

The Master and Margarita

Annotations per Chapter



Jan Vanhellemont

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2020

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First Printing: 2020

ISBN 978-9-081853-32-3

The illustrations in this book are gouaches made by the author.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the creation of this book, and in particular **Willam F. Jack** from Oakdale, United States, who has taken the trouble to read it thoroughly so that it could be published in flawless English.

Also a word of thanks to **Bénédicte Prévost** from Nivelles, Belgium, for the ditches of coffee and soup and the encouragements, and for urging me to make the illustrations for this book.

Preface

It was a hot summer night in July 2003 and I was admiring the Eiffel Tower from the open window of a nice penthouse at the Avenue Émile Zola in Paris. I was talking to **Tatiana Poppel**, a Russian friend who lived there. We were discussing literature and I told her about my favourite novel, *Cien años de soledad*, written by **Gabriel Garcia Márquez**. And then it was her turn. She told me a strange, but funny story about the Devil visiting Moscow. I was listening and I was amused, but without really trying to remember the name of the novel or its author. But the story never left me. It was saved in my brains forever.

One year later the images came back, and how! Another Russian friend of mine, **Irina Ternovaya**, advised me to read *The Master and Margarita*, written by **Mikhail Bulgakov**. And so I did. With quite some dramatic consequences. I lost my heart in Moscow. It will stay there forever and I started learning Russian because, one day, I wanted to be able to read the novel in the original language...

In 2006, I created the «*Master and Margarita*» website with more information on Mikhail Bulgakov, the novel and its themes, the political, economical, social and cultural context, the characters and the locations, and I discovered how this novel has inspired many others to create music, movie pictures or theatre plays. Take a look frequently at the newspage of the website too, because Bulgakov is still alive...

Welcome to the wonderful world of *The Master and Margarita*...

Introduction

Mikhail Bulgakov's novel *The Master and Margarita* is, among other things, a satire. The author criticises real people in the Soviet Union of the 30s and creates absurd situations by mixing reality and fiction. That mix is hidden everywhere throughout the novel in small details which, at first sight, seem to be trivial, but which are significant for those who know why they are mentioned. It is, for instance, not a coincidence that the woman tramdriver who beheaded Mikhail Berlioz at the Patriarch's Ponds in Chapter 3 is wearing «a crimson armband», or that the master tells Ivan Bezdomny in Chapter 13 that he «*was in the same coat but with the buttons torn off*».

In this book you can find annotations, ordered by chapter, explaining the names, locations, situations, quotations and other elements which Mikhail Bulgakov used to illustrate his view of Soviet society, with the aim of better understanding the novel. The terms are mentioned in the order of their first appearance in the novel.

At the time my *Annotations* were published, I knew seven different English translations of *The Master and Margarita*. For these annotations I have followed the translation of **Richard Pevear** and **Larissa Volokhonsky** from 1997, published by *Penguin Classics*. The other English translators I know are:

The Master and Margarita

English translations

Michael Glenny, 1967, Everyman's Library

Mirra Ginsburg, 1967, Grove Press

Diana Burgin and Tiernan O'Connor, 1996, Random House Vintage

Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, 1997, Penguin Classics

Michael Karpelson, 2006, Lulu Press

Hugh Aplin, 2008, Oneworld Classics

John Dougherty, 2017, Russian Tumble

Each translator makes his own choices, so the same words can be translated in different ways. To give one example: the title of chapter 7 of *The Master and Margarita* is **Нехорошая квартира** [Nekhoroshaya kvartirka] or *The Bad Apartment*. In 1967, **Michael Glenny**, translated it as *The Haunted Flat*. In 1997, **Richard Pevear** and **Larissa Volokhonsky** translated it as *A Naughty Apartment*.

So it's pretty clear that, when making *Annotations per chapter*, choices have to be made in terms of lemmas and references to keywords and quotes. Without making a judgment on the other English translations of *The Master and Margarita*, I have chosen to use the translation of **Richard Pevear** and **Larissa Volokhonsky** as my reference point. The reasons for this are rather practical in nature. First of all, when I started collecting information about the

names and terms used by Mikhail Bulgakov, I had only read the translations of Michael Glenny and Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. Since Glenny did not have the complete uncensored novel as a source text in 1967, my choice for the other translation was quickly made. Moreover, it later turned out that, despite some reservations that are described in these *Annotations*, the translation of Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky is fairly faithful to the source texts of Mikhail Bulgakov.

The annotations in this book are rather summary. They are meant to be a first aid - while reading the novel, you can consult the annotations to get a brief explanation, enabling you to understand names and references, so that you don't need to interrupt your joy of reading. More detailed annotations and comprehensive descriptions of the political, economic, social and cultural context of the novel can be found on the «*Master and Margarita*» website. On various places in this book you will find Quick Reference (QR) codes which you can scan to gain immediate access to more detailed information on the «*Master and Margarita*» website.



<https://www.masterandmargarita.eu>

Chapter 1
Never Talk With Strangers



Epigraph

«... who are you, then?»
«I am part of that power
which eternally wills evil
and eternally works good.»

This epigraph comes from the scene entitled *Faust's Study* in the first part of the drama *Faust*, written by **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** (1749-1842). The question is asked by Faust; the answer comes from the demon Mephistopheles.

Never Talk with Strangers

The title of the chapter is an ironic reference to the dread of many Muscovites in a period in which existed an obsession with espionage. In his speech to the joint plenum of the *Central Committee* and the *Central Control Commission* of the *Communist Party* on January 11, 1933, General Secretary **Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin** (1878-1953) had warned that «the former» (the supporters of the previous regime, he meant) were «scattered around the country» and they only wanted to bring «mischief and harm». Talking to them was dangerous and those who did would be pursued on suspicion of espionage. Foreigners belonged to «the breed of the unknown and the strangers», with whom you should not talk.

Foreigners who visited the Soviet Union were closely monitored by the secret service **НКВД** [NKVD], the **Народный комиссариат внутренних дел** [Narodny komissariat vnutrennikh del] or *People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs*, whose informers and infiltrators were at work everywhere. Later, during the *Cold War* between the Soviet Union and the West, this service was known as the notorious **КГБ** [KGB], the **Комитет государственной безопасности** [Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti] or *Committee for State Security*.

Since 1995 it is called **ФСБ** [FSB], the **Федеральная служба безопасности Российской Федерации** [Federalnaya sluzhba bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii] or *Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation*. In *The Master and Margarita*, Bulgakov never mentions the NKVD by name. However, the service is ubiquitous in the novel, but is indicated by the impersonal «one» or «them», or referred to as «a certain organisation».

You can read much more on the issue of Russians and foreigners in the section *Social and Cultural Context* of the «Master & Margarita» website.



Patriarch's Ponds

The Patriarch's Ponds are situated in a park very close to Bulgakov's former residence in the **Большая Садовая улица** [Bolshaya Sadovaya ulitsa] or *Big Garden Street* in Moscow. The Russian name of this place is **Патриаршие пруды** [Patriarshie prudy] or *Patriarch's Ponds*. The name is in plural, though there is actually only one pond. In the past there were three ponds. The name of the pond refers to the *Patriarch*, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church whose residence was close to the park.

Many streets, squares and buildings got a new name in the Soviet era. In Bulgakov's time, the Patriarch's Ponds were called **Пионерские пруды** [Pionerskie prudy] or *Pioneer's Ponds*. In *The Master and Margarita* however, Bulgakov consequently used the pre-revolutionary names, which often were of Christian Orthodox origin.

You can read more on the Patriarch's Ponds in the section *Locations* of the «Master & Margarita» website.



a grey summer suit and a respectable fedora

The first of the two citizens at Patriarch's Ponds looks like a functionary. With the description of «black horn-rimmed glasses of a supernatural size», Bulgakov gives an indication of his appreciation of such characters.

As far as the hat is concerned, Bulgakov described a **приличную шляпу пирожком** [prilichnuyu shlyapu pirozhkom]. A literal translation would be: *a decent hat as a pastry*, but the translation given here is quite correct, since **шляпа пирожком** [shlyapa pirozhkom] was the popular name given to a **Федора** [fedora].

A **fedora** is a felt hat, often made from Belgian rabbit fur, with a wide brim and indented crown, typically creased lengthwise down the crown and pinched near the front on both sides.

The name of the hat comes from **Fédora Romazov**, a character from the play *Fédora* by the French writer **Victorien Sardou** (1831-1908). She was wearing a fedora, and the fact that this character was played in the first performances of the play in 1889 by the world-famous actress **Sarah Bernhardt** (1844-1923) made this hat popular all over the world. First worn by women, the fedora later became a popular men's attribute after **Edward VIII** (1894-

1972), the then *Prince of Wales*, started wearing it in 1924. Well-known variants later were produced by the fashion houses *Borsalino* and *Stilton*.

After the revolution, hats were no longer used in the Soviet Union, unless by old-fashioned intellectuals. Hats were winning acceptance again in the 30's, namely among the new elite.

Georgy Andreevsky (°1940), who worked for years for the *Attorney General* of the Soviet Union, published a series of books entitled *The daily life in Moscow during the Stalin era*. He quoted a French journalist whose name he spelled in Cyrillic as **Морис Родэ-Сэн** [Maurice Rodin-Saint], but about whom I haven't found any further information. In 1934, this journalist wrote the following in the emigrants' journal **Иллюстрированная Россия** [Illyustrirovannaya Rossiya] or *Russia Illustrated*: «It is shocking to see how the people are dressed in Moscow. Shoes are a rarity. Some passers-by, however, differ greatly from the mass. They are better dressed and they all carry, without any exception, a bag. These are the officials, the rulers of the Soviet society. Shoes, bags and hats, that's how you can recognize the Soviet caste».

Bulgakov himself was always dressed very decently when he was in company. He not only often carried a fedora, but also a pince-nez.

A checkered cap, a cowboy shirt and black sneakers

The second character complies with the stereotype image of a proletarian poet looking far less bourgeois. He was в **ковбойке** [v kovboyke], or in a *checkered shirt*. The word **ковбойка** [kovboyka] is derived from the American word **ковбой** [kovboy] or *cowboy*.

Mikhail Aleksandrovich Berlioz

This absolutely non-Russian name for the chairman of the board of Massolit is referring to the French composer **Louis Hector Berlioz** (1803-1869) who wrote the opera *La damnation de Faust*. In this opera there are four characters: **Faust** (tenor), the devil **Méphistophélès** (bariton), **Marguerite** (mezzosoprano) and **Brander** (bas).

Hector Berlioz wrote also the well-known *Symphonie fantastique* (1830), one of the most famous examples of *programme music*. In the fourth movement of this symphony, the *Marche au supplice* or *March to the Scaffold*, the main character is seeing his own decapitation in his dream, and in the fifth movement, the *Songe d'une nuit du sabbat* or *Dream of a Witches' Sabbath*, he sees himself at a witches' sabbath in a giant orgy. Both themes will be important later in the novel.

For the lovers of trivia: composer Hector Berlioz studied, like Bulgakov, medicine before he focused totally on art.

A more detailed description of Mikhail Aleksandrovich Berlioz can be found in the *Characters* section of the «Master & Margarita» website.



Massolit

Massolit is an invented but plausible contraction parodying the many contractions introduced by the government in the Soviet Union. There will be others further on in the novel - such as the *Dramlit House* (House for Dramatists and Literary Workers) and *findirector* (financial director).

In Bulgakov's time, writers needed to be members of official literary unions if they wanted to publish their works. Some examples of such unions were the **Российская Ассоциация Пролетарских Писателей (РАПП)** [Rossiyskaya Assotsiatsiya Proletarskikh Pisateley (RAPP)] or *Russian Association of Proletarian Writers* and the **Московская Ассоциация Пролетарских Писателей (МАПП)** [Moskovskaya Assotsiatsiya Proletarskikh Pisateley (MAPP)] or *Moscow Association of Proletarian Writers*.

The names of these organisations are real: many hideous abbreviations were commonly used in the Soviet Union.

Bulgakov based the fictional Massolit on the RAPP and the MAPP. In the book he gives no explanation for the abbreviation. But it probably was the **Мастера Социалистической литературы** [Mastera Sotsialisticheskoy literatyry] or *Masters for Socialist Literature*, by analogy with the **Мастера Коммунистической Драмы (Масткомдрам)** [Mastera Kommunisticheskoy Dramy (Mastkomdram)] or *Masters for Communist Drama*, an organisation that really existed in Bulgakov's era. Mastkomdram was created on November 29, 1920 as an initiative of the TEO, the *Theatre Division of the Commissariat of Education and Enlightenment*, and lead by theatre director and actor **Vsevolod Emilevich Meyerhold** (1874-1940).

According to the Russian Bulgakov expert **Boris Vadimovich Sokolov** (°1957), the author of the *Bulgakov Encyclopedia*, the name **Массолит** [Massolit] would be an abbreviation of **Масонские литературы** [Masonskie literaturi] or *Masonic writers*.

Sokolov argues his thesis by referring to a text written by **Afanasy Ivanovich Bulgakov** (1859-1907), theologian and church historian, and father of Mikhail Afanasievich. In 1903, he had written an article about *Modern Freemasonry in its Relationship with the Church and the State*, which was published in the *Acts of the Theological Academy* of Kiev.

Bulgakov Senior wrote that the Masons wanted to introduce a new faith. It was a false faith, according to him, because their only aspiration would have been to increase the personal wealth of its members. However, it seems somewhat farfetched to link the name Massolit to Freemasonry. In that case, Bulgakov would have written **Масолит** [Masolit], with only one «s», which not.

Mikhail Bulgakov was interested in the symbols of Freemasonry, however, and he refers to them indeed on various places in the novel.

Ivan Nikolaevich Ponyryov (Bezdomny)

Бездомный [Bezdomny], the nickname of the poet **Ivan Nikolaevich Ponyryov**, means *The Homeless* in Russian.

In the early versions of the novel the young poet was called **Безродный** [Bezrodny], which means *The Lonely*. Many so-called proletarian writers used such pseudonyms. The most famous one is probably **Aleksey Maximovich Peshkov** (1868-1936) who called himself **Maxim Gorky**. **Горький** [Gorky] means *The Bitter*. Other examples of such pseudonyms are **Голодный** [Golodny], *The Hungry*, **Беспощадный** [Besposhadny], *The Wreckless* or **Приблудный** [Pribludny], *The Lost*.

The pseudonym Bezdomny reminds one of **Demyan Bedny** (1883-1945). **Бедный** [Bedny] means *The Poor*. His real name was **Efim Alexandrovich Pridvorov**. Pridvorov wrote anti-religious works in the 20's, like, for example *The New Testament without Shortcomings of the Evangelist Demyan*. In 1925, Bulgakov made an annotation in his diaries which later were found in the KGB-archives: «He presents Jesus Christs as a cheat and a swindler... there are no words for such crime». It is possible that Bulgakov got the idea of writing *The Master and Margarita* after having read Bedny's work.

«Homeless» also reminds of **Alexander Pych Bezymensky** (1898-1973). **Безыменский** [Bezymensky] means *The Nameless*. He was a proletarian poet who had written a theatre play that partly was a parody of Bulgakov's own play *Days of the Turbins*.

A more detailed description of Ivan Nikolayich Ponyryov (Bezdomny) can be found in the *Characters* section of the «Master & Margarita» website.



Seltzer and beer

Bulgakov didn't need to exaggerate to make this conversation appear as a parody - this kind of dialogue could be heard daily in the former Soviet Union. Both the situation of supply shortage and the description of the protagonists' attitudes towards it were common practice. Only in a **берёзка** [beryożka] or *foreign-currency store* there were no supply shortages.

You can read more on foreign currency stores in the *Context* section of the «Master & Margarita» website.



In the original Russian text Bulgakov didn't write about ordinary *seltzer*. He used the word **нарзан** [narzan]. Since 1894, the Narzan mineral water was bottled in Kislovodsk, a city in the Stavropol region of the North Caucasus. Bulgakov wrote *narzan*, without a capital letter, because the water was so popular that the brand name became a generic name.

Kislovodsk

Literally **Kislovodsk** means *acid waters*. It was a popular resort in the northern Caucasus, famous for its mineral springs. The Narzan mineral water is bottled here. For Russians with connections «the South» with the Caucasus, the Crimea and the Black Sea was the most prestigious resort.

After the creation of the **Союз советских писателей** [Soyuz Sovietskikh Pisateley] or *Union of Soviet Writers* in 1932, writers in the Soviet Union could be rewarded with a **путёвка** [putyovka] for Kislovodsk. A *putyovka* is a (doctor's) referral letter which Soviet citizens needed for going to a *sanatorium*. A sojourn in a sanatorium was - and still is in many cases - a combination of a recreational stay on the sea coast with a programme of courses of treatment and physical exercises, prescribed and monitored by doctors.

A transparent citizen [...] wove himself out of it

In the period that Bulgakov wrote *The Master and Margarita*, hardly anything of his work was published. This was perhaps the reason why he sometimes returned to themes or situations he had described earlier, which had no or only a limited audience.

The transparent citizen who appears here for Berlioz, resembles a theme that was already in **Столица в блокноте** [Stolitsa v bloknotye] or *The Capital on a Blocnote*, published in the journal *Nakanune* in December 1922 and February 1923: «... behind the young man wove himself out of the air, with no signal from his part (Bolshevik tricks!), a policeman».

A long anti-religious poem

Antireligious demonstrations of every sort and kind were extremely well-spread in that epoch, such as the iconoclastic poetries of **Demyan Bedny** (1883-1945), pseudonym of **Efim Aleksandrovich Pridvorov**.

Mikhail Bulgakov recalled with indignation that he considered it cursing. It is possible that the original drawing of *The Master and Margarita* was born as a reaction against this rude propaganda.

Berlioz ordered a poem on the occasion of the holiday of Easter with the express purpose of propaganda. This was not unusual. In the Soviet Union it was common practice to publish atheistic literary works on the eve of Christian and other holidays.

You can read more about atheism and propaganda in the Soviet Union in the *Context* section of the «Master & Margarita» website.



The most ordinary mythology

The statement that Jesus as a person is a myth comes from the theory of **Bruno Bauer** (1809-1882), a German theologian, philosopher and historian and a follower of **Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel** (1770-1831) who once awarded the young Bauer an academic prize for a philosophical essay criticizing **Immanuel Kant** (1724-1804).

Kant had made quite some efforts to prove the existence of God. Bauer also engaged in furious polemics with others who, as he himself, tried to prove that the historical Jesus never existed, such as **David Strauss** (1808-1874).

Philo of Alexandria

Philo of Alexandria (20 BC-54) was a Greek philosopher of Jewish origin, a biblical exegete and a theologian. He influenced both the Neo-Platonists and early Christian thinkers.

Flavius Josephus

Flavius Josephus (57-100) was a Jewish general and historian, born in Jerusalem. He is the author of *The Jewish War* and *Antiquities of the Jews*. Incidentally, Berlioz is mistaken when he says that «the brilliantly educated Flavius never said a word about the existence of Jesus», because Christ is indeed mentioned in this work.

Tacitus's [famous] Annals

Annals is a work on the history of the Roman Empire during the first century by the Roman historian **Cornelius Tacitus** (55-120), covering the years 14 to 66. He also wrote the book *History*, covering the years 69-70.

The *Annals* are not completely saved, except for the years 14-37 (the reign of Emperor Tiberius) and 47-66 (Claudius and Nero). Tacitus referred in one page to Jesus Christ, his execution by Pontius Pilate and the existence of early Christians in Rome.

Modern scholarship rejects the opinion that the passage Berlioz refers to is «a later spurious interpolation».

However, in *The Prospect of a Christian Interpolation in Tacitus, Annals 15.44*, an article published in 2014, the American atheist activist and blogger **Richard Cevantis Carrier** (°1969), a leading proponent of the *Christ myth* theory, uses almost the same words by saying that the execution of Christ by the procurator Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius' line is «a Christian interpolation».

Osiris

In Ancient Egypt, the god **Osiris** was the protector of the dead, brother and husband of **Isis**, and father of the falcon-headed god **Horus**.

Tammoz

Tammoz is a Syro-Phoenician demi-god, his Greek equivalent **Adonis** is probably known better.

Marduk

Marduk is a Babylonian sun-god, the leader of a revolt against the old deities and an institutor of a new order.

Vitzliputzli

Vitzliputzli, in other literary works also named **Huitzilopochtli**, is the Aztec god of war, to whom human sacrifices were offered.

A black knob shaped like a poodle's head

In the drama *Faust* by **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** (1749-1842), Mephistopheles first comes to Faust by taking the form of a black poodle.

A foreigner

Foreigners aroused both curiosity and suspicion in Soviet Russia, representing both the glamour of «abroad» and the possibility of espionage. Talking to strangers could get one into trouble with the secret police. Few foreigners visited the Soviet Union, and those who did were required to register with the authorities and to stay in special hotels, and they were observed very closely.

In Russian language a foreigner is indicated by the word **иностранец** [inostranyets], but in times past the word **немец** [nemets] was also used. This word had a double meaning, however. It stood, besides for *foreigner*, also for *German*. So when Ivan, in the first chapter of *The Master and Margarita* asks Woland «**Вы немец?**» [Vy nemets?], it can mean «*are you German?*» as well as «*are you a foreigner?*». **Немец** [nemets] would come from the verb **неметь** [nemet], which means *to become dumb*. A nemets is then a dumb, in the sense of someone who doesn't speak Russian.

The Phoenician Adonis

With the **Phoenician Adonis** Berlioz refers to the Syro-Phoenician equivalent of the Greek god Adonis: the demi-god **Tammoz**.

The Phrygian Atris

The name **Atris** is probably a typographical error in the English translation by **Richard Pevear** and **Larissa Volokhonsky**, since Bulgakov was writing about **фригийский Аттис** [Frigiyskiy Attis] or *Phrygian Attis*. **Attis** is a Phrygian god, companion to **Cybele**. He was castrated and bled to death.

The Persian Mithras

Mithras is the Greek name for the Persian **Mithra**, a god who is truth-speaking, has one thousand ears, ten thousand eyes, is all-knowing, strong, sleepless, and ever awake. Mithra is also protector and keeper of all aspects of interpersonal relationships, such as friendship and love, and closely associated with the goddess **Aredvi Sura Anahita**, the hypostasis of knowledge.

The coming of the Magi

In the original Russian text appears as **приход волхвов** [prikhod volkhvov]. It means *the coming of the magicians*. In Russian, the term **священные волхвы** [svyachennije volkhvy] or *holy magicians* is used to describe *the Three Wise Men, the Three Kings, or the Kings from the East* who visited the newborn Jesus according to Matthew 2:1-12 - «After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him'.» The **Magi** were members of the Persian priestly caste. In other Bible translations the terms diviners or astrologers are also used.

If, not being your acquaintance, I allow myself...

The foreigner's introduction inspired **Mick Jagger** (°1943) from the British rock band **The Rolling Stones** to write the world famous song *Sympaty For The Devil*, one year after the novel was published for the first time. At that time, the British singer **Marianne Faithfull** (°1946) was Jagger's girlfriend. In an interview with **Sylvie Simmons** from the magazine *Mojo* in 2005, she said: «I got Mick to read *The Master and Margarita* and out of that, after discussing it at length with me, he wrote that song».

The song starts with the words: «Please, allow me to introduce myself...». In 1968, the French director **Jean-Luc Godard** (°1930) released the film *One Plus One*, entirely devoted to the creation of the song *Sympathy For The Devil*.

Restless old Immanuel

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was a German idealist philosopher. In his *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781) he wrote that, though we can't prove it, we can, by the pure reason - which is the ability to transcend the sensory reality and thus no longer depend on it - conclude that, among others, freedom, immorality and God exist.

Immanuel Kant

The five proofs that Kant «roundly demolished» according to Woland, and to which he added «a sixth of his own», are the so called *Quinque viae*, which are five proofs of the existence of God, formulated by the catholic philosopher and theologian **Thomas Aquinas** (1225-1274) in his *Summa Theologiae* (1265-1274).

You can read more about these proofs in the annotations for Chapter 3.

Schiller

Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller, better known as **Friedrich Schiller** (1759-1805) was a German poet and playwright and a liberal idealist. At first, Schiller was a revolutionary in his work, which in those days meant that he was striving for freedom and equality, and rejected arbitrariness and injustice. Later he became more moderate. Schiller is, among others, known for his poem *An die Freude* (1785) which was partly used by his contemporary **Ludwig von Beethoven** (1770-1827) in the final movement of the *Ninth Symphony*. A well-known statement of Schiller concerned the work of Immanuel Kant related to freedom: «you can because you have to».

Schiller struck a productive, if complicated, friendship with the already famous and influential **Johann Wolfgang Goethe** (1749-1842), with whom he discussed much on issues concerning aesthetics, encouraging Goethe to finish works he left merely as sketches; this thereby gave way to a period now referred to as *Weimar Classicism*. They also worked together on *Die Xenien* (The Xenies), a collection of short but harshly satiric poems in which both Schiller and Goethe verbally attacked those persons they perceived as enemies of their aesthetic agenda.

Strauss

The Strauss mentioned here is **David Strauss** (1808-1874), a German theologian, author of *Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet* or *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*. He didn't care for the reality of the Jesus character, but he gave a mythical interpretation of the *New Testament* in the context of the poetical consciousness of the Jewish and the early Christian communities. To him, the person Jesus was a fiction resulting from cultural and literary expectations.

You can download the full text of *Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet* in English from the *Archives* section of the «Master & Margarita» website.



Solovki

Solovki is an informal name for the **Solovetski Islands** in the White Sea. On the territory of a former convent stood the **Соловецкий лагерь особого назначения** [Solovetsky lager osobogo naznacheniya] or the *Solovetsky Special Purpose Camp*, one of the earliest and most notorious concentration camps. The last prisoners were loaded on a barge and drowned in the White Sea in 1959.

The «three years in Solovki» could refer to an incident that occurred in 1926, two years before Bulgakov began to write *The Master and Margarita*. At that time, a number of Freemasons were arrested in Leningrad by the secret police **OGPU**, the forerunner of the **NKVD**. One of those arrested was the lawyer **Boris Viktorovich Kirichenko** (1883-1941?), who was known under the pseudonym **Boris Viktorovich Astromov**.

Astromov said that he was already 2000 years old and that he was a follower of **Immanuel Kant** (1724-1804). He was convicted because he had helped to organise an «international bourgeois conspiracy against the Soviet Union». He got sentenced to five years in a concentration camp, later reduced to three years. In December 1926, he was pardoned and he was exiled to Siberia. In 1940, he was again arrested by the NKVD. After that, no one ever heard about him anymore.

Man governs it himself

Bezdomny quotes a verse from the poem **Наше воскресенье** [Nashe voskresenye] or *Our Resurrection*, written by **Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky** (1893-1930) in 1923: «**нам не бог начертал бег [...] миром правит сам человек**» or «*no god determines our flight [...] the world is governed by man himself*».

Motionless in a wooden box

The story which Woland describes so colourfully here, refers to **Господин из Сан-Франциско** [Gospodin iz San Frantsisko] or *The Gentleman from San Francisco*, a story from 1915 by Nobel Prize winner **Ivan Alekseevich Bunin** (1870-1953). Bunin himself said that he got the idea of writing this story after having seen the cover of the novella *Death in Venice* by **Thomas Mann** (1875-1955) in a Moscow bookstore.

Bulgakov must have loved this story, since he also referred to it in his novel *The White Guard*, where «a cold cup of tea and *The Gentleman from San Francisco* lay on the table in front of **Elena Turbin**».

Our Brand

In the Russian text Ivan says that he smokes **Наша Марка** [Nasha Marka] or *Our Brand*. Nasha Marka, produced originally by *V.I. Asmolov & Co* in Rostov on Don, is a Russian brand of cigarettes. It still exists and is very popular - it celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2003. In 1920, the company was nationalized and the name changed to the *Don State Tobacco Factory (DSTF)*. Production promptly decreased by 60 % compared to 1916. But the *New Economic Policy (NEP)* gave a new impulse and in 1926 the production was four times the 1922 results. After the Soviet era, in 1992, the DSTF was reorganised and the name changed into *JSC Donskoy Tabak*. It is now part of the agroholding *AGROCOM*.

The way Woland offers a cigarette to Ivan is reminiscent of a scene from the drama *Faust* by **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** (1749-1842).

The devil Mephistopheles asks some tipplers in the *Auerbachs Keller* in Leipzig: «*Nun sagt, was wünschet ihr zu schmecken?*» or «*Tell me, what do you wish to taste?*», which is followed by the counter-question: «*Wie meint Ihr das? Habt Ihr so mancherlei?*» or «*How do you mean? Have you got so much choice then?*». Just like Ivan replied: «*What, have you got several?*» when Woland asks him which kind of cigarettes he prefers.

A cigarette case

The cigarette case of the stranger contains precisely *Our Brand* cigarettes - it is not so strange: the devil is traditionally gifted with the power to make any desired object appear.

But Berlioz and Ivan are also astonished by the triangle which adorns the case. It is one of the emblems of the devil. It is often found in esotericism (Jewish mystic, mystic of numbers, freemasonry). It is the reversible face par excellence, often linked to its reversed picture, as in the *Seal of Solomon* and the *Star of David* (David was the father of Solomon).

This seal is formed by two twined triangles: the one - going up - representing the negative force or the devil, the other one - going down - representing the positive force or God. The equilibrium of both triangles is the key of *Wisdom*.

The Seal of Solomon

On the lid of the cigarette case «a diamond triangle flashed white and blue fire». Blue is the highest colour of *Freemasonry*. It symbolizes perfection, truth and immortality.

A triangle with the so-called *Eye of Providence* is present in all temples of *Masonic Lodges* on the wall opposite to the entrance, symbolizing the East.

Enemies? Interventionists?

There was constant talk in the early Soviet period of «enemies of the revolution» or «foreign interventionists» seeking to subvert the new workers' state. The Soviet propaganda often created an image of an enemy to avoid facing its own failure.

Komsomol

Komsomol is the contraction of the **Коммунистический союз молодёжи** [Kommunistichesky Soyuz Molodyozhy] or *Union of Communist Youth*, which all «good Soviet young people» were expected to join.

Komsomol had little direct influence on the Communist Party but played an important role as a mechanism for teaching the values of the party to the young, and as an organ for introducing the young to the political arena. The female conductor of the tram that will decapitate Berlioz, is a Komsomol member. We know that because she is wearing a «crimson armband». Well... in Chapter 3, we will see that it should have been a «scarlet scarf».

While growing up, a Soviet citizen had to follow a complete ideological itinerary, starting with the **Всесоюзная пионерская организация** [Vsesoyuznaya pionyerskaya organizatsiya] or *Pioneers*. At the age of 14, the youngster moved to the Komsomol, where he or she stayed until the age of 28. After that, the talented members could join the Communist Party, which was a condition for having access to more important functions.

The Komsomol served as a repository for young potentials and a steppingstone for a career. Being thrown out of the youth movement, for instance because of misbehaviour at school, or because of politically incorrect ideas, was considered as one of the major punishments and after that, further career opportunities within the Soviet Union were reduced to zero.

Annushka

Annushka is one of the few real life persons keeping her actual name in *The Master and Margarita*. **Tatiana Nikolaevna Lappa** (1892-1982), Bulgakov's first wife, remembered **Annushka Goryacheva** (1871-?), who lived in the same apartment no. 50. The apartment was a sort of working-class dormitory with 7 rooms off a central corridor. Annushka Goryacheva had a son and beat him often. They used to buy home-brew vodka, get drunk, fight, and make noise.

In an earlier version of the novel, her name was **Pelageyushka**, later she was **Annushka Basina**. She also played a role in *No. 13 - The House of the Elpit Workers' Commune*, a short story which Bulgakov wrote in 1922, and in *Theatrical Novel*, his last novel, written in 1937, which was published in English as *Black Snow*.

Boulgakov could get terribly annoyed by the real Annushka, as we can conclude from the fact that he wrote in his diary on October 29, 1923: «The first day of heating was marked by the fact that the famous Annushka left the window of the big kitchen opened during all night. I resolutely do not know what to do with the scoundrel who lives in this flat».

You can read more on Annushka Goryacheva in the *Characters* section of the «Master & Margarita» website.



A Russian emigre

Many Russians who were opposed to the revolution emigrated abroad, forming important «colonies» in various capitals like Berlin, Paris, Prague, Harbin or Shanghai - where they remained potential spies and interventionists.

Gerbert of Aurillac

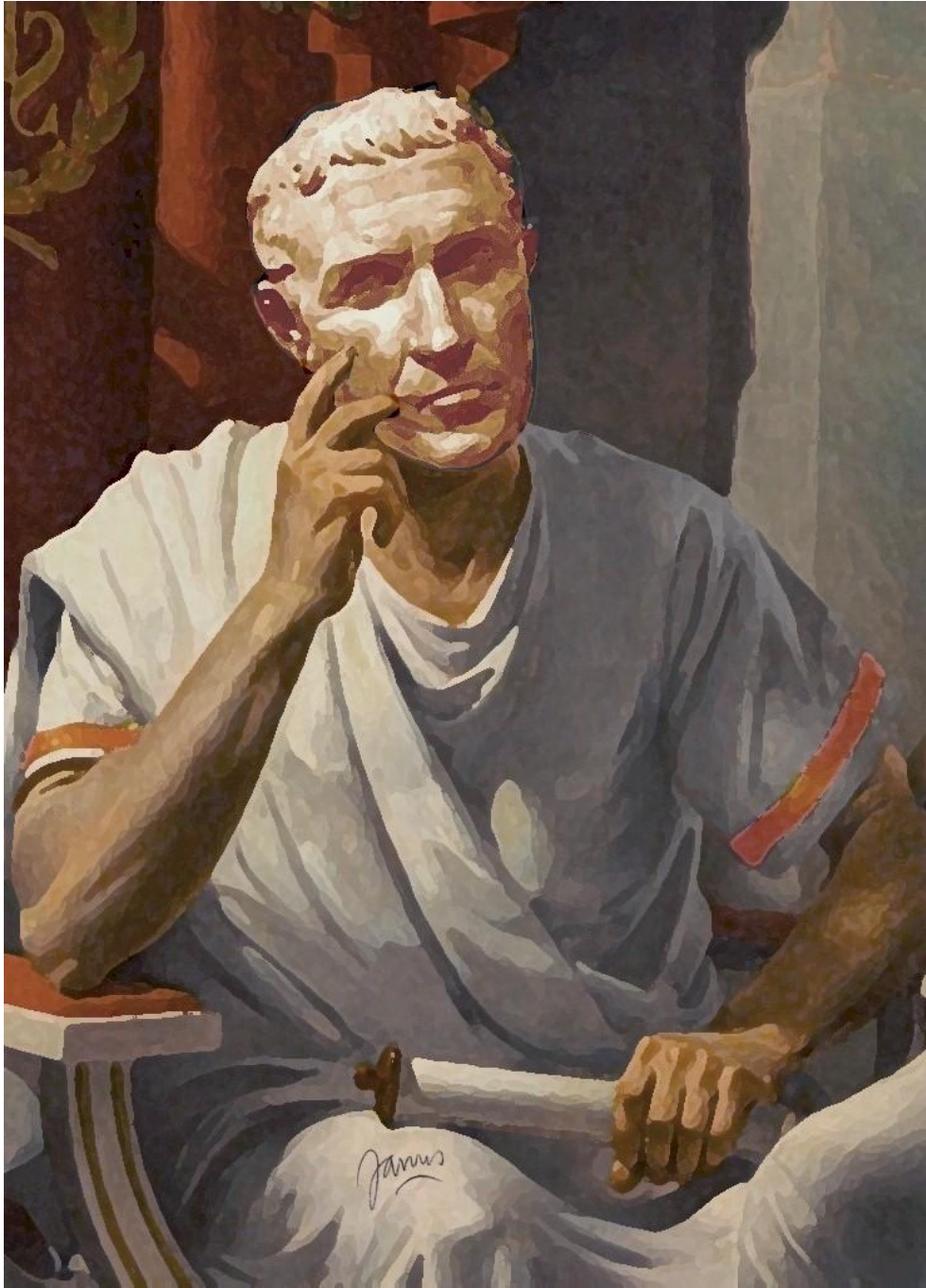
Gerbert of Aurillac (946-1003) was a theologian and mathematician, popularly taken to be a magician and alchemist. He became pope in 999 under the name of **Sylvester II**.

Nisan

Nisan is, according to the *civil calendar*, the seventh month of the Jewish lunar calendar. Originally, according to the *ecclesiastical calendar*, it was the first month.

The *fifteenth day of Nisan* (beginning at sundown on the fourteenth) is the start of the feast of *Pesach* or *Passover*, (Hebrew: **פסח** - coming from *passing over* or *Pasach*). It's the day of the full moon, because the Jewish months start on the day following the new lunar crescent. Passover is also known as *Pesach*, the *spring feast*, or *freedom feast*, commemorating the exodus of the Jews from Egypt.

Chapter 2
Pontius Pilate



The Chapter's Title

In 1998, the Seattle based rock band **Pearl Jam** released the song *Pilate*, inspired by this chapter.

Judea

Judea is the southern part of Palestina, occupied by Rome in 65 BC. It was named after **Judah**, the fourth son of the Biblical patriarch **Jacob**. In the year 6 it became a Roman province. The residence of the prefect - called «procurator» by Bulgakov - was in *Caesarea Stratonova* on the Mediterranean.

Pontius Pilate

Pontius Pilate (?-38) was the fifth Roman prefect of Judea from 26 to 36. Mikhail Bulgakov drew details for his portrayal of the procurator from **David Strauss** (1808-1874), already mentioned in the first chapter, but also from *Life of Christ* by the Dean of the *Canterbury Cathedral*, **Frederic Farrar** (1851-1905), from *Vie de Jésus* by the French historian **Ernest Renan** (1823-1892), from *Le Procureur de Judée* by **Jacques Anatole François Thibault** (1844-1924), who wrote under the pseudonym **Anatole France**, and from the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, which probably was written in the fourth century, and of which the first part was entitled *Acta Pilati*, or the *Acts of Pilate*.

You can download all these works for free in the *Archives* section of the «Master & Margarita» website. In the *Characters* section of the «Master & Margarita» website, you can read much more on Pontius Pilate.



Herod the Great

Herod the Great (?75 BC-04), was the *client king* in Judea whom the Romans rewarded for his services by making him king. According to the New Testament, he ordered the murder of Jewish children - the *Massacre of the Innocents* - when he heard of the birth of the Messiah - the «*King of the Jews*». A better translation might be: «*King of the Judeans*», as it was more for his influence on the kingdom of Judea than on his religious opinions that was executed.

Herod loved buildings in Roman style. It can be seen in the many palaces and other constructions he built in Jerusalem and in the city of Caesarea at the Mediterranean shore. According to the master's Pilate story, Caesarea was Pilate's preferred residence.

The Twelfth Lightning legion

The twelfth legion, *Legio XII*, was a Roman legion, levied by **Gaius Julius Caesar** (100 BC-44 BC) in 58 BC, which accompanied him during the Gallic wars until 49 BC. The legion's logo was the image of a lightning which gave it the name *Fulminata* - *lightning* is *fulmen* in Latin.

The twelfth legion was also known as *Paterna*, *Victrix*, *Antiqua*, *Certa Constans*, and *Galliena*. Bulgakov found the name from the book *L'Antéchrist (The Antichrist)* another work by **Ernest Renan** (1823-1892), and made the annotation «12-й *Fulminata*» [12th *Fulminata*] in his notebook.

Yershalaim

Bulgakov uses an alternative transliteration of the Hebrew ירושלים [Yeru-shalayim] for the name of the city of Jerusalem. In certain other cases as well, Bulgakov has preferred using the distancing effect of such alternatives: he used *Yeshua* for Jesus, *Ha-Nozri* for Nazareth, *Kaifa* for Caiaphas, *Kiriath* for Iscariot.

Oh gods, gods...

The refrain «*Oh gods, gods...*» runs through *The Master and Margarita* like a leitmotiv. It appears ten times in the novel and is taken from the opera *Aïda* written by **Giuseppe Verdi** (1813-1901), which Bulgakov knew and loved and also quoted in other works.

Galilee

Galilee is the northern part of Palestine, green and fertile, with its capital at *Tiberias* on the *Sea of Galilee*, also known as *Lake Kinnereth* or *Lake of Gennesaret*.

The tetrarch

In Pilate's time Galilee was ruled by the tetrarch **Herod Antipas** (20 BC-30), son of **Herod the Great** (73 BC-4BC). In a tetrarchy, the power is divided between four individuals. In

the first century, the Romans also used the title of *tetrarch* to indicate the ruler of a smaller part of their vast empire.

Herod Antipas was responsible for the decapitation of **John the Baptist** (7BC-29), through the vengeful request of his step-daughter **Salome** (14-?) and her mother **Herodias** (15BC-39).

According to the *Gospel of Luke* (23:7-12), Herod Antipas was in Jerusalem at the time of Christ's crucifixion. Pontius Pilate had sent Jesus to Herod to pronounce judgment. It was meant to flatter him because they were at odds with each other. Herod was honoured but sent Jesus back to Pilate.

The latter issued his judgment and washed his hands saying he was innocent of the blood of this just person. Since then Herod and Pilate were friends again. Luke 23:12 - «And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other.»

Sanhedrin

The *Sanhedrin* was the highest Jewish legislative and judicial body, headed by the high priest of the temple in Jerusalem. The lower courts of justice were called lesser *sanhedrins*. The Sanhedrin followed the Jewish law under supervision of the Romans.

A man of about twenty-seven

According to the *New Testament*, Jesus Christ was about thirty-three years old when he died. This is one of the many details in which Bulgakov deviates from the traditional biblical story.

In his annotations for the third version of *The Master and Margarita* he wrote: «33-й год нашей эры. Иешуа мог родиться и в 4-10 году нашей эры (23 года?)» or «The year 33 of our era. Yeshua could have been born between the years 4 and 10 of our era (23 years?)».

Dressed in an old and torn light-blue chiton

The chiton is an ancient Greek garment consisting of straight pieces of cloth which had different sizes. These pieces of cloth were draped around the body, no scissors nor needles were used. Men wore a short chiton without sleeves, women a long one with sleeves.

Blue was a favourite colour among the Jews and was considered sacred. Bulgakov got this description from *Life of Christ* by **Frederic Farrar** (1851-1905): «...at each corner of His

dress the fringe and blue riband which the Law enjoins (...) He is in the ordinary dress of His time and country».

Aramaic

Aramaic is a West-Semitic language which is spoken today as a first language in some villages around *Damascus* in Syria and in other parts of the Middle-East.

Originally it was spoken by the *Aramaeans*, but eventually it became the *lingua franca* of the entire Persian empire. So it became widely spread all over the Middle East, and consequently Palestine.

Some passages of the Bible are written in Aramaic and not in Hebrew, and it is very likely that Jesus spoke Aramaic in his daily contacts with people. In the movie picture *The Passion of the Christ* (2004), directed by **Mel Gibson** (°1956), most of the dialogues are in Aramaic.

Ernest Renan (1823-1892) wrote that «l'idiome propre de Jésus était le dialecte syriaque mêlé d'hébreu qu'on parlait alors en Palestine» or «Jesus' mother tongue was the Syriac dialect mixed with Hebrew, which was then spoken in Palestine». The Syriac was a dialect of Aramaic.

Today the language is considered to be endangered. After thousands of years it risks to becoming extinct under the pressure of dominant languages and cultures in those areas where still exist Aramaic groups.

The temple of Yershalaim

The temple of Jerusalem was originally built by **King Solomon** (1000 BC-928 BC) in the 10th century BC. It was destroyed the first time by the Babylonian invaders in 586 BC and reconstructed in the 5th century BC. **Herod the Great** (73 BC-4BC) renewed it completely, but it was destroyed by the Roman emperor **Titus Flavius Caesar** (39-81) in 70.

Ratslayer

Bulgakov calls him **Марк Крысобой** [Mark Krysoboy]. **Крыса** [krysa] is *rat* and **бой** [boy] means *fight*.

In the English translations he's called **Muribellum** (Glenny, 1967) or **Ratslayer** (Pevear and Volokhonsky, 1997). *Muribellum* means *Mousefighter*. It was a Roman nickname for fearful and pusillanimous soldiers. *Muribellum* is meant ironically, because Mark Ratslayer was not a coward at all.

