

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-60471-0 - The Cambridge Companion to Pushkin

Edited by Andrew Kahn

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The Cambridge Companion to Pushkin

Alexander Pushkin stands in a unique position as the founding father of modern Russian literature. In this *Companion*, leading scholars discuss Pushkin's work in its political, literary, social and intellectual contexts. In the first part of the book, individual chapters analyse his poetry, his theatrical works, his narrative poetry and historical writings. The second section explains and samples Pushkin's impact on broader Russian culture by looking at his enduring legacy in music and film from his own day to the present. Special attention is given to the reinvention of Pushkin as a cultural icon during the Soviet period. No other volume available brings together such a range of material and such comprehensive coverage of all Pushkin's major and minor writings. The contributions represent state-of-the-art scholarship that is innovative and accessible, and are complemented by a chronology and a guide to further reading.

ANDREW KAHN is University Lecturer in Russian at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of St Edmund Hall, Oxford.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-60471-0 - The Cambridge Companion to Pushkin

Edited by Andrew Kahn

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

THE CAMBRIDGE
COMPANION TO
PUSHKIN

EDITED BY
ANDREW KAHN
St Edmund Hall, Oxford



Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-60471-0 - The Cambridge Companion to Pushkin
Edited by Andrew Kahn
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, São Paulo
Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521604710
© Cambridge University Press 2006

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2006

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN-13 978-0-521-84367-6 hardback
ISBN-10 0-521-84367-7 hardback
ISBN-13 978-0-521-60471-0 paperback
ISBN-10 0-521-60471-0 paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for
external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not
guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

CONTENTS

<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>List of contributors</i>	viii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>Note on the text</i>	x
<i>Chronology</i>	xi
<i>Map</i>	xv
 Introduction	 I
ANDREW KAHN	
 Part I Texts and Contexts	
 1 Pushkin’s life	 II
DAVID BETHEA AND SERGEI DAVYDOV	
 2 Pushkin’s lyric identities	 26
ANDREW KAHN	
 3 <i>Evgenii Onegin</i>	 4I
MARCUS LEVITT	
 4 Pushkin’s drama	 57
CARYL EMERSON	
 5 Pushkin’s long poems and the epic impulse	 75
MICHAEL WACHTEL	
 6 Prose fiction	 90
IRINA REYFMAN	

CONTENTS

7	Pushkin and politics OLEG PROSKURIN	105
8	Pushkin and history SIMON DIXON	118
9	Pushkin and the art of the letter MIKHAIL GRONAS	130
10	Pushkin and literary criticism WILLIAM MILLS TODD III	143
Part II The Pushkinian tradition		
11	Pushkin in music BORIS GASPAROV	159
12	Pushkin and Russia Abroad ROBERT P. HUGHES	174
13	Pushkin filmed: life stories, literary works and variations on the myth STEPHANIE SANDLER	188
14	Pushkin in Soviet and post-Soviet culture EVGENY DOBRENKO	202
	<i>Appendix on verse-forms</i>	221
	<i>Guide to further reading</i>	224
	<i>Index</i>	228

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Mass meeting, 1937, near the Pushkin Monument on Tverskoi Boulevard, Moscow. The verse at the bottom of the billboard of Pushkin is from his ‘Epistle to Siberia’. Reproduced from Iu. Molok, *Pushkin v 1937 godu: materialy i issledovaniia po ikonografii*, Moscow, NLO, 2000, p. 27 page 210
2. Boris Knoblok, poster, 1936. The verses are the same as those quoted on the billboard (figure 1) and describe the day when freedom will come ‘and on the ruins of autocracy / will our names be written’. Here, the names of Stalin, Pushkin, Molotov, Gorky, Kaganovich and Mayakovsky are written on the red volumes carried by the masses. Reproduced from Molok, *Pushkin v 1937 godu*, p. 55 211
3. Boris Orlov, *All-Russian totem*, 1982. The representation likens Pushkin to the general secretary of the Communist Party, Leonid Brezhnev. Reproduced from *Shinel’ Pushkina*, Moscow and St Petersburg, Pentagraphics Ltd, cover 217

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-60471-0 - The Cambridge Companion to Pushkin

