the text examples of another typical feature of translated texts, namely explicitation, that is "all those grammatical and lexical elements that are absent in the ST and that render the TT more precise and unambiguous" [Ippoliti 2013, 10]. Marshak goes beyond that and tends to add details that are absent in ST and Potapova's version in order to give a more vivid description of the scene:

р. 1 На окраину немедленно отправили дюжину солдат-Лимончиков, чтобы надушить бедняков. На этот раз солдаты оставили дома сабли и пушки и взвалили на плечи бидоны с опрыскивателями. В бидонах

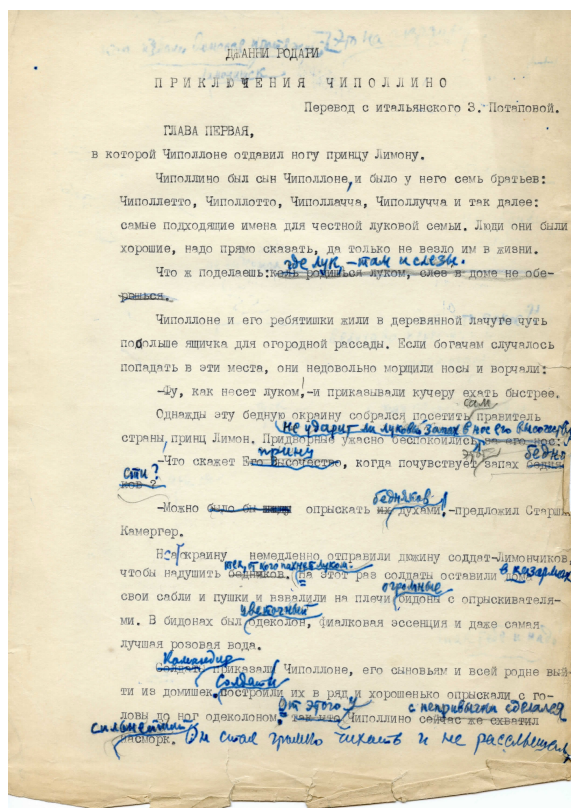


Figure 1. Marshak, S. (1953). Priklyucheniya Chipollino: typewritten copy with Marshak’s handwritten remarks, private archive of Marshak’s heirs. [P. 1]

был одеколон, фиалковая эссенция и даже самая лучшая розовая вода > На окраину немедленно отправили дюжину солдат-Лимончиков, чтобы надушить тех, от кого пахнет луком. На этот раз солдаты оставили в казармах свои сабли и пушки и взвалили на плечи огромные бидоны с опрыскивателями. В бидонах был цветочный одеколон, фиалковая эссенция и даже самая лучшая розовая вода.

In this passage there are a few observations to be made: Marshak seems not to appreciate the word “bednyak” which he replaces with a longer periphrasis (“those who smells like onion”). He chooses preciseness instead of vagueness by replacing the general “doma” (“at home”)

with “v kazarmakh” (“in the barracks”) since Lemon Court soldiers live there, and finally indicates the size of the canisters (“huge”) and the kind of cologne soldiers are spraying the outskirts to eliminate the smell of onions (“floral”). These little details, that are absent both in the ST and in Potapova’s translation, help children’s imagination to depict the scene and to feel being the part of it.

Such insertions are dictated also by the willingness to make as clear as possible the logical passages in each narrative sequence. It is worth noting that most of Marshak’s own production for children was addressed to little children (pre-school or up to 7–8) so it is legitimate to assume that he always had a natural propensity to give as many details as possible and describe precisely the consequentiality of actions:

р. 1 Чиполлино сейчас же схватил насморк > Чиполлино сейчас же с непривычки сделался сильнееший насморк.

р. 2 Может быть, тебе не нравится, что мои верноподданные жаждут увидеть меня, а? > Может быть, тебе не нравится, что мои верноподданные так жаждут увидеть меня, что рвутся вперед, а?

р. 2 ...и им доставалось немало толчков и пинков от тех, кто напирал сзади. Бедный старик Чиполлоне закричал: > Им обоим доставалось немало толчков и пинков от тех, кто напирал сзади. Наконец бедный старик Чиполлоне не выдержал и закричал:

р. 4 ...но потом он подумал, что лучше не поднимать шума > Подумав, он решил, что болтунов всё равно не переспоришь, и промолчал.