At the foot of a bronze statue

Statues in the decoration of palaces was a characteristic of the Hellenistic culture, and thus familiar to the Roman Pilate, but for Jews it was very unusual. However, **Frederic Farrar** (1851-1905) wrote about the presence of sculptural porticos in Herod's palace.

Hegemon

Ἡγεμών or hegemon is Greek for *leader, ruler* or *guide*.

Yeshua

The name **ישוע** [Yeshua] is Aramaic and means the *Lord is salvation*. The name **הנוצרי** [Ha-Nozri] means *from Nazareth*, the city in Galilee where Jesus lived before he started his public life.

Gamala

When Pilate asks him where he comes from, Yeshua does not answer *Nazareth*, the hometown of the biblical Jesus, nor Bethlehem, his birth place. No, he says *Gamala*, and «indicates with his head that there, somewhere far off to his right, in the north, is the town of Gamala».

Gamala is a town northeast of Tiberias at the Sea of Galilee, which is traditionally not linked to the life of Jesus. None of the four canonical evangelists mention it, so why would Bulgakov do it?

Some historians argue that the absence of textual references to Nazareth in the *Old Testament* and the *Talmud*, as well as the works of **Flavius Josephus** (57-100), suggest that a town called Nazareth did not exist in Jesus' days. They think that Jesus lived in Gamala.

In 1927, the French writer **Henry Barbusse** (1873-1935) had supported this idea in his book *Jésus* (Jesus). He had written it because he had felt, as he said it himself, «a strong charm for the human and touching image of the jewish prophet, son of a worker carpenter, who encircled himself with people of modest condition and focussed himself on the humble». Barbusse did not believe in the divinity of Jesus, he believed in his love for mankind. He sympathized with a long, enduring tradition within the working movement: the idea of the revolutionary Jesus, killed by the mighties of the epoch of which he questioned their power. When Barbusse published an article called *Jesus marxist* in the journal *L'Humanité* to explain himself, many people were scandalized. Later on, Barbusse would write a theatre play called *Jésus contre Dieu* (Jesus against God) which would never be staged.

Gamala was the homebase of **Judas of Galilee** who had led a violent resistance against Rome in the year 6 and whose followers, the *Zealots*, formed a radical anti-Roman group refusing to pay Roman taxes. Jesus recruited his first apostles in the neighbourhood of Gamala. It cannot be excluded that among his first followers there were quite a few Zealots, even among the apostles. **Jacob** and **John** (sons of **Zebedee**) had sons of the thunder as nicknames, which could refer to the Zealots. It is even possible that **Peter** was a Zealot. His nickname **Bar-jonah** (Matthew 16,17) would refer to the Zealots. It means *son of Jonah* but also *outlaw*. In Luke 6:15 **Simon the Zealot** is mentioned among Jesus' closest followers, and maybe Peter's brother **Andrew** was a Zealot.

Close to Gamala, in *Bethsaida*, took place one of the two *feedings of the multitude*, which Jesus Christ would have done. It was the feeding of the 5.000, starting from five barley loaves and two small fish. It was shortly after Jesus had heard that **John the Baptist** (7BC-29) had been killed. The crowd was enthusiastic, as was written in John 6:15: «So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.»

After the miracle Jesus sent his apostles away. Matthew 14:22: «Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd.» Some scholars assume that Jesus sent his apostles away to avoid them to be considered as Zealots by the authorities. This first feeding of the multitude at Bethsaida is described by all four canonical evangelists. A second similar miracle, starting from seven loaves and a few fish, from which a group of 4,000 people were fed, was described only by Mark and Matthew.

A Syrian

Yeshua says: «I don't remember my parents. I was told that my father was a Syrian». Once again, Bulgakov differs significantly from the canonical evangelists who wrote that Jesus' mother, **Mary**, was still alive when he was executed, so he knew her well when he appeared before Pilate.

Mary would have conceived Jesus immaculately, without having had intercourse with her fiance **Joseph of Nazareth**. Matthew and Luke wrote that Joseph was a descendant of **King David** (1040BC-970BC) who, according to the Hebrew Bible, was the second king of the *United Kingdom of Israel*. Joseph was a carpenter by profession. He was last time mentioned in the Bible when Jesus was 12 years old. During Jesus' public life, he is not mentioned, leading many to assume that he was already deceased.

According to the Bible, Jesus also had brothers and sisters. His four brothers are mentioned by name as **James, Joseph, Simon** and **Judas**, but his sisters are not named or numbered. Some Christians who believe in the perpetual virginity of Mary, say they were not brothers and sisters of Jesus, but children born from a previous marriage of Joseph.

Matthew Levi

Many Christians believe that the *evangelist* Matthew is the same person as the *apostle* Matthew, originally named **Levi**. It is very doubtful that this is possible, because it would mean that Matthew would have been very old when he wrote his gospel. Most Biblical experts estimate the origin of the gospels as follows: Mark circa 65; Luke circa 80-85; Matthew circa 85-90; John circa 90-100. Others date the first three gospels somewhat earlier: Mark shortly after 60; Luke between 60 and 70 and Matthew shortly after 70.

In *The Master and Margarita*, Jesus and **Matthew Levi** know each other, but not long enough to consider him an apostle. Bulgakov refers clearly to the evangelist - «one with a goatskin parchment who follows me, follows me and keeps writing all the time».

Bulgakov never mentions the apostles in the novel. Although he makes **Aphranius** say that, «though we have been unable - so far at least - to discover any admirers or followers of his, it is none the less impossible to guarantee that there are none». But further they aren't even mentioned. Matthew Levi is called «disciple», although it's only by himself. He has characteristics from both the apostle as the evangelist. He's a tax collector, like the apostle Matthew Levi, and writes down the acts of Jesus, like the evangelist Matthew.

The apostle Matthew's calling by Jesus was rather controversial. After a conflict with the scribes Jesus left the city and went to the *Lake Tiberias*. Along *Capernaum*, a town near the lake, was a seaway, the main road from Syria to Egypt. All goods entering Herod's territory, were taxed at the Capernaum tollbooth, it was one of the four taxes that had to be paid.

The tax collectors collected the tolls for the occupying force and often demanded more money than required to keep the remainder for themselves. People hated them and they were so despised that their money was not accepted by the Jewish as alms and that their testimony was not legitimate in Jewish courts, because they were ritually unclean because of their contacts with heathens. Matthew, called Levi by Mark and Luke, was such tax collector and the fact that Jesus called chose him as a follower, must have been questionable for many Jews.

When Jesus beckons him, Matthew leaves his old life behind him and follows Jesus as his disciple. They go into Matthew's house and have a festive meal, with Jesus, his disciples and many tax collectors and sinners. The evangelist Matthew describes the calling of the apostle Matthew as follows: 9:9 - «As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, 'Follow me'. And he got up and followed him».

What is truth?

This is a quote from the trial of Jesus by Pilate, as described by the Evangelist John. «What is truth? retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, I find no basis for a charge against him» - John 18:38.

Bethphage

The name **Bethfage** is Hebrew for *House of figs*, it is the name of a village near Jerusalem which Jesus passed through on his final journey to Jerusalem.

The gardens on the Mount of Olives

The **Mount of Olives** is a hill to the east of Jerusalem. At the foot of this hill is Gethsemane, Hebrew for the *olive press*, just across the *Kedron* river. According to the Gospels it was here that Christ was arrested.

Dysmas, Gestas and Bar-Rabban

Dysmas and **Gestas** were the thieves crucified together with Jesus. Their names are not mentioned in the canonical Gospels, but found in the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus*, also known as *The Acts of Pilate*. **Bar-Rabban** is the **Barabbas** from the Gospel who was released by Pilate on the occasion of the feast of Pesach.

The full text of the *Gospel of Nicodemus* is available for download at the *Archives* section of the «Master & Margarita» website.



Yehuda of Kiriath

The name **Иуда** [Yuda], used by Bulgakov, is the Russian transliteration of the Aramaic **יהודה** [Yehudah]. Aramaic was the *lingua franca* in the Middle East at the beginning of our era, and therefore Bulgakov chose to use many of the names in the biblical story of *The Master and Margarita* in Aramaic.

Yehuda, Bulgakov's Judas, is quite different from Judas in the Bible. In the *New Testament*, Judas is one of the twelve apostles, and he knows Jesus much longer than just two days. The apostles accompanied Jesus of Nazareth for three years.

In the Bible Judas has not been killed - he committed suicide, driven by remorse and regret. After his death he was replaced in the group of 12 apostles by **Matthias**. Bulgakov made him a spy, driven by money and somewhat by love too.

In the *Characters* section of the «Master & Margarita» website, you can read much more on Yehuda of Kiriath.



Lit the lamps

With his observation on «lighting the lamps» Pilate wanted to tease Yeshua because he had not understood that lighting the lamps was a sign. The lamps were lit so that the concealed witnesses for the accusation could see the face of the criminal. Yeshua was slightly surprised that «the procurator was so well informed», as if he did not realise that he had been betrayed.

Bald Mountain

Bald Mountain is the place which in the Gospels is called Golgotha - an Aramaic word meaning *Place of the skulls* - and where Jesus was crucified. Topographically Bulgakov's hill is higher than Golgotha and farther from the city. There is also a Bald Mountain near Bulgakov's native city Kiev in Ukraine.

Joseph Kaifa

The *Sanhedrin* had no direct authority to sentence to death except in case of desecration of the temple. That's why their death penalty for Jesus of Nazareth had to be ratified by Pilate.

The Sanhedrin was presided by the high priest. The historical **Joseph Caiaphas** (?-36) was appointed to that function by Pilate's predecessor, **Valerius Gratus**, in the year 18.

Kaifa politely apologised

Pilate invited Kaifa on to the balcony, to take shelter from the merciless heat, but «Kaifa politely apologised». According to a Jewish belief, going under the roof of a gentile would have made the high priest unclean and therefore unable to celebrate the coming feast.

Pilate himself began moving with them

This is possibly a hint to the legend according to which Pilate died by drowning himself.

Equestrian of the Golden Spear

The *Knights of the Golden Spear* was an equestrian order of Roman nobility. The order was next in importance to the Senate. Emperor **Augustus** (63 BC-14) reformed the order, after which it supplied occupants for many administrative posts. The name Pilate (Pilatus) may be derived from *pilum*, Latin for *spear*.

Chapter 3
The Seventh Proof



The chapter's title

In the first chapter Woland, Ivan and Berlioz were discussing the five proofs of the existence of God. The catholic philosopher and theologian **Thomas Aquinas** (1225-1274) formulated five proofs or arguments of the existence of God in his *Summa Theologiae* (1265-1274).

1. The argument of *the unmoved mover* (ex motu). Aquinas said that things move, therefore something or someone - an unmoved mover from whom all motion proceeds - must exist.
2. The argument of *the first cause* (ex causa). Some things are caused by something or someone else. Therefore, there must be an uncaused cause of all caused things.
3. The argument of *contingency* (ex contingentia). Many things in the universe may either exist or not exist. Such things are called contingent. But it is impossible for everything in the universe to be contingent, therefore there must be a necessary being whose existence is not contingent.
4. The argument of *degree* (ex gradu). Various perfections may be found in varying degrees throughout the universe, which assumes the existence of the perfections themselves
5. The argument of *design* (ex fine). All designed things have a designer. The universe is designed. Therefore, the universe has a designer.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), the German idealist philosopher, added a sixth argument to it, although Woland doesn't seem to like it much: «he fashioned his own sixth proof as if in ridicule of himself».

Kant's proof was called the argument of the moral order. Kant said that we are rationally obliged to attain the *summum bonum*. And what we are obliged to attain, must be possible for us to attain. If there is no God or afterlife, it is not possible to attain the summum bonum, so God or the afterlife must exist.

In this chapter Woland asserts the existence of yet a seventh proof, which is demonstrated to Berlioz minutes later when he is decapitated by a streetcar - «At least believe that the devil exists! I no longer ask you for anything more. Mind you, there exists a seventh proof of it, the surest of all! And it is going to be presented to you right now!»

And a couple of minutes later Berlioz notices that Woland is right. The seventh proof could be called the *experiential proof*, because Berlioz experiences that the devil exists, by which the seventh proof of God's existence is given.

It may be worth to mention that Bulgakov's close friend, the philosopher and literary critic **Pavel Sergeevich Popov** (1892-1964), was absorbed by the problem of the proofs of the existence of God.

An accent, which now appeared, now disappeared

Woland, who spoke perfectly Russian in the first chapter, begins to speak with an accent which «now appeared, now disappeared». In Bulgakov's notebooks, we find a reference to the «typewriter with the Turkish accent» from *The Golden Calf* by **Ilya Ilf** (1897-1937) and **Yevgeny Petrov** (1903-1942), but also to «a Caucasian accent».

This Caucasian accent is a reference to **Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin** (1878-1953), who spoke with a Georgian accent, although his language was officially labeled as «perfect». In other words: Stalin's accent «now appeared, now disappeared», depending on who was describing it. It gives power to the assumption by some that Stalin was the prototype for Woland.

Hotel Metropole

The *Metropol* hotel - no «e» at the end - in Moscow was built between 1899-1903 by **William Walcott** (1874-1943). This posh art-nouveau hotel has 400 rooms and suites and is decorated with mosaics by the artist **Mikhail Vrubel** (1856-1910).

The *Metropol* has been the site of many historic events, including speeches by **Vladimir Ilyich Lenin** (1870-1924) and the 1918-1919 meetings of the *Central Committee* of the Russian Republic. It became one of the hotels specially designated for foreigners. It is still one of the most luxurious hotels in Moscow.

Secrecy

«I was personally present at it all. I was on Pontius Pilate's balcony, and in the garden when he talked with Kaifa, and on the platform, only secretly, incognito, so to speak, and therefore I beg you - not a word to anyone, total secrecy, shh...»

With these words Woland suggests already that he's the devil. In the previous chapter, where the meeting between Pilate and Kaifa is described, is mentioned that Pilate wanted to «speak with the president previously and alone». Without - mortal - witnesses.

There isn't any

«... no matter what one asks for, there isn't any!» Woland says, shaking with laughter, when Ivan says that there isn't any devil. This quote became very popular in Russia after the publication of *The Master and Margarita*. The Soviet citizens considered it as a comment on the shortage of goods in the shops.

Koroviev

The description of Koroviev's dressing refers to the devil visiting **Ivan Fyodorevich Karamazov** in the novel *The Brothers Karamazov* written by **Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky** (1821-1881). Koroviev's profession of choir master connects him to bandmaster **Kreisler**, a character of **Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffman** (1776-1822). This bandmaster had a cat for companion. This cat was called **Murr** and it was of a special kind. The bandmaster and his cat appear in the book *Lebensansichten des Katers Murr* (1819-1821).

The name Koroviev is derived from the Russian word **корова** [korova] or *cow*. This refers to the *Golden Calf* used by Mephistoteles to celebrate the omnipotence of money in the opera *Faust*, composed by **Charles Gounod** (1818-1895).

Later in the novel, Bulgakov will use a second pseudonym for the Koroviev character. Woland will call him *Fagott* during the show at the *Variety Theatre* in Chapter 12. It connects him to the many musical themes in the story. His appearance makes us think of the long wind instrument which can be two meters long and which has a wide register. Fagott has acquired the capacity to change his voice.

Your uncle in Kiev

«Would you like me to have a telegram sent at once to your uncle in Kiev?», Woland calls out to Berlioz when he runs away. Berlioz winces, because how does the madman know about the existence of a Kievan uncle? And indeed, in chapter 18 he shows up after having received a telegram from Moscow.

The tramway

The tram-car that will decapitate Berlioz comes racing along, turning down the «newly laid line from Yermolaevsky to Bronnaya». Bulgakov needed to mention that the line was «newly laid», because most historians agree that there was no tramway at that place. But the influence of Bulgakov's novel has resulted in many Muscovites «recalling» such a line.

However, in a long interview, published by literary critic and psychologist **Leonid Konstantinovich Parshin** (1944-2010), **Tatiana Nikolaevna Lappa** (1892-1982), Bulgakov's first wife said: «There was a tramway on Bolshaya Sadovaya, but not along the Patriarch's Ponds. We lived there for several years, and there was no tramway».

Boris Myagkov (1938-2003), a literature researcher who wrote several books about Bulgakov, said he had found a newspaper article from 1929, in which it was written that the construction of a tram line along Malaya Bronnaya and Spiridonovka was planned. Thorough investigation in the archives of the **Управление организации пассажирских перевозок** [Upravlenie organizatsii passazhirskikh perevozok] or the *Administration of the*

Organisation of Public Transport in Moscow, and several interviews with former employees of this organisation have not given any evidence of it, however.

Bulgakov disliked tramways. One of his apartments was next to the tram tracks and the squeal of brakes irritated him day and night. Trams are «crowded, suffocating people, clutching the rails. People are hanging on the fenders and the running boards, like rabbits».

The decapitation

For the idea of decapitation by a tramway, Bulgakov might have been inspired by an anecdote from the younger years of his third wife **Elena Sergeevna Nyurenberg** (1893-1970).

In June 1918, Elena Sergeevna was present at the funeral of the actor **Mamont Viktorovich Dalsky**, pseudonym for **Mamont Viktorovich Neyolov** (1865-1918). There she met the son of the actor, **Yuri Mamontovich Neyolov** (1894-1935?), later named **Georgy**. It appeared to be a good match, because Yuri became Elena Sergeevna's first husband in December of that year.

At their meeting at his father's funeral, Yuri told Elena Sergeevna how his father had died: on his way to his friend, opera singer **Fyodor Ivanovich Khalyapin** (1873-1938) he slipped on the sidewalk, to end up under the wheels of a streetcar.

Crimson armband

According to the English translators **Richard Pevear** and **Larissa Volokhonsky**, Berlioz makes out the *crimson armband* of the woman driver. But this translation is not accurate. Bulgakov described it as an **алая повязка** [alaya povyazka] or *scarlet scarf* or *necktie*. Translator **Michael Glenny**, however, got it right. He described the driver wearing a *red necktie*.

This necktie proves once more that Woland's prediction in Chapter 1 was very accurate, since such necktie was the sign that the woman driver was a member of *Komsomol*.

Chapter 4
The Chase



Clickable map

On the «Master & Margarita» website, you can find a clickable map on which you can follow Ivan's chase through the streets of Moscow.



The «A»-line

There are many streetcar lines in Moscow. They are all numbered, except for one which is indicated with the letter «A». This line, which is now called «Annushka», has one particular car which is called **Трактирь Аннушка** [Traktir Annushka] or *Café Annushka*, and which serves as a restaurant. The line does not run along the **Патриаршие пруды** [Patriarshie Prudy] or *Patriarch's Ponds*, however, it runs laps around the **Чистые пруды** [Chistye Prudy] or *Clean Ponds*, 4 km to the east.

Number 15, apartment 47

Ivan realizes that the professor must «unfailingly» be found in house number 15, and «most assuredly» in apartment 47. Here the translators made a little mistake, because in Bulgakov's original text is written number 13, apartment 47. Bulgakov actually describes the apartment of his friends the Lyamins. **Nikolay Nikolaevich Lyamin** (1892-1941), literary scholar and translator, and **Natalia Abramovna Lyamina-Ushakova** (1899-1990), his artist-wife. The address was slightly modified though, since in reality, the Lyamins lived at Savelievsky pereulok number 12, apartment 66.

The story of the Lyamins will come back later in the novel, in *Nikanor Ivanovich's dream* in Chapter 15.

Primuses

The shortage of living space after the revolution led to the typical Soviet phenomenon of *communal apartments*, in which several families would have one or two private rooms and share the kitchen and toilet facilities.

The *primus stove*, a portable one-burner stove fuelled with pressurized benzene, made its appearance at the same time and became a symbol of communal-apartment life. Each family would have its own primus.

The primus will play an important role further on in *The Master and Margarita*, when Kоровiev and Behemoth bid Moscow farewell.

Two wedding candles

In an Orthodox marriage service, the bride and groom stand during the ceremony, holding lit candles. These are special, large, often decorated candles, and are customarily kept indefinitely after the wedding, in the living spaces of the bride and groom, sometimes in the corner with the family icon.

The Moscow River amphitheatre

The place «on the granite steps of the Moscow River amphitheatre», where Ivan dives swallow-fashion into the water, is at the foot of what had been the *Cathedral of Christ the Saviour*. «Had been», because in 1931, while Bulgakov was writing *The Master and Margarita*, the cathedral was dynamited by the Soviet regime.

The remaining granite steps and amphitheatre were originally a grand baptismal font at the riverside, popularly known as the *Jordan*. The cathedral has now been rebuilt.

You can read the full story of the cathedral in the *Locations* section of the «Master & Margarita» website



Having taken off his clothes

The incongruous bathing of Ivan can be assimilated with a christening. From this instant, Ivan is not the same person any more.

Getting rid of the clothes refers to the preparation for the initiation ritual in the first degree of *Freemasonry*, where the neophyte gets rid of his old outfit, including all metals such as watches, coins and rings.

Symbolically he rids himself of his pride, his vanity, his greed and all that binds him to the material or the materialistic. It also means that he «takes off the old man, with his accumulated knowledge, convictions, prejudices and passions» and that he is open to a fundamental exploration of life and especially his own.

You can read more on Freemasonry in *The Master and Margarita* in the *Context* section of the «Master & Margarita» website.



Yevgeny Onegin

Yevgeny Onegin is a great novel in verse written by **Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin** (1799-1837), which inspired **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** (1840-1893) to compose an opera of the same title, of which the libretto was written by the composer's brother **Modest Ilyich Tchaikovsky** (1850-1916). **Tatyana**, mentioned further on, is the heroine of *Yevgeny Onegin*.

Yevgeny Onegin symbolizes classical Russian culture which Ivan and his fellows professionally rejected. This music invites him to feel pity for the hero of the opera, to find again what he had humiliated, and to reconcile with his roots. The polonaise comes from all the houses at the same time - they were equipped with radios with one unique programme. With this description Bulgakov shows the standardisation of culture in the Soviet society.

A torn white Tolstoy blouse

A *Tolstoy blouse* or *Tolstoy shirt* is a traditional full Russian shirt with the collar opening on one side of the neck. The original name is **косоворотка** [kosovorotka] or *skew-collared*. It came to be associated with **Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy** (1828-1910), who liked to dress in peasant costume and mow the meadow along with his peasants. Hence the name **тольстовка** [tolstovka]. Since they were non-Western, such shirts were at various times signs of Russian nationalism.

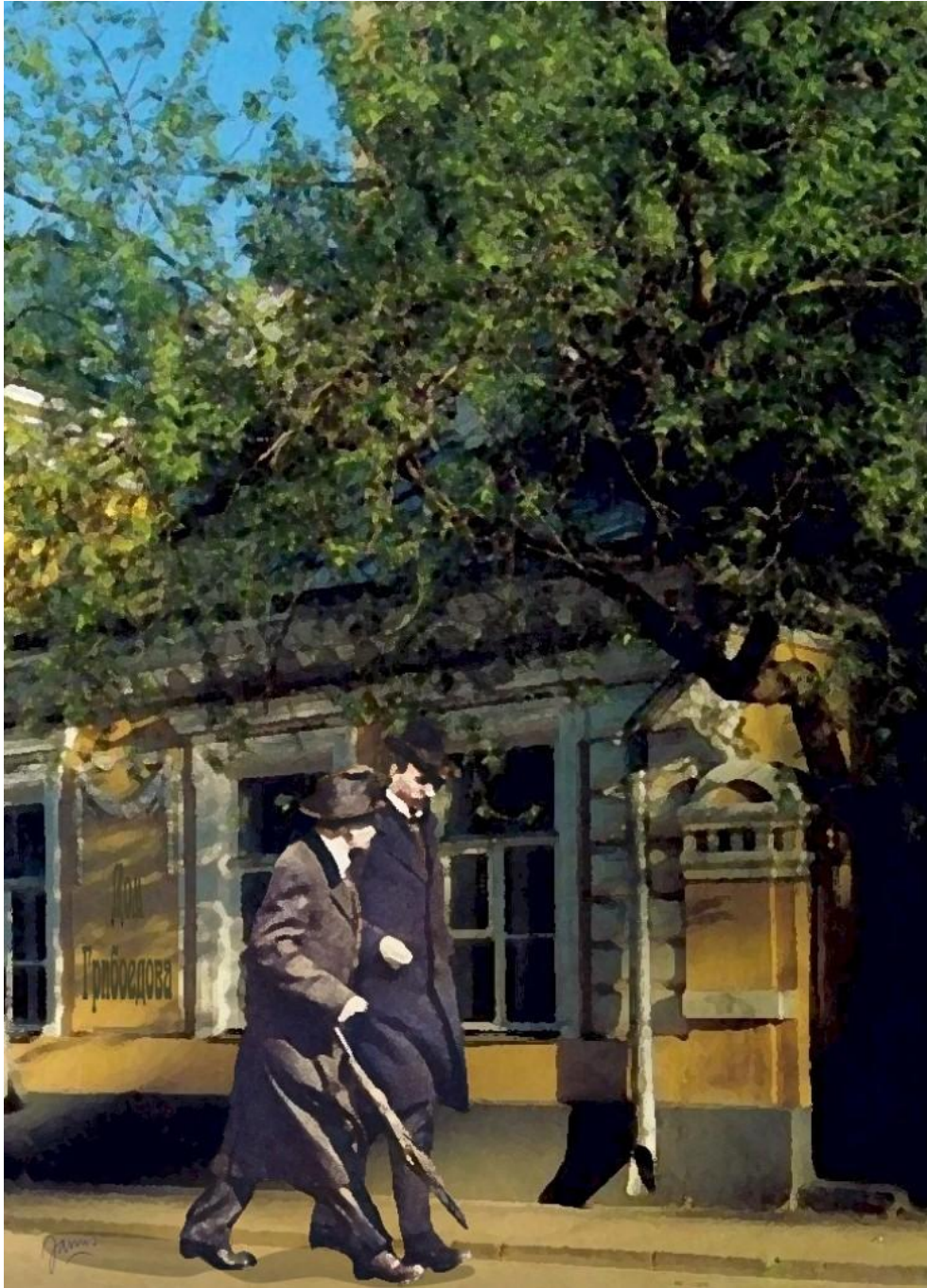
The clothes which Ivan Bezdomny puts on to replace «the checkered cap, the cowboy shirt, the wrinkled white trousers and the black sneakers» that he wore at the Patriarch's Ponds, could refer to the initiation ritual for *Apprentices*, the first degree of *Freemasonry*, where the candidate is introduced in shabby clothes. Usually he wears, like Bezdomny, a torn, whitish

and half opened shirt. The candidate is blindfolded. In the third version of *The Master and Margarita* written in 1933, Ivan was temporarily blind when he was brought into the clinic.

The icon and the candle

During the initiation ritual for *Apprentices* in Freemasonry, the candidate holds a candle, and the point of a sword is held at his chest. In an earlier version of *The Master and Margarita*, the paper icon was attached to Ivan's chest by a safety pin.

Chapter 5
There were Doings at Griboedov's



Alexander Sergeevich Griboedov

The poet, playwright and diplomat **Alexander Sergeevich Griboedov** (1795-1829) is best known as the author of the comedy **Горе от ума** [Gorye ot uma] or *Woe from Wit*, the first real masterpiece of the Russian theatre.

But the *Griboedov House* never really existed. When following Bulgakov's routemap, we arrive at Tverskoy Boulevard 25. There's a house that fits the description: the *Herzen House*, where **Alexander Ivanovich Herzen** (1812-1870), another Russian author, was born in 1812.

The role of the original *Herzen House* corresponds to that of the *Griboedov House* in the book. The Herzen house was the home of many literary organisations in the twenties. The **Российская Ассоциация Пролетарских Писателей (РАПП)** [Rossiyskaya Assotsiatsiya Proletarskikh Pisateley (RAPP)] or *Russian Association of Proletarian Writers*, the **Московская Ассоциация Пролетарских Писателей (МАПП)** [Moskovskaya Assotsiatsiya Proletarskikh Pisateley (MAPP)] or *Moscow Association of Proletarian Writers* and the **Литературный Организация Красной Армии и Флота (ЛОКАФ)** [Literaturniy Organizatsiya Krasnoy Armii i Flota (LOKAF)] or the *Literary Union of the Red Army and the Marine*. The names of these organisations are real: much hideous abbreviations were commonly used in the Soviet Union. Bulgakov based the fictive MASSOLIT on the RAPP and the MAPP.

In *The Master and Margarita*, Bulgakov gives no explanation for the abbreviation MASSOLIT. But it probably was the **Мастера Социалистической литературы** [Mastera Sotsialisticheskoy literatury] or *Masters for Socialist Literature*, by analogy with the **Мастера Коммунистической Драмы (МАСТКОМДРАМ)** [Mastera Kommunisticheskoy Dramy (MASTKOMDRAM)] or *Masters for Communist Drama*, an organisation that really existed in Bulgakov's era.

Until 1931 there was a writers' restaurant in the Herzen house. **Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky** (1894-1930) criticised it heavily in his satirical poem *Herzen house*. Since 1930 it is the home of the *Maxim Gorki Literary Institute*, where aspirant-writers are trained.

A seedy garden

Bulgakov uses the term **чахлый сад** [chakhli sad] or *stunted garden*. **Michael Glenny** translated it as a «ragged garden». These days, the front yard of the Herzen house can certainly not be described as «seedy», «ragged» or «stunted».

I do not know how the garden looked like in the time of Bulgakov, but it seems that, with this description, he wanted to commence polemics with **Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky** (1893-1930), in particular because of the optimistic pathos which the latter showed in his famous verses from the poem *Khrenov's Story of Kuznetsktroy and the People of Kuznetsk*.

*«I know - the city will come
I know - the garden will bloom
When there exist such people
In the Soviet country»*

This poem from 1929 heralded the construction of the Siberian industrial city of *Novokuznetsk*, which was then called *Kuznetsk*. The Stalinist industrialization would transform Kuznetsk in the 1930s into a major center of coal mining and industry, and used the urbanization principles of the *Garden City*. The Garden City was a method of urban planning, developed in 1898 by the English **Sir Ebenezer Howard** (1850-1928). Garden Cities were planned, self-sufficient communities, surrounded by green belts, with proportional zones for housing, industry and agriculture. Bulgakov was quite skeptical to this principle, especially with relation to the proportionality, and he reproached Mayakovsky that he had written an ode to a city he had never visited himself.

Eventually, Bulgakov would be correct in being skeptical. Despite the green belt, Novokuznetsk now has one of the highest concentrations of air pollution in Russia. According to a survey from 1997, the sulfur concentration at one of the factories was 312 times the allowable standard, the fluoride concentration at a pharmaceutical factory 300 times, and the benzopyrene of the city 10 times.

On the «Master & Margarita» website, we published a video about Novokuznetsk which was made in 1949 to glorify 20 years of *Stalin City*. It contains the above mentioned verses of Mayakovsky.



The verse of Mayakovsky was again very popular in 2014 among critics of the regime of **Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin** (°1952). It was eagerly resumed on blogs and social media when it appeared that, barely six weeks after the *Winter Olympic Games* in Sochi, virtually the entire infrastructure that was built for it was turned into a ghost town. The organisation of these games had cost 51 billion dollar.

M. V. Spurioznaya

In the original Russian text the person to whom should be applied for *One-Day Creative Trips* is not called **M. V. Spurioznaya**, but **М. В. Подложная** [M.V. Podlozhnaya]. This name is not without a meaning: the Russian word **подложный** [podlozhny] means *false, untrue, faked*.

Perelygino

The name Perelygino is clearly meant to suggest the actual *Peredelkino*, a writers' village near Moscow where many writers were allotted country houses. It was a privileged and highly desirable place. The name is not just a simple transformation of Peredelkino, because the Russian word **лгун** [lgun] means *liar*. In one of the earlier versions of the novel this writers' village was called **Перевракино** [Perevrakino], which comes from **враки** [vraki] or *lies*. What it boils down to is that Perelygino means as much as *Liars' Village*.

In 1958, Peredelkino became very famous when **Boris Leonidovich Pasternak** (1890-1960) won the *Nobel Prize for Literature*. He had a dacha there and worked there on his novel *Doctor Zhivago*. Nowadays the new rich are buying the entire village. They demolish the wooden houses for replacing them with luxury palaces.

Yalta, Suuk-Su... (Winter Palace)

To this list of resort towns in the Crimea, the Caucasus and Kazakhstan, Bulgakov incongruously adds the *Winter Palace* in Leningrad. It was the former residence of the emperors.

And what a restaurant!

Until the last days of the Soviet Union, restaurants belonging to the *Writers' Union*, the *Journalists' Union*, the *Union of Cinematographers*, and the *Actors' Union* were among the best and cheapest in Moscow, but to get in, one needed an ID from these organisations.

Amvrosy and Foka

Amvrosy comes from the Greek word **αμβροσία** [ambrosia], or *immortal* and it was also the name of the food of the gods conferring immortality on whoever consumed it.

Foka is the name of the hero of the fable *Demyan's Fish Soup* by the most famous Russian fabulist **Ivan Andreevich Krylov** (1769-1844), in which Foka, who rejects excess, notably of foods, is plied with far more than he can eat.

The Coliseum, where you can get slapped in the mug with a bunch of grapes by a young man

Some Bulgakov scholars think that the **Колизей** [Kolizej] or *Coliseum* is the restaurant of hotel *Metropol* in Moscow. But it is more likely that Bulgakov was thinking of the **Дом Союзов** [Dom Soyuzov] or *House of the Unions*, and more in particular its **Колонный зал**

[Kolonnii zal] or *Colonnade*. Because **Колизей** [Kolizej] could be a contraction of **Колонный зал** [Kolonnii zal].

On August 17, 1934 the First Congress of the newly created **Союз советских писателей** [Soyuz Sovyetskikh Pisateley] or *Soviet Writers' Union* was organised in this hall. Bulgakov was not invited for this event, but he had heard how things went there. The delegates were spoiled rather generously. Per person and per day, the organisation spent 40 roubles on food. For comparison: an ordinary dinner cost about 85 kopecks in those days, and in a fancy restaurant you could pay up to 5 roubles for it.

The incident with the grapes refers to the final banquet of this Congress in the Colonnade. Many people were drunk and a young poet had struck **Alexander Yakovlevich Tairov** (1885-1950), the director of the **Камерный театр** [Kamerny teater] or *Chamber Theatre*. In 1928-1929, Tairov had played Bulgakov's theatre play *The Crimson Island* more than 60 times.

In it languished twelve writers

«In it languished twelve writers who had gathered for a meeting and were waiting for Mikhail Alexandrovich». This sentence is a typical example of the satirical device that swaps situations from one world to another. The twelve writers in Griboedov seem to be the apostles waiting for Jesus at the *Last Supper*.

Rather than parodying specific writers, Bulgakov employs Gogol's device of significant and funny-sounding names in this passage. **Глухарев** [Glukharev] means *black grouse*, **Драгунский** [Dragunsky] means *dragoon*, **Павианов** [Pavyanov] - translated as *Baboon* by **Richard Pevear** and **Larissa Volokhonsky** - means *baboon*, and **Богохульский** [Borokhulsky] - translated as *Blasphemsky* - means *blasphemer*.

The belletrist Beskudnikov

The belletrist Beskudnikov is a «quiet, decently dressed man with attentive and at the same time elusive eyes». In an earlier version of the novel he was depicted as «a good looking, Frenchy man with a suit and solid shoes made in France».

The real life prototype for the belletrist Beskudnikov could have been the writer and playwright **Vladimir Mikhailovich Kirshon** (1902-1938), one of the secretaries of the RAPP in Moscow, and one of the most relentless persecutors of Bulgakov. In August 1937, Kirshon was arrested along with other former RAPP leaders, and the next year he was executed at the *Butyrka* prison in Moscow.

But in the third version of *The Master and Margarita*, on which Bulgakov worked from 1932 to 1934, the Beskudnikov character was introduced as «the chairman of the Playwrights Section of MASSOLIT». This could be an indication that his real life prototype was

Yuri Livovich Slyozkin (1885-1947). In his notebooks, under the title *Results 1928-1929*, Bulgakov wrote: «Slyozkin proudly announced his appointment as the Chairman of the Bureau of the Drama Section». Slyozkin was a novelist which Bulgakov had met in 1920 in Vladikavkaz. One year later, he had introduced Bulgakov in the literary circles of Moscow. But in 1925, this «supposed friend» would use him in a rather malicious manner as a prototype for the journalist **Alexey Vasilievich** in his novel *Девушка с гор* [Debushka s gor] or *The girl from the mountains*. In return, Bulgakov would use Slyozkin as a prototype for the elderly, patronizing and jealous writer **Likospastov** - «an unbelievable scum» - in his *Theatrical Novel*.

The poet Dvubratsky

Dvubratsky is derived from the Russian word **Двубратский** [dvubratsky], which means *two-brotherly*, but which is also used to suggest *opportunistic*. It is likely that the poet and translator **Alexander Ilich Bezymensky** (1898-1973) was the real prototype for Dvubratsky. Bezymensky means *The Nameless*, which feeds the theory of some scholars that Bezymensky could as well have been the real prototype of **Ivan Bezdomy**, the *Homeless*.

The name Bezymensky was not a pseudonym, however, it was his real name indeed. But Bezymensky was such a proletarian poet that he said: «if Bezymensky had not been my birth name, I would have taken it as a pseudonym».

In 1929, Bezymensky had written a theatre play **Выстрел** [Vystrel] or *The Shot*, which partly was a parody of Bulgakov's *Days of the Turbins*. In the 1929-1932 version of *The Master and Margarita*, the poet Dvubratsky was called **Aleksandr Ivanovich Zhitomirsky**. Zhitomir is the city, 140 km west from Kiev, where Bezymensky was born.

Boz'n George

Behind **Boz'n George**, the male pseudonym for the female writer **Natasha Lukinisha Nepremenova** in the novel, we suppose a parody of the French writer **Amandine Dupin** (1804-1876) who used the pseudonym **Georges Sand**. Sand was a 19th-century feminist, who had a nine-year relationship with the composer **Frédéric Chopin** (1810-1849). She wrote novels inspired by socialism and was politically active as a member of the *Temporary Government* in 1848, in the build-up to the *Second Republic* in France.

However, according to **Elena Sergeevna Nyurenberg** (1893-1970), Bulgakov's third wife, he would have integrated some more writers in his description of the Boz'n George character. Like, for instance, the playwright **Sofya Aleksandrovna Apraksina-Lavrinaitis** (1885-?), who used the male pseudonym **Сергей Мятёжный** [Sergey Myatezhny] or *Sergey the Rebel*. She knew Bulgakov and presented him, in 1939, a libretto for the Bolshoy Theatre.

The scenarist Glukharev

Glukharev is derived from the Russian word **глухарь** [glukhar], which is a *grouse*, a bird of the family of the *gallinaceans*.

Tamara Polumesyats

The name **Полумесяц** [Polumesyats] means *half moon*.

The novelist Zhukopov

Zhukopov is derived from the Russian word **жук** [zhuk], which means *beetle* or *bug*. According to the Russian psychologist and translator **Valery Konstantinovich Mershavka** (°1957), Mikhail Bulgakov would have found his inspiration for this character with **Alexander Gavrilovich Shlyapnikov** (1885-1937), a revolutionary of the first hours and leader of the so-called *Workers' Opposition* in the 1920s.

In 1931, he published the book *On the eve of 1917*, with his memoirs about the *Russian Revolution*. However, we have not found any second source confirming that Shlyapnikov would have been the prototype of Zhukopov.

Some movie actress in a yellow dress

In the early versions of *The Master and Margarita*, the previously mentioned novelist Zhukopov danced just «with a movie actress». It was only in 1934 that this description was changed into «some movie actress in a yellow dress». We therefore have good reasons to believe that the prototype of this movie actress was none other than **Lyubov Petrovna Orlova** (1902-1975).

Indeed, in 1934, the successful film **Весёлые ребята** [Besyolye rebyata] or *Jolly Fellows* by director **Grigory Vasilevich Aleksandrov** (1903-1983) was released in Russia, with Orlova, the director's wife, in the leading role.

The film was, of course, in black and white, but Orlova shone in a yellow dress on the poster, made by **Yosif Vasilevich Gerasimovich** (1894-1982). Two years later, the couple Aleksandrov-Orlova would make **Цирк** [Tsirk] or *The Circus*, a propagandist movie which glorified the Soviet regime, and about which you can read more in the *Context* section of the «Master & Margarita» website.



Cherdakchi

Cherdakchi is derived from the Russian word **чердак** [cherdak], which means *attic, junk room or loft*.

The writer Johann from Kronstadt

With this character Bulgakov refers to the two film scripts written by **Vsevolod Vitalyevich Vishnevsky** (1900-1951), the man who inspired him to study in depth the character of **Mstislav Lavrovich**.

In these scripts, *We from Kronstadt* (1933) and *We are the Russian People* (1937), there is a character named **Johann Ilyich Sergeev** (1829-1908), nicknamed **Father Johann**, rector of the cathedral of Kronstadt, which is not far from Saint-Petersburg. He organised many activities for the poor and was canonized by the Russian Orthodox church.

Mstislav Lavrovich

Mstislav Lavrovich is a parody to **Vsevolod Vitalyevich Vishnevsky** (1900-1951), novelist and playwright, and a rabid rival of Bulgakov.

He prevented that Bulgakov's pieces **Бег** [Beg] or *The Flight* and **Мольер** [Molière] from being performed at the *Moscow Art Theatre MKhAT*.

Klyazma

The *Klyazma* is a river in the Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod and Vladimir oblasts in Russia, a left tributary of the *Oka River*. The length of the river is 686 km.

Bulgakov situates his Perelygino at the Klyazma river bank although its actual prototype Peredelkino is situated at the other side of Moscow, in the southwest.

Dachas

A dacha is a *summer house* in the Russian countryside. The Russian custom of having a summer house originated in the first years after the construction of Saint Petersburg. The word **дача** [dacha] comes from the verb **дать** [dat'], which means *to give*. Czar **Peter the Great** (1672-1725) gave pieces of land in the countryside to highly ranked officials so that they could build a villa. By doing so, he bound his people to himself and he could extend his new city at the same time.

Until the end of the twentieth century the dacha was a coveted, but also uncomfortable possession. Living on the dacha was associated by the authorities with doing nothing and with the unproductive use of land. According to the communist ideology free time should be spent in the advancement of the socialist society and the personal development necessary to become a good citizen. But, as in many other situations, faithful officials, military officers and writers could enjoy their free time fully.

The atmosphere in a dacha during the Stalin era is extremely well depicted in the much appraised picture **Утомлённые солнцем** [Utomyonnye Solntsem] or *Burnt By The Sun* by **Nikita Sergeevich Michalkov** (°1945) from 1994, better known by its French title *Soleil Trompeur*. We can see how colonel Kotov spends a holiday with his family - his wife Maroussia, his little daughter Nadia and some grandma's, grandpa's, uncles and aunts - in their dacha in 1936.



Zheldybin

I don't know (yet) if there exists a real prototype for the writer **Zheldybin**, Berlioz' assistant in Massolit, «summoned by telephone from his sick wife's side».

Hallelujah

This charleston written by **Vincent Youmans** (1898-1946), and which Bulgakov loved very much, appears three times in the novel. On the «Master & Margarita» website you can see how the Griboedov jazz band plays *Hallelujah* in the TV-series *Master i Margarita* made by the Russian director **Vladimir Bortko** in 2005.



The famous Griboedov jazz band

With this jazz band, Bulgakov was referring to the ensemble **Московские ребята** [Moskovskiy rebyata] or *Moscow Friends*, also known as the **Aleksandr Tsfasman Jazz Band**. The band's leader **Aleksandr Tsfasman** (1906-1971) played a major role in the development of popular music in the Soviet Union since the mid-20s. In 1923, he became head of the music department of the *Griboedov Drama Studio* in Moscow.

In 1926, Tsfasman with his band recorded the very first jazz album in the Soviet Union with the song *Hallelujah*, mentioned in the previous paragraph, and he also played regularly at the restaurant *Casino* at the Triumphalnaya Square, at only a few steps from Bolshaya Sadovaya ulitsa no. 10.