Edited by Andrew Kahn

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTRIBUTORS

DAVID BETHEA, University of Wisconsin, Madison and University of Oxford

SERGEI DAVYDOV, Middlebury College

SIMON DIXON, University of Leeds

EVGENY DOBRENKO, University of Nottingham

CARYL EMERSON, Princeton University

BORIS GASPAROV, Columbia University

MIKHAIL GRONAS, Dartmouth College

ROBERT P. HUGHES, University of California, Berkeley

ANDREW KAHN, University of Oxford

MARCUS LEVITT, University of Southern California

OLEG PROSKURIN, Moscow

IRINA REYFMAN, Columbia University

STEPHANIE SANDLER, Harvard University

WILLIAM MILLS TODD III, Harvard University

MICHAEL WACHTEL, Princeton University

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-60471-0 - The Cambridge Companion to Pushkin

Edited by Andrew Kahn

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Rebecca Duplessis and Dominique Lussier for editorial assistance; Janet Godden for practical wisdom; and Dr Sarah Turner for translations of Chapters 7 and 14.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-60471-0 - The Cambridge Companion to Pushkin

Edited by Andrew Kahn

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NOTE ON THE TEXT

Unless otherwise indicated, all citations of Pushkin's works are from A. S. Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, ed. M. A. Tsiavlovskii, B. Tomashevskii *et al.*, 17 vols., Leningrad, Akademiia nauk, 1937–54, henceforth, PSS.

Russian is transliterated according to the Library of Congress conventions except in the case of well-known surnames given in familiar form, e.g. Dostoevsky, rather than -skii. Russian first names are given in the original spelling, e.g. Petr rather than Peter and Ivan. For the sake of familiarity, however, the English spelling of names like Maria and Natalia is preferred, as it is with the name of a well-known figure like Pushkin, which appears as Alexander rather than Aleksandr. Following standard practice, rulers' names are given in their more familiar form (Nicholas I rather than Nikolai).

Until February 1918, Russia used the Julian (Old Style) calendar, which ran thirteen days behind the Gregorian (New Style) calendar used in Western Europe. To avoid complication, dates given in this volume are in the Old Style.

CHRONOLOGY

26 May 1799	Alexander Pushkin born in Moscow to Major Sergei L’vovich Pushkin 1771–1848 and Nadezhda Osipovna née Gannibal 1775–1836.
1811	Matriculates at the newly founded Imperial Lycée at Tsarskoe Selo as a member of its first class; makes lifelong friends with Baron Anton Del’vig.
20 June 1814	Makes his debut in print with the publication of two poems in the literary journal the <i>Herald of Europe</i> .
1815	Beginning of a lifelong friendship with the older poet and influential figure Vasilii Zhukovskii, who predicts his future greatness.
1816	Joins Arzamas, the most progressive and western of literary groups in St Petersburg.
June 1817	Graduates from the Lycée. Secures an appointment in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
April 1820	At the order of Alexander I, Pushkin is investigated for subversive behaviour linked to the inflammatory ode ‘Liberty’.
1820	July publication of long poem <i>Ruslan and Liudmila</i> to popular and critical acclaim.
1820–24	Period of exile in southern Russia. From the autumn of 1820 based in Kishinev until June 1823, followed by time in Odessa from July 1823 until July 1824.
December 1824	<i>The Fountain of Bakhchisarai</i> is published. In August, Pushkin transfers from the south to confinement on the family estate at Mikhailovskoe until 1826.
1825	<i>Boris Godunov</i> completed, Pushkin has affair with the peasant girl Olga Kalashnikova.