The last two examples are particularly interesting from a semantic point of view: notice that Cipollone is characterized by his incapacity to bear or tolerate, especially the lack of justice, whereas at the beginning Cipollino thinks it is useless to raise his voice. Therefore it is not unsurprising that Marshak decides to emphasize Cipollino’s decision to “keep quiet” (“promolchal”). This is a key element of the Rodari’s story of rebellion, since Cipollino can change his world when he decides not to stay quiet anymore. The semantic linked to say/not say lies at the core of the story, which is about the strength to speak up and do not be silent when injustice reigns. Some other corrections made by Marshak’s can be interpreted in this respect:

р. 7 Мастер Виноградника задумчиво почесал себе шилом сначала за правым ухом > Мастер Виноградника молча почесал себя шилом сначала за правым ухом.

Marshak’s additions often concern descriptions of characters’ actions, which he tends to make more detailed:

р. 3 В конце концов поднажали так, что старый Чиполлоне полетел прямо на ногу самому принцу Лимону > Не выдержав напора, старый Чиполлоне завертелся кубарем и наступил на ногу самому принцу Лимону.

р. 5 Сам же Чиполлино, завязав свои вещи в узелок и повесив его на палку, пустился в путь > Попрощавшись с дядей, матерью и братьями, Чиполлино завязал свои вещи в узелок и, нацепив его на палку, пустился в путь.

р. 7 Кум Тыква решил работать побольше, а есть поменьше > Кум Тыква подумал-подумал и решил работать подольше, а есть поменьше. Так он и сделал.

р. 7 Мастер Виноградинка захватил шило, посмотрел на грудку кирпичей и начал: > Мастер Виноградинка, захватив с собой шило, вышел из мастерской, посмотрел на грудку кирпичей и начал:

р. 10 Из кареты вылез толстяк, одетый в зеленое, с пухлой красной физиономией, которая казалась вот-вот лопнет, как перезревший помидор > Из кареты, пыхтя и отдуваясь, вылез толстяк, одетый во все зеленое. Его красные, пухлые, надутые щеки, казалось, вот-вот лопнут, как перезревший помидор.

Elsewhere Marshak's editing aims at increasing the lyrical atmosphere of the tale, as in the following example where Marshak clearly makes use of a lullaby intonation:

р. 10 Никакого Помидора здесь больше нет... Я в своем домике плыву, как моряк в лодочке, посреди Тихого океана. В море вода голубая, спокойная... как мягко она колышет мою лодочку... > Никакого сеньора Помидора тут больше нет... Я сизжу в своем домике и плыву, как моряк в лодочке, по Тихому океану. Вокруг вода — синяя-синяя, спокойная-спокойная... Как мягко она колышет мою лодочку!..

In certain passages, such addictions grow up to significantly alter the text and depict a whole new scene

р. 11 На самом же деле океаны были тут непричем: попросту кавалер Помидор ухватился за верхушку домика и стал трясти его изо всех сил, так, что черепица полетела во все стороны. > Конечно, никакого моря вокруг не было и в помине, но домик кума Тыквы и в самом деле покачивался то вправо, то влево. Это происходило оттого, что кавалер Помидор ухватился за край крышки и стал обеими руками трясти домик изо всех сил. Крыша ходила ходуном, и аккуратно уложенная черепица разлеталась во все стороны.





“brand” — but also at the level of punctuation it is easy to see how Marshak wants to give more emphasis to the scenes and to increase the emotional side of the narration, even when in the ST it is plain and neutral.

As far as wordplay is concerned, the following example reminds the well-known pun of the absent-minded man from Basseinaya Street:

р. 12 Да, да, действительно... то есть... — бормотал Горошек, ещё пуше зеленея от страха

— Что там еще действительно или действительно? Адвокат вы или нет?

> Да-да, действительно непочтительно... то есть... бормотал Горошек, еще пуше зеленея от страха. — То есть недействительно почтительно!

— Что там еще действительно или действительно? Адвокат вы или нет?

Sometimes Marshak plays on the effect of accumulation<sup>7</sup>, by means of hyperbolic climax, in order to increase the irony of the whole scene, as in the following example where terrible Senor Tomato cannot help sneezing after ripping some hair out of Cipollino's head:

р. 14 Страшный кавалер Помидор вдруг почувствовал, что у него ужасно щиплет глаза, и от едкого лука он заплакал, как фонтан. Даже как два фонтана. Слезы текли у него по обеим щекам в два ручья так обильно, что полили всю улицу, словно по ней прошелся дворник со шлангом

> Вырвав у Чиполлино прядь луковых волос, грозный кавальер Помидор вдруг почувствовал едкую горечь в глазах и в носу. Он чихнул разок — другой, а потом слезы брызнули у него из глаз, как фонтан. Даже как два фонтана. Струйки, ручьи, реки слез текли по обеим его щекам так обильно, что залили всю улицу, словно по ней прошелся дворник со шлангом.