One Karsky shashlik

«One Karsky shashlik! Two Zubrovkas! Home-style tripe!», a voice commands through a megaphone while the jazz band plays «Halleluja». At first, I had not planned to write an annotation about this order, until I noticed that different dishes are ordered in the Dutch, English and French translations of *The Master and Margarita* - and that they don't really correspond to Bulgakov's text. Have a look:

«*Karbonade eenmaal! Sjaslielik tweemaal! Van de haas driemaal!*» (Fondse/Prins - Dutch)

«*Chops once! Kebab twice! Chicken a la King!*» (Glenny - English)

«*One Karsky shashlik! Two Zubrovkas! Home-style tripe!*» (Pevear - English)

«*Une brochette à la kars, une! Deux vodka Zoubrovka, deux! En flacons de maîtres!*» (Ligny - French)

In the Russian source text we can read: «*Карский раз! Зубрик два! Фляки господарские*», which should be translated as: «*One Karsky shashlik! Two Zubrovkas! One Fliyaki gospodarskiye!*»

I admit, it's not easy. But today the internet offers the possibility to find out what it's all about.

Karsky shashlik is a Karsky meat spit - prepared like they do at the *Kara Sea* (which is a part of the Arctic Ocean). It's an unusual dish, because in the northern part of Siberia one expects fish dishes rather than meat.

Zubrovka is a Polish vodka with a tincture (alcoholic solution) of *Hierochloe odorata*, also called *sweetgrass* or *bison grass*. That's why it may not be imported into the United States, since sweetgrass contains, like many other gramineous or meadow plants, *coumarin*. This substance has a sweet scent, readily recognised as the scent of newly-mown hay, but it's also carcinogenic.

No wonder that the translators didn't know how to deal with *Fliyaki gospodarskye*. Because the Russians hardly know it either. On dozens of websites is asked «что же такое «**фляки господарские**» и с чем их едят?» or «*what is Fliyaki gospodarskye for heaven's sake and how do you eat it?*» The English «home-style tripe» translation by Pevear is closest to the truth. The authors of the website *www.cooking.ru* found the answer after a long search effort. It's a *soup of intestines*. To prepare it, you need: 1kg of intestines of beef, 400 grams of vegetables, 500 grams of bones of beef, 60 grams of lard, 30 grams of flower, nutmeg, red and black pepper, ginger, oregano, salt, and 50 grams of Swiss cheese. **Приятного аппетита!** [Priatnevo appetita!] or *Bon appétit!*

A handsome dark-eyed man with a dagger-like beard

The prototype for **Archibald Archibaldovich** was **Yakov Danilovich Rozental** (1893-1966), nicknamed *the Beard*. Therefore Bulgakov called him *the Pirate*.

Yakov Rozental was the manager of the restaurant of the *Hertzen House*, which was the prototype for the *Griboedov House*, and the restaurant of the *Journalists' Union* from 1925 to 1931. The Bulgakovs were acquainted with Rozental, and Bulgakov's third wife **Elena Sergeevna Nyurenberg** (1893-1970) mentioned him in her diary.

Oh, gods, my gods, poison, bring me poison!

The narrator quotes once more the words of the opera *Aïda* written by **Giuseppe Verdi** (1813-1901), which Pilatus already used in chapter 2 of the novel.

Let's not burden the telegraph wires any more

The novel is interlarded with references to works of other Russian writers. With the «burdening of the telegraph wires», Bulgakov quotes the Russian poet **Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky** (1893-1930), with whom Bulgakov had a love-hate relationship. They often played billiards together, but in 1928 Mayakovsky would join the ones who called for a ban of Bulgakov's play *Days of the Turbins*.

Mayakovsky committed suicide in 1930. Here's an excerpt from the unfinished poem Bulgakov refers to:

«...there's no need
to burden you with the lightning of my cables.»

But, as for us, we're alive!

«Yes, he's dead, dead... But, as for us, we're alive!» Here Bulgakov quotes from the novella *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* by **Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy** (1828-1910). It's from Tolstoy's late period and it is considered as one of his best works. The characters of this story had exactly the same reaction when Ivan Ilyich died: everyone who heard of it said: «Well, he's dead, but, as for me, I'm alive!»

What last name begins with «W»?

«We, Wi, Wa, Wu... Wagner?» is another reference to another literary work. This time it's the drama *Faust*, written by **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** (1749-1842). Wagner is the research assistant of doctor Faust.

Coachman

Though increasingly replaced by automobiles, horse-drawn cabs were still in use in Moscow until around 1940.

Riukhin

Through the conversation with Pushkin's statue, Bulgakov makes clear who is the prototype for Riukhin. It's **Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky** (1893-1930) who, in 1924, at the occasion of the celebration of the 125th anniversary of Pushkin's birth, wrote the poem *Jubilee* in which, at night, he lifts up Pushkin from his plinth at Tverskaya bulvar and introduces him into his thoughts on a walk through the streets of Moscow.

The quarrel between Riukhin and Ivan Bezdomny in the novel is a parody of the always changing relation between Mayakovsky and another poet, **Alexander Ilich Bezymensky** (1898-1973), who was mentioned earlier in these annotations as *The Nameless*.

Chapter 6
Schizophrenia, As Was Said



Greetings, saboteur!

Ivan uses standard terms from Soviet mass campaigns against so-called «enemies of the people». Anyone thought to be working against the aims of the ruling party could be denounced and arrested as a «saboteur».

Actually, Ivan says «**Здорово, вредитель**» [Zodorovo, vreditel], which means «*Hi, vermin*». But the translation is correct in its meaning, because the Soviets had countless synonyms to define so-called saboteurs, and **вредитель** [vreditel] or *vermin* was one of them. It was mainly used to indicate someone who worked against the regime from inside by sabotaging the machines or by messing up the production planning.

That giftless goof Sashka

This reproach from Ivan Bezdomny to Riukhin is based on the animosity between their prototypes, the poets **Alexander Illich Bezymensky** (1898-1973) and **Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky** (1893-1930), who didn't get along. At first, Mayakovsky was Bezymensky's idol, but the feeling was not reciprocated. Mayakovsky compared Bezymensky's work to «coffee made of carrots». With «carrots» he meant *chicory*, so he compares him to substitute coffee.

A typical little kulak

Кулак [kulak] is actually Russian for *fist*, but it's also the name given to rich or successful peasants in the Soviet Union. In 1930, **Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin** (1878-1953) ordered their liquidation.

After the abolishment of the serfdom in 1861 a minority of farmers in the Russian Empire succeeded in developing a prosperous and independent peasant class. The communists dashed the power and influence of these kulaks in the villages. The medium-sized farmers, the *serednyaki*, were forced to join *kolkhozy* or *collective state farms*.

Those resounding verses he wrote for the First of May

In the Russian text Bulgakov didn't write that Riukhin's verses were about the *First of May*. He wrote: «Сличите с теми звучными стихами, который он сочинил к первому числу!» or «*Compare it to those resounding verses he wrote for the first!*» So Bulgakov didn't specify which «first», which may be an explanation why the English translators **Diana Burgin** and **Katherine Tiernan O'Connor** thought that Riukhin's verses were about *New Year*.

But they were indeed verses for the *First of May*, and more in particular May 1st, 1924. With his reference to «resounding verses», Bezdomny is referring to the poem *Jubilee*, written by **Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky** (1893-1930) for the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the birthday of **Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin** (1799-1837). This poem was quite resounding indeed, as you can judge yourself here:

«Александр Сергеевич, разрешите представиться. Маяковский.»

«Aleksandr Sergeevich, let me introduce myself. Mayakovsky.»

Today we know May 1st as the globally celebrated *International Labour Day*. The date of May 1st wasn't chosen by coincidence and, contrary to what many people think, the origin of this date is not to be found in the socialist movement, but in the early years of capitalism in the United States, and more specifically in New York and Chicago. At that time, May 1st was the day on which and all existing housing contracts in New York were to be renewed. The day was known as *Moving Day*. Landlords had to notify their tenants of rent increases by February 1st, which would take effect three months later at 9 am. Tenants waited until May 1st to move, and the streets of New York would be filled with «moving vans». Mentions of May 1st as *Moving Day* in Chicago can be found as early as the 1840s. In the late nineteenth century as many as one-third of all Chicago households moved annually.

May 1st was also the day on which American companies usually finished their accounting for the year and on which labour contracts were renewed. On May 1st, 1886, trade union strikers and protesters in Chicago mounted a march, demanding an eight-hour workday. Over 400,000 workers went on strike, and the protest turned violent and deadly after police clashes. Three days later, at the so-called *Rally at Haymarket Square*, a bomb exploded, and dozens died. Three years later, on July 21st, 1889, at the first congress of the so-called *Second International* in Paris, the socialist movement in Europe decided to celebrate May 1 as *Labour Day*. The aim was to support the growing demands for an eight-hour workday worldwide. On May 1st, 1890, the first celebrations were organised in many countries.

«Soaring up!» and «Soaring down!!»

In this passage, Bezdomny clearly wants to denounce the bombastic propaganda style used by Riukhin in his poems. To illustrate that, «Soaring up and soaring down!!» sounds okay, but is a very «free» translation of what Bulgakov really wrote. In the original Russian text of the novel we read: «**Взвейтесь! да развейтесь!**», which means «*Stand up! Yes, disperse!*». Those words refer to **Взвейтесь кострами** [Vsveytes kostrami] or *Set up the bonfires*, the first *Pioneer song* written in the Soviet Union.

At a meeting of the *Central Committee* of the *Komsomol* in May 1922, **Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya** (1869-1939), the wife of **Vladimir Ilyich Lenin** (1870-1924), suggested the idea of creating *Pioneer songs*. The poet **Aleksandr Alekseevich Zharov** (1904-1984) was requested to write a song - a march - within two weeks. In his memoirs, Zharov wrote that, because of the time pressure, the writer **Dmitry Andreevich Furmanov** (1891-1926) advised him to start from something that already existed.

When he went to the Moscow *Bolshoy Theatre* to watch the opera *Faust* by **Charles Gounod** (1818-1893), Zharov took the *March of the Soldiers* from this opera as a basis for his lyrics. **Sergey Fodorovich Kaydan-Dyoshkin** (1901-1972), a music college student, «adapted Gounod's march to the Pioneers' clarions», and «the first Pioneer song was born».

A corridor, lit by blue night-lights

Again, we see a reference to *Freemasonry*. Before the *Apprentice* initiation ritual, the candidate is ushered in the «chamber of reflection», a small darkened room adjoining the *Lodge room*, usually in the basement of the temple building.

Bulgakov's interest in Freemasonry can be explained by the fact that, in 1903, **Afanasy Ivanovich Bulgakov** (1859-1907), theologian and church historian, and the father of Mikhail Afanasievich, had written an article about *Modern Freemasonry in its Relationship with the Church and the State*, which was published in the *Acts of the Theological Academy of Kiev*. Bulgakov refers more than once to Freemasonry in the novel.

A metal man

The «metal man, his head inclined slightly, gazing at the boulevard with indifference» is a description of the big statue of **Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin** (1799-1837) in Moscow. It's called the «big statue», because there are several other statues of Pushkin in Moscow. This metal man stands on Pushkin square, looking over Tverskaya ulitsa, the busiest shopping street in Moscow.

The snowstorm covers

This is the first line of *Winter Evening* (1825), one of the most most-frequently anthologized poems written by **Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin** (1799-1837).

A glass of Abrau wine in his hand

Abrau-Durso is a city in the Novorossiysk region in Russia where, since 1870, champagne and wines are produced. The vintages are situated along the Black sea coast.

It was the Russian prince **Lev Sergeevich Golitsyn** (1845-1916) who brought to Russia the recipe for champagne discovered 200 years earlier by the French Benedictine monk **Dom Pierre Pérignon** (1638-1715). He began the production of it in *Abrau Durso*. In 1889 the production of this winery won the Gold Medal at the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris in the category of *sparkling wines*.

Chapter 7
A Naughty Apartment



Stepan (Styopa) Bogdanovich Likhodeev

Лиходей [Likhodey] means *scoundrel, blackguard, villain or rogue*. To increase ambivalence, Bulgakov gives this character a Christian *patronymic* or *father's name*, since **Богданович** [Bogdanovich] comes from «**данный Богом**» [danny Bogom] or «*given by God*».

In the 1929 version of *The Master and Margarita*, this character's name is not Styopa Likhodeev, but **Garusha Pedulaev**, and its real life prototype was **Tuadzhin Peizulaev** (?-1936). Peizulaev was a lawyer whom Bulgakov knew when he lived in Vladikavkaz in the Caucasus from 1919 to 1921. He the co-author of *The Sons of the Mullah*, one of Bulgakov's very first theatre plays.

At the end of this chapter, Woland will send Likhodeev to *Yalta*. In the 1929 version, Woland sends Pedulaev to *Vladikavkaz*. In later versions Pedulaev's name changed into **Stepa Bombeev** and later into **Stepan Likhodeev**. Tuadzhin Peizulaev died in 1936 and that's probably the reason why Bulgakov, out of respect, changed Pedulaev's name into Likhodeev and sent him to *Yalta*. In the final version of *The Master and Margarita*, Likhodeev keeps one small detail from the earlier versions, however: he returns to Moscow wearing «a Caucasian fur cap and a felt cossack coat».

The situation in *Yalta* refers to *Earthquake*, a story from 1929, written by **Mikhail Mikhailovich Zoshchenko** (1895-1958) in which the hero, **Ivan Yakovlevich Snopkov**, wanders through *Yalta* in his underwear, as the result of a drinking problem. Before the earthquake mentioned in the title, Snopkov had emptied one and a half bottle of vodka, fell asleep, and was robbed of his clothes by plunderers. Such incidents actually happened after the earthquake which distressed the area of *Yalta* on September 11, 1927, by the way.

The syndrom of black tomcats and amnesia as a result of drinking port already appeared in earlier work of Bulgakov: in **Чаша жизни** [Chasha zhizni] or *The Cup of Life* (1922) and in **День нашей жизни** [Den nashey zhizni] or *Days of our Life* (1923).

Likhodeev's concern about the seal on Berlioz's door and a «dubious conversation» that had taken place in the apartment is an allusion to what happened to one of Bulgakov's friends, the actor **Nikolai Vasilevich Bezekirsky**. Bezekirsky was arrested and exiled to Ryazan because of «a contarevolutionary discussion in a certain house that I visited regularly». Bulgakov had received a letter from Bezekirsky on this subject in April 1929.

A big, six-storeyed, U-shaped building on Sadovaya Street

A difficult case, this sentence. And that is due to the convoluted translation of one simple Russian word: **покой** [pokoy]. Bulgakov's original text says that Styopa lived «**в большом шестиэтажном доме, покоем расположенном на садовой улице**». It can be translated as: «*in a big house of six [five] storeys, peacefully situated in Sadovaya Street*».

But the English translators **Richard Pevear** and his spouse **Larissa Volokhonsky** translated the word **покоем** [pokoyem], which means «*peaceful*», as «*U-shaped*». The Dutch translators **Marko Fondse** and **Aai Prins** obviously have read this English translation, because they also mention a «*groot, in een u-vorm opgetrokken woonblok met vijf verdiepingen*» or a «*five-storeyed, U-shaped building*».

This house is situated at the Bolshaya Sadovaya street No. 10 in Moscow. Bulgakov had been living there with his first wife **Tatyana Nikolaevna Lappa** (1892-1982), from 1921 to 1924, precisely in apartment No. 50, which is mentioned here. The building still exists, and now houses two museums commemorating Bulgakov: the *Bulgakov House* on the ground floor, and the *Museum M.A. Bulgakov* in the notorious apartment No. 50.

Obviously, the translators never saw the house on Bolshaya Sadovaya Street. Because, if they had seen it, they would have known that the building is not - and never was - «U-shaped». It's a rectangular building, with a patio in the middle. Nowadays, Bolshaya Sadovaya is a very noisy street with much traffic, but in Bulgakov's time it was a very peaceful neighbourhood. In front of the building, as on many places on the Garden Ring, there was a very broad footway with trees and bushes. So Bulgakov's words could have been accurately translated as «a big house peacefully situated in Sadovaya Street».

So why did Pevear and Volokhonsky translate **покой** [pokoy] as «U-shaped»?

According to them, the word **покой** [pokoy] has another meaning besides «peaceful». Until about 1900 the Russians used the *Church Slavonic* names to indicate the letters of the Cyrillic alphabet. And the Church Slavonic name for the letter which is now known as «*Pe*» - and written as «**П**» - was **покой** [pokoy]. So, according to the translators, the Russian text could possibly have been translated as: «a six-storeyed, П-shaped building on Sadovaya Street». Providing it was П-shaped, of course - which not.

But Pevear and Volokhonsky - convinced that the house was «П-shaped» - had a problem, since the letter «П» does not exist in the English alphabet. So they simply turned it upside down by making it a «U».

By the way, in his first translation of *The Master and Margarita*, made in 1968, the Dutch translator Marko Fondse described «a big house of five storeys, peacefully situated in Sadovaya Street». It was only after the publication of the English Pevear and Volokhonsky translation in 1997 that he changed the house into a «U-shaped building».

The French translators and the English translator **Michael Glenny** did not translate the word **покой** [pokoy] at all, as if it wasn't in the source text.

One more observation: when I was comparing the various translations of *The Master and Margarita*, I noticed that the Dutch translator counted *five* storeys, and the English translator counted *six*. In Bulgakov's text it's **шестиэтажном** [shestiyetazhnom] or *six storeys*. The English and French translators take this literally and write about six storeys too. This confusion is due to the fact that in Russia the *ground floor* is considered as the *first floor*. So the building has six floors: five storeys and the ground floor.

Anna Frantsevna de Fougeray

The name **de Fougeray** must sound odd in Russian ears, because **фужер** [fougèré] means *wine glass* in Russian. A real jeweller with a similar name lived in Russia, however: **Peter Carl Fabergé** (1846-1920).

Fabergé was a third generation Russian operating the jewelry store which his father had founded in 1870 in Saint-Petersburg. He opened points of sales in Moscow, Odessa, Paris and London. His craftsmen made many lavishly-decorated objects, but became famous all over the world with the imperial *Easter Eggs* which were very popular with the last two czars, from 1881 to 1917.

A far relative of the real jeweler, **A. P. Fabergé**, lived in Prechistenka street no. 13, where some of Bulgakov's friends lived later. Bulgakov was a frequent visitor of this house after he had started living in Moscow. The candleholder and the staircase in the novel are probably based on examples he had seen there.

Belomut

I don't know (yet) if there exists a real prototype for the **Belomut** character. In an earlier version of *The Master and Margarita*, with the working title *The Great Chancellor*, he was called with his full name **Mikhail Grigoryevich Belomut**.

On a day off

During the first *Five-year Plan* - an ambitious plan introduced by **Josef Vissarionovich Stalin** (1878-1953) to collectivize the Russian economy completely - the Soviet government experimented a few times with the calendar.

In 1929, a radical change took place. On August 26, the *Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union* issued a decree to abolish both the official *Gregorian calendar* - installed by Lenin - and the *Julian calendar* - which was still used by the Russian Orthodox Church. They wanted to introduce a new calendar, in which the weeks were changed and the earlier religious holidays were replaced by days off related to the Revolution.

This **Советский революционный календарь** [Sovietsky revolyutsionny kalendar] or *Soviet revolutionary calendar*, ncommonly referred to as the *Eternal Calendar*, had to be effective on October 1, 1929. A week had five days and there were six weeks in a month, leaving 12 months of 30 days, or 72 weeks of 5 days, plus five holidays with a revolutionary name, not the name of a normal weekday. The main purpose of the Eternal calendar was to increase productivity because the days off were spread out. The workers were divided into five groups, indicated by a color (yellow, pink, red, purple, green), and each group had its own day off, without taking into account that this could cause problems for family life. But

productivity would also seem to suffer because the machines were running continuously, so there was no time to properly maintain them. A bizarre side effect was also the fact that the Soviet Union would have been the only country with 30 days in February.

But the Russians once again showed that they had great adaptability. Just as they continued to count in rubles when the chervonets was the official currency in the Soviet Union, they used the Eternal calendar only to schedule their working days, and they continued to follow the old calendar in their daily lives.

People began to disappear

Here, as throughout *The Master and Margarita*, Bulgakov treats the everyday Soviet phenomenon of *disappearances* (arrests) and other activities of the secret police **NKVD** in the most vague, impersonal and hushed manner.

The main example is the arrest of the master himself in Chapter 13, which passes almost without mention.

Bozhedomka Street

This street is now called *Dostoevsky Street*. In Bulgakov's Russian tekst we read **Божедомка** [Boszhedomka] or *Hospice Street*. A *hospice* is an institution, usually with a homely atmosphere, specialised in terminal care. But the name *boszhedomka* was also used for a place in a cemetery where the poor, the beggars, the orphans and the people who died a violent death were buried.

Aspirin

In the original Russian text, Styopa is asking for a **пирамидона** [pyramidon]. Pyramidon is a medicine against pain and fever similar to aspirin.

Here I am!

Bulgakov quotes: «**Вот и я!**» [Vot i ya!] or «*Here I am!*», which are the exact words said by the devil Mephistopheles - «Me voici!» - when he first appeared to Faust in the opera *Faust*, written by the French composer **Charles Gounod** (1818-1895).

«Here I am!» was also one of the first working titles which Bulgakov had in mind while he was writing *The Master and Margarita*.

the dacha of the sketch-writer Khustov in Skhodnya

Сходня [Skhodnya] is a suburb north of Moscow.

The prototype of the sketch-writer **Khustov** is probably **Karl Bernhardovich Radek** (1885-1939), whose real name was **Karol Sobelsohn**. Radek was born in *Lemberg* in what was then Austria-Hungary, and which is now the city of *Lviv* in Ukraine. He played a major role in the organisation of the international communist movement, and even became secretary of the *Comintern* or the *Third International* in 1920. He also worked for the newspapers *Pravda* and *Izvestia*.

Woland calls Khustov «a bastard, a squabbler, a trimmer and a toady». This refers to the fact that Karl Radek was sentenced to a rather mild punishment at the *Second Moscow Show Trial* in January 1937 because he had made incriminating statements about, among others, **Nikolay Ivanovich Bukharin** (1888-1938), who was later tried at the *Third Moscow Show Trial* in March 1938. As a result of Radek's testimony, Bukharin would be sentenced to death and executed.

Later, the wife of Bukharin, **Anna Mikhailovna Larina** (1914-1994), wrote her memoirs under the title **Незабываемое** [Nezabyvaemoye] or *Unforgettable*, translated in English in 1991 with the title *This I Cannot Forget: The Memoirs of Nikolai Bukharin's Widow*. In this work we learn that Karl Radek had a dacha in Skhodnya.

You can read a full description of the Khustov character in the *Characters* section of the «Master & Margarita» website.



the lady Styopa had wanted to kiss

This lady is not clearly described in the final version of *The Master and Margarita*. It is only said that «she was in radio, maybe not». In *The Prince of Darkness*, one of the earlier versions of *The Master and Margarita*, however, we read that Khustov has kissed a lady who was «not the wife of Khustov», and that she «stayed in a neighboring dacha».

That could be a reference to the writer and correspondent of *Izvestia* **Larissa Michailovna Reisner** (1895-1926). Karl Radek was married and had a daughter, but it was generally known that Reisner was his mistress.

Professor of black magic Woland

Woland introduces himself to Styopa with a German name for *Satan*, which appears in the old Faust legends in several variants, such as **Woland**, **Faland** or **Wieland**.

Some see Woland as a parody on **Josef Vissarionovich Stalin** (1878-1953), the leader of the Soviet Union from 1924 to 1953, who committed his greatest atrocities in the 30s, when Bulgakov was writing *The Master and Margarita*. There are similarities indeed. Just as Stalin saved Bulgakov while he eliminated others unconditionally, Woland saves the master while he punishes others. In 1899, Stalin was banned from the Russian Orthodox seminar of Tbilisi, just like Satan, as a fallen angel, was banned from heaven.

The name Woland is very un-Russian. It's a variant of the devil's name in the drama *Faust* written by **Johan Wolfgang von Goethe** (1749-1842): the knight **Voland** or **Faland**.

You can read a comprehensive description of Woland in the *Characters* section of the «Master & Margarita» website.



Findirector

Финдиректор [findirektor] is a typical Soviet contraction for *financial director* - the Soviet language was interspersed with such expressions: *Nakompros*, *Komsomol*, *Gulag*, *agitprop* and many more. In *The Master and Margarita*, Bulgakov invented more of such contractions and acronyms, such as *Massolit* and *Dramlit*, to ridicule this practice.

Rimsky

Grigory Danilovich Rimsky is the financial manager of the *Variety Theatre*. **Римский** [Rimsky] means *Roman* in Russian. His name comes from the Russian composer **Nikolay Andreevich Rimsky-Korsakov** (1844-1908), who wrote the famous *Flight of the Bumblebee* from the opera *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* (1899-1900) and the symphonic suite *Sherazade* (1888).

Ironically enough, the financial director of the *Variety Theatre*, with his rational mind and an opponent of the black magic sceances, has the same name as the composer who put pa-

gant legends and folklore into music, such as *May Night* (1880) and *Night on Bald Mountain* (1886), a symphonic poem that he finished for **Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky** (1839-1881).

For trivia: in Vladimir Bortko's TV-series **Мастер и Маргарита** [Master i Margarita] from 2005, the orchestra of the *Variety Theatre* plays Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sherazade* at the beginning of Woland's show.

An enormous wax seal

A seal on the door was, in general, the sign that someone had been arrested and his possessions had been sealed for further investigation. That is why Styopa is afraid of some dubious conversation he had with Berlioz «on some unnecessary subject».

Styopa immediately assumes that Berlioz has been arrested, hence his «disagreeable thoughts» about whether he may have compromised himself with the editor and thus be in danger of arrest himself.

Voronezh

Воронеж [Voronezh] is a big city in the south of Russia, not far from Ukraine. In the period that Bulgakov was working on *The Master and Margarita* it underwent an explosive expansion, growing from 120.000 people (1926) to 345.000 (1939). And the growth would not stop, because today there are some 850.000 people living in Voronezh.

Azazello

Bulgakov adds an Italian ending to the Hebrew name **Azazel**, a demon who lives in the wilderness.

In the Old Testament apocryphal *Book of Enoch* Azazel was the leader of the **grigori**, a group of fallen angels who mated with mortal women, giving rise to a race of giants, known as the **Nephilim**.

Azazel is particularly noteworthy among the grigori because it was he who taught men how to make weapons of war, as well as teaching women how to make and wear cosmetics. Eventually, Azazel's teachings created such iniquity that God decided to destroy all life on Earth with *Noah's Flood*.

Thanks to Azazel, women learned the «sinful art» of painting their faces, so it is clear why, in Chapter 19, he delivers the cream which has the effect of making Margarita young again.

Yalta

The city of **Ялта** [Yalta] is located on the southern coast of the *Crimean Peninsula* on the Black Sea. The city is known by the *Yalta Conference*, which took place in February 1945. That meeting place was chosen because **Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin** (1878-1953) refused to travel farther than the Black Sea Resort. The spheres of influence of the United States and the Soviet Union after the war were decided upon in Yalta in 1945. Those spheres of influence would last for about 45 years.

Chapter 8
The Combat between the Professor and the Poet



Stravinsky's hospital

The prototype of Doctor Stravinsky's hospital, where Ivan meets the master for the first time was the *Khimki City Hospital No. 1* in the northern part of Moscow. It was built in 1907, originally as a dacha for business man and benefactor **Sergei Pavolvich Patrikeev** (1867-1914).

The house was designed by the famous architect **Frantz Schechtel**, pseudonym of **Fyodor Osipovich Shechtel** (1859-1926), who had also designed the *Moscow Art Theatre MKhAT* in 1902, and who designed many more remarkable buildings in Moscow.

You can read a comprehensive description of the hospital in the *Locations* section of the «Master & Margarita» website.



The Metropol

The **Metropol** hotel was built between between 1899 and 1903 by the British architect **William Walcot** (1874-1943). This posh art-nouveau hotel is decorated with mosaics by **Mikhail Aleksandrovich Vrubel** (1856-1910). The construction was financed by the merchant and entrepreneur **Savva Ivanovich Mamontov** (1841-1918), who wanted to build a cultural center.

Walcot applied to the open contest with a draft codenamed **Женская головка** [Zhenskaya golovka] or *A Lady's Head*, earning the fourth prize and losing to **Lev Nikolaevich Kekushev** (1862-1917/1919?). However, Mamontov discarded the professional jury decision, and awarded the design to Walcot, while Lev Kekushev would later join the team as a project manager. More than once, Walcot's original plans were changed in the process. In fact, there is little common between the extant building and its 1899 draft.

They got out of Ivan decidedly everything about his past life

Again, we see a reference to *Freemasonry*. Before a candidate is allowed to be initiated as an *Apprentice*, he is subjected to a thorough examination, similar to the one Ivan Bezdomny goes through, when he is questioned «about Uncle Fyodor, who had done some hard drinking in Vologda». At that Masonic interview, the candidate will not see any of the Masons, except for the questioners. Only later he will meet the *Grand Master*. In the novel, the ques-

tioning of Ivan is done «by three persons - two women and a man - all in white». Only after they have asked all their questions, he will meet doctor Stravinsky in person.

Chapter 9
Koroviev's Stunts



Bosoy

Nikanor Ivanovich Bosoy is chairman of the tenants' association of block 302 bis on Bolshaya Sadovaya. The quasi-official function of chairman of a tenants' association of a block attributed quite some power to the function holder. In the Soviet Union there was a permanent shortage of housing accommodation and the chairman was in an ideal position to accept bribes in exchange for preferential treatment.

Босо́й [bosoy] means *barefoot* in Russian, which points to the rural origin of the character Nikanor Ivanovich Bosoy. Bulgakov had a low opinion of those «provincials who were being kicked upstairs».

In one of the earlier versions of the novel, Bosoy was called **Nikodim Grigorevich Porot**, of whom the first name would be a direct referral to **Nikodemus**, the author of the apocryphal gospel known as *The Acts of Pilate*.

Claims to the deceased's living space

The problem of housing in the Soviet Union is one of the recurring themes in the works of Bulgakov, not only in *The Master and Margarita*, but also, for example, in his novella *Heart of a Dog* and in many feuilletons, letters and diary excerpts.

Shortly after the Russian revolution, **Vladimir Ilyitch Ulyanov** (1870-1924), better known as **Vladimir Lenin**, drafted a plan to expropriate and resettle private apartments, and conceived the idea of the *communal apartment*. Private ownership of houses was abolished in 1918. New laws came into effect governing who could live where, and they were applied by tenants associations headed by a chairman. Many of them were, like Nikanor Ivanovich Bosoy, uneducated, incompetent law-abiding folks who, despite their lack of competencies, had quite some power in their quasi-official function. This situation made life quite uncertain. When an occupant was absent for six weeks, he could be deported. There were cases of people who went traveling for a couple of weeks, and found that, upon their return, new residents had settled in their apartments. Quite often, these new residents had granted a «favour» to the chairman of the tenants association.

A very lively example of how it worked can be seen in the movie picture *Doctor Zhivago* (1965), directed by **David Lean** (1908-1991) and based on the famous novel by **Boris Leonidovich Pasternak** (1890-1960). When doctor **Yuri Andreevich Zhivago** returns to Moscow after the war, his mansion now houses 13 families.

Of supernatural speed

The news of Berlioz's death spread with «a sort of supernatural speed». In chapter 1 Bulgakov described horn-rimmed glasses «of a supernatural size». Bulgakov makes many little

jokes about the Soviet government's habit to exaggerate, especially when it was about its own realizations.

Meat dumplings

The English translation of **Richard Pevear** and **Larissa Volokhonsky** provides «the description of the theft of some meat dumplings». In the original text the word **пельменей** [pelmeni] is used. *Pelmeni* are Russian, originally Siberian meat dumplings, sometimes called *Siberian ravioli*. They would be made in large quantities and frozen (originally outside) to be boiled later.

A little checkered jacket, a jockey's cap, and a pince-nez

Koroviev's costume here recalls that of the devil who appears to **Ivan Fyodorovich Karamazov** in *The Brothers Karamazov* written by **Fyodor Michailovich Dostoevsky** (1821-1881).

Today I'm an unofficial person, and tomorrow, lo and behold, I'm an official one!

This is meant both as an indication of the chaos of Soviet life and as a nod to **Nikolai Vasilyevich Gogol** (1809-1852): in his novel *Overcoat* a major character, the communal officer **Akaky Akakiyewich Bashmatskin** is known only as an unimportant person who becomes important just because he's got a new overcoat.

Let's say it's Koroviev

Koroviev makes clear that his name is not important, merely tentative, just like Woland's nationality. And that agitates the good Soviet citizens, because it's very non-Russian.

These foreign tourists

In the original Russian text, the term **Интурист** [Intourist] is used. The word *Intourist* is short for **Иностранный Турист** [Inostranny Tourist] or *Foreign Tourist*, which was an organisation in the Soviet Union that served as a travel agency, but also as a branch of the secret service **NKVD** to keep an eye on «dangerous» foreigners.

Intourist was created in 1929 by **Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin** (1878-1953). After the collapse of the Soviet Union it was privatized. It is now property of the Moscow based

company *Sistema*, and it's one of the most important tourist organisations in the world with a huge network of banks, hotels and exchange offices.

But where are the witnesses?

Pilate makes a similar comment to Kaifa in Chapter 2.

Messire

As is the case with Pilate, who is to be addressed as *Hegemon*, there is an appropriate way to address Woland. *Messire* is a French honorific used for *lords* and *priests*.

Speculating in foreign currency

The currencies of the Soviet Union (the official *chervonets* and the non-official *ruble*) were not convertible currencies, and the government therefore had a great need for foreign currency for trade purposes. Soviet citizens were forbidden to possess foreign currency. Speculating in currency could even be a capital offence.

The portrait of some old man

Bulgakov describes the 100-dollar bills with the picture of **Benjamin Franklin** (1706-1790), political theorist, scientist, inventor, civic activist, statesman, satirist, and one of the *Founding Fathers* of the United States of America.

Timofei Kondratyevich Kvastsov

Kvastsov lives in apartment 11 of Bolshaya Sadovaya 302-bis. We know that when Koroviev uses his name to turn in Bosoy to the secret police. Just to be on the safe side, they arrest Kvastsov as well. Kvastsov's name comes from **квасцы** [kvastsji], which is *alum*, the substance used in styptic pencils to disinfect cuts and stop bleeding.

Chapter 10
News From Yalta



The Variety Theatre

The **Театр Варьете** [Teatr Varyete] or *Variety Theatre* is a fictitious building. Bulgakov based it on the *Moscow Music Hall* from the 20's, which was situated on Triumfalnaya square where the *Satire Theatre* is now located, at only a few steps of the *Bulgakov House* on Bolshaya Sadovaya number 10.

In the first versions of *The Master and Margarita*, the *Variety Theatre* had a different name: it was then called **Театр Кабае** [Teatr Kabare] or *Cabaret Theatre*.

You can read a comprehensive description of the Variety Theatre in the *Locations* section of the «Master & Margarita» website.



Vareukha

The name Vareukha is derived from the word **варение** [varenie], which means *to brew*. Vareukha is also the name of an Ukrainean cocktail made of honey, berries and spices boiled in vodka. It was the favourite drink of the *Cossacks*.

Unlike the Russians, who insist on chilled vodkas, the Ukrainians generally prefer warm brandies and vodkas, which as they so quaintly put it «create a carnation bloom right inside your stomach». For centuries, vareukha was the favored tippie of the fearsome Cossacks, «fueling their warrior bodies by day and making them merry by night».

A super-lightning telegram

In the Russian text «**Сверхмолния вам. Распишитесь**» is written It means: «*Super-lightning for you. Sign.*» The word «telegram» is not mentioned, because the Russians know what a *Super-lightning* is.

In the Soviet Union, and certainly in the Stalin era, it was common to portray the state organisations, and thus the telegraph services as well, in an exaggerated positive way. Bulgakov didn't need to change much to parody it. *Super-lightning* was only a little step more than the term *Lightning* which was actually used by the postal services to describe a telegram. Vareukha will see a lightning soon anyhow.

A false Dimitri - the Yalta impostor

An *impostor* is a person who illegally takes on the authority or possessions of another. Russia has known three such impostors in the so-called **Смутное время** [Smutnoye Vremya] or *Time of Troubles*.

The *Time of Troubles* is the period from 1604 to 1613, which was the most turbulent period in Russia's history before the Russian revolution. After the death of czar **Fyodor I Ivanovich** (1584-1598), the feeble-minded son of czar **Ivan the Terrible** (1530-1584), it was **Boris Godunov** (1551-1605), Fyodor's father-in-law, who became czar in 1598. Another son of Ivan the Terrible, **Dimitri Ivanovich** (1581-1591), had died seven years before from a mysterious stab wound when he was ten years old.

After that, three «false Dimitri's» have presented themselves. The first one was **Grigori Otrepyev** († 1606) who was in fact an ambitious monk. He actually succeeded, with support of the Polish, the Cossacks and the peasants, to become czar **Dimitri I** on June 30, 1605. Less than one year later he was killed.

In 1608, a second false Dimitri made attempt to appoint a Polish-minded czar in Moscow, with the support of the Polish, the Germans and the Cossacks. When an important part of his army of 100.000 troops changed their alliegence from Russia to the king of Poland **Sigismund III** (1566-1632), he ran away. His real name was never known but it is believed that he was the son of a priest or a converted Jew. He was called *the Thief of Tushino*.

The third false Dimitri, who was supposed to be a *dean* named **Sidorka**, declared himself czar **Dimitri Ivanovich II** on March 28, 1611, with support of the Swedish, and he also managed to get support of some Cossacks in 1612. But the Cossacks created havoc in the neighbourhood of Moscow, and he was arrested on May 18, 1612, and executed by the commanding officers in Moscow.

The false Dimitri's were also called *Pseudo-demetrius* (Latin), *Lzhedmitri* (misleading Dimitri) or *Dimitri Samozvanets* (Dimitri, the self-declared ruler).

The *Time of Troubles* ended on February 21, 1613, with the election of czar **Michael Fyodorovich Romanov** (1596-1645), the first czar of the *Romanov dynasty*, the rulers over Russia until the 1917 revolution. The abdication of **Tsar Nicholas II** on March 15, 1917, as a result of the February Revolution would end 304 years of Romanov rule, establishing the Russian Republic under the *Russian Provisional Government* that soon led to the *Russian Civil War*. In 1918, the czar and his family were executed by the *Bolsheviks* and the 47 survivors of the *House of Romanov's* 65 members went into exile abroad.

Rocks, my refuge...

«*Starrender Fels, mein Aufenthalt...*» or «*Thundery rocks, my refuge...*» are words from *Aufenthalt* (Refuge), the song no. 5 of the collection *Schwanengesang* (Swan-song), written

by **Franz Schubert** (1797-1828). The lyrics were written by **Ludwig Rellstab** (1799-1860), and were inspired by the drama *Faust*, written by **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** (1749-1842).

Take it there personally. Let them sort it out.

«Now that is really clever!» thought Varenuška when Rimsky gave these orders. It's another oblique reference to the secret police. By now the reader should recognize the technique.

Mister's busy

In the Russian text the word *Mister* is not used. But the translation is quite accurate. Varenuška asks to speak to Woland, and the answer is: «**Они заняты**» - «*They are busy*», in plural form.

Woland's retinue often uses the plural form to refer to him. It was a somewhat archaic means of showing respect, like the French form «vous», the English form «thou» or the *majestic plural* «we». It wasn't used anymore in Russia after the Revolution. After all, all the inhabitants of the Soviet Union were equal, so no courtesy formulas suggesting a class difference should be used. Which did not mean that everyone was treated equally, but a reader of «The Master and Margarita» knows that very well.

A new Georgian tavern in Pushkino

Pushkino is a town situated 29 km from Moscow, and known for its many *dacha*'s. There was a summer theatre where **Anton Pavlovich Chekhov** (1860-1904) rehearsed with the *Moscow Art Theatre MKhAT*.

In the original Russian text we don't read anything about a *Georgian restaurant*, because the place is mentioned by its typical name **чебуречная** [cheburechnaya]. A *cheburechnaya* is a tavern or restaurant specialised in **чебуреки** [chebureks], a kind of very tasty folded Caucasian pancakes filled with meat.

In the English translation by **Michael Glenny** and in the Dutch translation by **Marko Fondse**, the *Yalta* in Pushkino is described as *a Turkish restaurant*. In the French translation by **Claude Ligny** it was called by its real name: *une tchebouretchnaïa*.

The cheburechnaya *Yalta* in Pushkino actually existed. In a newspaper advertisement from that time, the restaurant described itself as the **лучший загородный ресторан** [luchshy zagorodny restoran] or *the best country restaurant*.

Comr... citiz...

Varenuvka can't decide how to address his attackers. Forms of address are significant in the Soviet Union. Soviets were addressed as *comrades* unless they were suspected of a crime, in which case they became *citizens*.

A completely naked girl - red-haired

The woman with the red hair is **Hella**, a vampire. Her words «come let me give you a kiss» are reminiscent of the woman-vampire in the story **Упырь** [Uпыr] or *The Vampire*, written in 1841 by **Aleksei Konstantinovich Tolstoy** (1817-1885), nephew of the better known **Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy** (1828-1910). That woman-vampire kisses one of the heroes and turns him into a vampire.

Hella is a female vampire. From Bulgakov's annotations we know that Bulgakov found her name in the **Энциклопедический словарь Брокгауза и Ефрона** [Entsiklopedesky slovar Brokhauza i Efrona] or the *Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary*, a work containing 86 volumes, which can be considered as the Russian equivalent for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Under the keyword **Чародейство** [Charodeystvo] or *magic* or *witchcraft*, he found that **Empuza**, **Lamia** and **Hella** were the names given on the Greek island of *Lesbos* to premature girls who became vampires after their death.

In the earlier versions of *The Master and Margarita*, however, this **рыжая голая** [ryzhaya golaya] or *red naked* had a different name. She was called **Marta**.

The Russian psychologist and translator **Valery Konstantinovich Mershavka** (°1957) believes that this Marta was inspired by **Sofia Lvovna Perovskaya** (1853-1881). Perovskaya was a prominent member of the socialist revolutionary organisation **Народная воля** [Narodnaya Volya] or *The Will of the People*, and she participated in three attempts to murder **Tsar Alexander II** (1818-1881). The last attempt was successful, after which Perovskaya was sentenced to death by hanging. This way of executing could explain the **багровый шрам** [bagrovy shram] or the *red scar* in Marta's - and later Hella's - neck.

Chapter 11
Ivan Splits in Two



The former Ivan and the new Ivan

In this chapter, Mikhail Bulgakov describes the split of Ivan's personality. Somewhere else in the book a diagnosis of *schizophrenia* is referenced. Today we know that people with schizophrenia suffer from no split personalities or no multiple personality disorder, but it was formerly a widely-spread idea, certainly in the 30's, which is understandable, since the word comes from the Greek words **σχίζειν** [skhizein] or *to split* and **φρένα** [frena] or *mind*. Schizophrenia was one of the most popular diagnoses when dissidents or «saboteurs» were arrested by the secret police in the Soviet Union.

In the first version of *The Master and Margarita*, Bulgakov used the term *mania furibunda* or *raving madness* to describe Bezdomy's condition. This mental illness had been described by **Franciscus Adalbertus Lux** (1805-?) of the *Faculty of Medicine* at the *Königliche Friedrich Wilhelms Universität* in Berlin, Germany, in 1827.

It's interesting to see which words Bulgakov uses in Russian to describe the «old Ivan» and the «new Ivan». The most common word in Russian to describe «old» is **старый** [stary], but Bulgakov describes the «old Ivan» as **ветхий** (vetkhy), which also means «old», but only used in the biblical context of the **Ветхий Завет** [Vetkhy Zavyet], or *Old Testament*.

He was already picturing a palm tree on its elephant's leg

In a previous version of the novel Ivan already dreamed of palm trees in the scene at Patriarchs' Ponds. But there he was told sternly not to sing under the palms, because «that's not what they were planted for»!

Video

The splitting process of Ivan is also shown in the four-part TV-series *Mistrz i Małgorzata* by director **Maciej Wojtyszko** from 1990. The author of this book subtitled this TV-series in English, Spanish, French, German, Italian and Dutch. The DVD with those subtitles is available in the webshop of the «Master & Margarita» website.



Chapter 12
Black Magic and Its Exposure



The title

In the Russian title of Chapter 12 the word **разоблачение** [razoblatsyenyey] is used for «*exposure*». It is composed of the preposition **раз-** [raz-], which means *out-*, and the verb **облачить** [oblachit], which means something like *dress up*. We will see that *dressing up* - and *getting undressed again* - will play an important role in this chapter.