CHRONOLOGY

11 January 1825	Pushkin visited by his Lycée classmate Ivan Pushchin, who hints at secret political activity.
18 February 1825	Publication of chapter 1 of <i>Evgenii Onegin</i> , with sales of 700 copies in February, decreasing steeply in the next months.
1 March 1825	Death of Alexander I.
14 December 1825	Coronation of Nicholas I disrupted by the Decembrists.
1826	<i>Poems of Alexander Pushkin</i> , Part I. In September, Nicholas I pardons him and becomes the poet's personal censor. Possibly advised by the critic and government agent Faddei Bulgarin, Nicholas blocks <i>Boris Godunov</i> for publication.
1827	Publication in July of the narrative poems <i>Brothers-Brigands</i> and <i>The Gypsies</i> , written in 1824. Publication in November of the burlesque poem <i>Count Null</i> to much indignation in prudish court circles.
1828	Chapters 4, 5 and 6 of <i>Evgenii Onegin</i> published to tepid reviews and modest sales. Second edition of <i>Ruslan and Liudmila</i> sells well. Investigated for the illicit circulation of stanzas from the poem 'André Chénier' under the title of '14 December'.
18–19 August 1828	Real threat of a second period of exile owing to the blasphemous <i>The Gabrieliad</i> . Made to sign a declaration stating that his verses will not henceforth be circulated in public without the censor's approval under a threat of severe punishment. Also placed under surveillance, which is to continue until his death.
1829	March publication of <i>Poltava</i> ; <i>Poems of Alexander Pushkin</i> , Parts I and II.
May 1829	First proposal to Natalia Goncharova. Pushkin travels to Georgia and the Caucasus, recorded in <i>A Journey to Erzerum</i> .
January 1830	First number of the <i>Literary Gazette</i> , edited by Del'vig, to which Pushkin contributes.
Spring 1830	Del'vig publishes critical review of Faddei Bulgarin's play <i>Dmitrii the Pretender</i> , hinting at plagiarism of Pushkin and Bulgarin's status as a spy. Open hostilities prompt malicious epigrams from Pushkin;

CHRONOLOGY

	Bulgarin and his allies plague Pushkin henceforth. Engagement to Natalia Nikolaevna Goncharova, a beauty and favourite at court. Follows the July Revolution in France avidly.
September– December 1830	‘First Boldino autumn’. Among other works, <i>Tales of Belkin</i> , <i>The Little House in Kolomna</i> , <i>Onegin’s Journey</i> (original chapter 10 of the novel), the <i>Little Tragedies</i> , and over thirty lyric poems are composed.
January 1831	<i>Boris Godunov</i> published, 400 copies sell on the day of publication; receives 10,000 roubles from the publisher Smirdin, much of which goes to pay off debt.
18 February 1831	Marries Goncharova (having loaned her impoverished parents 11,000 roubles for the bride’s dowry).
June 1831	The couple live in Tsarskoe Selo. The <i>Tales of Belkin</i> published.
August 1831	Russia retakes Warsaw, ending the Polish insurrection. Pushkin publishes the patriotic ‘To the Slanders of Russia’, highly regarded at court but deemed craven by others.
November 1831	Nicholas I grants Pushkin permission to undertake historical research in the state archive, has him readmitted to a nominal position in the Foreign Office with an annual stipend of 5,000 roubles paid from July 1832.
Winter 1832	Chapter 8 of <i>Evgenii Onegin</i> published. Beginning of acute financial problems.
March 1832	<i>Poems of Alexander Pushkin</i> , Part III, published.
7 January 1833	Election to membership in the Russian Academy.
February– March 1833	Archival research on the Pugachev rebellion. First sketches of <i>The Captain’s Daughter</i> penned. Travels to the Orenburg and Kazan districts to research the history of the Pugachev Rebellion.
March 1833	<i>Evgenii Onegin</i> published in book form.
6–31 October 1833	‘Second Boldino autumn’: ‘The Queen of Spades’, <i>Angelo</i> , several fairytales, the great lyric ‘Autumn’, and <i>The Bronze Horseman</i> composed. Financial woes mount and the family estate is almost forfeited to creditors.
1 January 1834	Appointment as Junior Gentleman of the Chamber.

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-60471-0 - The Cambridge Companion to Pushkin
Edited by Andrew Kahn
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CHRONOLOGY

March 1834	‘The Queen of Spades’ published. Researches the history of the reign of Peter the Great, works in Voltaire’s Library in St Petersburg.
December 1834	<i>History of the Pugachev Rebellion</i> published with the tsar’s approval. <i>The Tale of the Golden Cockerel</i> begun.
April 1835	<i>Poems of Alexander Pushkin</i> , Part IV, published.
1836	As editor publishes first volume of the journal <i>The Contemporary</i> . Three more volumes appear during the course of the year, including his only novel <i>The Captain’s Daughter</i> , completed on 19 October, and published in December in volume iv.
29 March 1836	Death of Pushkin’s mother.
26–29 January 1837	Wounded in duel and death.



Pushkin's Russia