Punctuation too plays a relevant role in marking the different intonations in dialogues and narrative parts. The constant replacement of full stops or dots by exclamative marks makes it clear that Marshak strives to make the text sound more expressive, showing in this way his attention to the children audience that always enjoys high intonation and oral features in written texts.

р. 7–8 Она мышей ловит > Она мышей ловит!

р. 8 Тебе виднее, ты арифметике учился > Тебе виднее, ты арифметике учился!

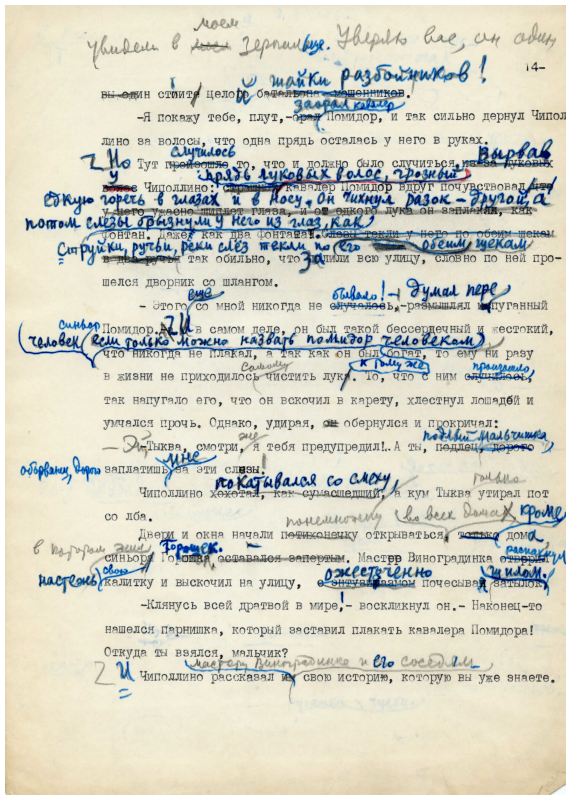


Figure 3. Marshak, S. (1953). Priklyucheniya Chipollino: typewritten copy with Marshak's handwritten remarks, private archive of Marshak's heirs. [P. 14]

p. 8 Надо быть поосторожнее > Надо быть поосторожнее!

p. 9 мне было бы здесь очень очень уютно > мне было бы здесь очень очень уютно!

p. 13 Если ты нашел нового, покажи-ка мне его! > Если ты нашел нового, покажи-ка мне его!

In all examples Rodari puts full stops or dots, and so does Potapova, while Marshak prefers to raise the tone of the speaker<sup>8</sup>, especially in dialogues that represent an extremely important part of any children's

book. By alternating the descriptive and narrative passages they vary the rhythm, and also add elements of orality to the written text.

Finally, in dialogues it is also easier to spot Marshak's willingness to increase the Esopian subtext, already well present in Rodari's novel and even more fitting in the Soviet context:

р. 4 — В тюрьме полным-полно честных людей.

— А что же плохого они сделали?

— Ничего. Вот за это-то их и засадили. Принцу Лимону не по нутру хорошие люди.

>

— Да ведь в тюрьме полным-полно<sup>9</sup> честных людей.

— А за что же они сидят? Что плохого они сделали?

— Ровно ничего, сынок. Вот за это-то их и засадили. Принцу Лимону порядочные люди не по нутру.