In 1928, in the period that Bulgakov had begun writing the first version of *The Master and Margarita*, **Harry August Jansen** (1883-1955) was on tour in Moscow. He was an American artist of Danish origin, who performed the role of **Dante the Magician**. Through his make-up he resembled **Mephistopheles**, the devil from the drama *Faust* by **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** (1749-1832).

One of the places where Jansen performed was the *Music Hall* in Moscow, which was the prototype of the *Variety Theatre*. According to the audience, he looked at them «with the condescending smile of a devil-philosopher».

In 1940, Harry Jansen published *Sim-Sala-Bim, 50 Tricks For Everybody*, a programme brochure of 28 pages, in which he «exposed» several of his tricks himself.

The Giulli family

In the 30's, the **Труппа Польди** [Truppa Poldi] or the *Poldi Company* - a name used by the **Podrezov** family - displayed its bicycle tricks in the *Moscow Music Hall*. On posters from that time, the man in the yellow bowler-hat and the blond woman on a single wheel can be recognised. Bulgakov writes that the woman is wearing a **трико** [triko], the Russian transliteration of *tricot* - the first of many French words he will use in this chapter.

Where he had gone...

Of course, Rimsky knew very well where Varenuvka had gone - he had sent Varenuvka to the secret service NKVD himself to «let them sort it out» - but he doesn't even dare to think the name of the secret police to himself.

But what for?

Varenuvka did not come back from the place not mentioned. That almost obviously compels Rimsky conclude that he was arrested. But he hesitates to call, because the unmentioned secret police is not an authority whom you spontaneously contact at your own initiative. Because, one day, it could be turned against you

This certainly unpleasant, though hardly supernatural occurrence

Again Bulgakov's humor here is at the expense of the Soviet reality. Telephones, even to this day, are extremely unreliable in Russia.

A messenger came in

In the original text, Bulgakov uses again the Russian transliteration of a French word. He writes **курьер** [kuryer], from *courrier* or *messenger boy*.

The messenger's announcement makes Rimsky wince with pain. Not only must he allow the performance of a black magic show that he didn't approve of in the first place, he also knows that he is the only one left to greet the foreign artist.

He turns «blacker than a storm cloud» - a foreshadowing of the upcoming scene in which money rains down from the ceiling - and heads backstage to welcome the foreigner.

Bengalsky

The Bengalsky character is a symbol for the «political educators» who took an active part in Soviet society - Mikhail Bulgakov hated them, so Bengalsky is promptly decapitated.

The Bengalsky character is based on **Vladimir Ivanovich Nyemirovich-Danchenko** (1858-1943), one of the directors of the *Moscow Art Theatre MKhAT*. Bulgakov called him an «old cynic». He was longing to show his novel to this «philistine».

In his *Theatrical Novel*, Bulgakov presented this Vladimir Ivanovich on the bank of the river *Ganges*. Maybe that's an explanation for the name Bengalsky.

The decapitation of Bengalsky may have been inspired by a scene from *Metamorphoses*, also known as *The Golden Ass*, by the Romanized Berber **Lucius Apuleius Madaurensis** (123 BC-80 BC). *Metamorphoses* is the only Latin novel that has been preserved in its entirety. The witch Moreya slashes off the head off of one of the characters, Socrates, and then puts it back intact.

An armchair

Woland's position in the theatre is in a seat while he is watching the audience, which is a reversal of what we could expect. And indeed, the Muscovites in the audience end up putting on more of a show than Woland himself.

The checkered clown

Bulgakov described a **клетчатого гаера** [kletchatogo gayera] or a *checkered gaillard*, which is again a Russian transliteration of a French word. Originally, the word *gaillard* refers to a *renaissance dance* and the associated music, but it is also used for «a guy», «a fellow» or «a strapper»: a (young) man full of vigor, strength and health.

What do you think, the Moscow populace has changed significantly, hasn't it?

While this statement normally would not be considered offensive, in the Soviet Union under Stalin it was a very subversive question to ask. According to the Communist Party line, the people of the Soviet Union had entered into the *utopia of Communism*. The people living in it were *new Soviet men and women*.

The *Homo soveticus* was a quite different species from any other human being on earth. They worked harder, knew more and were happier than anyone else. For Bulgakov to claim otherwise was dangerous.

Trams, automobiles...

While it appears that Woland is answering the question seriously and thoughtfully, Bulgakov does little to veil his sarcasm. In the author's diary entry of August 9, 1924, he writes that they have introduced buses in Moscow, but that there are very few of them. On December 20-21, 1924 he writes: «They're working out a new traffic scheme... But there is no traffic, because there are no trams. And it's laughable, but there are only eight buses for the whole of Moscow».

Knowing how much Bulgakov cursed the public transportation system in Moscow, one can only imagine the sarcasm he intended in these lines. Woland seems to be saying that while the city appears to have changed outwardly (and no doubt, the authorities praise these fine improvements in public transportation), there really are no significant changes for the better. Meanwhile, Grigory Rimsky grows pale and tense, fearing what Woland might say next.

If it weren't for poker

Poker, like other card games, was looked upon with sorrow by the Soviets. This changed dramatically after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Moscow, and other cities as well, swarms with casino's. At the end of 2006 some of them were closed because they were connected to the Georgian mafia.

Behemoth

In the biblical Book Job 40:10-19 a huge monster, in Hebrew called **בהמות**, [behemot] is described. Bible translators didn't know which way to go with this word for a long time because they didn't know any beast with «a tail like a cedar and an enormous power in his abdominal muscles and loins». Some chose for an *elephant*, others for a *hippopotamus* but they all knew that neither of these could be accurate. That's why English translators leave the word *Behemoth* as it is.

Бегемот [Begemot] is also Russian for *hippopotamus*. In Chapter 17, the pretty **Anna Richardovna**, the secretary of **Prosha Prokhor Petrovich**, describes Behemoth as «a tomcat, black, big as a hippopotamus».

In circles of devil experts, Behemoth is the devil of the *desires of the stomach*. It could explain why he's so interested in the food at the currency store *Torgsin* in Chapter 28.

According to Bulgakov's second wife **Lyubov Evgenevna Belozerskaya** (1895-1987) the prototype for Behemoth was their own pet **Flyushka**, a big grey cat.

By God, they're real! Ten-rouble bills!

The English translators of *The Master and Margarita* - just like their Dutch and French colleagues - obviously missed some of Bulgakov's satire here. Because they translated this sentence as follows:

- «By God, they're real! Ten-rouble bills!» joyful cries came from the gallery.

In the original Russian text though, Bulgakov did not use the word *roubles*, he described another monetary unit from the Soviet period, the *chervonets*. A correct translation would have been:

- «By God, they're real! Chervontsy!» joyful cries came from the gallery.

Bulgakov never uses the term *ten-rouble bills* in *The Master and Margarita*. He always writes **червонец** [chervonets] or its plural **червонцы** [chervontsy], which gives a complete other dimension to the question concerning the bills being «real or some sort of magic ones». The chervonets was indeed the new official monetary unit introduced by the Soviet government in 1922 to stop the hyperinflation and restrain chaos in the money standard resulting from the civil war. It became and remained the official currency in the Soviet Union until 1947.

However, the Soviet regime did not dare to abolish the rouble. For 25 years, the country had two currencies: the official chervonets - distrusted by everyone - and the «good old rouble». There was, however, no exchange rate between the two currencies, and officially only the chervonets could be used.

In *The Master and Margarita*, Bulgakov more than once criticises the use of the chervonets. In Chapter 18, the *chervontsy* that fell from under the cupola into the theatre transform into cut-up paper, in labels of Narzan mineral water, in labels of Abrau-Durso wine, or in foreign currency. Such strange things happen only to chervontsy, never to roubles. Still in chapter 18, the taxi-driver at the *Variety Theatre* only wants to take **Vasily Stepanovich Lastochkin** as a passenger if he pays with **Трешки** [treshki] or *three-roubles bills*. He accepts only «good, solid roubles», not chervontsy. Soviet citizens just didn't trust this currency imposed on them by the authorities.

It's a pity that translators of *The Master and Margarita* almost without exception translate the word **червонец** [chernovets] by *ten-rouble bill* because, by doing so, they miss an essential part of Bulgakov's satire on the subject of money in the Soviet Union.

You can read much more on *roubles* and *chervontsy* in the *Context* section of the «*Master & Margarita*» website.



Avec playzeer

Again, Bulgakov is using Cyrillic transliterations of French words. In the Russian text, we can read **Авек плезир** [Avek plezir], the Cyrillic transliteration of the French *Avec plaisir*, which means *joyfully*. A little further in the text, Bulgakov uses the word **бельэтаж** [beletazh], the transliteration of the French *bel étage*, to refer to the theatre's *mezzanine*, but the English reader won't know this, since **Richard Pevear** and **Larissa Volokhonsky** translated it as the *dress circle*.

Capricious notes

Here's another transliteration of a French word: in the Russian text, Bulgakov writes **капризные бумажки** [kapriznye bumazhki] or *capricious pieces of paper*.

Why would Bulgakov pepper the show of Woland and his retinue with so many foreign words, particularly from the French? And how is Woland, the «visiting professor from Germany», able to address the Muscovites in their native tongue with no perceivable accent (except when he chooses to speak with one of them)?

The answer is clear. Woland, after all, is the devil, so he is able to speak in any language and appeal to any group of people in their native tongue. John 8:44 reads: «You belong to your

father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire... When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies».

Woland uses French exclamations and forms of address with the spectators at the *Variety Theatre*, because French is seductive and is the language of high society. He employs this pretentious use of the language to appeal to the vanity of Muscovites and to their desire to be held in that light.

Marred by a queer scar on her neck

Gretchen, the Margarita from *Faust*, the drama written by **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** (1794-1832) had exactly the same mark as Hella in the scene on *Walpurgis Night*.

Guerlain, Chanel No. 5, Mitsouko, Narcisse Noir

Obviously, Parisian clothing and perfumes would have been completely inaccessible to the average Soviet woman. The incomprehensible but seductive words of the perfume brands are all phonetically written in Russian letters. In the Russian text Bulgakov writes about **Герлэн, шанель номер пять, мицуко, нарсис нуар** which are, again, the Russian transliterations of the famous French brands *Guerlain*, *Chanel No. 5*, *Mitsouko* and *Narcisse Noir*.

Bulgakov chooses the perfumes deliberately, not simply naming well-known fragrances but rather selecting ones that have a connection to Russia. The first one mentioned, *Guerlain*, is from a famous French perfume house named after **Pierre-François Pascal Guerlain** (1798-1864), the preferred perfumer of all the courts in Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century. The founder of the company earned the prestigious French title of *Parfumeur breveté de sa Majesté*, which led him to create perfumes for, among others, **Queen Victoria** (1819-1901) of England, **Queen Isabella** (1830-1904) of Spain, and **Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich** (1878-1918) of Russia, the youngest son of **Alexander III** (1845-1894).

Mitsouko, created in 1919 by **Jacques Guerlain** (1874-1963), the grandson of the founder of the perfume house *Guerlain*, is said to have been inspired by the name of the heroine of the novel *La Bataille* (The Battle), written by **Claude Farrère** (1876-1957) in 1909. It is the story of an impossible love between **Mitsouko**, the wife of the Japanese Admiral **Togo**, and a British officer. The story takes place in 1905, during the war between Russia and Japan. Both men go to war, and Mitsouko, hiding her feelings with dignity, waits for the outcome of the battle to discover which of the two men will come back to her and become her companion for life.

The perfume *Chanel No. 5* was created by **Ernest Beaux** (1881-1961), a Russian and French perfumer born in Moscow. According to his colleagues, the *No. 5* fragrance was a remake of one of the perfumer's earlier creations called **Букет де Екатерины** [Bouquet de Cathérine]. It had been created as an homage to **Catherine the Great** (1729-1796) and re-

leased in 1913 to celebrate the three-hundredth anniversary of the rise of the Romanov dynasty. It was produced by *Rallet & Company*, the largest Russian perfume house and purveyor to the courts of Imperial Russia.

Finally, *Narcisse Noir* was created by **Ernest Daltroff** (1867-1941), the founder of the famous French perfume house *Caron*, in 1911. Daltroff was a chemist and perfumer from Russia who had been born into a wealthy bourgeois family of Russian Jews and later emigrated to France. Bulgakov's reference to this particular fragrance is wonderfully appropriate given its name, *Black Narcissus*. The colour black has an aura of the occult and the forbidden, both of which are important elements in this scene.

Narcissus was the youth from Greek mythology who fell in love with his own image reflected in a pool and wasted away from unsatisfied desire, whereupon he was transformed into the flower. In this scene, the ladies in the audience are transformed through Parisian attire from humble Soviet citizens into pretentious, vain narcissists, as the next scene demonstrates.

Arkady

The so called *Acoustics Commission of the Moscow theatres* did not actually exist. Bulgakov very probably based this institution on the **Управления театральных зрелищных предприятий (УТЗП)** [Upravleniya teatralnykh zrelishchykh predpiyaty] (UTZP) or the *Directorate for Theatre Enterprises* belonging to the **Народный комиссариат просвещения (Наркомпрос)** [Narodny komissariat prosveshcheniya] (Narkompros) or the *People's Commissariat of Enlightenment*. The Narkompros had a number of different sections to control education and arts in the Soviet Union. The UTZP, created in 1936, was meant to provide a single agency authority over all theatre troupes, estimated at approximately 900.

Bulgakov situates his Commission on **Чистые пруды** [Chistye Prudy] or *Clean Ponds*. In the Soviet era there were, indeed, three organisations responsible for guarding - and especially censoring - a variety of arts in a building along the *Clean Ponds* on Chistoprudny Boulevard no. 6. One of them was the UTZP. Another organisation located in this building was the **Главный репертуарный комитет (Главрепертком)** [Glavny repertuarny komitet] (Glavrepertkom) or the *Central Committee for Repertoires*, created in 1923, from which theatrical performances needed permission before staging a performance.

According to Bulgakov, Arkady Sempleyarov lived at the **Каменный мост** [Kamenny Most] or *Stone Bridge* in the **Дом на набережной** [Dom na naberezhnoy] or the *House on the Embankment*. In reality, a man called **Yakov Stanislavovich Ganetsky** (1879-1937) lived at this address. He was the director of the **Государственного объединения музыки, эстрады и цирка (ГОМЕЦ)** [Gosudarstvennogo obedineniya muzyki, estrady i tsirka] (GOMETs) or the *State Union for Music-Hall, Concert- and Circus Enterprises*, one of the organisations which could censor authors and playwrights.

The UTZP was under command of **Mikhail Pavlovich Arkadyev** (1896-1937) - probably the source of inspiration for Arkady Sempleyarov's first name. You can read more about the UTZP in the *Context* section of the «*Master & Margarita*» website.

According to the *Bulgakov Encyclopaedia*, the surname Sempleyarov would come from the name of a good friend of Bulgakov's, composer and director **Alexander Afanasevich Spendiarov** (1871-1928). But Spendarov was not as self-satisfied and arrogant as the Sempleyarov of the *Variety Theatre*. On the contrary, he was rather anxious and absent-minded, like the Sempleyarov we meet later in the novel, in Chapter 27, when he is summoned to come to the office of the secret police.

For the more assertive, big-headed Sempleyarov in the theatre, Bulgakov was rather inspired by the character of **Avel Sofronovich Enukidze** (1877-1937), a Georgian who, from 1922 to 1935, was chairman of the boards of the *Bolshoy Theatre* and the *Moscow Art Theatre MKhAT*. Enukidze was also member of the *Narkompros*, the *Soviet People's Commissariat for Education*, of which some departments had their offices at Chistoprudny Boulevard no. 6, where Bulgakov situated the *Acoustics Commission of the Moscow theatres*.

Enukidze was much attracted by the female beauty, and he was particularly interested in the actresses of the theatres submitted to his Commission. In June 1935 he was removed from his party functions, and in December 1937 he was sentenced and executed for terrorist acts against the native country and espionage. Together with him was sentenced and executed baron **Boris Sergeevich Steiger** (1892-1937), the prototype of the **baron Meigel** character in the novel.

Both Semplejarov's intervention in the *Variety Theatre* and the situation with the niece from Saratov affected **Vsevolod Emilevich Meyerhold** (1874-1940), an enthusiast activist of the Soviet theatre, but opponent to the *Social Realism*. He had worked in the Theatre Department of the *Narkompros* until 1922, when he started his own *Meyerhold Theatre* in Moscow. In March 1936 he would have said in a discussion that «the masses of spectators ask for an explanation».

The link with his niece is made because Meyerhold had a close relationship with the Saratov region, and because his second wife, **Zynaida Nikolaevna Raykh** (1894-1939) was twenty years younger than he. In 1939, she was found dead in their apartment, and Meyerhold was heavily tortured to make him confess that he had murdered her. He was sentenced to death and executed, probably on February 1st, 1940.

The mass of spectators demands an explanation

«The mass of spectators» is typical Soviet jargon. Sempleyarov asks his own question but he presents it like if it were the mass asking for it. «The people» or «the masses» were ostensibly in control.

The role of Louisa

Arkady's young relation refers to the character **Louisa Miller** from the play *Kabale und Liebe* (Intrigue and Love), written by the German dramatist and writer **Friedrich Schiller** (1759-1805). The play, first performed in 1784 in Frankfurt, was a fixture in the repertoires of Soviet theatres.

The rollicking words to this march

These words are Bulgakov's free adaptation of *His Excellency*, a tune from a vaudeville from 1839, written by **Dmitri Timofeevich Lensky** (1805-1860). The title of the piece was **Лев Гурыч Синичкин, или Провинциальная дебютантка** or *Lev Gurych Sinichkin, or a Provincial Debutante*.

It's the story of **Lev Gurych Sinichkin**, an old actor who desperately wants to offer a major role in the theatre to his talented daughter. But the powerful prima donna of the theatre company, a woman with a bad character and a whole network of relations, is standing in her way. After many heroic efforts and cheerful misunderstandings the old man's dream eventually comes true, and the star actress causes scandal with her patron.

This vaudeville was performed from 1924 to 1931 in Moscow at the *Vakhtangov theatre* on the Arbat, alongside the apartment that Bulgakov had described in his theatre play *Zoyka's apartment*.

In 1974, director **Alexander Arkadevich Belinsky** (1928-2014) made a TV-movie of this vaudeville - **Лев Гурыч Синичкин** [Lev Gurych Sinichkin]. The leading roles were played by **Nikolai Nikolaevich Trofimov** (1920-2005) and **Galina Georgievna Fedotova** (°1949).

In the *Videos & Music* section of the «Master & Margarita» website you can watch an excerpt of Alexander Belinsky's film in which Nikolai Trofimov performs the song *His Excellency*.



The version of that song which Bulgakov describes in *The Master and Margarita* doesn't sound exactly as in the original vaudeville.

The so-called *rollicking words of the march* are as follows - first you can read Dmitri Lensky's original words, and below Bulgakov's adaptation:

Original

*«His Excellency
calls her his own
and even patronage
renders to her.»*

Bulgakov's version

*«His Excellency reached the stage
Of liking barnyard fowl.
He took under his patronage
Three young girls and an owl!!!»*

Chapter 13
The Hero Enters



The title

The Russian title is **Явление героя** [Yavleniye geroya] which could be translated as *The apparition of the hero*. The word **Явление** [Yavleniye] or *Apparition* is often used in the Bible when Christ shows himself to the people or his disciples.

Clean-shaven...

The master is introduced as «a clean-shaven, dark-haired man of approximately thirty-eight, with a sharp nose, anxious eyes, and a wisp of hair hanging down on his forehead». Bulgakov himself was 38 years old in 1929. Some readers recognise **Nikolai Vasilyevich Gogol** (1809-1852) in this description. Gogol burned the manuscript of the second part of his novel *Dead Souls*.

Here we sit

The verb which is used by Bulgakov in the Russian text - **Сидим** [sidim] - means *we are sitting*, but is also used to say «we are in prison».

I cannot stand noise, turmoil, force, or other things like that

The master's aversion to noise and screaming almost literally repeats the words of **Wagner** in the drama *Faust*, written by **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** (1749-1842).

Yesterday in a restaurant I socked one type in the mug

Such acts of vandalism often occurred in the circles of workers and peasants in the 1920s in the Soviet Union. The authorities were very concerned about this kind of «social promiscuity», which was explained by a «lack of cultural needs» and by the low educational level of the population. Characteristic of this time was also a widespread *anti-Semitism*.

The incident in which Bezdomy was involved, was inspired by the behaviour of the poet **Sergei Alexandrovich Yesenin** (1895-1925), who has been married for a short time with the American dancer **Isadora Duncan** (1877-1927), who was 18 years old than he. Yesenin and Duncan had met each other at *The Stables of Pegasus*, a cafe located in the basement of the building at Bolshaya Sadovaya no. 10. Yesenin hit his wife repeatedly and in 1923 he was put into a psychiatric hospital. One year later he was, for reasons of drunkenness, assault and anti-Semitic incidents, banned from the restaurant of the *Herzen House*, the writers' house which was the prototype of the *Griboedov House* from *The Master and Margarita*.

You dislike my poetry?

The master dislikes Ivan's poetry without ever having read it. Bulgakov is commenting on the low quality and the unoriginal nature of accepted and published Soviet poetry. If Ivan is published and famous, it means he can't be good!

In 1936, when the working title of *The Master and Margarita* was *The Great Chancellor*, the master replied:

«*On the wide river, where the carp jumps,
over the fulness of the sun, the wind and the intensity of the fields strength,
and harmony...
did you write this?*»

Is your poetry good? «Monstrous!»

Bulgakov writes indeed **Чудовищны** [Chudivishchny] or *monstrous*. Even Ivan is aware that his officially-approved poems are no good. The first English translator of *The Master and Margarita*, **Michael Glenny** (1927-1990), got this a little wrong in 1967. He translated Ivan's reaction as «stupendous».

Currency in the ventilation, Pushkin, Kurolesov

Bulgakov again introduces a character without letting us know who he is. The explanation will follow later in the novel. In chapter 15, *Nikanor Ivanovich's dream*, **Kurolesov** is the actor who recites excerpts of *The Covetous Knight* of the Russian poet **Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin** (1799-1837).

You can read more on Kurolesov in the *Characters* section of the «Master & Margarita» website.



The critic Latunsky

The critic **Latunsky** is probably a hint at one of Bulgakov's indefatigable enemies, **Olaf Semenovich Litovsky** (1892-1971), the chairman of the **Главный репертуарный**

комитет (Главрепертком) [Glavny repertuarny komitet] (Glavrepertkom) or the *Central Committee for Repertoires*. In a debate at the *Meyerhold Theatre*, Litovsky had introduced the term **Булгаковщина** (Bulgakovshchina) or *Bulgakovism* after the first performances of Bulgakov's play *Days of the Turbins*.

Litovsky actually lived in the building at Lavrushinsky pereulok 17, which Bulgakov uses in Chapter 21 as a prototype for the *Dramlit House*. Moreover, he lived on the seventh floor, in apartment 84, exactly the apartment which Margarita will destroy in that chapter.

Mstislav Lavrovich

The Lavrovich character is a parody of **Vsevolod Vitalyevich Vishnevsky** (1900-1951), a writer and playwright who also was a Bulgakov's archrival. He prevented the production of his plays **Бер** [The Flight] and **Мольер** [Molière].

The opera «Faust»

Bulgakov mentions his favorite opera here, while elsewhere he merely uses its details, or only indirect references. But that's not enough in this situation, because Ivan obviously did not understand the hints which could have made him understand that he met the devil at Patriarchs' Ponds.

A black cap with the letter «М» embroidered on it in yellow silk

«I see, I see, Ai-yai-yai, what a thing!», Ivan rasped after hearing the master's hint to Faust. The master shows himself to Ivan both in profile and full face, to prove that he is a master. Besides, Bulgakov himself had such a cap with the letter «М» embroidered on it. His third wife **Elena Sergeevna Nyurenberg** (1893-1970) had made it for him.

In English, many people refer to the protagonist of Bulgakov's novel by writing «the Master», with a capital «М». However, throughout the novel, Bulgakov consistently writes **мастер** [master], with a small «м». Which is logical, since a capital letter would turn the common generic noun **мастер** [master] into a proper name, and the master «no longer has a name», as you will read in the next paragraph.

So, why do so many people, including scholars and translators, write «the Master»? The first reason for this misunderstanding may be the fact that the Russian title of the novel is written as **Мастер и Маргарита** [Master i Margarita], with a capital «М». But that is due solely to the fact that it is the first word of the title, since the Russian language has got no articles like «the» or «a». If Bulgakov had reversed the title, like in **Маргарита и мастер** [Margarita i master], the word **мастер** [master] would have been without a capital.

Confused? I haven't finished yet. In English, nouns, adjectives and verbs are generally capitalised in titles. Consequently, in the title of the novel and in its chapters titles, «The Master» should be capitalized, but not in the text. So, in *The Master and Margarita*, the master should be written with a small «m», except in chapters titles.

Yet, some English translators such as **Richard Pevear** and **Larissa Volokhonsky**, write «the Master» across the board, and the French translator **Claude Ligny** writes «le Maître». But other translators follow Bulgakov's logics, like the Dutch **Marko Fondse** with «de meester», the Spanish **Amaya Lacasa Sancha** with «el maestro» and the British **Michael Glenny** with «the master».

I no longer have a name

The master's name is never revealed in the novel. «I no longer have a name» also means: I lost my identity.

In the movie picture *The Master and Margareth* (1972) the Serbian film director **Aleksandar Petrović** (1929-1994) made, in my humble opinion, an unforgivable mistake by giving a name to the master. Personally I think you should not do it but, if you really want, you can watch it on the «Master & Margarita» website.

The name which Petrović gave to the master, is the name of the protagonist of *A Theatrical Novel*, one of Bulgakov's last novels, also known as *Black Snow*.

In the television series *Master i Margarita* from 2005, director **Vladimir Bortko** (°1946) also refers to this naming. In episode 8, when Behemoth returns the manuscript of the novel to the master, we see briefly, but clearly, the title page of the manuscript on which the same name is mentioned as author.

From what languages?

This dialogue is very similar to a scene from *The Count of Monte Cristo*, a novel written by the French author **Alexandre Dumas** (1802-1870), completed in 1844. **Edmond Dantès**, the main character, meets the «mad priest» **Abbé Faria** when they are both imprisoned at the *Château d'If* in the Mediterranean Sea. Faria had tried to tunnel his way to freedom but, due to wrong calculations, he ended up in Dantès' cell. The two became friends and one of the dialogues they had was the following:

(Dantès) «You are, doubtless, acquainted with a variety of languages?»

(Faria) «Yes, I speak five of the modern tongues - that is to say, German, French, Italian, English, and Spanish. And because of the aid of ancient Greek, I learned modern Greek. I don't speak it so well as I would wish, but I am still trying to improve myself.»

By the way, in the Russian text, Bezdomny asks «С **какого языка?**» or «*From what language?*», in the singular form. So he supposed the master only spoke one foreign language - which was already a feat in the Soviet Union. No wonder that he enviously whispered «Oh, my!» when he heard that there were five.

One day he won a hundred thousand roubles with a state bond

Lotteries were arranged by the Soviet government to fund various activities. One way to do this was by the emission of *state bonds*. Citizens were «asked» to buy state bonds at work, just as the master did it at the museum.

Often there was a lottery connected to it by which some bonds could win a significant amount of money. Because there were not many safe places, the master kept his bond in the basket of dirty laundry.

A room on Myasnitskaya

The **Мясницкая улица** [Myasnitskaya ulitsa] or *Butchers' Street* connects *Lubyanka Square* with *Turgenevskaya Square*, close to the *Clear Ponds*. Between 1935 and 1990 it was named *Kirov Street*. Nowadays, you can find in this street one of Moscow's nicest book shops, the *Biblio-Globus*. It is situated next to the *Mayakovsky Museum*.

Two rooms in the basement of a little house in the garden

During the period of the *New Economic Policy (NEP)* from 1921 to 1928, private persons were allowed to build and possess small houses in the Soviet Union. The prototype of the basement of the master is situated in Mansurovsky pereulok no. 9 in Moscow and belonged to the brothers **Sergey Sergeevich Topleninov** and **Vladimir Sergeevich Topleninov**.

Sergey, the younger brother, was stage designer and make-up artist at the *Moscow Art Theatre MKhAT*. Vladimir was an actor at various theatre companies. When Sergey got married he moved out and a part of the house was rented to the playwright and scriptwriter **Sergey Alexandrovich Yermolinsky** (1900-1984) and his wife **Maria Artemievna Chimishkian** (1904-?).

From 1916, Bulgakov visited there often. He worked there on *The Master and Margarita* and he read parts of it to his friends. Bulgakov's second wife **Lyubov Yevgenyeva Belozerskaya** (1894-1987) didn't trust Yermolinsky, however. She called him «a man with two faces», and said that Bulgakov used him as the prototype for the **Aloisy Mogarych** character in *The Master and Margarita*.

You can read more on the basement of the master in the *Locations* section of the «Master & Margarita» website.

A front hall with a sink in it

Some older buildings in Moscow still lacked running water at the time. The master is very pleased with his sink. He mentions it «with special pride». The reason for this pride is in the fact that in the communal apartments in that time there sinks were only offered in the shared rooms of kitchen and bathroom. So, unlike most people, the master could wash himself privately.

Actually, there was a porcelain sink in the front hall of the Topleninov house, and there really were, «only four steps away, near the fence, lilacs, a linden and a maple». The house was built in 1834 and it is a miracle that it still exists. Today, it is completely ruined and doesn't look like a house where you want to live.

In the movie picture [*Est*] *Ouest* from 1999, the French director **Régis Warnier** (°1948) shows some aspects of the allotment of rooms in a communal apartment in the Soviet Union. You can watch an excerpt from this picture in the *Videos and Music* section of the «Master & Margarita» website.



The last words of the novel

The master already knew that the last words of his novel would be «...the fifth procurator of Judea, the equestrian Pontius Pilate».

There is some disagreement about the question whether Pilate was the fifth or the sixth *procurator* - or *prefect* - of Judea. Bulgakov chose for the fifth, according to some because it offered him a nicer alliteration in Russian: **пятый прокуратор Иудей, Понтий Пилат** [pyatny prokurator Yudey, Ponty Pilat]. He used more or less the same words to finish *The Master and Margarita*.

Yet I fear that this description is one of the few mistakes made by Bulgakov concerning the *Palestine* of that time, since the title «procurator» was not yet used in the reign of Emperor **Tiberius** (42 BC-37) to designate the governor of a Roman province. So Pilate was not a «procurator», he was a «prefect». It was only under **Claudius I** (10BC-54), who was emperor from 41 to 54, that the title «procurator» was introduced. Despite the fact that there was

no noteworthy difference in functions, Pontius Pilate was not «the fifth procurator», but «the fifth prefect of Judea».

There was a wonderful restaurant on the Arbat

The wonderful restaurant is the *Praga*, situated at Arbat no. 2. It's the first building you see when you walk to the Arbat from the *Arbatskaya* metro station. A restaurant frequented by cabbies and known as *Braga home brew* originally stood on this site. In the year 1896, the entire building was won by the merchant **Pyotr Semenovich Tararykin** on a bet at playing billiards with his left hand. He spared no expense in renovating the restaurant, using the services of the architect **Lev Nikolayevich Kekushev** (1862-1916/1919).

Moscow's best chefs, such as the Belgian-Russian **Lucien Olivier** (1838-1883), the creator of the well-known *Salade Olivier*, and **Ivan Yakovlevich Testov** (1890-?) worked here. After the revolution it became a cheap cafeteria, then in the 30's a special canteen for Joseph Stalin's bodyguards. Today it is again an expensive and elegant restaurant with nine palatial dining rooms and separate smaller private rooms.

Repulsive, alarming yellow flowers

While the yellow flowers which Margarita is carrying are not identified in *Book One* of the novel, they would be instantly recognizable to Muscovites of the Soviet period as *mimosas*. Mimosas are the first flowers to appear in the spring and were imported to Moscow from the South.

It is probably not insignificant that both the mimosas and Margarita are only named in *Book Two* - «What did she need, this witch [...] who had adorned herself with mimosa that time in the spring?». Margarita's flowers are a symbol of misery; yellow is the colour of the *mad-house* - state buildings were painted dark yellow - and «yellow house» meant «madhouse». But yellow is also the colour of *betrayal* - one should never give yellow flowers to a lover in Russia.

The way in which Bulgakov describes the appearance of Margarita with her yellow flowers, reminds of the painting **Первый признак весны** [Pervy priznak vesny] or *The First Sign of Spring* by the Polish-French painter **Emile Eisman-Semenowsky** (1857-1911), an assistant of the Belgian painter **Jan van Beers** (1852-1927), who understood the lucrative aspect of commercial reproductions of his work by publishing prints of it.

It is therefore possible that Bulgakov has seen a reproduction of this painting. Anyway, for some Polish people the link is obvious, since they call this painting simply *Margarita*.

In his TV-series *Mistrz i Malgorzata* from 1990, the Polish director **Maciej Wojtyszko** (°1946) clearly shows how the master dislikes yellow flowers.

The author of this book subtitled this TV-series in English, Spanish, French, German, Italian and Dutch. You can watch an excerpt and order the DVD in the web shop of the «Master & Margarita» website.



She turned down a lane from Tverskaya

When Bulgakov and **Elena Sergeevna Nyurenberg** (1893-1970) met each other for the first time on February 28, 1929, they left a party on *Bolshoi Gnezdnikovsky pereulok no. 10*, just off Tverskaya, to stroll around Moscow.

There is, however, some uncertainty about the date on which this meeting took place. On January 4, 1956, Elena Sergeevna noted in her diary that she first met Bulgakov, who was accompanied by his second wife, **Lyubov Yevgenyeva Belozerskaya** (1894-1987) on [Thursday] February 28, 1929.

But in a letter to her brother **Aleksander Sergeevich Nyurenberg** (1890-1964) from February 13, 1961, she wrote that she met Bulgakov on the occasion of **Масленица** [Maslenitsa], a public holiday comparable to the European *carnival*, on which often pancakes are made. In 1929, however, the Maslenitsa festival was not on [Thursday] February 28, but on [Sunday] March 17.

For the trivia: just like Bulgakov, the author of this book also met his third wife for the first time in Bolshoy Gnezdnikovsky pereulok. But this fairy tale did not last as long as Bulgakov's...

Tverskaya

Тверская улица [Tverskaya ulitsa] or *Tver Street* still is Moscow's main street. It was later renamed **Горького улица** [Gorkovo ulitsa] or *Gorky Street*, and then *Tver Street* again. It is the road to Tver, later renamed *Kalinin*, now again Tver.

Varenka Manechka... striped dress

The master hardly remembers the name of the woman with whom he lived before he met Margarita. I don't know if Bulgakov had a real prototype in mind for Varenka or Manechka

«with the striped dress». Both Varenka and Manechka are Russian nicknames, the first is for Barbara, the other for Maria.

This fragment is reminiscent of a scene in *The Return*, a novel written by **Andrei Bely** (1880-1934), pseudonym of **Boris Nikolayevich Bugayev**, in which the hero, **Yevgeny Handrikov**, after a sojourn in a psychiatric hospital, doesn't remember the name of his wife, just the colour of her dress.

Secret wife

The master's affair with Margarita mimics that of Bulgakov with **Elena Sergeevna Shilovskaya** (1893-1970), born **Nyurenberg**, who left her well-positioned military husband for the relatively less-well-off writer. At first their affair was difficult because both were married, but Elena Sergeevna eventually became Bulgakov's wife. The character of Margarita only appeared in the novel after Bulgakov met Shilovskaya.

He would never tell her name to anyone

We will learn the name of the master's lover in *Book Two*, but it will not be the master who reveals it.

The bureau and books from the painted floor to the sooty ceiling

In Chapter 13 the master recalls the «writing desk... and the books, books that went from the painted floor to the soot-covered ceiling». This description matches perfectly Bulgakov's own study room.

A novel on such a strange theme

The policy toward literature adopted by the Communist party in 1928 is characterized by the term **Социальный заказ** [sotsialnyi zakaz] or the «*social command*». It was in connection with the first *Five-Year Plan* and carried out by the **Российская Ассоциация Пролетарских Писателей (РАПП)** [Rossyskaya assotsiatsiya Proletarskikh Pisateley] (RAPP) or the *Russian Association of Proletarian Writers*, and the editorial boards of the publishing houses. Under this policy, specific themes were dictated to writers individually with the goal of stimulating «socialist construction».

The theme assigned to *Bezdomny*, while not directly connected with the Five-Year Plan, is meant to further the ideological ends of the state related to *religion*. Although the Soviet

Union was an official atheistic state, the RAPP leaders made it clear that they allowed such historical themes, if treated from the «proper» Marxist point of view.

Bulgakov is specifically ridiculing this social command in the novel when his hero, the master, recalls that the editor to whom he submitted his manuscript asked him, which question was in his opinion was a totally idiotic question: «who had given him the idea to write a novel on such a strange theme?» A book about Pilate was clearly not foreseen in the master's *social command*.

There are parallels between Bulgakov's life and the life of the master. Bulgakov's first novel, *The White Guard*, was only partially published in a journal in 1925, but he read it to various literary groups, whose general reaction was that one could never get a work on such a subject published.

The real attacks, however, came in 1926 when Bulgakov turned the novel into a hit play for the *Moscow Art Theater MKhAT* under the name *Days of the Turbins*. Nothing could have been stranger than Bulgakov's subject, which concerned the fate of a pro-monarchist family in Kiev during the *Civil War*. The attacks described in this chapter of *The Master and Margarita* are clearly distillations of the ones various critics made on Bulgakov's plays.

Ariman

Bulgakov has given the name of the Persian evil spirit **Ariman** to the real critic **Leopold Leonidovich Averbach** (1903-1939).

Leopold Averbach was the secretary of the writers' union **Российская Ассоциация Пролетарских Писателей (РАПП)** [Rossyskaya assotsiatsiya Proletarskikh Pisateley] (RAPP) or the *Russian Association of Proletarian Writers*.

In 1926, Averbach, one of Bulgakov's fiercest opponents, wrote **За пролетарскую литературу** [Za proletarskuyu literatury] or *About the Proletarian Literature*, in which he called Bulgakov «the most prominent representative of the right wing».

Red petals strewn across the tide page

With these words, Bulgakov refers to a fact of his private life, as told by **Elena Sergeevna Nyurenberg** (1893-1970), his third wife, to Bulgakov specialist **Marietta Omarovna Chudakova** (°1937) in October 1968: «In the summer of 1929, I went to Yessentuki for a treatment. Bulgakov wrote me a nice letter, strewn with petals of red roses. But I could not keep those letters. In one of his letters he wrote: 'I have prepared a worthy gift for you'. When I was back in Moscow, he gave me the text of an autobiographical novella 'To a secret friend'».

Slanting rain

The image of the slanting rain comes from the poem *Back home!* by **Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovski** (1893-1930). Bulgakov must have known it from its magazine publication in 1926. When the poet compiled it later he deleted, on the advice of his friend **Osip Maksimovich Brik** (1888-1945), the last lines, probably the best of the poem. They read as follows:

*«I want understanding of my country, nothing more.
And what
if understanding fails to come?*

*Then I pass in vain
its territory
just like rain
passes over slantingly»*

It appears that Bulgakov identifies himself with these verses through the master.

Pilatism

Bulgakov's archives contain excerpts from the newspaper *Rabochaya Moskva*, in which an article was published with the title **Ударим по булгаковщине!** [Udarim po bulgakovshchine] or *We will strike and fight against Bulgakovism!*

In the *The Master and Margarita*, Lavrovich writes an article in which he recommends to **Ударить по пилатчине** [udarit' po pilatchine] or «*Striking, and striking hard, at Pilatism*». Bulgakov was, like the master, attacked by the press. In his letter to the Soviet authorities in 1930 he knew exactly how often. In ten years of authorship, he had read 301 articles about him in the soviet press, «among which: laudatory - 3, hostile-abusive - 298» His theatre plays were almost all banned.

The initials «N.E.»

In the French and English translations of *The Master and Margarita* the initials «N.E.» are mentioned, but in the Dutch translation we read about the initials «M.Z.». In the Russian editions we find both the initials «N.E.» and the initials «M.Z.».

In a Russian text on the internet **подписанная буквами «Н.Э.»** or *signed with the initials «N.E.»* is written, but in many printed versions of the novel we read **подписанная буквами «М.З.»** or *signed with the initials «M.Z.»*. I don't know (yet) who is «N.E.», but the real prototype for «M.Z.» is **Mikhail Borisovich Zagorsky** (1885-1951), a writer and

critic who wrote very bitter articles on Bulgakov's theatre plays *Crimson Island* and *Days of the Turbins*.

In an earlier version of the novel Bulgakov had given a name to this character corresponding to the initials «M.Z.». He was called **З. Мышьяк** [Z. Mishyak], which means *Z. Arsenic*.

A militant Old Believer

The **Старообрядчество** [Staroobryadtsy] or **Древлеправославие** [Drevleptavoslavie], *Old Believers* or *Old Ritualists* separated from the Russian Orthodox church in the 17th century. They wanted to maintain the liturgical and ritual practices of the Eastern Orthodox Church as they were before the reforms of Patriarch **Nikon of Moscow**, born as **Nikita Minin** (1605-1681). Latunsky uses this term somewhat vainly.

On October 5, 1926, Bulgakov himself was called, in a similar way, a *militant white guard* by **Alexander Robertovich Orlinski** (1892-1938) in *Nasha Gazeta*. Bulgakov's theatre play *Days of the Turbins* was qualified as a «political demonstration in which the author winks to the rubbish of the White Guard».

Joyless autumn days set in

The time of year is meaningful to Russian readers who have known the Soviet era, since autumn and spring were times of increased arrests, as the government tried to distract the populace from the regime's economic and cultural failures.

Aloisy Mogarych

It may surprise the reader why I mention the character **Aloisy Mogarych** on this page. In the English translations of **Michael Glenny** and **Richard Pevear** and **Larissa Volokhonsky** - and in many others - Mogarych only appears in chapter 24, when Woland calls him to account for what he had done to the master.

But in the original Russian text, Aloisy Mogarych appears already at the end of Chapter 13. The master tells Ivan how Mogarych showed up in his garden, introduced himself as a journalist, and proved to know amazingly much about the working methods and the criteria used by the authorities to ban manuscripts. The master even tells Ivan that they became friends.

This scene is one of the so-called loose ends of *The Master and Margarita*. Since Bulgakov died before he could finish the authoritative text, the novel retains some imperfections. The frequent rewriting, shortening and extensions of the novel caused some loose ends and even some contradictions in the text.

The author of this book translated this loose end in English, and you can download it from the *Archives* section of the «Master & Margarita» website. In the *Characters* section, you can read more on Aloisy Mogarych.

We also published a video excerpt, on which you can watch the first meeting of the master and Aloisy Mogarych as it was filmed by **Vladimir Bortko** in his TV series *Master i Margarita* in 2005. The author of this book subtitled this TV-series in English, Spanish, French, German, Italian and Dutch. You can order the DVD in the web shop of the «Master & Margarita» website.



And started burning them

Bulgakov himself burned a number of his manuscripts, including an early version of *The Master and Margarita*, in 1930, after he was effectively banned from the theaters.

There came a knock at my window...

Only Ivan can hear what follows. But to the Russian reader who has known the Soviet era, it is clear that the master is arrested. When he returns to his basement later, it becomes clear that someone else lives there now: «a gramophone was playing in my rooms». The reason is exposed in *Book Two* when **Alois Mogarych** is called to account at Woland's.

Mid-January...

From the first chapter we know that Ivan was taken to the hospital of Doctor Stravinsky «on a dreadful May evening». With the detail of «mid-january» we now know that the master had spent some four months in «another institution».

...in the same coat but with the buttons torn off

This laconic reference is the only indication of where the master has spent those lost four months. It was customary to remove belts, shoelaces and buttons from the apparel of those «held for questioning» in the Soviet Union.

Fear possessed every cell of my body

Many of the details of the master's anxiety are autobiographical. In the mid 1930's Bulgakov suffered from agoraphobia and was treated by various methods.

Chapter 14
Glory to the Cock!



Eight bottles of dry white Ai-Danil

Ai-Danil is a white wine from the Crimea (Ukraine). I never tried it myself, but in March 2004, a bottle *Ai-Danil Furmint-Harslevelu*, vintage 1892, was sold at auction for 2.466 English pounds in London.

The vent-pane

The vent-pane is a so-called **форточка** [fortochka]. It's a small window in the bigger window for ventilation. These *fortochkas* are extremely practical in the Russian winter, when some ventilation is desired when not wanting to open the entire double window.

With the third crowing of the cock

Bulgakov interweaves the theme of vampires fearing the dawn with the biblical story of Peter's denial. (Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-73; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:25-27).

The movie theatre

There was and still is a movie theater at *Triumfalnaya ploshad* nr. 3 in Moscow, across the *Garden Ring* where Rimsky takes the taxi. First called **Khanzhonkov**, then **Mephrabpom**, then **Gorn**, then **Moskva**. This is still its name, but today it is also known again as the **Khanzhonkov's House Cinema**. It is one of the few theatres to show only Russian-made films.

This movie theatre with 500 seats was created in 1913 by the famous film director **Alexander Alekseevich Khanzhonkov** (1877-1945).

Leningrad station

If there ever was a glass vault or cupola in the Leningrad station, then it is no longer there. Substantial reconstructions in the late Soviet days have altered the form of all but the front of the station today.

Chapter 15
Nikanor Ivanovich's Dream



The Chapter's title

This chapter of *The Master and Margarita* is perhaps the most astonishing one to Western readers. In the Russian commentaries, however, it's perhaps the most commented-upon because it is full of references to all elements of the the Soviet state that Bulgakov hated: the arrests of dissidents, their internment and «treatment» in psychiatric hospitals, the show trials, the rampant cronyism and corruption, the monetary policy, the attitude to foreign currency and housing policy. No wonder that, with the first publication of *The Master and Margarita* in 1966, 2,848 of the 3,492 words (almost 82%) of this chapter had been deleted by the authorities. The whole dream was censored out, and the title of the chapter became simply *Nikanor Ivanovich*.

Originally this chapter was called *The Castle of Miracles*. Later, other titles followed: *The Intimate Conversation*, *The Extraordinary Adventures of Bosoy* and *Moscow Nights*.

On October 12, 1933, after the arrest of playwright and screenwriter **Nikolay Robertovich Erdman** (1900-1970) and his colleague **Vladimir Zakharovich Mass** (1896-1979), Bulgakov's third wife **Elena Sergeevna Nyurenberg** (1893-1970) wrote in her diary: «In the morning, a call from Olya: Nikolay Erdman and Mass have been arrested. Misha frowned [...] During the night, MA burned a part of his novel». It was a part of the text of this chapter 15.

After the arrest of the poet **Osip Mandelstam** (1891-1938) on the night of on May 13-14, 1934 he destroyed some more pages of it. But in July 1936, he again added *The Dream of Nikanor Ivanovich* to the novel.

After first visiting another place

The reader already knows where Nikanor Ivanovich passed some time as a preliminary precaution before he was taken to Stravinsky's hospital. The other place was, of course, the **Главное управление государственной безопасности (ГУГБ)** [Glavnoe upravleniye gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosty] (GUGB) or *General Directorate of State Security*, the secret police situated at *Lubyanka square* in Moscow.

The interrogation scene is written almost entirely in plural impersonal pronoun form, and with no subject. We know somebody is doing the interrogating, but we never know who they are: [they] asked, [they] raised their voice, [they] hinted...

Noteworthy is not only the impersonality of the interrogation that follows, but the combination of menace and tenderness in the interrogating voice.

The same combination will reappear in Nikanor Ivanovich's dream - an extraordinary rendering of the operation of secret police within society, which also evokes the «theatre» of Stalin's trumped-up show trials of the later thirties.

Quinquet lamps

In 1780, the French chemist **Joseph Louis Proust** (1754-1826) invented an oil lamp in which the oil reservoir was higher than the wick: the oil, stored at a higher level than the nozzle, was pushed to it by its own weight. Later the Swiss physicist and chemist **François Pierre Ami Argand** (1750-1803) made improvements on this lamp in such way that the light was much brighter than a candle, it burned more cleanly, and was cheaper to use than candles.

In France this Argand is hardly known though, because the French pharmacist **Antoine Quinquet** (1745-1803) used the improvements of both Proust and Argand to introduce the *Quinquet lamp* in 1784. Until today the British, Swiss and French antiquarians discuss the legitimacy of the name Quinquets because, except for the French, they all accuse Quinquet of industrial spying.

In 1783, both Antoine Quinquet and Ami Argand had already co-operated in the construction of the *montgolfière*, a hot air balloon which **Jacques Étienne Montgolfier** (1745-1799) had offered to the French king.

Bedsornev or Prolezhnov

In the English translation by **Richard Pevear** and **Larissa Volokhonsky**, the «perplexed and dispirited secretary of the house management» is called **Bedsornev**. In the Russian text he is called **Пролежнев** [Prolezhnev]. Michael Glenny transliterated his name to **Prolezhnov**. The verb **Пролежать** [prolezjat] means *to laze away* or *to lie down*. This shows once more what Bulgakov thought of such officials.

Turn over your currency

In 1928-1929 and in 1931-1933, the **Объединённое государственное политическое управление (ОГПУ)** [Obedinyonnoe gosudarstvennoe politicheskoye upravlenye] (OGPU) or the *United State Political Administration* organised a campaign to confiscate foreign currency, gold and jewels of the population. The OGPU was the secret police which became part of the previously mentioned NKVD in 1934, and from then on was called **Главное управление государственной безопасности (ГУГБ)** [Glavnoe upravleniye gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosty] (GUGB) or *General Directorate of State Security*.

The suspected **валючки** [valyuchiki] or *foreign currency speculators* were put in jail for several weeks until they «voluntarily» gave up their foreign currency and their valuables. The confiscated items - jewelry, icons, Faberge eggs, porcelain and rare manuscripts - were sold abroad, mainly in the United States. The regime needed hard currency to import goods to ensure the success of the *Five Year Plans*. The American historian **Robert Chadwell Williams** (1917-1991) summed it up as: «Tractors were needed more than Titians, Fords

more than Fabergé». A wide variety of methods were used to compel the population to hand over their goods, such as feeding citizens salted foods and preventing them from drinking water. More sinister methods are described in the book *I Speak for the Silent* (1935) by Professor **Vladimir Vyacheslavovich Chernavin** (1887-1949), a contemporary of Bulgakov.

I Speak for the Silent was reprinted in 1964 in *Readings in Russian Civilization*, an historical text in three volumes published by Professor **Thomas Riha** (1929-?), a lecturer of Russian history in Denver at the *University of Colorado*, but from Czech origins. On March 20, 1969, Thomas Riha disappeared without a trace. His wedding ring was found in the house of the painter, designer and inventor **Gustav Ingwerson** (1891-1969), when the latter was found dead on June 18, 1969 in his home in Denver. Ingwerson had died of poisoning by *cyanide*.

Both the disappearance of Riha and the death of Ingwerson have been attributed to the glamorous master forger and impostor **Galya Tannenbaum** (1932-1971), born as **Gloria Forest**, who liked to be called *The Colonel*, as she claimed to be an officer the *Military Intelligence Corps* of the *US Army*. On March 7, 1971, Tannenbaum committed suicide using cyanide, and the disappearance of Thomas Riha has never been solved.

The full text of *I speak for the Silent* is available for download from the *Archives* section of the «Master & Margarita» website.



In a theatre house

The theatre is a metaphor for the working methods of the OGPU/NKVD, with fabricated charges and scripted trials. The prison where Nikanor Ivanovich is taken is doubly displaced - into a theater and into a dream - perhaps to avoid the censor; yet it was still cut when the novel was published for the first time in 1966.

The audience was all of the same sex - male - and all for some reason bearded

This is another reference to the fact that the theatre stands for a prison. In theatres, men and women are not segregated by sex, but in prisons they are. The beards could be because the prisoners couldn't shave, or they could be a hint that the foreign currency speculators are *Old Believers*, like many merchants were, or Jews.

All sitting? Sitting, sitting!

Again the verb *to sit* is used to indicate a prison. The Soviet citizens didn't need to see the word prison, since the construction was so familiar. «You are sitting» meant «you are in prison».

Sergei Gerardovich Dunchil

This is a very non-Russian sounding name, perhaps a combination of [Isadora] **Duncan** and [Winston] **Churchill**.

Ida Herkulanovna Vors

Dunchil's mistress **Ida Herkulanovna Vors** has a very bizarre name. Herkulan is an extremely rare name, and **ворс** [vors] refers to the fuzziness of cloths like *wool* or *velvet*.

Kharkov

Kharkov, where Dunhil's mistress Ida Herkulanovna Vors comes from, is an industrial town in Ukraine.

Sawa Potapovich Kurolesov

The surname of the artist **Savva Kurolesov** comes from the verb **куролесить** [kurolesit], which means *playing tricks* as much as *acting crazy*. He has already been introduced in chapter 13, when the master told Ivan that a new patient has been brought in to room 119, who constantly cursed Pushkin up and down and kept shouting «Kurolesov, encore, encore!»

In *Bulgakov Deciphered. The Secrets of The Master and Margarita*, a book from 2010, Bulgakov expert **Boris Vadimovich Sokolov** (°1957), who is also the author of the *Bulgakov Encyclopedia*, argues that the character Kurolesov would be based on **Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov** (1870-1924), better known as **Vladimir Ilyich Lenin**.

The Covetous Knight

The Covetous Knight, also called *The Miserly Knight*, is the minor tragedy **Скупой Рыцарь** [Skuloy Ritsar], written in 1830 by **Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin** (1799-1837),

from which the quoted lines are taken. It's about the demonic and destructive fascination of gold. A not so nice father, the baron, refuses to help his son **Albert**, although he can afford to. Pushkin had similar problems with his father. The baron and Albert are about to fight a duel, which could be averted at the last moment. But the baron dies soon after that - from a natural cause.

This minor tragedy was used by **Sergey Vasilyevich Rachmaninoff** (1873-1943) in 1905 as a libretto for his opera of the same name.

As a young awaits a tryst with some sly strumpet

These words are the first two lines of the second scene of *The Miserly Knight*. They are the beginning of the baron's long opening monologue. In Russian, they sound like this:

*«Как молодой повеса ждет свиданья
С какой-нибудь развратницей лукавой».*

And who's going to pay the rent - Pushkin?

This «household» way of referring to **Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin** (1799-1837) is quite common in Russia, showing how far the poet has entered into people's everyday life, though without necessarily bringing a knowledge of his works with him, like Bulgakov already showed: «And who's going to pay the rent - Pushkin? Then who did unscrew the bulb on the stairway - Pushkin? So who's going to buy the fuel - Pushkin?». In this context, the name Pushkin means something similar to «nothing» or «nobody».

Nikolai Kanavkin

Bulgakov's description here may have been inspired by the story of his friend, the philologist and translator **Nikolay Nikolaevich Lyamin** (1892-1941), who was held in custody for two weeks in 1931.

Lyamin's wife, the artist **Natalia Abramovna Lyamina-Ushakova** (1899-1990) was from a famous merchant family. Her aunt had already been arrested and the OGPU was looking for a necklace. Lyamin didn't mention the aunt until they brought her before him. This may explain Bulgakov's description to «to fetch the aunt and ask her kindly to come for the programme at the women's theatre». When they searched Lyamin's apartment, they found only some cheap jewelry, and he was released.

Nikolay Lyamin was a man with a wide and interesting store of knowledge, speaking several languages. He had collected a fine library. Bulgakov often went to him for advice.

Prechistenka

Nikolay Lyamin lived in the *Saveliyevsky pereulok*, now *Pozharsky pereulok*, a side-lane of *Prechistenka ulitsa*. This neighbourhood was known for the literati who lived there. Many of them were friends of Bulgakov's second spouse, **Lyubov Evgenyeva Belozerskaya** (1894-1987).

Prechistenka is still considered as one of the nicest streets of Moscow.

In a candy tin

In the Russian source text, Bulgakov is not talking about just any ordinary candies. He wrote **в коробке из-под Эйнема** [*v korovke iz-pod Einema*], or in «*a box of Einem candies*». Einem chocolates and cookies were produced by the *Einem factory*, started by **Theodor Ferdinand von Einem** (1826-1876), who had built the plant on the banks of the Moscow river. After the *Russian Revolution*, the factory was nationalized and was renamed in 1922 to **Красный Октябрь** [*Krasny Oktyabr*] or *Red October*. Red October became the most famous chocolate manufacturer of the Soviet Union. In 1965 it would start the production of **Алёнка** [*Alyonka*], one of the most popular candies ever.

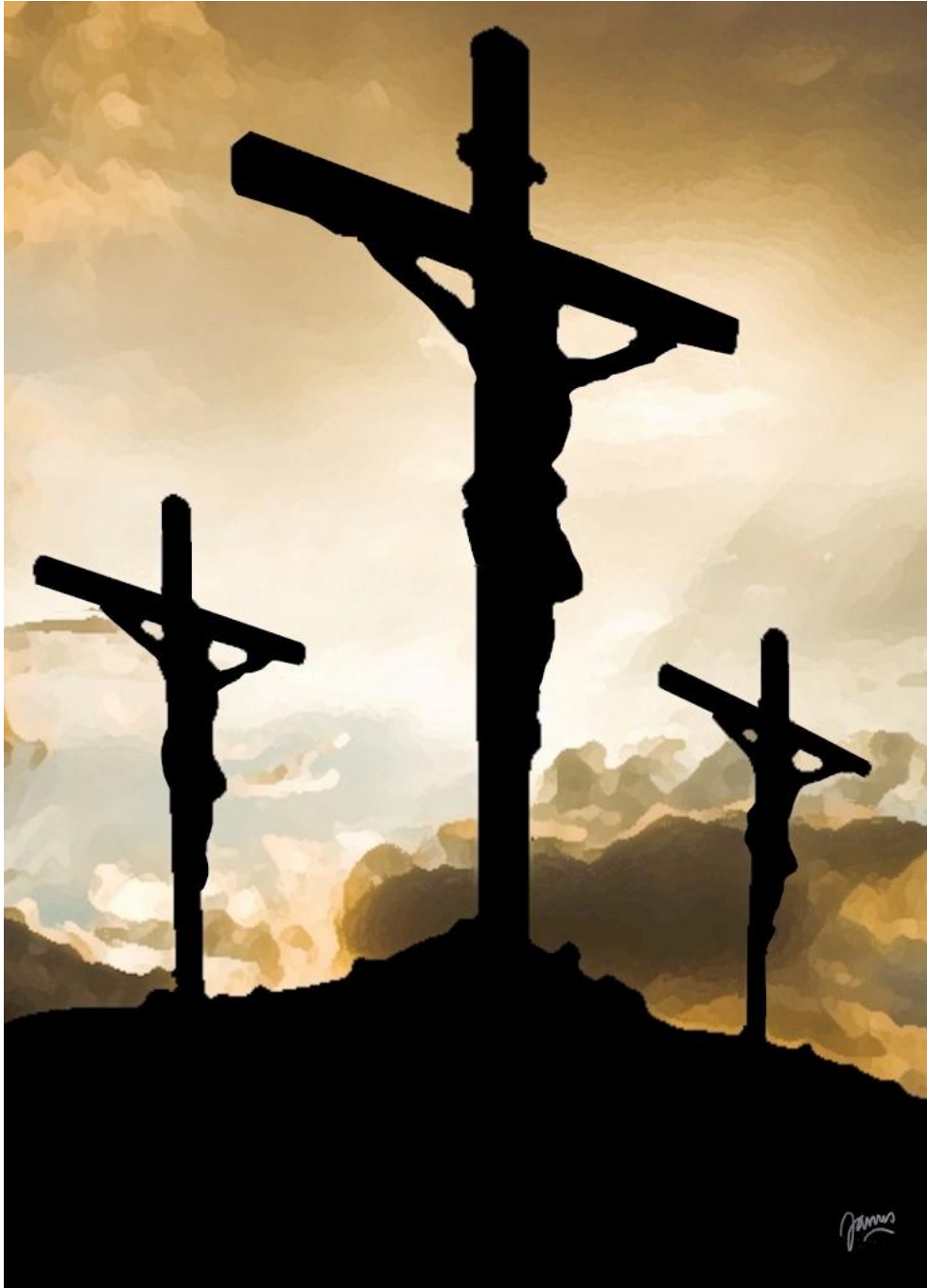
The Einem candies were quite famous for the beautiful boxes in which they were sold and for the quirky advertising campaigns, which disappeared after the nationalization. Perhaps that is why Bulgakov used the pre-revolutionary name Einem.

This passage shows again the rather high level of the Dutch translation of *The Master and Margarita* - despite some inaccuracies, mentioned elsewhere in these annotations. **Marko Fondse** (1932-1999) correctly mentions «*een doosje van Einemtoffees*» or «*a box of Einem candies*». The English translator **Michael Glenny** (1927-1990) just writes «*in a box*», while **Richard Pevear** (°1943) and **Larissa Volokhonsky** write «*in a candy tin*». The French translator **Claude Ligny** is the worst: he writes that the money was hidden «*dans une boîte de cigares*» or «*in a cigar box*».

There great heaps... of gold are mine

These lines come from an aria sung by **Hermann**, the main character in *Queen of Spades*, an opera composed by **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** (1840-1893). The libretto, written by the composer's brother **Modest Ilyich Tchaikovsky** (1850-1916), is based on the story by **Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin** (1799-1837).

Chapter 16
The Execution



Bald Mountain

Bald Mountain is *Golgotha*, which is the Armenian word for *place of the skull*. The Hebrew word גולגולת [gulgôlet] means *skull*. Another name for Golgotha is *Calvary*. In the Bible is written that this place, where the executions occurred, was situated outside Jerusalem, but without indicating the exact location.

In the *Holosiiv Municipal District* of Kiev, Bulgakov's native city, there is also a Лиса Гора [Lisa Gora] or *Bald Mountain* near the confluence of the Dnipro and Lybid' rivers. It's a large wooded hill which supposedly takes its name from the fact that its top was not covered by trees. It is said that witches gathered there to affirm Satan's rule over the world. The hill is now a nature reserve included in the Kiev Fortress museum.

The cavalry ala

Ala is Latin, and means *wing* - both wing of a bird and wing of an army. *Ala* and its derivatives, *alares* and *alarii* were used in different or at least modified senses at different periods. During the time of the Pilate story, the terms *alarii* and *cohortes alariae* referred to the soldiers of foreign origin who served in the Roman army, both infantry and cavalry, and they were referred to as *dextera ala* (right wing) and *sinistra ala* (left wing). This means that the cavalry *ala* which is described here is not composed of Roman soldiers, but of allies.

The Hebron gate

The main entrance gate to Jerusalem is the *Jaffa gate*. The Arab name of this gate is باب الخليل [Bab el-Halil] or *Hebron gate*. It means *the Beloved* which refers to **Abraham**, a common patriarch of the three *Abrahamic religions* (Christianity, Islam, and Judaism). Abraham was God's beloved one who was buried in Hebron. The Hebron gate is situated at the west side of the city leading to the Islamic and Armenian quarters.

Bulgakov introduces an anachronism here, because in reality this gate did not yet exist in the time of the crucifixion of Jesus. The gate was only built in 1538 under **Suleiman the Magnificent** (1494-1566), the 10th Sultan of the *House of Osman*.

In the city of Jerusalem, the rules of Suleiman and the following Ottoman Sultans brought an age of religious peace. Jews, Christians and Muslims enjoyed the freedom of religion.

The Cappadocian cohort

Cappadocia was a vast inland district of *Asia Minor*, in Turkey. Cappadocia used to be the most powerful province of Anatolia. That province was bounded in the south by the chain of *Mount Taurus*, to the east by the river *Euphrates*, to the north by *Pontus* at the Black Sea,

and to the west vaguely by *Lycaonia* and eastern *Galatia*. Today Cappadocia is much smaller: now it is a piece of land between *Kayseri* and the three big lakes in the neighbourhood, on which the volcanos *Erciyas* and the smaller *Hassan Dagi* poured out huge quantities of ashes, mud and lava during the big eruptions in history.

In two languages - Aramaic and Greek

The three condemned men had white boards hanging around from the necks with the text «robber and rebel» written on each of them in two languages - Aramaic and Greek. In the first version of the novel, Bulgakov mentioned three languages - Latin, Hebrew and Greek. It reminds one of the gospel of Luke (23: 38), who also mentioned those three languages, albeit with a different text: «This is the king of the Jews». John (19: 20) references the same text - «Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews» -, but in other languages: Aramaic, Latin and Greek.

Furthermore, according to John's gospel, this text would have commanded to be written by Pontius Pilate himself. When the chief priests of the Jews protested, he answered: «What I have written, I have written».

In the final version of *The Master and Margarita*, Bulgakov opted for two languages, Aramaic and Greek, and a rather different text: «robber and rebel».

A long, razor-sharp bread knife

After the Hebron gate this is the second anachronism in this chapter, since bread was not sliced with knives at the time, it was broken by the hand.

«I curse you, God!»

When Matthew Levi curses God and is convinced of God's injustice, it bears a striking resemblance to the work of the Russian writer **Vladimir Yakovlevich Zazubrin** (1895-1937). In his novel **Два мира** [Dva mira] or *Two Worlds* (1921), he writes about an officer of the *White Army* during the civil war who kneels before an icon and curses God: «You see? You see our torments, evil old man? How stupid I was when I believed in your wisdom and goodness. Your joy is the suffering of men. No, I don't believe in you. You are the god of lies, violence, deception. You are the god of inquisitors, sadists, executioners, robbers, murderers! You are their patron and defender».

Zazubrin was, like Bulgakov, one of Stalin's favourite writers, but it didn't stop him from exposing, like he did in 1926, with a controversial speech, the destruction of the natural environment by the ambitious industrialization policy.

The sun had disappeared

According to the Gospels, Jesus' death was followed by an *earthquake* and *darkness*. According to Luke the darkness was caused by a solar eclipse. Luke 23:44 - «And it was almost the sixth hour: and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour». Bulgakov writes that the darkness was due to «a storm cloud having swallowed the sun». Bulgakov made a note from *The Life of Christ Critically Examined* by **David Strauss** (1808-1974) to the effect that Luke's claim that the darkness was caused by a solar eclipse can't be correct, since the execution took place at the time of the Passover full moon.

The meagre Hinnom valley

The Hinnom valley is a deep narrow valley just outside the walls of Jerusalem. In the time of **King Solomon** (1000 BC-928 BC) it was the place where the Israelites worshipped the pagan gods **Moloch** and **Baal** with horrible sacrifices including the burning of their own first-born children, known as «going through the fire», mentioned in the Book of Kings 16:3 - «He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and even sacrificed his son in the fire, following the detestable ways of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites» and 23:10 - «The king also defiled Topheth in the Valley of Ben-hinnom, so that there would no longer be an immolation of sons or daughters by fire in honor of Molech.»

Jesus used the image of the fires in *Hinnom valley* as an allegorical phrase for the fire that God will use for the eternal punishment.

A bucket and a sponge

According to the Gospels, Christ was given vinegar mixed with gall on a stick, not a spear.

He gently pricked Yeshua in the heart

In Bulgakov's text Yeshua dies from the spear, while in the gospel according to John 19:34 Christ was pierced after he had already died.

«Hegemon...»

When the executioner gently pricked him in the heart, Yeshua twitched and whispered: «Hegemon...». Bulgakov's version of Yeshua's last words is quite different from what is found in the gospels. According to Matthew (27: 46), (Mark 15:33) and the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus (VIII, 3), Jesus cried out in a loud voice, saying: «**Ηλει ηλει λεμα σαβαχθاني?**» [Eli, Eli, lama sabakhthani] or «*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken*

me?». This phrase by Jesus is a quote from **King David** (1040 BC-970 BC) taken from the book of Psalms, chapter 22.

The other evangelists describe quite different words. Luke (23:43-46) wrote that Jesus had cried out in a loud voice, saying: «Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit» and according to John (19: 30), Jesus said, «It is finished» when he had received the drink.

Chapter 17
An Unquiet Day



Vassily Stepanovich Lastochkin

Vassily Stepanovich Lastochkin, the bookkeeper of the *Variety Theatre* is a modest and quiet man who, unexpectedly, by the disappearance of the other directors, turns out to be the senior member of the whole Variety team, which he will regret at the end of the chapter.

A queue of many thousands clung in two rows, its tail reaching to Kudrinskaya Square

The *Kudrinskaya Square* in Moscow is situated at the intersection of *Sadovaya Kudrinskaya ulitsa* (the continuation of *Bolshaya Sadovaya ulitsa*) and *Bolshaya Nikitskaya ulitsa*, which means that there were two rows waiting in a long line indeed, about one kilometer.

The famous Ace of Diamonds

In Russian, Bulgakov's police dog is called **Тузбубен** [Tuzbubyen]. **Туз** [tuz] means *ace* and **бубен** [bubyen] means *diamonds*. **Tuzbubyen** or **Ace of Diamonds** is probably a strange name for a police dog, but we don't need to search much for the explanation. It's a parody of a famous pre-revolutionary real police dog called **Треф** [Tref], which means *Clubs*.

In Bulgakov's archive a newspaper cutting was found from the *Pravda* of November 6, 1921, about the experiences of **Vladimir Ilyich Lenin** (1870-1924) in the summer of 1917, when he was forced to escape to Finland for a while. In that newspaper article we can read that not only the counterintelligence and police detectives were brought into action to track Lenin, but also dogs, among which the famous police dog Tref.

Faland

Faland is actually the German form of Woland's name that appears in the drama *Faust*, written by **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** (1749-1842).

Got any threes?

Just like in Chapter 12, the Russian *chervonets* is translated here as *ten-rouble bill*. *Threes*, however, is indeed the correct translation of the word **Трешки** [Treshki] in the original text.

In the conversation between Vassily Stepanovich Lastochkin and the cab driver, Bulgakov plays again with the «unreliable» chervonets and the «solid» rouble. The driver refuses to accept *chervontsy*, but *treshki* - three-rouble bills - are welcome.

A label from a seltzer bottle

In the original Russian text Bulgakov didn't write about ordinary *seltzer*. He mentioned the brand name. The labels are from bottles of the **Вода минерала нарзан** [Voda minerala Narzan] or *Narzan mineral water*. Since 1894 this water is bottled in *Kislovodsk*, a city in the region of Stavropol in Ukraine.

In Bulgakov's time, Narzan water was associated with this sunny resort town in the North Caucasus for more than a century, comparable to the *Spa* water in Belgium or *Vittel* in France. But in the chaos of post-communist Russia, the eminent old plant had to stoop to producing cheap junk. Counterfeiters tried to rip off the Narzan label.

When communism collapsed, Narzan had immaterial assets that most other domestic enterprises could only dream of - a pre-Revolutionary brand name, an established reputation and a quality product. But otherwise it was like any other company emerging from the dysfunctional - if secure - command economy. When regular orders from the state dried up, the factory was forced to switch to products targeted at mass consumers: cheap fortified wine and bedroom slippers.

It was quite a step down from the days when the company made special deliveries to ailing Soviet leader **Vladimir Ilyich Lenin** (1870-1924) in the 1920s. To make matters worse, Narzan's equipment was beginning to fall apart and there was zero investment.

But things can change for the better: today Narzan is an advanced company. The U.S.-educated manager **Vyacheslav Stanislavovich Sinadsky** (°1967) was hired to develop a strategy and attract capital from a Western lending institution. The company now outperforms its Soviet peak producing 70 million liters per year and is back on the tables of the nation's elite, including the Kremlin.

The Spectacles Commission

The *Spectacles Commission* which Prokhor «Prosha» Petrovich is presiding is more than likely based on the real life **Государственного объединения музыки, эстрады и цирка (ГОМЕЦ)** [Gosudarstvennogo obedineniya muzyki, estrady i tsirka] (GOMETs) or the *State Union of Music-Hall, Concert, and Circus Enterprises*, which was located in the building of the *Old Circus* at Tsvetnoi bulvar nr. 13 in Moscow, where now is situated the *Yuri Nikulin Circus*.

The jacket and trousers are there, but inside the jacket there's nothing!

Bulgakov wrote these scenes about the same time that **Ilya Ilf** (1897-1937) and **Yevgeny Petrov** (1903-1942) were writing their novel *The Golden Calf*, which has a similar scene with an empty suit. The source for both may have been *The History of a Town* written by

Mikhail Yefgrafovich Saltykov-Shchedrin (1826-1889). This book was published in 1869-1870 and it was a parody of Russian history, in the microcosm of a provincial town, whose very name - **Глунов** [Glupov] - is representative of its qualities, because *Glupov* means *Sillytown*.

The mayors of Glupov can be distinguished from each other only by the degree of their incompetence, but at the same time *The History of a Town* is an attack on the Russian people for their passivity toward their own fate.

Prosha

Anna Richardovna is the personal secretary of **Prokhor Petrovich**. Her use of the familiar form «*Prosha*» in addressing him is not appropriate in the work environment.

A cat, black, big as a behemoth

Bulgakov shows how Behemoth got his name here. *Hippopotamus* in Russian is **Бегемот** [Begemot].

The affiliate, located in Vagankovsky Lane

There never was an office on Vagankovsky Lane connected with entertainment, but Bulgakov would have come to this street to visit the *Rumyantsev* or *Lenin Library*. The street takes its name from **ваганить** [vaganit], a dialect word meaning to *clown* or *play the fool*. The czar's *jesters* (called skomorokhi) used to live here.

Glorious sea, sacred Baikal

This prison song about the *Siberian Baikal lake* was very popular after the Revolution. Its title is **Славное море, священный Байкал** [Slavnoye morye, sviyashchenny Baikal] or *Glorious Sea, Sacred Baikal*.

Slavnoye morye is a song which had been thought up by prisoners from the *Nerchinsk* prison camp in Siberia around 1850. It was based on the poem **Думы беглеца на Байкале** [Dumy begletsya na Baykalye] or *The Soul of the Fugitives in the Baikal*, which was written in 1848 by **Dmitri Pavlovich Davydov** (1811-1888). There exist many different versions of the song, because the original text of the poem was often changed and usually shortened considerably.

On the «*Master & Margarita*» website you can see how the song was sung by the employees of the *Commission on Spectacles and Entertainment of the Lighter Type* in the TV series

Mistrz i Małgorzata by **Maciej Wojtyszko** (°1946) in 1990. The author of this book subtitled this TV-series in English, Spanish, French, German, Italian and Dutch. The DVD can be order in the in the web shop of the «Master & Margarita» website.



The readers of the English **Michael Glenny** translation and the readers of the Dutch translation may wonder why the song *Glorious sea, sacred Baikal* is discussed here, since neither Glenny nor Fondse mentioned it. Fondse replaced this song by a Dutch childrens' song, and Glenny substituted *Glorious sea, sacred Baikal* blithely with **Эй ухнем** [Ey Ukhnem] or *The Song of the Volga Boatmen*, also known as *The Volga Burlak's Song*. *The Song of the Volga Boatmen* is another well-known traditional Russian song depicting the suffering of the people in the depth of misery in czarist Russia. In 1866, it was published in *Collection of Russian Folksongs*, a book by **Mily Alexeevich Balakirev** (1836-1910). It was taken to the number one position in the US-charts in 1941 by **Glenn Miller** (1904-1944), but it's not the song that Bulgakov described here in *The Master and Margarita*.

It is possible that Bulgakov got the idea for this scene from something that occurred in his private life and which his third wife **Elena Sergeevna Nyurenberg** (1893-1970) described in her diary. On December 18, 1934, the actor **Ruben Nikolaevich Simonov** (1899-1968) had visited their home, together with other members of the *Vakhtangov Theater*. Simonov had played a role in Bulgakov's piece *Zoya's apartment*. He had come to listen to a lecture of *Crazy Jourdain*, an adaptation which Bulgakov had made of the ballet comedy *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* by **Jean-Baptiste Molière** (1622-1673).

After the lecture they went together to Simonov's flat, where the actor, along with theater director and pedagogue **Yosif Mateevich Rapoport** (1901-1970), had sung the song **По диким степям Забайкалья** [Po dikim stepyam Zabaykalya] or *By the wild steppes of the Transbaykalye*. It's also a song created by exiles in Siberia, with the text attributed to the Belarusian writer **Ivan Kuzmich Kondratyev** (1849-1904). This song is also known as **Бродяга** [Brodyaga] or *The Wanderer*, the lyrics of which were also often changed and usually shortened considerably. It was published and recorded by many artists and choirs, the first time in 1908 by **Nadezhda Vasilevna Plevitskaya** (1884-1940).

Simonov and Rapoport must have entertained their audience particularly well that night, since they performed a hilarious version of *The Wanderer*. They had forgotten the words of parts of the text, and filled in the missing parts with their own interpretations.

In the neighbouring room no. 6

Room no. 6 is a reference to *Ward number 6*, a popular story from 1892 by **Anton Pavlovich Chekhov** (1860-1904) about a lunatic asylum where a constructed reality collides with real life.

Shilka and Nerchinsk

Shilka and **Nerchinsk** are towns on the *Shilka River*, east of Baikal, known as places of exile. The Nerchinsk camp is more in particular known as the place of origin of the song *Glorious sea, sacred Baikal*. «Shilka and Nerchinsk...» are the first words of the third verse of *Glorious sea, sacred Baikal*:

«*Shilka and Nerchinsk don't scare me anymore...
The mountain guards can't catch me*».

A dose of valerian

Valerian drops are distilled from the plant *Valeriana officinalis* (Heliotrope). These drops are still used as a mild sedative to calm anxiety and the heart.

Lermontov

Mikhail Yuryevich Lermontov (1814-1841) was a lyric poet, playwright and novelist of the generation following **Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin** (1799-1837). Lermontov's work shows his aversion to the suppression of the people by the czars. That's why he was so often in conflict with the authorities. Lermontov was absolutely not well-liked by the court. In 1837 Lermontov composed the poem *Death of a poet* as a reaction to the death of Pushkin. Czar **Nicolas I** (1825-1894) didn't like it and exiled Lermontov to the Caucasus. Inspired by his experiences, Lermontov wrote his masterpiece, the novel *A Hero of Our Time* (1840).

In February 1841, he stayed in the health resort *Pyatigorsk* for a couple of months. There it came to a duel between him and his fellow-officer **Nikolai Solomonovich Martynov** (1815-1875). Lermontov teased Martynov mercilessly until the latter couldn't stand it anymore. On July 25, 1841, Martynov challenged his offender to a duel. The fight took place two days later at the foot of the *Mashuk* mountain. Lermontov allegedly made it known that he was going to shoot into the air. But Martynov was the first to shoot and he aimed straight into Lermontov's heart, killing his opponent on the spot. On July 30, Mikhail Lermontov was buried, without military honours. Thousands of people attended the ceremony. Some say that Martynov had orders from the court to provoke the duel and to kill Lermontov.

Fanov and Kosarchuk, well-known affiliate toadies

I don't know (yet) if there exists a real prototype for these characters. **Фан** [Fan] means *fan* or supporter, and a **Косарь** [kosar] is a *chopper*.

Foreign money

It may be amazing that the list of «foreign money» here includes Latvian lats and Estonian kroons, along with the Canadian dollars, British pounds and Dutch guildens. Both Latvia and Estonia were Soviet republics. But between the wars - when Bulgakov wrote *The Master and Margarita* - the Baltic states were independent and had their own currencies.

Chapter 18
Hapless Visitors



Maximilian Andreevich Poplavsky

Poplavsky is Berlioz' uncle by marriage, living in Kiev. Bulgakov himself was born in Kiev. At the beginning of the book, in chapter 3, while Berlioz is running to the exit of the Patriarch's Ponds to call the secret police, Woland calls out: «Would you like me to have a telegram sent at once to your uncle in Kiev?»

There exists a Russian phrase saying: «**В огороде бузина, а в Киеве дядька**» or «*the elderberries are in the garden, and the uncle is in Kiev*». It's a reply given when there is no logical connection between things that someone is saying, similar to the phrase «you are mixing apples and oranges».

The former Institutsky Street

The «former» *Institutsky Street* is now Institutsky Street again. In 1919, the name was changed into *October 25 Street* and later, in 1944, into *October Revolution Street*. In 1993 it got back its old name. It is one of the main streets of Kiev, close to the *Independence Square*, better known as *Maidan*.

Have just been run over by tram-car

Bulgakov uses the impersonal form of the verb **зарезать** [zarezat] or *cutting someone's throat*, the *instrumentalis* declension of the noun **трамвай** [tramway] or *streetcar*, and the *accusative* form of the personal pronoun **я** [ya] or *I*.

This is a bizarre construction, in Russian as well as in English. The English language has no impersonal form, such as «on» in French or «men» in Dutch. To get a similar effect, the third person plural «they» is often used. So the translation closest to the meaning here would be: «They just cut my throat with a tramway», as if one could use a streetcar as a knife to cut a throat.

For the students among you: **зарезать** [zarezat] also means *to fail* in the context of an exam.

An apartment in Moscow

If a Soviet citizen could obtain an apartment in Moscow it was a great victory. Moscow had goods that could not be found anywhere else. However, to gain a **прописка** [propiska] - a *registration* or *permit* to live there - one had to have been born in the city or marry someone with a permit. Poplavsky's attempts to trade his apartment in Kiev for one in Moscow and his desire to inherit his nephew's housing was a common scenario during the Soviet period.

The spring flooding of the Dnieper

The Dnieper River flows through Kiev.

The staggeringly beautiful view which opened out from the foot of the monument to Prince Vladimir

The statue of **Prince Vladimir I of Kiev** stands on a hill overlooking the Dnieper River below. Technically the statue is a monument to the *baptism of Russia*. Prince **Vladimir Svyatoslavich the Great** (956-1015) was the pagan ruler who, in 988, brought Christianity in its Byzantine form to the *Kievan Rus'*. Kievan Rus' is considered a predecessor state of three modern East Slavic nations: Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. It stretched out from Kiev to Novgorod. Vladimir hoped for better political and cultural relation with Bulgaria and the Byzantine Empire.

The statue was made by **Vasili Ivanovich Demut-Malinovsky** (1779-1846) and **Peter Klodt von Jürgensburg** (1805-1867) and erected in 1853.

«Aha!»

Poplavsky's multiple exclamations of «Aha!» show that he knows how to interpret the news that the chairman and the secretary of the management of Bolshaya Sadovaya no. 302 bis have vanished.

Management member Pyatnashko

I don't know (yet) if there exists a real prototype for the **Pyatnashko** character. The first part of his name: **пять** [pyat], means *five*, and the verb **нажить** [nazhit] means *earning* [money].

As if on purpose, all of them at once...

In the Russian text, the men who vanish are put in the accusative, without a subject or verb. By this playing with the language, Bulgakov explains that they are the object of an action, executed by the «unmentionable» secret service. Poplavsky, clever man that he is, knows which subject and verb are involved when, a few seconds later, «he found himself alone in the empty management room». In the time of Stalin, the secret police were not always concerned about evidence of guilt or innocence. People who witnessed things that should not be seen were often arrested, convicted and even executed together with the guilty ones.

Three hundred drops of tincture of valerian

Again the drops that already appeared in the previous chapter. But 300 drops would be a huge dose, causing a coma or death.

The 412th office

Bulgakov uses again an impossibly high number for a department issuing passports. The number 412 will reappear in chapter 27 of the novel, when the secret police find **Grigory Danilovich Rimsky**, the *findirector* of the *Variety Theatre*, in room number 412 of the *Astoria* hotel in Leningrad.

Bulgakov knew this room very well, by the way. It's the room in which he preferred to stay himself when he was in Leningrad. And another coincidence: between 2004 and 2010, the author of this book often went to Moscow, where he stayed at the *Baltschug Kempinski* hotel, where he also often was assigned room number 412.

Passports

The internal passport was abolished after the revolution and reinstated by Stalin on October 27, 1932, in the period of the *Great Famine*. However, the rural population did not receive one, because the regime wanted to avoid that everybody left the kolchozes or collective farms. Without a passport it was impossible to move to another city. Peasants had to wait until the 60s before they could receive a passport.

The application process to get a passport was quite complex with many long questionnaires, containing a series of unpleasant and dangerous questions about the past, about relatives abroad, etc.

Actually, this hasn't changed much since then. In 2009, when the webmaster of the «Master & Margarita» website was applying for a residence permit in Moscow, he also had to fill out many long questionnaires in which he had to mention a lot of information, not only about himself, but also about his parents, all his brothers and sisters and their activities, all the addresses he ever lived etc. Before he could actually start the procedure, he was sent to four different hospitals in four different parts of the city for a whole series of medical examinations, of which the last one was in a psychiatric center.

At that time, he had a blog in which he described his experiences throughout the application procedure. Soon after he began describing the often rude and humiliating treatment of the applicants, of which most came from former Soviet republics, and details on how bribes were requested and paid, the blog was taken offline by unknown forces. The residence permit was granted, however.

Everything was confusion in the Oblonskys' home

Bulgakov quotes the second line of the novel *Anna Karenina* (1873-1876), the famous novel written by **Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy** (1828-1910).

Everything was confusion indeed. The wife discovered that the husband was carrying on an intrigue with a French girl, who was a governess in their family, and the wife announced to her husband that she could not go on living in the same house with him.

This position of affairs lasted three days, and not only the husband and wife themselves, but all the members of their family and household, were painfully conscious of it. The wife did not leave her own room, the husband had not been at home for three days, the children ran wild all over the house, the English governess quarreled with the housekeeper, the man-cook had walked off the day before just at dinner time, and both the kitchen-maid and the coachman had given warning.

An old-fashioned tussore silk suit

Bulgakov describes an elderly man **в чесунчовом старинном костюме** [v chessunchovom starinnom kostumye] or *in an old-fashioned tussore silk suit*. **Чесуча** [chesucha] is *tussore silk*. It's a brownish kind of wild silk, produced by the caterpillar of the *tussah* butterfly, which is found in China.

The Dutch translators don't mention tussore silk, they mention *shantung silk*. Shantung is the name given to a rough silk tissue produced in the province of 山东 [Shan-tung] or *Shandong*.

Shandong is considered as the province where pottery-making, porcelain and silk originated. Are the Dutch translators mistaken then? Well, not quite. The tissues which are made from tussore silk are *honan* and *shantung*.

Andrei Fokich Sokov

Sokov is the barman at the *Variety Theatre*. It's an appropriate name for a barman, because the Russian word **сок** [sok] means *juice*.

The purple scar on her neck

With this characteristic - «the only thing that might have been considered a defect in her appearance» - Bulgakov indicates that the girl who let Sokov in was a vampire. Vampires occur in many legends around the world. In most cases, they are evil beings who have died,

suicide victims, or witches, but they can also be created by being bitten - often in the neck - by another vampire.

A funereal cloak lined with fiery cloth and a long sword with a gleaming gold hilt

These are costumes and props appropriate to the devil Mephistopheles in the opera *Faust* by **Charles Gounod** (1818-1895).

Baron Meigel

The real prototype for Baron Meigel's character is **Baron Boris Sergeevich (von) Steiger** (1892-1937). In the '20's and '30's he worked in Moscow at the **Народный комиссариат просвещения (Наркомпрос)** [Narodny kommissariat prosveshcheniya] (Narkompros) or *People's Commissariat for Enlightening*, where he was responsible for *External Relations*. Simultaneously he worked as an agent of the **Объединённое государственное политическое управление (ОГПУ)** [Obedinyonnoe gosudarstvennoe politicheskoye upravlenye] (OGPU) or the *United State Political Administration*, the secret service which became part of the notorious **NKVD** in 1934. In 1937, Steiger was arrested and executed.

Steiger is mentioned several times in the diary of Bulgakov's third wife **Elena Sergeevna Nyurenberg** (1893-1970). He was often found at the embassy of the United States. He reported on foreigners connected with the theatre, and on Soviet citizens having contact with the embassy.

Meigel reappears in the novel in chapter 23, at the *Great Ball of Satan*. In the *Characters* section of the «Master & Margarita» website, you can read more on Boris Sergeevich Steiger.

A tailcoat or a black suit

On March 29, 1935, Bulgakov and his wife received an invitation to a reception which would be organised at the American ambassador's residence on April 23. The invitation had a note added: «A tailcoat or a black suit». In her diary, Bulgakov's third wife **Elena Sergeevna Nyurenberg** (1893-1970) wrote, «Misha was worried that the note was meant for him only. And I tried very hard to 'create' a tailcoat quickly. But the tailor couldn't find the right fabric and he had to go in a suit».