The above-mentioned examples are only a starting point for a deeper investigation, but they allow us to claim that Marshak's intervention on Potapova's text is extensive and covers all aspects of language at both lexical and syntactic levels. Marshak does not try to simplify Rodari's text, on the contrary, sometimes he makes it more challenging from a grammatical and syntactical point of view. Moreover, Marshak is not afraid to *interpret* the ST and add or modify some parts of it in order to meet his own criteria for a "great art for little ones", even if this means to shift the logic accent or the intonation of a sentence or a whole passage. Since it is a tale for children, Marshak tends to modify the neutral tone of Rodari's voice in favor of a more expressive intonation. According to Marshak, preciseness, clearness and irony, together with imagination, are the most important criteria for any children's writer and/or translator; his systematical choices in editing Potapova's translation go in that direction and demonstrate his general approach to the text. Furthermore, Marshak strongly believes in the power of words and their symbolic or hidden meaning. He does not distort the meaning of the ST but stresses those elements and characteristics that appear to him the most important for his new readership. The Aesopian language inherent in much children's literature is brought here to the fore even more than in Rodari's source text. Thus, the double-reader orientation of any children's literature, and Soviet above all, receives full disclosure and turns this amusing story into a multi-layered and complex work of art potentially dangerous for the official ideology.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Note also that in the first edition Rodari uses a lot of metaphors that are omitted in the second version of the story, sometimes replaced by other expressions, as can be seen in the following examples (my emphasis): “accarezzandolo *come fosse un gattino*” [Rodari 1951, 14] and “accarezzandolo affettuosamente” [Rodari 2020, 268]; “Il sudore gli scendeva a ruscelli dalla fronte, *come la rugiada*, e gli entrava in bocca” [Rodari 1951, 17] and “Il sudore gli scendeva a ruscelli dalla fronte, e gli entrava in bocca” [Rodari 2020, 270]; “con gli occhietti piccoli e cattivi, con la bocca *che pareva la fessura di un salvadanaio*” [Rodari 1951, 20–21] and “con gli occhietti piccoli, con la bocca cattiva” [Rodari 2020, 273].
- <sup>2</sup> Marshak officially worked at the publishing house as literary consultant [Shvarts 1990].
- <sup>3</sup> Marshak highly valued Tolstoy’s short stories, his *Knigi dlia chteniya* (“Books for reading”) and other masterpieces. He was also very fond of Pushkin’s fairy tales and his lyric in general.
- <sup>4</sup> I am very much in debt to Marshak’s heirs, Aleksandr Immanuilovich and Tatiana Aleksandrovna Marshak, for their permission to work on this material and publish it, and for all their support in my research on Marshak’s works.
- <sup>5</sup> As mentioned before, only the first two chapters of the book were taken into account.
- <sup>6</sup> The examples are given in the following way: the first is from Potapova’s typewritten translation, the second, after “>” sign, is Marshak’s revision. I underline the most relevant changes. The pages are numbered in the manuscript.
- <sup>7</sup> He uses the same technique also in the first Chapter: *р. 3 сразу увидел все звезды на небеси (sic) даже без помощи придворного астронома > сразу увидел все небесные звезды и планеты без помощи придворного астронома.*
- <sup>8</sup> This tendency could also be due to Marshak’s great passion and activity in the world of theatre for children, where he has worked for some crucial years of his formation as a children’s writer [De Florio 2020].
- <sup>9</sup> In the typewritten version at the beginning Marshak adds “samych” (“the most”), but then cancels it. This could well serve as an example of self-censorship.

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*Джулия Де Флорио*

Университете Модены и Реджо Эмилии; ORCID: 0000-0002-1489-9059

МАРШАК — РЕДАКТОР «ПРИКЛЮЧЕНИЙ ЧИПОЛЛИНО»  
 ДЖАННИ РОДАРИ. ЗАМЕТКИ НА ОСНОВЕ АРХИВНОГО  
 МАТЕРИАЛА

Краткая заметка Самуила Маршака «Почему я перевел стихи Джанни Родари» (Маршак 1971) представляет собой интересный «взгляд изнутри» на его переводческую практику в отношении стихов итальянского детского поэта. Содержащаяся в ней информация далеко не исчерпывает тему «Маршак — переводчик Джанни Родари». Маршак был редактором и другого перевода произведений итальянского писателя: «Приключений Чиполлино» Златы Потаповой. При анализе перевода Потаповой и предложенных Маршаком изменений, включенных в машинописную копию, хранящуюся в архиве Маршака, можно легко заметить ряд переводческих стратегий, которые подчеркивают пристальное внимание Самуила Яковлевича к передаче не только словесного текста, но и всей культурной системы с итальянского языка на русский, а также его свободу в смещении эмоциональных и логических акцентов текста в соответствии с собственными представлениями о том, что делает детскую литературу «высшей литературой». Такие предварительные наблюдения служат отправной точкой для определения подхода Самуила Маршака к редактированию и переводу детской литературы.

*Keywords:* С. Маршак, Приключения Чиполлино, Джанни Родари, Маршак, редактор, архив Маршака