This reception of April 23 inspired Bulgakov to describe the *Great Ball of Satan* in chapter 23. At the end of this reception, Bulgakov and his wife met the aforementioned Steiger for the first time: «We left at half past five in one of the cars of the embassy. With us in the car was a man we didn't know, but whom all Moscow knows. It seems his name is Steiger. He was sitting next to the driver and we were in the rear».

A black tailcoat and patent leather shoes are also part of the dress code for lodge brothers in *Freemasonry*. Later in the novel, at the Great Ball of Satan, all male guests will be dressed this way.

The stained glass of the big windows, the table covered with church brocade

Various houses in Moscow at the turn of the century had stained glass windows, although not the one Bulgakov actually lived in. The church-like atmosphere prepares the reader for the ball that takes place in chapter 23.

In 1926, two years before Bulgakov started writing *The Master and Margarita*, several Freemasons got arrested in the Soviet Union, mostly in Leningrad, where six Lodges were found to exist.

One of those arrested was the lawyer **Boris Viktorovich Kirichenko** (1883-1941?), who lived under the pseudonym **Boris Viktorovich Astromov**.

In the the secret police documents, the following description can be read: «The interior of the Masonic Lodge would be an asset to any given museum. We saw old portraits of the great Freemasons who belong in the ranks of the devotees of the genius. We saw secret 300 years old lamps, astral knots, the true rings of *Cagliostro*, Indian resins and Japanese incense, the bones keys of the Jesuits, *Tangar* sculptures, tapestries embroidered in blue gold, and even the original oath of allegiance to the Maltese knights, signed by Paul I.»

In an earlier version of *The Master and Margarita*, similar items filled the apartment on Sadovaya: a great number of rugs, a golden chalice on a pedestal for the holy gifts, Woland's black Catholic cassock, made of gold brocade with inverted crosses, and a cat with turquoise eyes sitting on a couch.

When Andrey Fokich Sokov, the buffet manager of the *Variety Theatre*, was leaving the apartment, he saw a temple where, instead of an icon, «a picture with sacred content» was placed.

A church panikhida

А **панихида** [panikhida] is a special service of the Orthodox Church for *commemoration of the dead*, held between the actual death and the burial.

A *panikhida* may be celebrated at any other convenient time as well, like on the sixth month anniversary of death or the annual anniversary of death. Many Orthodox Christians offer a panikhida every year on the anniversary of a beloved one's death, celebrating in a certain sense their birthday into life eternal.

Brynza Feta cheese is never green in colour!

In the Russian text is written: «**Брынза не бывает зеленого цвета!**» or «*Brynza has no green colour!*». Bulgakov doesn't use the word *feta*. **Брынза** [Brynza] is a *goat's or sheep milk cheese* made mainly in Slovakia, Romania and Moldova, but also in Poland, Ukraine, Hungary and part of Moravia. This cheese is creamy, rich and salty, and ranges from soft and spreadable to semidry and crumbly.

They supplied sturgeon of the second freshness

Sturgeon of the second freshness or, in Russian: **Осетрину прислали второй свежести** [Osetrinu prislali vtoroy svezhesti] became one of the many popular sayings from Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* after its first publication. It was common in the Soviet Union to classify things into grades, in such way that the lesser categories could be given a positive name anyway.

In the 19th century there existed already expressions such as «partially fresh eggs». In 1895, **George du Maurier** (1834-1896) published a cartoon in the British humorous magazine *Punch* with the title *True Humility*. A timid-looking curate is taking breakfast in his bishop's house, but the egg he received isn't really fresh. The Bishop says: «I'm afraid you've got a bad egg, Mister Jones». Apparently trying to avoid offence the curate replies: «Oh, no, my Lord, I assure you that parts of it are excellent!»

A cup of wine?

The interrogation of Sokov in the apartment of Woland also reminds us of the test undergone by a *Freemason* before he is being initiated as a *Knight Kadosh* or *Knight of the White and Black Eagle*, the 30th degree in the *Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite*. All candidates for this degree are, among other things, judged on their attitude towards the *Seven Deadly Sins*: hubristic pride, greed, lust, malicious envy, gluttony, wrath, and sloth. But Sokov does not drink wine and does not seem to be interested in women. He does show signs of greed, however, and he became angry when Woland asked him if he was going to die. He thus failed the test and would not see the light.

The binomial theorem, you might think!

The expression **бином Ньютона!** [binom Newtona!] or *Newton's binomial theorem!* became also very popular in Russian after the first publication of the novel. From what follows in the text, one can see that anything is simpler than Newton's binomial theorem, even the prediction of someone's death.

Newton's binomial theorem is a rather complex mathematical formula developed by **Isaac Newton** (1643-1727) that demonstrates *the expansion of powers of sums*. It specifies the expansion of a binomial of the form $(x + y)^n$ to the exponent n as the sum of $n + 1$ terms of which the general term consists of a product of x and y with x raised to the exponent $(n - k)$ and y raised to the exponent k and a coefficient consisting of $n!$ divided by $(n - k)!k!$ where k takes on values from 0 to n . If you were able to understand this explanation, you're a whole lot smarter than I.

Hella

Hella is a female vampire. From his annotations we know that Bulgakov found her name in the **Энциклопедический словарь Брокгауза и Ефрона** [Entsiklopedesky slovar Brokhauza i Efrona] or the *Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary*, a work containing 86 volumes, which can be considered as the Russian equivalent for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Under the keyword **Чародейство** [Charodeystvo] or *magic* or *witchcraft*, he found that **Empuza**, **Lamia** and **Hella** were the names given on the Greek island of *Lesbos* to premature girls who became vampires after their death.

In the earlier versions of *The Master and Margarita*, however, this **рыжая голая** [ryzhaya golaya] or *red naked* had a different name. She was called **Marta**.

The Russian psychologist and translator **Valery Konstantinovich Mershavka** (°1957) believes that this Marta was inspired by **Sofia Lvovna Perovskaya** (1853-1881). Perovskaya was a prominent member of the socialist revolutionary organisation **Народная воля** [Narodnaya Volya] or *The Will of the People*, and she participated in three attempts to murder **Tsar Alexander II** (1818-1881). The last attempt was successful, after which Perovskaya was sentenced to death by hanging. This way of executing could explain the **багровый шрам** [bagrovy shram] or the *red scar* in Marta's - and later Hella's - neck.

A velvet beret with a dishevelled cock's feather

When the buffet manager is leaving the apartment, he notices that he is wearing a velvet beret with a dishevelled cock's feather. That is significantly inferior to the «broad-brimmed black felt hat with a plume of ostrich feathers on the left» which, according to the rules, the *Knights of Kadosh* should wear during the masonic rituals.

The beret turned into a black kitten

For this detail Bulgakov was most likely inspired by the novel **Московский чудаки** [Moskovsky Chudak] or *The Moscow Eccentric* by the Russian writer **Boris Nikolaevich Bugaev** (1880-1934), who wrote under the pseudonym **Andrei Bely**.

In *The Moscow Eccentric*, the self-willed professor **Korobkin** puts a cat on his head instead of his fur beret. The prototype of professor Korobkin's character was Bely's own father, **Nikolai Vasilyevich Bugaev** (1837-1903), who was a prominent Russian mathematician. Nikolai Bugaev was a memorable character with a life filled with scandals. He was not, it is said, much admired for his looks, but his wife was brilliant, beautiful, and rich, and the Bugaevs were socially prominent.

Professor Kuzmin

Bulgakov took the name Kuzmin from **Vasily Ivanovich Kuzmin** (1851-1928), a Russian surgeon and professor at the universities of Moscow and Kazan who, at the end of his career, had opened a private practice in Sadovaya Kudrinskaya no. 29, near the Patriarch's Ponds. Many sources see him as the real prototype for the professor in *The Master and Margarita*, and introduce him as «one of the doctors who unsuccessfully treated Bulgakov at the end of 1939». But that is impossible, because Vasily Ivanovich Kuzmin died more than 10 years before.

The real life prototype for the Professor Kuzmin in the novel was Professor **Miron Semyonovich Vovsi** (1897-1960), a specialist in kidney and lung diseases. Vovsi received his doctor's degree in 1919 at the Medical Faculty of the *Moscow State University*. He was known for not always paying attention to medical ethics, especially in expressing his diagnosis. After he had examined Bulgakov on September 17, 1939, he immediately told Bulgakov's wife **Elena Sergeevna Nyurenberg** (1893-1970) that Bulgakov would die within three days. Bulgakov would die only seven months later, but he couldn't stop thinking of the meeting with Vovsi, and on January 15, 1940, he dictated the scene of buffet manager Sokov and his meeting with Professor Kuzmin to his wife Elena Sergeevna.

A small white house

The drugstore mentioned in *The Master and Margarita* belonged to a certain **Rubanovski** and was situated in Bolshaya Sadovaya ulitsa no. 1. The house in which Bulgakov places the cabinet of doctor Kuzmin was a little further, in no. 5, which is where **Elena Sergeevna Nyurenberg** (1893-1970), Bulgakov's third wife, lived.

Both buildings were torn down when the **Отель Пекин** [Otel Pekin] or *Hotel Peking*, one of Moscow's biggest hotels, was built. The real doctor Kuzmin lived in Kudrinskaya ulitsa no. 28.

Professor Bouret

I don't know (yet) if there exists a real prototype for the professor **Bouret** character. In Michael Glenny's translation he's called **Burye**.

«Hallelujah!»

This is the second appearance of this song in the novel. This charleston written by **Vincent Youmans** (1898-1946) appears three times in the novel.

Working it in syncopation

The word *syncopation* comes from the Greek verb **συγκόπτω** [synkopto], which means *to abbreviate*. In music, the term is used to denote a disturbance or interruption of the regular flow of rhythm or the placement of rhythmic stresses or accents where they wouldn't normally occur.

(I'm not joking!)

This is one of the few times that the narrator comments directly what's happening in *The Master and Margarita*. As if the reader, who swallowed decapitations, mass hypnoses and much more demonic things, would now, all of the sudden, not believe that a sparrow «shat in the presentation inkstand».

He called a leech bureau

The medicinal leech *Hirudo medicinalis* and its congeners *Hirudo verbana*, *Hirudo troctina* and *Hirudo orientalis* was used as a means of *bloodletting*. The leech was put on the skin and it sucked blood from the patient. Then the blood was pushed out of the leech to avoid it to become saturated. A diagnosis was made based on an analysis of the blood. In previous times, leeches could be freely bought in pharmacies. In some big American states and in Asia they are still used, albeit much less than in Bulgakov's time. Between 1829 and 1836, for example, 6 million leeches were used annually in hospitals in Paris, drawing nearly 85.000 kg of blood from patients each year.

Ironically, modern medicine again has a use for medicinal leeches. They produce a substance, the so-called *hirudine*, which is an effective means to reduce blood coagulation, to relieve pressure from pooling blood, especially after plastic surgery, and to stimulate circulation in reattachment operations for organs with critical blood flow, such as eye lids, fingers, and ears.

Chapter 19
Margarita



Follow me, reader!

This is one of the few cases where the narrator addresses the reader directly. The narrator seems to prepare the reader for some great exposé.

Margarita

The name which Bulgakov gives to his heroin recalls that of Gretchen (the German diminutive of Margarete), the young girl ruined by *Faust* in the drama written by **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** (1794-1832). In the novel are also made references to **Marguerite de Valois** (1555-1615), spouse of the French king **Henri IV** (1553-1610), also known as *la reine Margot*.

The main prototype for Margarita was, without any doubt, **Elena Sergeevna Shilovskaya** (1893-1970), born **Nyurenberg**, Bulgakov's third wife. Like the master and Margarita, they were both married when they met each other, and they both fell in love immediately. Elena Sergeevna was married to **Yevgeny Aleksandrovich Shilovsky** (1889-1952), and she met Bulgakov on February 28, 1929 or March 17, 1929 - the sources are contradictory - in the home of the brothers and artists **Moyseenko** at Bolshoy Gnezdnikovsky pereulok no. 10, apartment 527. Bolshoy Gnezdnikovsky pereulok is a lane down Tverskaya. In the novel, the master and Margarita met each other for the first time when «she turned down a lane from Tverskaya»

The house stands untouched to this day

This sentence was correct when Bulgakov wrote it, but it is no longer true. In order to identify Margarita's house, I relied on a clue presented by Bulgakov's himself. In chapter 21 of the novel, he gives us a detailed description of Margarita's flight from her house to the *Dramlit House*, the building where Latunsky lived. If you follow this description in the reverse direction, back to its starting place, you arrive at a house in Taneevukh ulitsa, now called Maly Vlasevski pereulok, no. 10 in Moscow. It corresponds nicely with the description in the novel, at least it did until 1964, when it was demolished.

Bulgakov must have known that house very well. Because there, or in the house just next to it, in no. 9a - the sources are not unanimous - lived **Olga Sergeevna Bokshanskaya** (1891-1948), the sister of Bulgakov's wife **Elena Sergeevna Nyurenberg** (1893-1970). Olga Sergeevna lived there with her husband, MKhAT actor **Yevgeny Vasilevich Kalushki** (1896-1966).

The house next door, Maly Vlasevski pereulok, no. 12, which was built in the same style, has been completely restored. In January 2012, it had been put on the market. The advertisement called it, rather deceptively, *Margarita's house*, and the price asked was 42 million dollar.

You can read much more on Margarita's house in the *Locations* section of the «Master & Margarita» website.



The dread Antonia Tower

The **Antonia Tower** was a fortress in ancient Jerusalem. It housed the Roman garrison in the city and was the place where the Roman procurator normally stayed on official visits. It was named by **Herod the Great** (?75 BC-04) in honour of the Roman general and *triumvir* **Mark Antony** (85 BC-50 BC), who ruled the eastern third of the empire.

The Has-monaean Palace

The **Has-monaean** dynasty, under the lead of **Simon Maccabaeus** (?-135 BC), ruled over Judea from 140 to 34 BC. The *Has-monaean palace* was situated west in the Upper City. From the roof, the *Xystus*, one could address the people gathered on the huge square below.

The trolley-bus

The history of the trolleybus goes back to April 29, 1882, when **Ernst Werner von Siemens** (1816-1892) ran his *Elektromote* in Halensee, a suburb of Berlin, Germany. In my younger years, this public transportation vehicle was in use in Belgium too, but it has disappeared from our streets. In Moscow, however, these electric buses which are driven by overground electrical cables like trams, are still popular. Because they run on tires, rather than on tracks, they are more manoeuvrable than trams.

The cremation is at two, you say?

Like many other Christian religions, the *Orthodox Church* in Russia was strongly opposed to cremation. Cremation was regarded as a «sacrilege», and a crematorium was called «a chair of wickedness».

The Bolsheviks had introduced cremation in the Soviet Union as an alternative to the ecclesiastical burial. The first cremation took place on December 14, 1920, in Leningrad.

However, there were many technical problems, and the first crematory in Moscow was only opened in 1927. In order to convince the population and to provide a good example, official representatives of the regime and party members, such as Mikhail Alexandrovitch Berlioz, were cremated.

The Manege

The *Manege* is an oblong building next to the Kremlin and the *Aleksandrovsky Garden*, designed by Spanish engineer **Agustín de Betancourt y Molina** (1758–1824). Originally it was a riding academy built after the war against **Napoleon Bonaparte** (1769-1821). Later it was used as a concert hall. In 1867, **Hector Berlioz** (1803-1869) and **Nikolai Rubinstein** (1835-1881) gave a concert there for a public of 12.000 people.

Abandoned after the revolution, in Bulgakov's time the Manege served as a garage and warehouse for the Kremlin. It was completely restored as a permanent art-exhibition space, but it was totally destroyed by a fire on March 14, 2004. It was completely repaired again and on February 18, 2005, it re-opened with the exhibition which was planned for the day it burned down.

Lovelace

In the Russian text the name **Lovelace** is written in Cyrillic transliteration as **ловеласе**. He was the main character in the novel *Clarissa, or the history of a young lady* written by the English writer and printer **Samuel Richardson** (1689-1761), which was very popular in Russia.

Clarissa, or the history of a young lady may well be the longest novel in the English language. The full volume of its third edition, the edition most extensively revised by Richardson, is longer than one million words.

Lovelace is a womanizer who is more and more impressed by **Clarissa Harlowe**, a beautiful and virtuous young lady whose family has become very wealthy only in recent years. He finds it difficult to keep convincing himself that truly virtuous women do not exist. His growing passion for Clarissa forces him to extremes and eventually he rapes her. In Russia today, Lovelace is the equivalent of **Don Juan** or **Cassanova**.

I'd pawn my soul to the devil

Again Woland's suite appears as perceived through the thoughts of a Muscovite. Margarita's appeal is more direct than Berlioz's in the first chapter.

You want to arrest me?

Margarita's reaction reflects the terror which existed in the Soviet Union: she is prepared to be arrested even though she has committed no crime.

A very distinguished foreigner... a street pander

It was very common for the secret police to use sex to entrap foreigners or extract secrets from them. Margarita naturally assumes that this is what she is meant to do.

Oh God!

This is a quite funny reaction, given the circumstances and the company. So note Azazello's reaction to Margarita's words: «Please, no excitements and exclamations».

I must give myself to him

These words contain a double pun: Margarita persists in thinking she is being drafted to work for the secret service. At the same time, in traditional witch-lore, communion with the Devil always meant sexual intercourse as well.

The name «Niura»

According to **Alyona Rudko**, a fan of the «Master & Margarita» website from Rostov, Russia, the name **Niura** is, just like **Annushka**, an informal diminutive of the name **Anna**.

When Woland, in Chapter 2, said to Berlioz that «Annushka has already spilled the oil», he indicated that there was no way back. His death had been planned, there is no escape possible. The name Annushka symbolized the irreversible destiny.

The variant of this name, Niura, «carved on the back of the bench in big letters» could mean that the decision of Margarita is also final and irreversible. Her death is now planned, there is no possible escape for her neither.

Chapter 20
Azazello's Cream



Azazello

In the apocryphal *Book of Enoch* of the *Old Testament*, Azazel was the leader of the **grigori**, a group of fallen angels who mated with mortal women, giving rise to a race of giants, known as the **Nephilim**. Azazel is particularly noteworthy among the grigori because it was he who taught men how to make weapons of war, as well as teaching women how to make and wear cosmetics.

Thanks to Azazel women learned the «sinful art» of painting their faces, so it is clear why he delivers the cream which has the effect of making Margarita young again. Eventually, Azazel's teachings created such iniquity that God decided to destroy all life on Earth with *Noah's Flood*.

Azazel is a common demonic character in many religions. In the Jewish tradition Azazel was a demon living in the wilderness. This Jewish tradition got followers in Algeria and Morocco. In Islam, Azazel is a *Dzhin* thrown out of heaven because he refused to worship **Adam** and because he was driven by the lust for mortal girls.

In modern Hebrew the expression «go to azazel» means as much as «drop dead». Objects that «went to azazel», are broke and irreparable. And time, money or efforts that «went to azazel» are forever lost. In short, azazel is always a negative destination.

She dropped the box right on her watch crystal

Margarita begins having problems with the fourth dimension - time. Soon she will find herself in the fifth dimension.

As if a needle had been snatched from her brain

After having applied Azazello's cream, Margarita feels the pain easing in her temple, which started after her meeting with Azazello. It now feels «as if a needle had been snatched from her brain». This needle is also seen with Berlioz in the first chapter and several other places in the novel when humans who come into contact with Woland or one of his retinue like, for instance, Stefan (Styopa) Bogdanovich Likhodeev in Chapter 7 and Nikanor Ivanovich in Chapter 9.

A thundering virtuoso waltz

The action is again accompanied by music, but this time the music is not specified. Bulgakov didn't give any indications as on what musical piece we should imagine to accompany Margarita's transformation into a witch.

A squatting dance

Most people know this dance, though not by its Russian name: **вприсядку** [vprisyadku] means *squatting*, in the context of the typical Russian dance involving crouching on one leg with the other out straight, alternating from one leg to the other in a crouching position.

A sweeping broom, bristles up

The word Bulgakov uses for the broom on which Margarita flies away is not the typical witch's broom as we know it from stories. In most western presentations a witch's broom is made of twigs tied together on a stem. The name of this kind of broom in Russian is **веник** [vyenik]. But in the novel Margarita flies on an ordinary *flat-headed broom*, a **щетка** [shchetka].

Moreover, she did not fly in the traditional way of the witches on the broom. Usually flying witches are depicted with the twigs of the broom behind them. But Margarita had the broom **«щетиной вверх»** [shchetnoy vverkh] or *in the reverse way*, «with the bristles up».

Chapter 21
Flight



The Chapter's title

Margarita's flight over Moscow inspired the Scottish rock band **Franz Ferdinand** to the song *Love and Destroy* in 2004. It's the b-side of their single *Michael*.

After flying down her own lane

Although there are different opinions, we have strong arguments to believe that Margarita's «own lane» was *Taneyevuch ulitsa* in the Arbat area.

Bulgakov's road map

On the «Master & Margarita» website, we published a clickable map, on which you can follow Bulgakov's description of Margarita's flight, from Taneyevuch ulitsa to the Dramlit House.

The lane with the kerosene shop

Older residents recall that there was indeed an oil store at number 20 of Sivtsev Vrazhek pereulok in Moscow, a street parallel with the Arbat.

The dazzlingly bright tubes on the theatre building

The theatre building is the *Vakhtangov Theatre* at number 26 of the Arbat. It is named after **Yevgeny Bagrationovich Vakhtangov** (1883-1922), a pupil of **Konstantin Sergeevich Stanislavsky** (1863-1938). The original 19th century building was destroyed by a bomb in the 40's. It was rebuilt at the same location.

Two primuses

Again Bulgakov mentions *primus stoves*. He did it already in Chapter 4, and they will play an important role later in the novel, when Koroviev and Behemoth raise hell in Moscow in chapter 28. The shortage of living space after the revolution led to the typical Soviet phenomenon of *communal apartments*, in which several families would have one or two private rooms and share the kitchen and toilet facilities. The primus stove, a portable one-burner stove fueled with pressurized benzene, made its appearance at the same time and became a symbol of communal-apartment life. Each family would have its own primus.

An eight-storeyed, obviously just-constructed building

Dramlit, the *House for Dramaturgists and Literators* is, according to Bulgakov's flight description, situated on Bolshoi Nikolopeskovsky pereulok near Arbat.

But there was no such building in Bolshoi Nikolopeskovsky pereulok. Bulgakov had simply projected another building, finished in 1935, to this spot. This other building was situated on the other side of the Moscow River in Lavrushinsky pereulok 17, close to the *Tretyakov Gallery*. The apartment 84 of that building was indeed on the seventh floor and is similar to the description in the novel, and the other apartments as well.

Furthermore, in apartment 84 lived, in reality, **Osaf Semeznovich Litovsky** (1892-1971), head of the **Главный репертуарный комитет (Главрепертком)** [Glavny repertuarny komitet] (Glavrepertkom) or the *Central Committee for Repertoires* from 1930 to 1937. Litovsky introduced the term *Bulgakovism* after the first performances of Bulgakov's play *Days of the Turbins*. Litovsky very closely matches the personality of the critic **Latunsky** in *The Master and Margarita*.

Seven storeys? Or eight? Bulgakov's text mentions: **ВОСЬМИЭТАЖНОГО** [vosmietàzhnovo] or *with eight storeys*. The English translators translated this as an «eight-storeyed, obviously just-constructed building» (Pevear en Volokhonsky) or «an obviously newly-built eight-storey block of flats» (Glenny). In the Dutch translation however we read «seven storeys». This confusion is due to the fact that in Russia the ground floor is considered as the «first floor». The building has thus eight floors: seven storeys and the ground floor.

Becker's drawing-room instrument, not guilty of anything

Jacob Davidovich Becker (1811-1879), a craftsman born in Germany, created his piano building workshop in Saint-Petersburg in 1841. His pianos enjoyed great fame, and he was the first to apply American and European technologies to piano-building in Russia. In 1903 the company merged with the piano building factory of **Ivan Karlovich Schröder** (?-1889), and in 1917 it was nationalized and renamed the *Red October Factory*.

In 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the company was renamed *the Saint Petersburg Piano Factory*, but it went bankrupt with a total debt of 13 billion roubles. **Lee Alexander Magness**, the Texan grandson of Ivan Karlovich Schröder, used all possible means since 1994 to lay hands on the factory.

In 1999, U.S. District Judge **David Hittner** in Houston, Texas, awarded damages, estimated at 234 million dollars, to Magness, his mother **Nina Schröder**, and his aunt **Agnes Schröder**, the daughters of Ivan Karlovich Schröder, after the Russian Federation had failed to respond to the lawsuit. But in April 2001, The U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans ruled that the Russians had not been properly served with the lawsuit, and set aside the judgment. The United States government intervened in this case in favour of the Russian

Federation with a so-called *amicus curiae* document. Magness filed for a rehearing of the case, but in October 2001, the *U.S. Supreme Court* declined to hear his arguments.

I'm your dream

The way in which Bulgakov plays with the Russian grammar here is untranslatable. «To dream of someone» in Russian is expressed with the verb **сниться** [snitsya] but in a particular construction, with the person dreamed of as the subject, and the person dreaming in the *dative*. Simply said: «I dreamed of her» in Russian sounds as: «She was dreamed of by me».

That is why the verb almost always appears in the third person singular, since one rarely talks about oneself being seen in someone else's dream. But that's what Margarita does: «**Я тебе снюсь**», «*I was dreamed by you*», she says.

After that she says: «Lie down now (...) I'll go on being your dream». And the boy answers: «**Ну, снись, снись**», which is the imperative form: «*Well, be my dream, be my dream*».

My French queen!

With this exclamation, Natasha already indicates what will be confirmed by Koroviev in the next chapter - the fact that Margarita is «a great-great-great-granddaughter» of «one of the French queens who lived in the sixteenth century».

Some naked fat man with a black silk top hat pushed back on his head

I don't know (yet) who this man could be. But he used to know Claudine, «the ungrieving widow» (see below), as well as the «bright Queen Margot» - the popular name given to **Marguerite de Valois** (1553-1615) (see below).

And apparently he was a friend of the French publisher **François Guessard** (1814-1882), who lived three centuries after the two abovementioned ladies.

Claudine

Claudine de La Tour-Turenne (1520-1591) was lady-in-waiting of **Marguerite de Valois** (1553-1615), the spouse of the French king **Henri IV** (1553-1610). On October 31, 1535, at the age of 15, Claudine married to **Justus II** (1510-1557), Seigneur of Tournon and Count of Rousillon. She became a widow at the age of 37.

Bright queen Margot

Queen Margot is **Marguerite de Valois** (1553-1615), queen of France and Navarra. She was the daughter of **Henri II** (1519-1559) and **Catherina de Medici** (1519-1589). Three of her brothers have been kings of France: **François II** (1544-1560), **Charles IX** (1550-1574) and **Henri III** (1551-1589).

Her mother first tried to pair her off to various other men, but eventually arrived at her cousin, **Henri of Navarra** (1553-1610), the later King **Henri IV**. The marriage took place on August 18, 1572. Henri was a protestant, and according to various sources Catherina de Medici would have tried to take advantage of the gathering of the *Huguenots* in Paris to organize the bloodbath of the *St. Bartholomew's Day* in the night between August 24 and 25, 1572.

The marriage of Marguerite and Henri involved much reciprocal cheating, and long periods of separation. In 1599 the marriage was annulled. Marguerite retained her title of queen.

Her memoirs, published more than one hundred years after her death, provided innumerable anecdotes about the Kings **Charles IX**, **Henri III** and **Henri IV**. Meanwhile she caused many scandals herself. She died on May 27, 1615.

The bloody wedding of his friend Guessard

The drunken man is indeed quite confused: his feeling for time fails. **François Guessard** (1814-1882) was a writer and publisher from Paris, who published the correspondence of **Marguerite de Valois** (1553-1615), but he lived in the 19th century - he published *Les Mémoires et lettres de Marguerite de Valois* in 1842. The «bloody wedding» was the notorious *St. Bartholomew's Day* in 1572.

The readers of the **Michael Glenny** translation may wonder why Guessard is mentioned here, because Glenny wrote that the fat man said that he had just come «from a wedding in Paris», without mentioning which wedding.

The Yenisey River

The *Yenisey* is a 4,129 km long river which is often considered as the separation between eastern and western Siberia.

Transparent naiads

The English translators **Richard Pevear** and **Larissa Volokhonsky** call the water nymphs *naiads*, and **Michael Glenny** calls them *water-sprites*. But naiads are water nymphs of the

Greek mythology, while Bulgakov described Russian **русалки** [rusalki], singular: *rusalka*. Rusalki are connected to the world of death. They were young women who died before they could get married. In the middle of the night they would go to the river bank to dance in the meadows. If they saw handsome men, they would fascinate them with songs and dancing, and then lead them to the river floor, to live with them.

Someone goat-legged

Wood ghosts and devils are often portrayed with the lower part of the body of an animal. The Russian writer **Boris Nikolaevich Bugaev** (1880-1934), who wrote under the pseudonym **Andrei Bely** (see annotations to chapter 18) described a goat-legged man at a sabbath in his **Северная симфония** [Severnaya simphoniya] or *Northern Symphony* from 1902.

A black, long-beaked rook

A rook is a big black bird, the *trypanocorax frugilegus*, resembling a crow. The Russian sculptor **Aleksandr Yulianovich Rukavishnikov** (°1950) made a huge statue of Margarita's driver. Originally, it was part of a large monument which would be erected on the Patriarch's Ponds in honour of Bulgakov, with a huge primus stove and Yeshua walking on the water.

But in February 2003, the project was withdrawn after much protest. The rook statue is now placed in the garden of the sculptor in Bolshaya Molchanovka ulitsa in Moscow, next to a beautiful image of a sleeping Aleksandr Pushkin. Rukavishnikov also created the statue of Koroviev and Behemoth which now adorns the courtyard of the *Bulgakov House* in Moscow.

Chapter 22
By Candlelight



Some completely deserted cemetery in the Dorogomilovo area

A map of the publishing house *Suvorin* from 1915 shows two cemeteries located on the banks of the Moscow River in the **Дорогомиловская Слобода** [Dorogomilovskaya Sloboda] or *Dorogomilovo area*.

Next to the large Orthodox cemetery was also a small Jewish cemetery. None of the two cemeteries still exist, because they were destroyed when the Kutuzovsky Prospekt was constructed after World War II.

An extraordinary invisible, yet quite palpable, endless stairway

The staircase that Margarita will climb reminds of the *mystical ladder with seven steps* that occurs in *Masonic* rites, during the initiation of the *Knight Kadosh* or *Knight of the White and the Black Eagle*, the 30th degree in the *Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite*. The staircase links the «earthly nothing» and the «heavenly glory», the path from ignorance to omniscience. The steps are representing *justice, kindness, humility, faith, labor, duty* and *generosity* on the one hand, and *grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music* and *astronomy* on the other hand.

It is rather unusual that Margarita, as a woman, can climb those stairs. Many Masonic lodges are solely intended for men. In Russia, however, the economist, publicist and feminist **Eka-terina Dmitrievna Kuskova** (1869-1958), had broken the spell. She was a member of the *Masonic Lodge Grand Orient des Peuples de Russie* from 1906 to 1917. In 1922, she was expelled from the Soviet Union.

The fifth dimension

In the elementary geometry three dimensions are defined: length, width and height. These (cartesian) parameters are perpendicular to each other.

- A point is zero-dimensional - it has no length, nor width, nor height.
- A line has one dimension - she only has length.
- A plane is two-dimensional - it has length and width.
- A body is three-dimensional - it has length, width and height.
- The fourth dimension is an extra independent permutation direction in space. The fourth dimension is often identified with *time*.

The fifth dimension is a higher dimension of *consciousness*. When Bulgakov was working on *The Master and Margarita*, in 1926, the Swedish physicist **Oskar Klein** (1894-1977) was attempting to explain why we can't perceive this additional dimension. Oskar Klein was also known for his theory about travelling in time.

A three-room apartment on Zemlyanoy Val

Земляной вал [Zyemlyanoy Val] or the *Earthen Embankment* - is, like Bolshaya Sadovaya, part of the Moscow *Garden Ring*, but it's opposite to the city center, in the East. The *Taganka Theatre*, where until today *The Master and Margarita* is still often performed on stage, is on Zyemlyana Vala ulitsa.

The machinations of this Muscovite described by Bulgakov were typical for that period. Clever and sometimes complex exchange schemes were often put up by various people in various combinations, and bribes were almost considered as a semi-legal practice.

The spring ball of the full moon, or the ball of the hundred kings

The **Северная симфония** [Severnaya simphoniya] or *Northern Symphony* from 1902, written by **Boris Nikolaevich Bugaev** (1880-1934), who wrote under the pseudonym **Andrei Bely**, ends with a feast at which the kings of the North drink blood from golden cups. Like Margarita, the queen kneels on one knee to welcome the guests, who kiss her hand and her knee.

One of the French queens who lived in the sixteenth century

In the previous chapter you can read more about **Marguerite de Valois** (1553-1615) and her marriage to the French king **Henri IV** (1553-1610).

Seven golden claws

The *menorah* or *seven branched candelabrum* is an old symbol of the Hebrew people and one of the oldest symbols of Judaism in general. According to tradition, Moses would have been given strict instructions by God to make a seven branched candelabrum and to put it in the *Tabernacle* of the *Ark of the Covenant* where the stone tablets containing the *Ten Commandments* were also stored. Woland's candelabrum with the seven golden claws is a parody of these menorah's.

A beetle artfully carved from dark stone

Bulgakov writes **жук** [zhuk], which is indeed *beetle* or *bug*. Yet most translators, including **Michael Glenny** (1927-1990), use the word *scarab* or *scarabaeus*, a type of dung beetle in Egyptian mythology.

The Egyptians saw the scarabaeus beetle as a symbol of immortality because it survived the annual flooding of the Nile. The ritual use of carved stone scarabs spread to Palestine, Greece and Italy in ancient times.

The chess journals would pay good money for the chance to publish it

Margarita said to Woland: «I beg you not to interrupt your game. I imagine the chess journals would pay good money for the chance to publish it». It is more than likely that Bulgakov described the party that was played between the Russian grandmasters **Mikhail Moiseevich Botvinnik** (1911-1995) and **Nikolai Nikolaevich Ryumin** (1908-1942) at the *Second International Chess Tournament*, which took place in Moscow from February 15 to March 15, 1935.

Twelve Soviet players and eight players from other countries participated in this tournament. They all belonged to the world top of chess. One of them was a woman: **Vera Frantevna Menchik** (1906-1944), a British-Czech who, unfortunately, would finish last.

The most impressive game of the tournament was, as said earlier, the one between Mikhail Botvinnik and Nikolai Ryumin, played in Round 6 on February 22, 1935. It was, indeed, a game about which much has been written, and not only in the chess journals. It became so famous that it got even known to people who were normally not so familiar with chess.

The game reached its decisive phase when, in the 33th turn, the king of Ryumin was moved to square G2 - just as Bulgakov described it -, after which Botvinnik put him in check with his queen. Three moves later the game was finished in favour of Botvinnik.

Despite this historical game, Ryumin would not gain much honour from this tournament. He stranded on a disappointing 14th place. Mikhail Botvinnik did better: he won the tournament, although he had to share the first place with the Czech player **Salomon Mikhailovich Flohr** (1908-1983). Botvinnik was still very young, however. Many years later, between 1948 and 1963, he would be the number one in the world almost without interruption.

Some English readers of *The Master and Margarita* will be truly amazed when they read this explanation. Because in the English translation by **Richard Pevear** and **Larissa Volokhonsky**, Woland says: «The king is on square G-5», and in the translation by **Michael Glenny** it is written: «The king is on square Kz».

Both translations are rather strange and incomprehensible, because Bulgakov wrote indeed «**Король на клетке г-два**» or «*The King is on g-two*», as it has been translated in all other translations known to me.

On the desktop version of the «Master & Margarita» website, we published an interactive chess board on which you can replay the full Ryumin-Botvinnik game. Unfortunately, I don't know yet the technology to make it work on a mobile site. So, for the time being, I have to

refer you to the website chessgames.com where you can reply the game with the following link.



You confounded Hans!

In the Russian text «**Вылезай, окаянный ганс!**» or «*Go away, damned hans (gans)*» is written. The word **ганс** [hans] is pronounced *gans* and is one of the many loan words used in the Russian language. It sounds Dutch or German. There are many folk tales in German in which Hans, who is often the third son of a family, is presented as an idiot, or at least somewhat a lunatic. Although, at the end, he usually winds up with the treasure or the beautiful princess. In Russian the equivalent of the Hans character is often called *Ivan* or *Ivanushka*.

Both **Ivan** and **Hans** related to the Medieval Latin name **Johannes**. It is a variant of the Greek name **Ἰωάννης** [Ioannis] and the Classical Latin name **Ioannes**, itself derived from the Hebrew name **יהוֹחָנָן** [Yehochanan], meaning *Jahweh is gracious*. Other variations of Johannes are **Jan, Jean, Juan, John, Giovanni, Janusz, Jens, Sean, João** etc.

Sextus Empiricus

Sextus Empiricus (160-210) was a Roman philosopher, astronomer and physician. His philosophical work is the most complete surviving account of ancient Greek and Roman skepticism. In his medical work, tradition maintains that he belonged to the *empiric* school, as reflected by his name. However, at least twice in his writings, Sextus seems to place himself closer to the *methodic* school, as his philosophical views imply.

Sextus Empiricus advises that we should suspend judgment about virtually all beliefs. That is, we should neither affirm any belief as true nor deny any belief as false. This view is known as *Pyrrhonian skepticism*, as distinguished from *Academic skepticism*, which, according to Sextus, denies knowledge altogether.

Martianus Capella

We don't know much about this Latin writing author of the 5th century, apart from some details we can find in his work, *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* (On the wedding of Philology and Mercury). In addition to some biographical hypotheses which we can deduct

from some excerpts in this huge allegorical encyclopaedia of nine volumes, we have no historical traces of the author.

Aristotle

Aristotle (384 BC-322 BC) was a Greek philosopher who is, together with **Socrates** (470 BC-399 BC) and **Plato** (427 BC-347 BC), considered as one of the most influential of the ancient Greek philosophers.

Aristotle is often considered as the first *homo universalis* because he introduced logics and methodology as the means to practise philosophy and other sciences. He mastered all the sciences known in his time (philosophy, psychology, political and social sciences, mathematics and physics, linguistics and literature, theatre...), which he systematically and methodically elaborated to an integrated system. Aristotle can be considered as a *systems philosopher*.

My leg hurts

Satan's lameness is most commonly ascribed to his fall from heaven.

In the year 1571, on Mount Brocken, on the Devil's Podium

The *Brocken* is, standing at 1141 meter, is the highest mountain in Northern Germany. The Brocken, also called *Blocksberg*, has played a role in many legends and has often been connected with witches and devils. On *Walpurgis Night*, demonic creatures would gather on the top of the mountain. According to a popular belief, banned witches were allowed to return to earth for one night at the sabbath on the Brocken.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) described the Brocken in his drama *Faust* (written in 1808) as the center of revelry for witches on Walpurgis Night.

*«Now to the Brocken the witches ride;
The stubble is gold and the corn is green;
There is the carnival crew to be seen,
And Squire Urianus will come to preside.
So over the valleys our company floats,
With witches a-farting on stinking old goats».*

Goethe may have gained inspiration from two rock formations on the mountain's summit, the *Teufelskanzel* or *Devil's Pulpit* or *Podium* and the *Hexenaltar* or *Witches' Altar*, where the scholarly Faust trades his eternal soul for the worldly assistance of Mephistopholes.

Still today the biggest Walpurgis feast of Germany is held on the Brocken in the night from April 30 to May 1. People disguised as witches run over the streets and hit unsuspecting passers-by with brooms. In the period of *Ascension* and *Whitsuntide*, some 60.000 people visit the Brocken.

My granny

The devil's grandma is sometimes used, like the devil himself, in Russian expressions, such as, for example, in «go to the devil» or «go to the devil's grandmother!»

A war has started there

The war «in a chunk of land, washed on one side by the ocean» is the *Spanish Civil War* which was going on in that time (1936-1939). Bulgakov greatly regretted this war and wrote many letters about it. In the twelve years that he worked on *The Master and Margarita*, the passage with the globe only appeared in 1937, when this war was on the radio every day. Woland's moaning about the radio coverage is, as a matter of fact, a reference to this daily news. Bulgakov's opinion was that wars could not be ended by words of indignation, but only by armed force against the aggressor.

Perhaps Mikhail Bulgakov was inspired for this passage by the bombing of the Basque town of *Guernica y Luno* on April 26 1937 by the *Condor Legion* of General **Hugo Sperlle** (1885-1953). That legion was a military unit of volunteers from Nazi Germany that was supporting the Spanish fascists of General **Francisco Franco** (1892-1975). The bombings took place on the weekly market day, and many shelters could not withstand the bombs. Therefore, many people fled into the fields around the city.

At that time, *Heinkel-51* squadrons shot at the fleeing men, women and children. Of the 5,000 inhabitants, 1654 were killed and 889 wounded. In response to this bombing, the painter **Pablo Picasso** (1881-1973) drew his famous painting *Guernica*.

Abaddon

Abaddon is the English transliteration of the Hebrew word אַבְדּוֹן [avaddon], which means *destruction* or *destroyer*. In the Book of Job 26: 6 of the Old Testament, the word abaddon is used to describe the underworld or the place where death rules: «וּמִן שְׂאוֹל נִגְדוּ וְאֵין כְּסוּת לְאַבְדּוֹן» [ärôm sh'ôl neg'Dô w'ëyn K'sût läávaDôn] or «The realm of the dead is naked before God; Destruction lies uncovered».

In the *Book of Revelation* 9:11 of the *New Testament* the name **Abaddon** is mentioned as the angel of the *abyss*: «They had as king over them the angel of the *Abyss*, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is **Apollyon**, that is, *Destroyer*».

Bulgakov's description of «some gaunt man in dark glasses, who was exceptionally pale by nature» could also be a reference to the Russian Marxist revolutionary and theoretician **Lev Davidovich Bronstein** (1879-1940), better known as **Leon Davidovich Trotsky**, the first leader of the *Red Army*. If you think this is too far-fetched: Bulgakov had already linked Trotsky and Abaddon in his novel *The White Guard* from 1925. In that novel, the doctor **Aleksey Turbin** talks to the young poet **Ivan Ruskov** who, after a cocaine addiction, has seen the light and warns the doctor for Satan. When the doctor asks him if he means Leon Trotsky, the poet replies: «Yes, that's the name he has adopted. But his true name is in Hebrew Abaddon, and in Greek Apollyon».

Bulgakov expert **Boris Vadimovich Sokolov** (°1957), the author of the *Bulgakov Encyclopedia*, adds to this that Abaddon's work is «just as flawless as Trotsky's activities» and that «they are both indifferent to the victims of war».

Chapter 23
The Great Ball at Satan's



An oval-framed picture of a black poodle

The poodle appears often in this chapter, and the attentive reader knows why: in *Faust* by **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** (1749-1832) the devil **Mephistopheles** appears to Faust as a poodle.

Margarita saw herself in a tropical forest

On April 23, 1935, **Elena Sergeevna Nyurenberg** (1893-1970), Bulgakov's third spouse, described in her diary a reception, which she calls a ball. The reception was held at the *Spaso House*, the residence of the American ambassador in Moscow.

«I have never seen such ball in my life. They were all carrying tail coats, there were only a few jackets and smokings.

They danced in a room with columns lit by streams of light coming from a gallery; behind a gate which separated them from the orchestra, there were living pheasants and other birds. We had dinner at small tables in a huge dining room with, in a corner, living baby bears, goats and roosters in cages. During dinner, musicians played the accordion.

In the room where we had dinner, our table was covered with a green transparent cloth lit from inside. There were armfuls of tulips and roses. I do not mention the abundance of food and champagne. On the upper floor (it is a big and luxurious mansion) they had arranged a room with a grilling room for shashlik and people were performig Caucasian dances.

We wanted to leave the place at half past three but they did not allow us to leave. We left at half past five in one of the cars of the embassy. A certain Steiger, I believe, a man whom we do not know but whom all Moscow knows and who can always be found when there are foreigners, joined us in the car. He was sitting next to the driver and we were in the rear. It was already daylight when we arrived home».

The tulips are also mentioned in this chapter, like many other eccentric details characterizing the parties of the American ambassador **William Bullitt** (1891-1967).

Those parties were described in a colourful way by **Charles Thayer** (1910-1969), one of the embassy's officials, in his book *Bears in the Caviar* (1951).

Bulgakov attended some of those parties. Ambassador William Bullitt had seen *The Days of the Turbins* in the *Moscow Art Theatre MKhAT* and he had sent Bulgakov several invitations to both cosy evenings and glorious feasts.

The man Steiger, mentioned by Elena Sergeyevna, was **Boris Sergeevich Steiger** (1892-1937), the «stool pigeon» who was the prototype for **Baron Meigel** in the novel.

On the «Master & Margarita» website you can download the text of the chapters of *Bears in the Caviar* describing the balls of William Bullitt at the Spaso House.



Hallelujah

Again - for the third time in the novel - the song *Hallelujah* by **Vincent Youmans** (1898-1946) is played. We saw it before in Griboedov (Chapter 5) and at doctor Kuzmin's house (Chapter 18).

An absolutely enormous fireplace

In my country we put a shoe next to the chimney on the eve of December 6 for the arrival of **Santa Claus**. It's not the US-import **Father Christmas**, but the Catholic **Saint Nicolas** (280-342), the former bishop of Myra, Turkey, and still the Catholic patron saint of children.

In Russia, the chimney was an important ritual place as the path to another world. It was both the entrance and the exit for supernatural beings including devils and witches, similar to what appears in *Christmas Eve* written by **Nicolas Vassilyevich Gogol** (1809-1852). The soul disappeared through the chimney-pot after death. In the 1936 version of *The Master and Margarita*, Margarita enters Berlioz' apartment through the chimney too.

Tailcoaters... and naked women with them

«The men in tailcoat and the women naked» - this was apparently the dress-code at Satan's ball. The invitation which the Bulgakov's received for the reception at the American embassy in 1935 included a handwritten note with the text «Tailcoat or black suit». It is quite unlikely that any of the women were naked at that reception.

A tailcoat or black suit are also part of the dress code in the *Freemasonry*. Bulgakov's interest in Freemasonry can be explained by the fact that, in 1903, **Afanasy Ivanovich Bulgakov** (1859-1907), theologian and church historian, and the father of Mikhail Afanasievich, had written an article about *Modern Freemasonry in its Relationship with the Church and the State*, which was published in the *Acts of the Theological Academy* of Kiev. Bulgakov refers more than once to Freemasonry in the novel.

The guests at the ball

All guests at Satan's ball share some characteristics. They're all dead, of course, and with the exception of the musicians, they all did something which sent them to hell - or which could have sent them to hell. The advantage of their being dead was that Bulgakov did not have to disguise their names.

Johann Strauss

The «waltz king» is the Viennese composer **Johann Strauss jr.** (1825-1899). His father, **Johann Strauss sr.** (1804-1849), was quite famous himself as the composer of the *Radetzky Marsch*. But his son Johann or **Schani** would rapidly become more famous with unforgettable waltzes as *An der schönen blauen Donau*, *Der Kaiserwalzer* and *Wiener Blut*, and with the operettes *Die Fledermaus* and *Der Zigeunerbaron*. In the era of Johann Strauss jr. the Viennese Waltz was not played in concert halls like it happens today, but mainly in dance halls, at receptions or at other mundane events.

Henri Vieuxtemps

Vieuxtemps is **Henri Vieuxtemps** (1820-1881), a Belgian virtuoso violinist from Verviers. At the age of ten he made his debut in Paris, where he was introduced by a virtuoso violinist of my hometown Leuven, **Charles Auguste de Bériot** (1802-1870). He travelled the world giving concerts, taught in the conservatory of Brussels and also for some time, from 1846 to 1851, also in the conservatory of Saint-Petersburg, where he was first violinist of the imperial court and first soloist of the *Royal Theatre*. He was very successful with his own compositions too, among which 7 concertos, chambre music and compositions for violin and piano. It was common practice to hire musicians from all over the world to play at important receptions like the ones at the Spaso House.

Kissing her knee

The guests at the ball greet Margarita by kissing her knee. Some see this as a reference to Freemasonry, since the candidates should bare their right knees while being initiated as *Apprentices*. And indeed, the guests at the ball are kissing Margarita's right knee.

Monsieur Jacques

Monsieur Jacques is **Jacques Cœur** (1395-1456), a rich French merchant who became superintendent of finances under **Charles VII** (1403-1461). He granted major loans to the king to finance his wars. The start of his career wasn't very promising because, before he became

successful, he was associated with a *counterfeiter*. And later he was accused of attempting to poison **Agnes Sorel** (1422-1450), the king's mistress.

He was condemned to death, which later was reduced to lifelong banishment and a money fine. His properties were confiscated so that the king did not have to refund his loan. Later **Louis XI** (1423-1483) would posthumously rehabilitate Jacques Coeur. In *The Master and Margarita* Koroviev calls him a country traitor and an alchemist, but in fact he was not. He built a splendid castle in his native town Bourges.

Earl Robert

Earl Robert, «a queen's lover» according to Koroviev, is **Robert Dudley** (1532-1588), Count of Leicester and a childhood friend of the British Queen **Elisabeth I** (1533-1603). He was the fifth of thirteen children. His spouse, **Amy Robsart** (1534-1560), died in mysterious circumstances but not, as suggested by Bulgakov, due to poisoning. In reality it was after falling down a flight of stairs.

Many rumours were going on about a liaison between Dudley and the queen. Many believed that Dudley had killed his wife to marry Elisabeth. Ironically enough, Amy's death made a marriage impossible because Elisabeth was strongly influenced by the public opinion. She placed Count Robert in command of the army - he was commanded to defeat the Spanish *Armada* - but he died soon after.

Signora Tofana

In the **Энциклопедический словарь Брокгауза и Ефрона** [Entsiklopedichesky slovar Brokgauza i Yefrona] or *Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary*, Bulgakov found the name **Signora Tofana** or **Teofania di Adamo** (1653-?) under the lemma **Аква Тофана** [Akva Tophana]. She was one of a «dynasty» of poisoners from the 17th century. The poison having her name, *aqua tofana*, probably contained *arsenic* and deadly *nightshade*, also called *belladonna*, which is one of the most toxic plants found in the Western hemisphere. Children have been poisoned by eating as few as three berries. Aqua tofana is a colourless and tasteless liquid, therefore an ideal mean to kill spouses or family members.

We don't know much of the first signora Tofana, **Teofania di Palermo**, except that she was executed for various murders by poison.

The second Tofana, **Teofania di Adamo** (1653-?), was from Naples, and would have gotten the recipe from the first Tofana. She would have been driven by hatred of males and would have sold the poison in bottles with the portrait of Saint-Nicolas, hence the trade-name *Manna di San Nicola*. Her poison would have killed at least 600 people. She was tortured in public and executed.

The third Tofana, **Giulia Tofana**, operated in Rome and would have been the sister or the daughter of the second. She would have been sentenced to death, and executed at the *Campo di Fiore*.

A Spanish boot

A Spanish boot is a wooden instrument of torture. It was some kind of mould which was put around the leg and constantly tightened. When a witch refused to confess, her legs were broken by this horrible tool.

Doctor **James Fian** (?-1591), a schoolmaster in Saltpans (Scotland) was a male witch who was under the suspicion of high treason against the king. He would eventually be burned 1591 in Edinburgh. He described how he was «put through the most violent and the most cruel pain in the world, namely the Spanish boot», which means of torture was described as «his legs were crushed and flattened, and the bones and the flesh were so bruised that the blood and the bone marrow splashed out of it in huge quantities».

Frieda

In Bulgakov's archives was found an excerpt from the book *Die sexuelle Frage* written by the Swiss neurologist and psychiatrist **Auguste Forel** (1848-1931). Forel came into conflict with the Catholic church because he believed that the soul and the mind were connected inseparably.

Forel didn't just take care of his patients, he was also concerned about social reforms. He worked with alcoholics and an active member of the Swiss movement opposed to alcohol abuse. He was a teetotallar himself. In *Die sexuelle Frage* he described the sexual perversions he had observed in his practice. One of his study objects was a **Fried Keller** - who had killed a little boy, and a certain **Koniecko** - who had strangled a baby with a handkerchief.

Fried Keller worked in a café in the Swiss canton Sankt Gallen. The married owner of the café had a crush on her and when she was 19 years old he lured her into the cellar. In May 1899 she gave birth to a boy in the Sankt Gallen hospital.

Her child was placed in a orphanage but had to leave when he reached the age of five. Forel described her emotional state of mind during the period preceding Easter Monday 1904, when she would see her child again.

But she heard that the nuns of the relief center had decided to send her child to her sister in Zürich. She took her child with her and brought him to the wood. She dug a grave with her hands, strangled the child with a piece of lace and went back home. But gypsies found him after a heavy rain shower, and Fried Keller was arrested on July 14.

Koniecko was a 19 years old worker from Silesia. She became pregnant in a similar situation, and strangled her newly born child with a handkerchief on February 25, 1908. She was sentenced to two years in jail. This court order was heavily criticized in Switzerland because the real guilty person - the father of the child who had abandoned her - was not punished.

Bulgakov combined the biographies of both women in the character Frieda, which may likewise be a reference to the *Faust* of **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** (1749-1832), in which Gretchen also kills her newly-born child.

The marquise

The marquise is **Marie-Madeleine Dreux d'Aubray** (1630-1676), marquise de Brinvilliers, a notorious poisoner who, with the help of her lover, army captain **Jean Baptiste Godin de Sainte-Croix** (?-1672), killed her father, her brother and her two sisters in order to receive their inheritances. She would have used the notorious *aqua tofana* for it. There are rumours that she also killed poor people whom she frequently visited at hospitals. She was condemned to be *executed by water*, which is the forced drinking of sixteen pints of water, followed by decapitation and cremation.

Madam Minkin

Madame Minkin, or in full **Anastasiya Fyodorovna Minkina** (1782-1825), was the housekeeper and lover of **Count Aleksey Araksheyev** (1769-1854), military advisor of czar **Alexander I** (1777-1825). She was an extraordinarily cruel and pernicious woman. One day she burned, blinded by jealousy, the face of her maid with curling tongs. Her own staff revolted against her and killed her in 1825. Aleksey Araksheyev himself had little to learn from his mistress. The woman farmers on his country Gruzino near Novgorod were obliged to give birth to at least one child per year, and because he was fond of the singing of the nightingales he let hang all the cats on his territory.

The emperor Rudolf

Emperor Rudolf or **Rudolf II of Habsburg** (1552-1612) was a German emperor and the son of **Maximilian II** (1527-1576). He lived in Prague and was the patron of **Tycho Brahe** (1546-1601) and **Johann Kepler** (1571-1630).

In 1572, Brahe discovered a new star in the *Cassiopeia* constellation. He described this event in his book *The Stella Nova*. Later he became famous because the new star appeared to be a *supernova*. It proved that the atmosphere of the stars as it was described by **Aristotle** (384 BC-322 BC) isn't constant.

Johann Kepler was an assistant of Tycho Brahe. He became known for his elaboration of the laws of the *movements of planets*. Later, **Isaac Newton** (1643-1727) would use Kepler's discoveries for the development of his *gravity law*.

The Moscow dressmaker

The Moscow dressmaker is **Zoya Denisovna Pelts**, the heroine of Bulgakov's own theatre play *Zoya's apartment*. Zoya managed a brothel under the guise of a dressmaker's shop. Her girls were so-called models and she was obsessed by the wish to leave the Soviet Union for Paris.

Various prototypes are given for the figure of Zoya. The first might have been one **Adèle Adolfovna Trostyanskaya** who really had a brothel disguised as a boutique. Bulgakov had read an article on her trial in the newspaper *Krasnaya Gazeta* in October 1924. Later, there would also have been an article in the same newspaper about a certain **Zoya Buyalskaya** who was arrested because she had a brothel disguised as a sewing workshop. Finally, there is **Zoya Petrovna Zhatova**, who was arrested in the spring of 1921 in Moscow because she held a clandestine restaurant. Among the clients who were arrested together with her were the poets **Anatoly Borisovich Marienhof** (1897-1962) and **Sergey Alexandrovich Yesenin** (1895-1925), the husband of the American dancer **Isadora Duncan** (1877-1927).

Zoya Zhatova ran her business in apartment no. 38 of Bolshaya Sadovaya no. 10 where she has been staying for a while. That apartment belonged to the Armenian-Russian avant-garde artist **Georgy Bogdanovich Yakulov** (1884-1928). For a description of the physical characteristics of his Zoya, Bulgakov had been inspired the wife of Yakulov, **Natalya Yulevna Shiff** (1889-1974).

Caligula

Caligula is the nickname of **Gaius Caesar** (12BC-41). He was the youngest son of **Germanicus** (15BC-19) and **Agrippina Senior** (14BC-33), and he succeeded **Tiberius** (42BC-37) as the emperor of Rome. People called him mentally ill, because he put Rome through many tyrannical brutalities and was eventually murdered. Caligula was raised in a military camp. He was quite popular among the soldiers and there he got his nickname Caligula, from the Latin *caligae* or *soldier's boots*. In his own time nobody used this nickname. It became popular only because historians used it all the time.

Messalina

Messalina, in full **Valeria Messalina** (15BC-48) was the third wife of the Roman emperor **Claudius** (10BC-54), the successor of **Caligula**. She was the daughter of **Domitia Longina**

(10BC-54) and **Valerius Messalla Barbatus** (11BC-21). She came from a respectable Roman family, but she was known for her immorality.

Once she challenged a notorious Roman prostitute, **Scylla**, to a sex competition. Scylla gave up after 25 men, but Messalina persisted until daybreak. Eventually she was executed because Claudius heard that she had organised a conspiracy against him. Later her daughter **Claudia Octavia** (39-62) would become the first wife of emperor **Nero** (37-68).

Maliuta Skuratov

Maliuta Skuratov with his «truly fiery beard» is the nickname of the Russian nobleman and notorious historical character **Grigory Lukyanovich Skuratov-Belsky** (?-1573), the right-hand man of **Иван Грозный** [Ivan Grozny] or **Ivan the Terrible** (1530-1584), the first Russian czar. Czar Ivan had proclaimed so-called **опричнина** [oprichina], a state policy including the institutionalization of a secret police. Skuratov was in command of the *oprichniks*, a special corps that terrorized the country with fire-raising, plundering and murders. With his own hands he strangled the Orthodox archbishop **Philip II** (1507-1569).

The last two guests

The last two guests are not explicitly named in the novel. But from the dialogue between Margarita and Koroviev we learn that the first one is the *People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs* and chief of the secret police NKVD **Genrikh Grigoryevitch Yagoda** (1891-1938) and the second one is his secretary **Pavel Petrovich Bulanov** (1895-1938). Yagoda enforced the *collectivisation* in the Soviet Union and is one of the main people responsible for the *great famine* in Ukraine in 1932-1933.

Both fell into disgrace and they were accused for having sprinkled the walls of the office of **Nikolay Ivanovich Yezhov** (1936-1938), Yagoda's successor, with poison. In 1938 they were sentenced to be shot during a show trial that became very famous, and for which they had been interrogators themselves. Yagoda was a notorious gambler and womanizer.

Film director **Yuri Kara** (°1954) presents another opinion in his film *Master i Margarita* from 1994. He shows **Adolf Hitler** (1889-1945) and **Joseph Stalin** (1887-1953) as the last two guests making their appearance before Margarita. According to Kara, Bulgakov would have been thinking of them when he wrote: «The last two guests were coming up the stairs!». But he would not have named these two dictators because, when the novel was written, they were still alive.

The author of this book subtitled this film in English, French, German, Italian and Dutch. The DVD is available in the web shop of the «Master & Margarita» website.



Spray the walls of the office with poison

The episode in which characters spray the walls of an office with poison is based on actual accusations that came to light in March 1938 in the trial of the so-called *Anti-Soviet Block of Rights and Trotskyites*, also called the *Trial of the 21* including, among others, **Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin** (1888-1938), **Aleksei Ivanovich Rykov** (1881-1938) and **Genrikh Grigoryevich Yagoda** (1891-1938).

Yagoda had been removed as head of the secret service NKVD in 1936 and, supposedly fearing implication in the murders of **Sergey Kirov** (1886-1934) and writer **Maksim Gorky** (1868-1936), he had ordered his secretary **Pavel Petrovich Bulanov** (1865-1938) to spray the walls of the office of his successor **Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov** (1895-1940) with poison. Yagoda and Bulanov were sentenced to be shot. Bulgakov understood all the farce of the fabricated charges, and Yagoda and Bulanov joined the ranks of the imaginary poisoners at the ball.

The aforementioned Yezhov, by the way, has a nickname among art historians. He is called *The Vanishing Commissar* because, after his own execution in 1940, his likeness was re-touched out of an official press photo; he is among the best-known examples of the Soviet press making someone who had fallen out of favour «disappear».

Two hamadryads with manes like lions played grand pianos

Hamadryads are Greek mythological beings that live in trees. They are a specific species of *dryads*, which are a particular type of *nymphs*. Hamadryads are born bonded to a specific tree. If their tree died, the hamadryad associated with it died as well. For that reason, dryads and the gods punished any mortals who harmed trees.

The Kamarinsky

The word **камаринская** [kamarinskaya] is derived from the name of the city of *Kamarino*. It is a Russian dance song with a short, always repeated tune and quite coarse words. One version sounds as follows: «What an odd guy are you, peasant of Kamarino, how you stumble down the street. I run to the booze shop with a headache, because a peasant can't live without booze» or: «Oh you son of a bitch, muzhik (peasant) from Kamarino...»

When at weddings the *kamarinskaya* is sung or danced, people usually don't care much about dancing the correct steps. The grotesque steps, the twitching of the shoulders, the ugly and sometime disgusting movements - it's all part of the game.

In 1848, the Russian composer **Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka** (1804-1857), the first Russian composer to gain wide recognition within his own country, wrote the symphonic poem *Kamarinskaya* in which he introduced this popular Russian tune.

It was the first orchestral work based entirely on Russian folk songs and became a touchstone for the following generation of Russian composers like **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** (1840-1893).

A salamander-conjurer who did not burn in the fireplace

At the ball Margarita sees «a salamander-conjurer who did not burn in the fireplace», and «for the second time her strength began to ebb». In medieval lore salamanders were thought to survive fires.

Another interesting connection is that the fireproof salamander was the symbol of the French king **François I** (1494-1547), who was the grandfather of **Marguerite de Valois** (1551-1615) and the brother of **Margarita of Navarre** (1492-1549).

His feet were in worn-out bedroom slippers

An *Apprentice* who is initiated into the first degree of *Freemasonry*, must replace his right shoe by a slipper.

On this platter a man's severed head with the front teeth knocked out

Berlioz' head on a platter recalls of course the biblical story of **Salome** who demanded to see the head of **John the Baptist** (7BC-29) on a platter.

The skull being used as a cup recalls the story of the last pagan Russian prince of the land of Rus, Prince **Svyatoslav I of Kiev** (942-972), the father of Prince **Vladimir Svyatoslav the Great** (956-1015) (see Chapter 18).

The prince was caught in ambush and killed by the **Pechenegs**, nomad people from Turkish origin, when he wanted to cross the cliffs near Chortitsa in 972. *The Primary Chronicle*, a Russian manuscript from the 12th century describing the history of the land of Rus in a Christian fashion, mentions that **Kurya**, the khan of the Pechenegs, made a chalice from Vladimir Svyatoslav's skull.

It will be given to each according to his faith

The words of Woland: «It will be given to each according to his faith» are a rather free interpretation of Matthew 9:29: «According to your faith be it done unto you».

Baron Meigel

The real prototype for Baron Meigel's character is **Baron Boris Sergeevich (von) Steiger** (1892-1937).

In the '20's and '30's Steiger worked in Moscow at the **Народный комиссариат просвещения (Наркомпрос)** [Narodny kommissariat prosveshcheniya] (Narkompros) or the *People's Commissariat for Enlightening*, where he was responsible for *External Relations*. Simultaneously he worked as an agent of the **Объединённое государственное политическое управление (ОГПУ)** [Obedinyonnoe gosudarstvennoe politicheskoye upravlenye] (OGPU) or the *United State Political Administration*, the secret service which became part of the notorious NKVD in 1934.

In 1937, Steiger was arrested and executed. He is mentioned several times in the diary of Bulgakov's third wife **Elena Sergeevna Nyurenberg** (1893-1970). He was often found at the embassy of the United States. He reported on foreigners connected with the theatre, and on Soviet citizens having contact with the embassy.

Some sort of black chlamys and a steel sword

At the end of the ball, after the skull of Berlioz is filled with the blood of Baron Meigel, Woland brings the skull to his lips, and a metamorphosis takes place. The patched shirt and worn slippers which Woland first wore are now gone. Now he is wearing sort of *black chlamys* with a steel sword at his hip.

A chlamys was an ancient Greek type of rather short cloak, coming from Macedonia or Thessaly. It consisted of a rectangular piece of cloth, thrown over the left shoulder and held together with a clothes pin on the right shoulder. The black chlamys and the sword correspond to the gear of a *Knight Kadosh* or a *Knight of the White and the Black Eagle*, the 30th degree in the *Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite*.

Drink!

Woland brings the skull to his lips, but then he offers the cup to Margarita and orders her to drink. That relates to the *sealing of the brotherhood* in *Freemasonry* by the mixing of the blood during the initiation for the degree of *Entered Apprentice*. The mixture is symbolically represented by a cup of red wine from which the master and the candidate drink together.

Also in the ritual for the degree of *Knight of the East and West*, the 17th degree in the *Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite*, the blood plays a role. The *Faithful Brother Master of Ceremonies* leads the candidate to a basin where a lancet and some red wine are kept ready. He lets some drops of wine fall on his arm while pretending they are leeching him. When the «blood» flows, it is collected on a cloth and shown to the candidate with the words: «One should never be afraid to shed his blood to set eyes on wondrous things»

Chapter 24
The Extraction of the Master



The Chapter's title

The Extraction of the Master may sound a little weird, but it's the exact translation of the Russian source text: **Извлечение мастера** [Izvlecheniye mastera]. The master is extracted from the insane asylum, from the clutches of the secret police, and eventually even from his life in Moscow. The verb **извлечь** [izvlech] or *to extract* is normally used to indicate, for instance, the pulling out splinters, the extraction of ore, and the derivation of square roots.

Nobless obleege

This is an English transliteration of the French expression *noblesse oblige*, literally meaning «nobility obliges». In general it means that one must act in a fashion that conforms to one's position, and with the reputation that one has earned. **Richard Pevear** and **Larissa Volokhonsky** translated it very well, since in the Russian text, Bulgakov wrote **Ноблесс оближ** [Nobless obleezh], which is the Cyrillic transliteration of *noblesse oblige*.

into a goblet

Since nobility obliges, Bulgakov did not describe an ordinary goblet. He wrote that Behemoth «poured some transparent liquid» in a **лафитный стакан** [lafitny stakan] or *Lafite glass*. It's a glass with a capacity of 125-150 ml with a conical shape and a thick bottom, mostly made of dark glass or metal. The word **лафитный** [lafitny] is the transliteration of *Lafite*, taken from the famous French wine estate *Château Lafite*, situated in the wine-producing village of Pauillac in the Médoc region.

The transparent liquid was no ordinary vodka, by the way, it was «pure spirit».

He had once wandered in the wilderness for nineteen days

Nineteen days is a rather comic distortion of well-known examples. In general such periods of wandering are defined by a round figure - forty days, for example, or forty years. The usual sustenance is *manna* or *locusts* and *wild honey*, certainly not meat of a tiger.

A tiger

Behemoth's story refers to an incident in the Bible when Jesus is led into the desert «to be tempted by the devil» (Matthew 4:1-11). He fasts for forty days and forty nights and becomes hungry. And then Satan says to him: «If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread». But Jesus refuses to demonstrate his powers. Satan shows Jesus all

the kingdoms of the world and promises him that they will be his «if you will bow down and worship me» But Jesus refuses and Satan leaves him.

History will judge

The Russian text is literally: «**История рассудит нас**» or «*History will judge us*». This phrase literally refers, of course jestingly, to Behemoth's lying story, but in the Soviet context and in the context of this novel it is more resonant.

The official Soviet ideologues regularly rewrote history. There was even a joke that «*in the West it may be hard to predict the future, but in Russia it's even harder to predict the past*».

The dissidents' dream was captured in the idea that history would have the last word, and would be on their side. By the way, the novel itself is about variants of historical facts which make you think of the importance of the reliability of the sources.

In Italian this sentence sounds as «*Ai posteri l'ardua sentenza*». It's a line from the poem *Il cinque maggio* or *The Fifth of May* by the Italian poet **Alessandro Manzoni** (1785-1873). May 5, 1821 was the day **Napoleon Bonaparte** (1769-1821) died.

Manuscripts don't burn

Рукописи не горят [Rukopisi ne goryat] or *Manuscripts don't burn* - this phrase became a very popular saying in the Soviet Union immediately after *The Master and Margarita* was first published. It was used especially in reference to writers whose works were considered dangerous by the government.

Many of these writers never wrote down their stories or poems. They memorized their works so that the secret police would not find copies of the writings.

This method helped preserve their stories for years. As a result, «manuscripts don't burn», because no matter what happens to the written copy of the work, it will always exist in the mind of its author.

This scene could also have been inspired by *Le Diable au XIXème siècle*, the anti-Masonic work published by **Marie Joseph Gabriel Antoine Jogand-Pagès** (1854-1907), better known as **Léo Taxil**, under the pseudonym **Docteur Bataille** in 1895.

Léo Taxil claimed that **Albert Pike** (1809-1891), Grand Master of the *Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite* in South Carolina, had received his instructions directly from the devil. According to Taxil, Pike would have got the text of the charter of the Lodge directly from Lucifer, while a pungent smell of sulfur was spread.

And at night, by moonlight, I have no peace

The master, the hero of the novel, quotes his own hero, Pilate, and repeats his gesture: he addressed «the distant moon and wrung his hands». This is one of the keys to the similarity of the two «heroes». Neither of them is «heroic» in the traditional sense and they both consider themselves as cowards of some sort.

In nothing but his underwear, though with a suitcase in his hand

In the Stalin period many people kept a suitcase with warm clothes ready under their beds in case the secret service NKVD would knock at their doors.

Aloisy Mogarych

When you read *The Master and Margarita* in English, French or Dutch, you first meet the **Aloisy Mogarych** character in this chapter. In the Russian version, however, the master already mentions him in Chapter 13 when he talks to Ivan in Doctor Stravinsky's hospital. The master told Ivan how Mogarych showed up in his garden, introduced himself as a journalist, and proved that he knew amazingly much about the working methods and the criteria used by the authorities to ban manuscripts. The master even told Ivan that they became friends.

This scene is one of the so-called «loose ends» of *The Master and Margarita*. Since Bulgakov died before he could finish the authorial text, the novel retains some imperfections. The frequent re-writings, shortenings and extensions of the novel caused some loose ends and even some contradictions in the text.

No cat has ever drunk bruderschaft with anyone

The German word *bruderschaft* is not translated in Russian here, but just phonetically transliterated as **брудершафт** [bruderschaft]. This is to indicate that we're not talking a usual brotherhood here, but the typical German special pledge of brotherhood drink with interlaced arms, after which the friends address each other with the familiar form «ty».

No papers, no person

During the Soviet period it was, even more than today, important to citizens to carry well-ordered documents to keep out of trouble. The implementation of the passport system was based on the *Sovnarkom* decree dated April 22, 1933 *About the Issue of Passports to the USSR Citizens in the territory of the USSR*. The typical documents recorded places of residence, nationality and professional occupation. Seals, dates, and official language were

essential, as the discussion on the certificate for Nikolai Ivanovich demonstrates. Being without documents could mean trouble with the police. In the Soviet period, documents were literally a matter of life and death.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the question of the passports still leads to discussions and sometimes trouble with the police on the streets, or to long procedural steps when you need Russian certificates for use abroad.

Some documents which in my country (Belgium) are kept by the local authorities in the city hall, and of which a duplicate is issued immediately and on simple request - such as birth, marriage or divorce certificates - you have to keep them with yourself in Russia. For other documents - such as proof of nationality, a certificate of residence or the proof of your marital status - Russians use an *internal passport*, which still is a document containing much more information than in other countries.

When a door banged on the landing above

This sentence shows that *The Master and Margarita* never had a completed authorial text. A man «in nothing but his underwear», carrying a suitcase and wearing a cap (Mogarych), hurling down the stairs, «bumped into Annushka, flung her aside so that she struck the back of her head against the wall». But some pages earlier was described that Mogarych «was turned upside down by Azazello» and that he left Woland's bedroom «through the open window». So he can't have banged the door on the landing above and then bump into Annushka on the stairs.

And so was the car in the courtyard

Here's another example of the lack of an authorial text. It's written yjat «The foreigner was long gone. And so was the car in the courtyard», while immediately after that is described how Azazello said goodbye to Margarita - in the car - and asked if she was comfortably seated. Probably Bulgakov added the description of this goodbye in a later version, but he forgot to delete the phrase written just before.

Annushka

We know **Annushka** from Chapter 3. She had spilled the sunflower oil on which Berlioz slipped.

Annushka is one of the few characters to keep her actual name in Bulgakov's novel. Bulgakov's first wife remembered **Annushka Goryacheva** (1871-?), who lived across the corridor in apartment number 48. The apartment was a sort of working-class dormitory with 7 rooms

off a central corridor. Annushka Goryacheva had a son and beat him often. They used to buy home-brew vodka, get drunk, fight, and make noise.

In an earlier version of the novel, Bulgakov named her **Pelageyushka**, and in another she was called **Annushka Basina**. She also played a role in *No. 13 - The House of the Elpit Workers' Commune*, a short story written in 1922 and in the novel *Theatrical Novel*, also known as *Black Snow*, written in 1937.

Boulgakov could get terribly annoyed by the real Annushka, as we can conclude from the fact that he wrote in his diary on October 29, 1923: «The first day of heating was marked by the fact that the famous Annushka left the window of the big kitchen opened during all night. I resolutely do not know what to do with the scoundrel who lives in this flat».

Chapter 25
How the Procurator Tried to Save Judas of Kiriath



The dread Antonia Tower

The *Antonia Tower* was already presented in Chapter 19, when Margarita reread fragments having neither a beginning nor an end of the master's fire-damaged typescript.

The Hasmonaean Palace

The *Hasmonaean Palace* was also described in Chapter 19.

Bald Skull

Golgotha, which Bulgakov calls *Bald Skull*, was already described in the Chapters 2 and 16.

The palace of Herod the Great

Bulgakov's notes show that he took the architectural details of the palace of **Herod the Great** from *The Life of Christ* by **Frederic Farrar** (1831-1903). Farrar was a well-known British preacher, born in Bombay (India). He was - among other things - minister in the famous *Westminster Abbey* and later *Dean of Canterbury*. His talent to mix historical details with biblical facts attracted masses of people to his sermons. The palace was situated at the west side of the Jerusalem city walls.

The full text of *The Life of Christ* is available for download in the *Archives* section of the «Master & Margarita» website



An oyster

Bulgakov may have found this detail in *Le Procureur de Judée* (1892) by **Anatole France** (1844-1924), pseudonym for **Jacques Anatole François Thibault**. In his preparatory notes to the last edition of *The Master and Margarita*, Bulgakov wrote in his notebook: «Could Pilate have eaten oysters?»

The excerpt of the text of Anatole France, which may have inspired Bulgakov for this question, reads as follows: «...la table supportait des plats d'argent dans lesquels étaient préparés des becfignes au miel, des grives, des huîtres du Lucrin et des lamproies de Sicile» or, in English: «...on the table were silver plates in which were prepared becfignes with honey, oysters from Lucrinus and sea lampreys from Sicily».

Lake Lucrinus, in Campania, northeast of Naples, had a connection to the sea, and was very famous for its oyster parks. In 1538 the lake disappeared as a result of an earthquake.

The full text of *Le Procureur de Judée* is available for download in the *Archives* section of the «Master & Margarita» website



Falerno or Caecuba

Bulgakov originally thought that *Falerno* wine was red. When he learned that it was dark amber, he changed the wine to *Caecuba*. He wanted to use a wine with the colour of blood. Unfortunately, Bulgakov died before he was able to make this change throughout the novel. In this chapter he found a textual solution by inserting the change from Falerno to Caecuba into the dialogue between Pilate and Afranius, but in chapter 30, where the colour matters, the text hasn't been changed. In that chapter, Azazello says wrongly: «I beg you to note that it's the same wine the procurator of Judea drank. Falernian wine».

For us, for thee, Caesar, father of the Romans, best and dearest of men!

According to some scholars this toast would be historically accurate, but I haven't found any confirmation. But he wpimd have sounded very contemporary for the Soviet citizen in the Stalin era. Bulgakov displaced much of what was typical for the Soviet Union in the 1930's to the Pilate chapters: interrogation and beating, political double-dealing, spying, etc. Pilate's reflexive response to the mention of Caesar is part of this pattern.

The feast of the twelve gods

The twelve senior gods of the Roman pantheon were: **Jupiter, Juno, Neptune, Vulcan, Apollo, Diana, Ceres, Venus, Mars, Vesta, Mercury and Minerva.**

The lares

Lar (plural lares) is a Latin word of Etruscan origin meaning *lord* or *ruler*. Lares were Roman deities - or rather ghosts - protecting the house and the family.

Another kind of household gods were the **penates**, they were honoured, together with the lares, in the house, where they were in charge of daily necessities, daily bread. They were the gods of the domestic storeroom.

This messiah

Messiah comes from the Hebrew word מָשִׁיחַ (mashiah), meaning *the anointed one*. The word exists in many religions like Judaism, Christianity and Islam, but in each religion it has got another meaning.

In Judaism a messiah is a leader who will herald a messianic period of peace and prosperity for the Jewish and for others, which will eventually lead to the end of the world. This person will be a descendant of **King David** (1005 BC-970 BC) and will rebuild the nation of Israel and bring world peace by restoring the *Davidic Kingdom*. The messiah is seen as an important prophet and king. Many times in history Jewish men have claimed the title of messiah, but none of them so far has been accepted by Judaism.

Christianity believes that the Messiah came in the person of **Jesus Christ**. To Christians the Messiah has both a divine and a human side. He is seen as the *Son of God* and as God himself, albeit in a way different from the *Father* and the *Holy Spirit* with whom he exists in trinity. The Messiah plays an important role in Christian eschatology or expectation of the end of the world. When he returns, Jesus Messiah will square up with everything that is hostile to God and then establish, from Jerusalem, the dominion over the earth.

According to the Islam the messiah is **Isa** (Arab for Jesus), which means that he ascended into heaven and will return to spend his life cleansing the earth of idolaters. The arrival of the prophet **Ahmed** or **Mohammed** (569-632) would have been announced during his life. According to the Islam the messiah will, somewhat like in Christianity, herald the last days.

Were they given the drink before being hung on the posts?

Some Bible scholars consider the offering of drinking to the condemned suffering at the cross as some legal kind of mercy. That is what it means for Pilate here as well, but in the Gospels it is rather presented as an ultimate mockery, which may explain why Jesus refuses it.

Matthew 27:34 - «There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it» and Mark 15:23 - «Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it»

Among human vices he considered cowardice one of the first

This saying is not found in the Gospels, though it is of great thematic importance for *The Master and Margarita*.

Bulgakov himself, according to one of his friends, regarded cowardice as the worst of all vices, «because all the rest comes from it». And the Soviet authorities apparently felt tackled by this quotation, because all references to this «worst of vices» were removed from the original magazine publication of *The Master and Margarita* in 1966.

Aphranius

This character appears already in Chapter 2, but only now is he given a name. Maybe because he is the head of Pilate's secret police.

His name could have been inspired by **Sextus Aphranius Burrus** (1-62), a Roman with Gallic roots. Aphranius Burrus was a tribune, and later procurator and private guard of empress **Livia Drusilla II** (58 BC-29) - the widow of emperor **Augustus** (63 BC-19) - and later private guard of the emperors **Tiberius** (42 BC-37) and **Claudius** (10 BC-54). He helped **Julia Agrippina the Younger** (15-59) put her son **Nero** (37-68) on the throne and became one of his advisors after Nero became emperor in 54 at the age of 16. The second advisor was the philosopher and writer **Lucius Annaeus Seneca** (4 BC-65). The first 5 years of Nero's reign - the so-called *quinquennium Neronis* - were generally described as «a school example of good governance», because Burrus and Seneca were determining policy from behind the scene.

After the apostle **Paulus** (3-67) was being arrested and put in the *Mamertine* prison at Capitoline Hill, Aphranius Burrus was responsible for him. There was said that he treated Paul very humanly.

Nero, however, was compelled to tolerate the fact that his mother **Julia Agrippina the Younger** (15-59) claimed a role for herself that was more important than that of her son. By the mediation of Agrippina, Aphranius Burrus gained control on the *Praetorian Guards* in the year 51. He had an excellent military reputation but he knew bloody well that he had to be grateful to Agrippina. He prevented Nero from assassinating his mother a once - although it later happened nevertheless. Sextus Aphranius Burrus himself died in the year 62.

Some one-liners coming from Aphranius Brutus are still known. He once told the young emperor Nero: «When I have spoken once, do not question me again», and his last words, just before he died, were «Ego me bene habeo» or «With me everything is well».

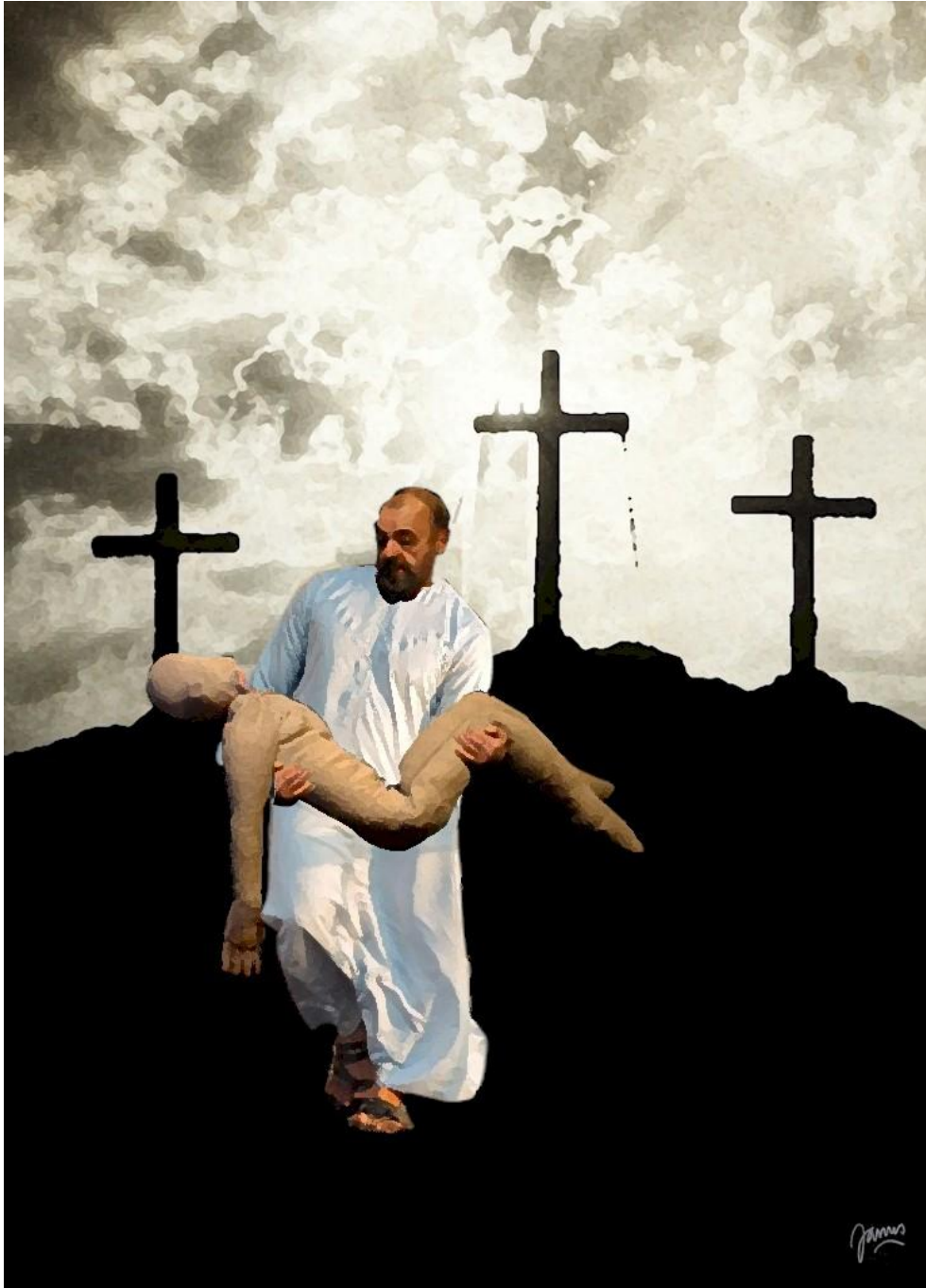
I have just received information that he is going to be killed tonight

Pilate seems to have a double intention with this comment. On the one hand he wishes to somehow make up for the unjust execution of Yeshua, on the other he is making sure that Kaifa will have problems resulting from Judas' death.

He rubbed his hands briskly

This gesture of Pilate is probably the best known emulation of the historical Pontius Pilate: he washed his hands in innocence. Matthew 27:24 - «When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it».

Chapter 26
The Burial



Banga

Banga is Pilate's dog. To him, Pilate could freely complain about the *hemicrania* which tortured him. Banga loved and respected his boss as the most powerful man in the world, the ruler of all men, thanks to whom the dog considered himself a privileged, lofty and special being. He tried to comfort his master and to face the misery together with him. Thus Banga stayed with him for 2.000 years, and they walked together down the path of moonlight.

The nickname of Bulgakov's second wife **Lyubov Yevgenyevna Belozerskaya** (1895-1987) was **Lyubanga**. She was the one who brought animals into the writer's life. In 1928, Bulgakov made a drawing which he had dedicated to Lyubanga - on the top is written «to Banga». It shows their **домовой** [domovoy] or *house spirit* which they had called **Rogash**, who runs off with a 5 carat ring.

In 2012, the American rock legend **Patti Smith** released the CD *Banga*, with the eponymous song inspired by Pilate's dog. On the «Master & Margarita» website you can see her playing the song in an acoustic version with guitarist **Lenny Kaye**. In the *Adaptations* section of the «Master & Margarita» website, you can watch an interview with Patti Smith in which she explains why people should read *The Master and Margarita*.



Niza

Just like Margarita, **Niza** slips out when her husband does not notice to meet her lover. But, unlike Margarita, she will not support him. Niza is portrayed in a shroud of mystery. Is she a double agent? Could be. She is, for sure, Judas' mistress, and maybe Aphranus' mistress as well.

Anyway, it was not just for the money that Judas was prepared to help Joseph Kaifa to frame Yeshua.

If someone's not recognized, it's a sign he'll get rich

«**кого не узнают, станет богатым**» or «*if someone's not recognized, it's a sign he'll get rich*» is not a Greek, Hebrew nor Aramaic expression, but a Russian saying.

The Olive estate in Gethsemane

Gethsemane means *olive press* in Aramaic. Bulgakov probably found this name in *The Life of Christ* by **Frederic Farrar** (1831-1903), who wrote: «The name Gethsemane means 'the oil-press', and doubtless it was so called from a press to crush the olives yielded by the countless trees from which the hill derives its designation».

The Gethsemane garden is located to the East of the city of Jerusalem, across the *Kedron* valley, at the foot of the *Mount of Olives*.

Thirty tetradrachmas

In Bulgakov's version, Judas received more than the *thirty pieces of silver* that were paid to the biblical Judas for betraying Jesus. Bulgakov writes about *thirty tetradrachmas*. The tetradrachma was the currency in the city state of Athens, it was a silver coin worth four drachmas. Because of its stability, the tetradrachma is often called «the dollar of ancient times». The tetradrachma was not suitable to pay for daily purchases. Those were paid with *oboloi*. One tetradrachma was worth 24 obeloi.

In the Bible, Judas returns the money to the high priest himself. In *The Master and Margarita*, his murderers do it, but the blood on the bag is the blood of Judas of Kiriath.

Now we shall always be together

Some sources mention that Bulgakov may have taken this idea of Jesus and Pilate «who would always be together» from the so-called *Gospel of Nicodemus*. This apocriphal Gospel is also called *The Acts of Pilate* because it focusses on Jesus' passion, and it certainly was a source of inspiration to Bulgakov, but I could not find this phrase in it.

The closest to it is this phrase from **Nicodemus VIII (XXIV) 1** - «And forthwith all the saints were gathered in one under the hand of the Lord».

The complete text of the *Gospel of Nicodemus* is available for download in the *Archives* section of the «Master & Margarita» website.



The killing of Judas

The murder scene in Gethsemane is similar to what happened in the Russian novella *Gethsemane*, written by **Alexander Mitrofanovich Fyedorov** (1868-1949), and published in the magazine *Novoe slovo* in 1910.

Bulgakov would have found the scene in the moonlight in it. Fyedorov shows, just like Bulgakov, the irony of the traitor himself being betrayed.

The soldiers on guard sat on stone benches playing dice

In the Bible the soldiers play dice for Jesus' clothes after the crucifixion. Matthew 27:35 - «And having crucified him, they divided his garments, casting a lot, that it might be fulfilled that was spoken by the prophet: they divided my garments to themselves, and over my vesture they cast a lot». Mark 15:24 - «And having crucified him, they were dividing his garments, casting a lot upon them, what each may take».

The son of an astrologer-king and a miller's daughter, the beautiful Pila

Bulgakov calls Pilate «the son of an astrologer-king and a miller's daughter, the beautiful Pila». There are no historical sources to justify this, but the French Bulgakov expert **Marianne Gourg** wrote in her comments to **Claude Ligny's** translation of *Le maître et Marguerite* in 1995 that Bulgakov could have found this detail in the Latin poem *De vita Pilati* or *About the Life of Pilate*, by the 12th-century poet **Petrus Pictor** or **Peter the Painter** from Sint-Omaars (Saint-Omer) in French Flanders. This poem existed in Russian translation. It consists of 369 rhyming couplets on various legends concerning Pontius Pilate.

One of those legends which was told in the region of Mainz in Germany was about Pilate's ancestry. This legend is about the astrologist **Ata** and the miller's daughter **Pila**, and is mentioned in *Pontius Pilatus, der fünfte Prokurator von Judäa und Richter Jesu von Nasareth* or *Pontius Pilate, the fifth procurator of Judea and Judge of Jesus of Nazareth*, written by **Gustav Adolf Müller** (1866-1928), and published in Stuttgart in 1888.

Pilate's name would thus derive from **Pila**, his mother's name. Pila would come from *pilum*, meaning *spear*.

Valerius Gratus

Valerius Gratus was Pilate's predecessor, he was Roman procurator from 15 to 25. He was the first prefect over Judea assigned by the emperor **Tiberius** (42 BC-35). It was he who

appointed **Joseph Kaifa** high priest, and Kaifa remained high priest for the rest of Gratus' administration and the reign of his successor, Pontius Pilate.

Might he not have killed himself?

This idea summarizes the irony of the entire conversation, because both men know very well that it's impossible. But in their cunning way of speaking, they pretend it being a mystery. The main purpose of their conversation is to make up a «script» which must wipe away the traces of their conspiracy. This was also the way by which, in the Soviet Union, stories were contrived to explain «disappearances».

According to the Bible, Judas killed himself after having returned the thirty pieces of silver. Matthew 27:5 - «And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself».

One of the bodies was not found on the hilltop

The rumour of the theft of Jesus' body is mentioned in Matthew 28:13-15 - «You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole him while we were asleep'. And if this gets to the ears of the governor, we will satisfy (him) and keep you out of trouble. The soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has circulated among the Jews to the present (day)».

Tolmai

Tolmai is a name that appears in *Hérodias*, written by **Gustave Flaubert** (1821-1880). This work dates from 1877 and one man bears this name, from the environment of tetrarch **Herod Antipas** (20 BC-39). In the 1929 version of *The Master and Margarita*, Aphranius was still called **Tolmai**. The name also appears in *The Life of Christ* written by **Frederic Farrar** (1831-1903).

a seal ring

In 1969, the Israeli archeologist **Gideon Foerster** (°1935) found a Roman ring during excavations in *Herodium*, the palace complex of **Herod the Great** (?75 BC-04). Almost 50 years later, on November 29, 2018, the Israeli newspaper **הארץ** [Haaretz] or *The Land* reported that it could be a ring of Pontius Pilate.

When the ring was excavated, archaeologists could not see that there was an inscription on it. This became visible only in 2018 when a technique was used that is known as *Reflectance*

Transformation Imaging (RTI). This is how they discovered the Greek word Πιλάτο [Pilato] or «from Pilate» on the ring.

The archaeologists doubt whether it is really a ring from Pilate. He is not of gold or silver, but of simple metal. But, since the body of Pontius Pilate has never been found, some Christian circles now suggest that Pilate may have lost the ring when he was «washing his hands in innocence».

Mikhail Bulgakov obviously did not know about the existence of the ring when he wrote *The Master and Margarita*. But it is remarkable that film director **Vladimir Bortko** (°1946), in episode 9 of his television series *Master i Margarita* from 2005, inserted a short scene which is not described in the novel. In this episode we see how Aphranius, after his last meeting with Pontius Pilate, throws the gift offered by Pilate with some contempt in the gutter when leaving the palace of Herod, near the place where the ring was found in 1969.

Yesterday we ate sweet spring baccuroth

Sweet spring **баккуроты** [baccuroty] is the Armaic name for *fresh figs* which were typically on the menu on a *Passover* supper.

Bulgakov made annotations in his notebooks based on *The Life of Christ* by **Frederic Farrar** (1831-1903). He had also made annotations based on the diary of **Konstantin Aleksandrovich Uspensky** (1804-1885), known as **Bishop Porphyrius Uspensky**. The latter was a famous Russian biblical archeologist who discovered the *Codex Sinaiticus* of the Bible, a manuscript version of the Greek Bible which he offered to the czar. In his diary, Uspenskii had noted that sweet figs are fully ripe in the second half of April, the period thus in which the Pilate scenes are situated.

The pure river of the water of life

The expression «the pure river of the water of life» is much similar to Revelation 22:1 - «Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb».

The fifth procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate

In Chapter 13, the master already told Ivan that his novel would end with the words: «The fifth procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate», and so it happened.

Chapter 27
The End of Apartment No. 50



A certain Moscow institution

This building is obviously the headquarters of the secret service on *Lubyanka square* in Moscow. In Bulgakov's time, the square was called *Dzerzhinsky square*, after **Felix Edmundovich Dzerzhinsky** (1877-1926), the first director of the *Cheka*, which was the first title of the secret police in the Soviet Union.

Cheka comes from **ЧК** which is short for **Всероссийская чрезвычайная комиссия по борьбе с контрреволюцией и саботажем** or the *All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Speculation*. It was the first of many successive organisations for State security. Bulgakov never refers to the secret service by name, and almost never uses a noun for its agents. That the windows are «ominously lit through the night» may be a reference to Stalin's famous all-night vigils.

A house by the Kamenny Bridge

According to Bulgakov, Sempleyarov lives at the **Каменный мост** [Kamenny Most] or *Stone Bridge* in the **Дом на набережной** [Dom na Naberezhnoy] or *House on the Embankment*. This complex was built at the Moscow river bank in 1928-1931 by architect **Boris Mikhailovich Yofan** (1891-1976). Today, the building houses a theatre, a movie theatre, two big department stores and a museum. In the Soviet period it had also apartments for the party elite.

The expulsion of his Saratov niece

In chapter 12, during Woland's show at the *Variety Theatre*, the «promising debutante» **Militsa Andreevna Pokobatko** was described as «a distant relation» who had come from Saratov and was living in the apartment of **Arkady Apollonovich** and his wife. In this chapter, she is defined as «his Saratov niece» and she is expelled from the apartment after «a night's scandal» following the seance of Black Magic - and its exposure.

Probably she was sent back to Saratov, which reminds us of **Горе от ума** [Gorye ot uma] or *Woe from Wit*, the play written by **Alexander Sergeevich Griboedov** (1795-1829), in which **Pavel Afanasievich Famusov**, the father, threatened to send his daughter **Sofia Pavlovna** «to the village, to auntie, to the backwater, to Saratov!»

The messenger Karpov

I don't know (yet) if there exists a real prototype for this character. The word **кари** [karp] means *carp*.

Kitaitsev

For **Kitaitsev**, the head of the programme department of the *Spectacles Commission* I don't know (yet) whether there exists a real prototype. The word **кит** [kit] means *whale* and Russian words starting with **китай** [kitay] usually refer to something *Chinese*.

The one who headed the investigation

Again Bulgakov is careful not to name names when he introduces agents of the secret police. He will persist in it throughout this chapter.

Astoria Hotel

The Astoria Hotel at the *Saint-Isaac Square* in Saint-Petersburg, where Bulgakov and his wife used to stay when they were in Leningrad, was built in 1910-1912 and designed by Russo-Swedish architect **Fyodor Lidval** (1870-1945). It was one of the best hotels in the city before the 1917 revolution. It became a hotel for the elite and foreigners after. It is said that Bulgakov himself preferred to be in room 412 when he went to Leningrad.

Ivanushka

Almost everywhere in *The Master and Margarita*, Bulgakov uses the pseudonym **Bezdomny** to talk about **Ivan Nikolaevich Ponyrev**. But in this chapter he's called **Ivan**, or even **Ivanushka**. It symbolizes the childlike powerlessness that Ivan seems to experience in this phase of the novel.

A tall sheepskin hat, a Georgian felt cape over a nightshirt, and blue leather bedroom slippers

The English translators **Richard Pevear** and **Larissa Volokhonsky** describe quite accurately how **Stepan (Styopa) Bogdanovich Likhodeev** is dressed when he returns from the Crimea, but it's a pity that his clothes are not indicated by their original Russian names. The sheepskin hat is a Caucasian fur cap, a **папакха** [papakha], and the Georgian felt cape is a Cossack's cape, a **бурка** [burka].

Styopa's clothes are rather strange for someone returning from the Crimea, but this may be the result of the many versions that Bulgakov made of the novel, and the lack of a completed authorial text. In one of the previous versions of the novel Styopa was indeed sent to Vladikavkaz in the Caucasus, where sheepskin hats and Georgian felt capes are normal.

He did not remember, drank starka somewhere

Starka is **старка водка** [starka vodka]. The Polish starka vodka is called the «most noble» and the «most mysterious» of all Polish vodka's, and the recipe is more than 500 years old. But there exists a Russian starka as well, a kind of cocktail made from white vermouth or white port wine with cognac, sugar and petals from fruit trees.

A good drink of benzene

With Behemoth drinking benzene, Bulgakov makes a reference to the reality of the 1920s. Struggling with the state liquor monopoly, people often drank **самогон** [samogon], which were distilled spirits that were generally produced illicitly from corn. If no corn was available, they sometimes drank **бензоконьяк** [benzokonyak], which is a rather flattering contraction of **бензол** [benzol] or *benzene* and **коньяк** [konyak] or *cognac*. Benzokonyak was made from gasoline to which different spices were added.

Chapter 28
The Last Adventures of Koroviev and Behemoth



A currency store

In the Russian text the name of the currency store is mentioned: it's the **Торгсин** [Torgsin] retail store. *Torgsin* is a typical Soviet contraction for **Торговля с иностранцами** [Torgovlia s inostrantsami] or *Trade with foreigners*. This was the name for these stores in the 20's and 30's. In theory, anyone with hard currency and valuables could enter this store and purchase unobtainable goods such as fine food and clothing, also from abroad. There were, of course, security guards at the door who would not let people in if they looked as if they did not possess any valuables.

The specific store mentioned in the novel is the *Torgsin* on Smolenskaya Square, at the corner of Arbat and the Garden Ring. Today, it still functions as a high-end supermarket, and is a part of the *Gastronom* chain.

Harun al-Rashid

The **Abbasid** was a dynasty of the *Arab Empire* that ruled the territory from 750 to 1258 from the capital Bagdad. The dynasty was headed by a *caliph*.

One of the caliphs was **Harun al-Rashid** (?766-809). He was known in legend for walking about the city at night disguised as a beggar, familiarising himself with the lives of his subjects. He became a hero of songs and appears in some tales from *The 1001 Nights*.

Palosich

Palosich is the contraction of the first name and the *patronymic* or father's name of **Pavel Iosifovich**. In rapid speech, first names and patronymics are often run together in Russian.

Choice Kerch Herring

Kerch Herring is a much-prized kind of herring from the city of *Kerch*, which is situated in the south-western corner of the Crimea, on the Sea of Azov.

Whistle!

Just as **Archibald Archibaldovich** rounds off his vigorous way of acting with the exclamation «Whistle!» in Griboedov (see chapter 5), the impressive **Pavel Iosifovich** in the Torgsin warehouse gives exactly the same command to call the police.

Bitter, bitter!

There's an old Russian custom of shouting **Горько!** [Gorko] or *Bitter!* every now and then during the banquet of a wedding. The newly-weds are then expected to kiss so as to make it sweet.

In the much praised film **Москва слезам не верит** [Moskva slezam ne verit] or *Moscow Doesn't Believe in Tears* by **Vladimir Valentinovich Menshov** (°1937) from 1979 we can see a wedding party at which the guests chant «Bitter! Bitter!» so that the bride and groom will kiss. The movie was awarded with the *Oscar* for the *Best Foreign Language Film* in 1979. The scene with «Bitter!» is at the end of the fragment which you can watch on the «Master & Margarita» website.



Don Quichote

Don Quixote is the world-famous novel written between 1605 and 1615 by the Spanish author **Miguel de Cervantes** (1547-1616). Bulgakov knew this novel very well, since he had made a stage adaptation of it in 1937-1939.

When the censors approved Bulgakov's stage adaptation, they were unaware that they were sanctioning a subtle but powerful criticism of Stalinist rule. Bulgakov did never see the play performed, though: it went into production in 1940, only months after his death.

Dead Souls

Dead Souls is the world-famous novel written between 1842 and 1852 by the Russian author **Nikolai Vasilevich Gogol** (1809-1852). Bulgakov knew this novel very well too, since he had made a stage adaptation of it in 1930-1932. Like Bulgakov himself, and like the master, Gogol burned a part of his manuscript.

Melpomene, Polyhymnia and Thalia

Melpomene, Polyhymnia and Thalia are three of a total of nine Greek *muses*: Melpomene is the muse of *tragedy*, Polyhymnia is the muse of *dance*, later also of *pantomime*, and Thalia is the muse of *comedy*.

The Inspector General

The Inspector General is, in English translations, the title that refers to **Ревизор** [Revizor], a comedy written by **Nikolai Vasilevich Gogol** (1809-1852), and one of the masterpieces of Russian theatre. It was written in 1836 and Bulgakov wrote a film script of it, but the movie was never made.

Evgeny Onegin

Koroviev does not refer to the opera by **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** (1840-1893), but to the long verse poem by **Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin** (1799-1837) on which the opera was based.

Your identification cards?

Griboedov is a writer's house. You can't just enter and enjoy the delights which **Archibald Archibaldovich** conjures up on your table. This scene is reminiscent of the philosophical novel *Sur la pierre blanche*, a work by the French writer **Jacques Anatole-François Thi-bault** (1844-1924), better known as **Anatole France**. The text was first published from April 18 to May 13, 1904, as a serial in the then newly established socialist newspaper *l'Humanité*.

In this series, the character **Jacques Hippolyte Dufresne** reads to some friends a story in which he finds himself in the year 2270. At that time, a large part of the world is united in one big *Federation* in which the socialist ideal has been realised and inequalities have (almost) completely disappeared.

During a walk, Jacques sees a beautiful big house where there are many people who seem to dine in a very pleasant environment. When he tries to enter, however, he is stopped, because he has no voucher. The doorman cannot understand «how can you travel without vouchers», and does not let him enter.

Dostoevsky

«Dostoevsky's dead,» said the citizeness, but somehow not very confidently. «I protest!», Behemoth exclaimed hotly. «Dostoevsky is immortal!» This is another quote of *The Master and Margarita* that became very popular when the novel was first published.

In fact, Bulgakov used this idea already earlier, in *The Life of Monsieur de Molière*, a novel he wrote in 1933, in which he described the life of **Jean-Baptiste Poquelin** (1622–1673), known by his stage name **Molière**. In that novel, Bulgakov described how **King Louis XIV** (1638-1715) wanted to see Molière. But prince **Armand de Bourbon-Condé** (1629-1666)

came to meet him, and said: «Molière is dead». Louis XIV took off his hat and replied: «Molière is immortal!»

And in Bulgakov's 1924 short *The Egyptian Mummy (The Story of a Union Member)*, the chairman of a local union asks: «And where does Karl Marx live?» A young man screams: «He died!» But the chairman barked: «No! He lives in the hearts of the proletariat».

Both scenes are satirical considerations of Bulgakov on the Soviet propaganda, which often suggested the immortality of the leaders of the revolution. A well-known example is the poem *Komsomolskaya* from 1924, written by **Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky** (1893-1930), in which the following words are constantly repeated like a mantra: «**Ленин жил, Ленин жив, Ленин будет жить**» or «*Lenin lived, Lenin lives, Lenin will live!*».

Sofya Pavlovna

The citizeness happens to have the same name as the heroine of *Woe From Wit* by **Alexander Sergeevich Griboedov** (1795-1829). It may have been this connection that landed her such a desirable job at the Griboedov house. She had one problem though: she didn't know that Dostoevsky was immortal.

Panaev and Skabichevsky

Koroviev and Behemoth register using the names of the writer, literary critic, journalist and magazine publisher **Ivan Ivanovich Panaev** (1812-1862) and the literary historian, critic and memoirist **Alexander Mikhailovich Skabichevsky** (1858-1912). Panaev wrote *Literary Reminiscences*, a series of portraits of literary figures, artists, musicians, and actors of the period from the 1820s to the 1850s. Skabichevsky is best known for his series of biographies of the 19th century Russian writers.

Neither of them both lived in the Soviet era, but Bulgakov considered them as *second rate*. According to him they could not perceive deep meaning, but they could judge only by superficial categories like membership in the Writers' Union.

So they are inter-changeable, as Bulgakov illustrates when Koroviev and Begemot register. Next to the name Panaev, Koroviev signs with Skabichevsky and Behemoth acts exactly the other way around.

A special little balyk

The **балык** [balyk] or **балычок** [balychok] is a long fillet of fish cut in one piece, and then smoked or salted, and it is very expensive.

The fiction writer Petrakov-Sukhovey

I don't know (yet) if there exist real prototypes for the fiction writer **Petrakov-Sukhovey** or his wife **Antonida Porfirievna**. The word **сухове́й** [sukhovey] refers to a *hot dry wind*, and **порфи́р** [porfir] is a hard kind of stone, like *granite*.

Moskovskaya vodka

Московская водка [Moskovskaya vodka] is, literally *Vodka from Moscow*. It's the brand name of a 100 % grain vodka of 40 degrees.

The chronicler Boba Kandalupsky

I don't know (yet) if there exists a real prototype for this character. **Боба** [Boba] is a diminutive for **Борис** [Boris], **кандалы** [kandaly] are *chains* or *shackles*, and a **кандальник** [kandalynik] is a *chained prisoner*. Since Bulgakov says that Boba Kandalupsky is famous in Moscow for his «astounding omniscience», **лупский** [lupsky] might come from **лу́па** [lupa] or *magnifying glass*, which allows him to see everything.

Chapter 29
The Fate of the Master and Margarita is Decided



One of the most beautiful houses in Moscow

Bulgakov describes here the *Pashkov House* on Mokhovaya Street in Moscow. It was built between 1784 and 1787, and was indeed about 150 years old when Bulgakov wrote *The Master and Margarita*. The house was built on the slope of the Vagankovsky hill facing the Borovitsky gates for **Peter Yegorovich Pashkov** (1726-1790), who was a retired officer and the son of an orderly of czar **Peter I** (1672-1725).

In 1812, the building was destroyed by a fire when **Napoleon Bonaparte** (1769-1821) invaded Moscow. Later the building was acquired by the government. It was renovated and became a school for children of the nobility. After that it became the first public library which also appeared to be a real cultural centre for Moscow. Prominent Russian writers and scientists came there to study.

After that the Pashkov house became part of the *Rumyantsev Museum*. Bulgakov visited it often in the 20s, when it had become the *Lenin Library*. Today it houses the manuscript collection of the *State Library*, including - appropriately - Bulgakov's archival manuscripts.

The building, designed by **Vasily Ivanovich Bazhenov** (1737-1799), is classical in style, with columns, urns, and terraces reminiscent of Rome. It had a garden with a pond, but they can't be seen anymore. Today the house looks over a never ending stream of vehicle traffic.

A black soutane and a long and broad sword

The black soutane and the long and broad sword coincide with the uniform of a *Knight of Kadosh* or *Knight of the White and the Black Eagle*, the 30th degree in the Freemason lodge of the *Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite*.

Resting his sharp chin on his fist

Woland imitates very accurately the pose of the statue *The Thinker* of the French sculptor **Auguste Rodin** (1840-1917). This statue is the central part of his famous work *The Gates of Hell*.

Little hovels destined to be pulled down

From the roof of the Pashkov House, Woland could also see, between the palaces, the **Храм Христа Спасителя** [Khram Khrista Spasitelya] or *The Cathedral of Christ the Saviour*. You might think that this is not exactly a «little hovel destined to be pulled down», but maybe you should learn this cathedral's story first.

The story of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour is worth telling, if only it was to show the megalomania and absurd ideas of Stalin.

After the Russian revolution, religion was officially abolished in the Soviet Union. The prominent position of the cathedral at the Moscow river embankment was a thorn in the flesh of Stalin, who had preferred a communist monument there. He organised a competition, to which participated, among others, famous architects like **Walter Gropius** (1883-1969) and **Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris** (1887-1965), who was better known as **Le Corbusier**.

The first prize was for an American project that resembled the *White House*. But things went back to «normal» when, by the means of a «Special Prize of the Jury», Soviet citizen **Boris Mikhailovich Iofan** (1891-1976), who also had designed the *House on the Embankment*, was proclaimed the winner. His *Palace of the Soviets* was a skyscraper with a 100 meter high statue of Lenin at its top. The total height of the building should have been 415 meters, which would have made it the tallest building in the world, even taller than the *Empire State Building*. The arm that Lenin would have stretched out over Moscow would have been thirty meters long.

In July 1931, the demolition of the Cathedral began. The last pieces were blown up in December 1931. Some priests refusing to leave the Cathedral were blown up with it. The writer **Ilya Arnoldovich Faynzilberg** (1897-1937), who formed the famous satirical writing partnership **Ilf & Petrov** together with **Eugene Petrovich Kataev** (1903-1942) - admired by Bulgakov - was also an avid photographer. He witnessed the detonation of the cathedral and took photos of it.

Another witness of the destruction of the cathedral was **Vladislav Vladislavovich Mikosha** (1909-2004), who just started his career as a cameraman in 1931 and who made a film about it.

When the construction of the *Palace of the Soviets* began, it appeared that no one had thought of the proximity of the river. Too much water from the Moscow river seeped into the soil, which made it impossible to erect such building on that particular spot.

Eventually the project was canceled by Party Secretary **Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev** (1894-1971) in 1953, and the excavation was transformed in 1958 into the huge **Москва бассейн** [Moskva basseyn] or *Moscow pool*, the world's largest open-air swimming pool.

After the fall of communism, religion was rapidly revived in Russia. In 1990, president **Boris Nikolaevich Yeltsin** (1931-2007) gave permission for the construction of a new cathedral following the original concept at the same location. The foundations were laid in 1994.

The new cathedral consists of two churches: the lower church, consecrated to the Saviour's Transfiguration, and the upper church. The lower church was inaugurated in 1996. The complete cathedral was inaugurated on August 19, 2000.

In the basement, next to the lower church, there's a museum telling the story of the cathedral and the church's history in general.

I like Rome better

Woland and Azazello look out over Moscow as the Torgsin and Griboedov are burning. It recalls how emperor **Nero** (37-68) had looked out over Rome after he had put the city on fire himself in the year 64. Originally Bulgakov had planned for this to happen to Moscow in the novel as well.

He does not deserve the light, he deserves peace

Scholars disagree about the significance of the master's fate. Some consider that he does not merit light because he does not persevere in his writing, he loses faith in himself. Others think for a creative writer peace may be no less a fate than light.

The Russian Bulgakov expert **Boris Vadimovich Sokolov** (°1957), the author of the *Bulgakov Encyclopedia*, associates this outcome with *Freemasonry*, without giving much evidence. He argues that Freemasons are regarded as «children of light» and sees a link with the drama *Faust* by **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** (1749-1832). He does not specify which link, though.

For sure, Goethe was a prominent Freemason. On June 23, 1780, on the eve of the feast of **John the Baptist** (7 BC-29), the most important holiday of the year for the German Freemasons, he joined *Amalia*, a Freemason Lodge in Weimar. He had asked not to be blindfolded during his initiation. He had given his word of honour that he would keep his eyes closed. Goethe wrote many poems on the occasion of Masonic events. In 1830, for example, he wrote *Dem würdigen Bruderfeste: «Fünfzig Jahre sind vorüber»*, a poignant poetic acceptance speech on his 50th anniversary as a Freemason.

The Belgian mathematician, professor of Logic and Philosophy of Science **Jean Paul Van Bendegem** (°1953), an eminent Freemason, says about the significance of light: «Light plays a major role in Freemasonry. A new member receives 'the light' at his initiation, a ritual having its origins in the *Enlightenment* thinking. Masons, however, use the light also in the biblical sense. They are inspired by the Gospel of John: 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it'» .

If this statement is correct, the master therefore would not have merited «heavenly glory», thus rest would be a lesser reward than light.

In 1991, the Russian literary critic **Yevgeny Kanchukov** wrote in his article **Расслоение мастера** [Rassloenie mastera] or *The Layering of the Master*, which was published in the literary magazine **Литературное обозрение** [Literaturnoe obozrenie] or *Literary Review*, that peace was a kind of punishment for the master.

Kanchukov compared the destiny of Levi Matthew with the fate of the master. Levi resisted, committed opposition and continued to write, so he could therefore join Yeshua in the light. The master gave up, burned his manuscript and turned away from his novel. So he showed cowardice, «the most grievous vice», and therefore he did not deserve the light.

Timiriazev

Koroviev refers here to the statue of the famous Russian botanist **Kliment Arkadyevich Timiriazev** (1843-1920) at the *Nikitsky Gates* in Moscow.

Chapter 30
It's Time! It's Time!



It's Time! It's Time!

The title *It's time! It's time!* is a reference to the poem *It's time, my friend, it's time!* written by **Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin** (1799-1837) in 1834.

There was decidedly no one to eavesdrop

Apparently the master can be quiet now. There will be no more evil forces on the lurk to betray him.

Aloisy, are you home?

The person who wants to speak to Aloisy vanishes when he hears what happened to his friend. Obviously he doesn't want to be associated with someone who has been arrested. Significantly, Margarita demands his name, which, of course, remains a mystery.

Peace be unto you

Bulgakov playfully gives this common Hebrew greeting to his demon. The risen Christ spoke these words too when he appeared to his disciples (Luke 24:36 - «While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, Peace be with you.» or John 20:26) - «And after eight days, his disciples were again in the house and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were shut, Jesus came, and taking his place in the middle of them, he said, «May peace be with you!» They are also regularly used in every liturgies and masses.

Falernian wine, [red as blood]

Bulgakov originally thought *Falerno* wine was red. When he learned it was dark amber, he changed the wine to *Caecuba*. He wanted to use a wine with the colour of blood. Unfortunately, Bulgakov died before he was able to make this change throughout the novel. In chapter 25, he found a textual solution by changing the wine in the dialogue between Pilate and Afranius, but he did not change it in chapter 30.

Chapter 25 -

«An excellent vintage, Procurator, but it is not Falerno?»
«Caecuba, thirty years old», the procurator replied courteously.

Chapter 30 -

«Messire sends you a present» - here he explained it precisely to the master - «a bottle of wine. I beg you to note that it's the same wine the procurator of Judea drank. Falernian wine».

The readers of the English translation made by **Richard Pevear** and **Larissa Volokhonsky** may not understand why I wrote in this chapter that the colour of the wine matters. That's because the translators did not translate the phrase written by Bulgakov immediately after the above-mentioned excerpt. In the Pevear and Volokhonski we read:

«The wine was sniffed, poured into glasses, held up to the light in the window, which was disappearing before the storm».

But the Russian text looks as follows:

«The wine was sniffed, poured into glasses, held up to the light in the window, which was disappearing before the storm. And they saw, how it all was painted in the colour of blood».

Or, like translator Michael Glenny wrote:

«They sniffed the wine, then poured it into glasses and looked through it towards the window. The light was already fading with the approach of the storm. Filtered through the glass, the light turned everything to the colour of blood».

Thus, even though the wine lacked the desired colour, Bulgakov left the text «the light turned everything to the colour of blood» when they looked through the glasses towards the window.

The *Falerno* was the most famous wine in ancient times and was produced in the *Campania* region. More than 3000 years ago the Greeks planted the *Aglianico* and the *Falanghina* there. The area is named *Falerno del Massico* and is one of the smallest d.o.c. area's in Italy. D.o.c. is the abbreviation of *Denominazione di origine controllata* or *Controlled designation of origin*, the second highest class of Italian wines. A broad spectrum of wines is produced there in that tradition. Modern vinification and biological cultivation play an important role. The most renowned Falernian today is the *Falerno del Massico* of the *Villa Matilde*, made from Aglianico and Piediroso. There exists white Falerno as well.

The *Caecuba* was also a strong wine from the *Larium* region, but according to my information it's no longer produced.

You can think, so how can you be dead?

Azazello makes an allusion to a statement of **René Descartes** (1596-1650), or **Renatus Cartesius** in Latin. He was a French mathematician, physicist and philosopher, one of the most important of his time. With his positing: «Cogito ergo sum» or «I think, therefore I am», Descartes took a dualistic position: he separated body and soul. He said that we should doubt everything, including that our body exists and we don't dream all this.

But you won't forget a single word of it?

In chapter 24 was already talked about what dissident writers in the Soviet Union did so they wouldn't get caught. Many of them never wrote down their stories or poems. They memorized their works so that the secret police would not find copies of the writings. This explains Margarita's question if the master «will not forget a single word of it».

Many writers distributed to various reliable friends different parts of their work.

I'll cut your hand off!

This is the first and only time in the novel that one of the demonic characters reacts so aggressively against a sign of Christian symbol.

Chapter 31
On Sparrow Hills



Sparrow Hills

From this spot, called **Воробьёвы горы** [Vorobyovy gory]) in Russian, Woland, Koroviev, Azazello and Behemoth said goodbye to Moscow, as they ride black horses. Together with the master and Margarita they rose into the air and galloped.

The *Sparrow Hills* - in reality it is only one long hill - are situated on the right bank of the Moskow River and reach a height of 220 meters above the sea level, and between 65 and 85 meters above the river level.

Once, the *Moscow Council for the Renovation of the City* had decided to install on Sparrow Hills, in a little park on the Moscow river, between Andreevskaya Naberezhnaya and Kosygin ulitsa, a sculpture group created by the **Aleksandr Yulianovich Rukavishnikov** (°1950) to honour Bulgakov. At first his monument was meant to be placed in the park of the Patriarch's Ponds. But the saga of those sculptures takes so long that we hardly dare refer to them anymore.

In 1953, the *Moscow State University* - one of Joseph Stalin's so-called *Seven Sisters* - was built on the hills. These «sisters» are seven rather bombastic skyscrapers in Moscow, sometimes also called the *wedding cakes* because of their typical shape. The university campus is situated 220 meter above sea level and 85 meter above the river banks. The observatory with view on Moscow can be reached by a funicular.

Not far from the observatory is the well known *Metromost*, a metro station on a bridge over the river. This bridge, connecting Komsomolsky Prospekt to Vernadsky Prospekt, has two levels: one for car traffic, and one for the metro. The metro station Vorobyovy Gory with his wall of glass is situated at the lower level.

In 1935, Sparrow Hills were renamed into **Ленинские горы** [Leninskiye gory] or *Lenin Hills*. This name was kept until 1999.

The Devichy Convent

Close to the Sparrow Hills is the **Новодевичье кладбище** [Novodevitche kladbyshche] or *Novodevichy convent*. The convent was founded in 1524 by **великий князь** [veliki knyaz] or *Grand Prince of Moscow Vasily III* (1479-1533) to commemorate the reconquest of Smolensk over the Lithuanians. But most of the currently-existing buildings are from the 17th century. It was here that **Boris Fyodorovich Godunov** (1551-1605) was elected czar and **Sofia Alexeevna** (1657-1704), the imperious sister of czar **Peter the Great** (1672-1725), was imprisoned.

The Novodevichy convent has one of the most famous graveyards of Russia. Party leader **Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchov** (1894-1971), film director **Sergey Mikhailovich Eisenstein** (1894-1971), former minister **Vyatsheslav Mikhailovich Molotov** (1890-1986), composer **Sergey Sergeevich Prokofyev** (1891-1953), writer **Anton Pavlovich Chekhov**

(1860-1904), aviation pioneer **Andrey Nikolaevich Tupolev** (1888-1972)... and **Mikhail Anasafievich Bulgakov** (1891-1940).

Bulgakov lies there with his third wife **Elena Sergeevna Nyurenberg** (1893-1970). When Elena Sergeevna was searching for a nice stone for Bulgakov's grave, she found a block of granite coming from the Crimea. It turned out to be the tombstone on the original grave of **Nikolay Vasilyevich Gogol** (1809-1852).

Fingers in his mouth and whistle

This strong kind of whistle is rather common in Russian folklore. **Соловей-Разбойник** [Solovey-Razboynik], for example, was a legendary robber who could kill his enemies with his whistle. He lived in the woods in the neighbourhood of *Bryansk*. He used to hide himself in the trees on the way to Kiev and to overwhelm foreigners by his whistle.

A huge slab of the bank sagged into the river

This sentence refers to what happened in the 19th century with the well-known Moscow *Cathedral of Christ the Saviour*. Originally, czar **Alexander I** (1777-1825) had promised to build the Cathedral on the spot where the wooden Vorobyoy palace was destroyed in 1812 after the great fire that forced **Napoleon Bonaparte** (1769-1821) to withdraw from Moscow.

The plans for a neoclassical design with a lot of Masonic symbols were made by architect **Aleksander Lavrentevich Witberg** (1787-1855) or **Carl Magnus Witberg**, who was of Swedish descent. But it turned out to be impossible to build the cathedral on the particular spot.

In 1817, the first stone for the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour was laid on Sparrow Hills. The Cathedral was planned to be built on the top, and to descend to the Moskow River via three terraces. But during the ground works it appeared that the mountain began to crumble and slide down, and in 1827 the construction was stopped. Twelve years later, in 1839, the construction of the Cathedral was resumed on a spot closer to the Kremlin, and in a design by architect **Konstantin Andreevich Thon** (1794-1881).

Chapter 32
Forgiveness and Eternal Refuge



Gods, my gods!

This paragraph was written when Bulgakov knew that he was dying of *nephrosclerosis*. According to some sources, this would be the reason why he intentionally left the last line of the paragraph unfinished. In the original manuscript we can read: «And without regret he leaves the mists of the earth, its swamps and rivers, with a light heart he gives himself into the hands of death, knowing that she alone [...]»

Bulgakov's wife **Elena Sergeevna Nyurenberg** (1893-1970) would have insisted finishing this sentence, and in most Russian versions of the novel it ends with «<успокоит его.>» or «<can bring him peace.>», albeit between clear brackets.

In the English translations the sentence is simply finished with «can comfort you» (Glenny) or «can bring him peace» (Pevear en Volokhonsky). And the French also can't stand to see a sentence with no end, so the French reader sees a nicely finished phrase «lui apportera la paix» or «will bring him peace».

Koroviev, the dark-violet knight

When they leave Moscow the members of Woland's retinue change and revert back into their original forms. Koroviev changes in a dark-violet knight with a most gloomy and never-smiling face. This reminds us of the knight **Samson** in the novel *Don Quichote* by **Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra** (1547-1616), which Bulgakov adapted to a theatrical play. In that story Samson disguised as the *Knight of the White Moon*, duels with Don Quichote and wins, after which Don Quichote falls into melancholy and dies.

The pun he thought up was not altogether good

Koroviev had once made an unfortunate joke. The pun he thought up, in a discussion about light and darkness, «was not altogether good».

The description of the Koroviev's clothes, the golden chains of the bridle and the use of the word *knight* could have been references to *Freemasonry*, but the pun about the light and the darkness almost certainly is one.

In 1873, **Albert Mackey** (1807-1881), a prominent Freemason from Charleston in South Carolina, wrote in his *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*: «Freemasons are called the Sons of the Light, because they are in possession of the true meaning of the symbol. It is stated that the uninitiated who have not received this knowledge are living in darkness.» As a Mason makes his way up through the different degrees of the Lodge, he will receive the *true light*, and he is considered superior to people to whom the mysteries of Freemasonry have not been revealed.

It is extremely inappropriate to make jokes about such teachings. Article 16 of the *Masonic Etiquette* mentions this, under the title *No practical jokes nor off-color stories*: «Why? The great lessons of Masonry, which are taught by our ritual, should never be demeaned by levity or pranks. The lodge room is not a proper location for the telling of practical jokes, pranks, horseplay nor off-color stories.»

Behemoth, the best jester the world has ever seen

Behemoth transformed into a slim youth, a demon-page, and the «best jester the world has ever seen».

This transformation could have been inspired by the character **Till Eulenspiegel**. This symphonic poem made by **Richard Strauss** (1864-1949) and based on the novel of the Flemish writer **Charles de Coster** (1827-1879) was, and still is very popular in Russia.

Azazello, the demon of the waterless desert

Azazello loses his fang. His eyes are now both the same, empty and black, and his face is white and cold and he shows himself «as the demon of the waterless desert, the killer-demon».

This is a hint at the apocryphal *Book of Enoch*, in which Azazel, through God's own demand, is cast into the darkness by the archangel Raphael, and disappears in the desert. In the Hebrew Bible there's a connection with a goat driven into the wilderness In Leviticus 16:10 is described: «But the goat for Azazel is to be placed living before the Lord, for the taking away of sin, that it may be sent away for Azazel into the waste land».

The first time that Bulgakov plays toyed with the idea of giving a role to this character was in 1930. On one note he had written:

«The meeting of poet with Woland

Margarita and Faust

Black mass

You will not raise the hillocks. Nor will you listen to the crowd. But you will listen to romance.

Margarita goat

Cherries. River. Verses. Story with lipstick».

A stony, joyless, flat summit

Bulgakov most likely describes *Mont Pilatus* at *Lake Luzern* in Switzerland, although the name of this mountain has probably nothing to do with Pontius Pilate. According to the

apocryphal book *Mors Pilati* or *The death of Pilate*, the body of Pilate would have been transported to Losania, after some attempts to dump it, first in Rome and later in France, and it would have been buried in the mountains. But Losania may be Lausanne, and not Luzern.

The name of the mountain in Luzern is almost certainly derived from *Mons Pilateus*, which means *The mountain with the hat*, because very often at noon the clouds form some kind of a cap around the mountain's summit.

But those who love folklore don't mind. According to the legend, each year on *Good Friday*, the devil digs up Pilate's body here to put it on a stone throne while Pilate washes his hands.

Twelve thousand moons

Margarita makes a miscalculation here: «twelve thousand moons» is one thousand years. But Pilate has been sitting on this mountain since two thousand years, so she should have said «twenty four thousand moons».

Romantic master!

Here Bulgakov sets himself clearly apart from the *Socialist Realism* of his time and prefers to identify with the *Romantics* of the 19th Century such as **Nikolai Vasilyevich Gogol** (1809-1852) or **Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffman** (1776-1822).

The individual vision of the artist was vitally important to the Romantics. Bulgakov had read an article on Hoffman which expressed the following ideas that run throughout the novel: a genuine artist is doomed to solitude, art is powerless when confronted with a reality that is destructive to art, the artist is not of the ordinary world, clarity and peace are needed for creation, a man of genius faces three possibilities: to succumb to reality and become a philistine, to die before his time, or go mad.

The Romantic idea of the artist as a tool of divine inspiration is also present as a work of art is a revelation granted to the artist.

In the evening listen to Schubert's music

Franz Schubert (1797-1828) is the famous Austrian romantic composer with several connections to Bulgakov. Schubert died very young, set several poems of Goethe to music - including one of Faust - endured constant defeats in his life, and suffered from depression. Melancholy, suicide and death were his themes.

Woland threw himself into a gap

This scene corresponds to the climax of the concert opera *La damnation de Faust* composed by the French composer **Louis Hector Berlioz** (1803-1869).

The master's memory began to fade

The master's peace comes at the price of the loss of his memory, but it is his memory we must rely on for the preservation of his novel - see Margarita's question in chapter 30.

The fifth procurator of Judea, the equestrian Pontius Pilate

The novel Bulgakov writes about the master ends with the same words as the novel the master writes about Pilate.

Epilogue



Feodosiya

Feodosiya or **Theodosia** is a seaport town in the Crimea, in Ukraine. The city has 74.669 inhabitants, most of them are Russians. The main language is Russian, only a few people speak Ukrainian.

Some 10 km south of Fedosia is the *Koktebel* health resort. In 1925, Bulgakov wrote his short story *Travel across Crimea*, in which he ironically described the disadvantages of Koktebel. He had been there with his second wife **Lyubov Yevgenyeva Belozerskaya** (1894-1987), to visit one of his friends, the poet **Maksimilian Aleksandrovich Voloshin** (Kiryenko-Voloshin) (1877-1932).

Voloshin, who has been living in Paris for a while, had become a member of the Masonic Lodge *Le Travail et les Vrais Amis Fidèles* in 1905.

Armavir

Armavir is a Russian town in the Krasnodar kray on the left bank of the Kuban river on the Taman peninsula. Armavir used to be the second industrial center of the kray after Krasnodar. It is situated 202 km northeast of Krasnodar at the foot of the Caucasus. It's the intersection with the railroad from Rostov-on-Don to Baku. There is also a petroleum pipeline from Azerbaijan.

The population of Armavir takes pride in being mentioned in *The Master and Margarita*. In the Novorossyskaya ulitsa, a statue has been erected showing «one of these perfectly guiltless beasts brought to the police by some citizen with its front paws tied».

A pickled mushroom

These pickled mushrooms are still available and very popular in Russia today.

Abducted by the gang of murderers

Probably we're confronted here with the problem of the missing authorial text again. Bulgakov describes the official version given here: Margarita and Natasha have disappeared, presumably abducted by a gang of murderers. And the same would have happened to a mental patient who called himself the master. He is abducted from the psychiatric clinic.

But that contradicts what was previously described in chapter 30. Margarita had been found dead on the floor of the living room in her villa after she had suddenly turned pale, clutched her heart, and cried helplessly: «Natasha... somebody... come...». And the master died in

room 118 of the clinic of doctor Stravinsky, as we learn from the dialogue between **Bezdomny** and sister **Praskovya Fyodorovna**.

Vodka with blackcurrant buds

Vodka with blackcurrant buds is a vodka flavoured with black currant buds, comparable to the blackcurrant gin known in Belgium and Holland.

The festal spring full moon

The *festal spring full moon* is the first full moon after the spring solstice, which is important to determine the date of Easter.

The Institute of History and Philosophy

While there was no institute with exactly this name, there were similar combinations, such as the *Leningrad Institute of Philosophy, Literature, and History*.

Professor Ivan Nikolaevich Ponyrev

Only at the first and the last page of the novel Ivan is mentioned by his real last name **Ponyrev**. Most of the time he's mentioned with his pseudonym **Bezdomny** or, as in Chapter 27, **Ivan** or **Ivanushka**.

Like a lodge brother in *Freemasonry*, Ivan has progressed through different phases of awareness and insights in *The Master and Margarita*. The ignorant of the first chapter is now a professor.

The fifth procurator of Judea, the equestrian Pontius Pilate

This is the third time that this sentence appears in *The Master and Margarita*. In the Russian version Bulgakov changes his approach, however. Throughout the book he calls Pontius Pilate **Понтий Пилат** [Ponty Pilat], but here he perhaps-unexpectedly writes **Понтийский Пилат** [Pontysky Pilat].

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