

**MSC 2020****International Scientific and Practical Conference «MAN. SOCIETY.  
COMMUNICATION»****COVERAGE OF ALEXANDER PUSHKIN'S WORK IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup>-  
CENTURY FRENCH MEDIA**

Oxana Bogemova (a)\*, Polina Tsema (b)  
\*Corresponding author

(a) Pskov State University, Pskov, Russian Federation, Boguemova@mail.ru  
(b) Pskov State University, Pskov, Russian Federation, Polina.tsema@gmail.com

**Abstract**

This article provides a huge range of reviews on the work of Alexander Pushkin, published in the French press during the life of the poet. The research is based on articles from the journal "Rêvue encyclopédique". The study is also supplemented by a reference to some little-known publications, both metropolitan and provincial, located in the BNF database, the National library of France. This allows to trace the history of the reader's acquaintance with A. S. Pushkin, to determine the degree of significance of his work for the French press. This also makes possible to reveal the formation of interest in the press in the secular side of the poet's life. Parisian publications, introducing the public to new products from Russia, were biased in their assessment of Pushkin's work. They often expressed the idea of imitation of Russian authors to French models, so they called for a degree of leniency towards a culture that had recently emerged from its barbaric state. The publication "Revue encyclopédique" stands out against the general background of negative attitude to Russian literature in the first half of the XIX century. The regional press of France also showed interest in the poet's work. Contrary to expectations, its publications were distinguished by independence and originality. At the same time, the emphasis in these articles shifted from the artistic merits of the texts of Alexander Pushkin to the very fact of introducing the French reader to a new exotic layer of world culture.

2357-1330 © 2021 Published by European Publisher.

*Keywords:* Media, Pushkin, Revue encyclopédique, social life



This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported License, permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

## **1. Introduction**

The problem of covering the works of A.S. Pushkin in the French press quite often arises in modern studies. Philologists are attracted for the most part by the history of the acquaintance of the French reader with his works. The main attention of researchers is focused on reviews of the press that interested the author himself. We can say that publications in editions that regularly posted articles on Russian literature on their pages were studied in detail, while many journals whose editors showed only episodic interest in this topic are outside the scope of researchers' interests (Zaborov, 2019). Meanwhile, this era can rightfully be defined as the heyday of literary journalism in France, and the theme of consecrating the work of A.S. Pushkin in the press has always attracted the interest of researchers (Volkhovskaya, 2019).

## **2. Problem Statement**

The analysis of available studies on this topic allowed identifying the following problem fields.

### **2.1. The problem of borrowing materials**

We can assume that second-order publications will be guided by publications of leading magazines considering the peculiarities of journalistic activity in the first half of the 19th century. A preliminary analysis of the material also allowed us to hypothesize a significant number of borrowings and reprinted articles.

### **2.2. Subject of published materials**

We assume that, in comparison with the materials of "Rêvue encyclopédique", which published articles by authors interested in popularizing Russian literature, other publications could shift public interest towards the secular component of A. Pushkin's life and work. A comparative analysis of the publications of "Rêvue encyclopédique" and other publications allows us to determine how much the latter take on a condescending attitude towards Russian literature in general and to A. S. Pushkin, as its representative.

## **3. Research Questions**

Given the fact that there were three provincial journals among the sources we found, it seems possible to organize a study in accordance with the following questions.

### **3.1. The volume of borrowing in the regional press**

The issue of orientation to Paris publications is quite acute. The problem is not only in the frank borrowing of materials, but also in what position the journalists take in relation to Russian literature and the work of A.S. Pushkin

### **3.2. The formation of the image of a Russian poet on the pages of the French press**

The study of the fact how much French society was interested in the opportunity to learn new names is of considerable interest. The question of how the image of the national poet in Russia was formed is fairly well studied (Brintlinger, 2016; Horowitz, 1999; Terras, 1983). Who was the Russian poet for the French reader – an exotic national poet, an enlightened savage or a rebellious singer of freedom?

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

In our work, we consider a number of publications presented in the National Library of France in order to establish whether there is a relationship between the nature of publications in large literary journals and the appearance of notes in regional publications through the use of new and little-studied lifetime evidence of creativity by A. S. Pushkin.

## **5. Research Methods**

Since the purpose of the research is to study journalistic evidence of literary heritage, it seemed to us possible to turn to the methodological principles of the study formulated in the framework of theoretical source study.

Publications in intravital publications, both large (“*Révue encyclopédique ou analyse raisonnée des productions les plus remarquables dans la littérature, les sciences et les arts*”), and less significant ones, in which references to the work of A.S. Pushkin were episodic in nature were used as practical material. The latter include the following sources: Anonymous (1830, 03.03). *Variétés. Le Forban : historique, littéraire et dramatique* ; Anonymous (1830, 07.07) *Athénée de Marseille. Le sémaphore de Marseille*; Anonymous (1831, 06.02) *Littérature étrangère. Littérature russe. Gazette littéraire : revue française et étrangère de la littérature, des sciences, des beaux-arts, etc.*; Anonymous (1831, 06.16) *Variétés. Exposé des évènements qui accompagnèrent l’avènement de Nicolas au trône de Russie, par un témoin oculaire. Gazette littéraire : revue française et étrangère de la littérature, des sciences, des beaux-arts, etc.*; Papa-Loth. (1832) *Album: Trilby, mosaïque littéraire*, 118; Anonymous (1836) *Littérature moderne du Nord. Littérature russe: L'Époque ou Les Soirées européennes : sciences, littérature, voyages, critiques littéraires, théâtres, etc.*, 02, 329-342; Anonymous (1836) *Littérature moderne du Nord. Littérature russe (Suite): L'Époque ou Les Soirées européennes: sciences, littérature, voyages, critiques littéraires, théâtres, etc.*, 05, 190-199.

## **6. Findings**

We began our study by examining the articles published in the publication “*Révue encyclopédique ou analyse raisonnée des productions les plus remarquables dans la littérature, les sciences et les arts*” (*Revue encyclopédique*, 1819). As Teplova N. notes, it was the “*Encyclopedic Journal*” that first published materials about A. S. Pushkin (Teplova, 2001). This is due to the fact that the executive secretary of the publication, Edm-Joachim Garraud, knew and loved Russian literature well, and regularly covered the main events in the literary world of Russia.

The very first mention of A. S. Pushkin appears on the pages of the February issue of the “Encyclopedic Journal” in 1821 (v. 9) with the appearance of the poem “Ruslan and Lyudmila”. It is noted that this poem is filled with the most exquisite beauty.

In 1824, the name of A. S. Pushkin was mentioned three times in the “Encyclopedic Journal”. The first time it appears in an article on the “New Aonides” almanac. The second mention of the poet’s name is connected with the “Literary Leaflets” by M. Bulgarin, where he publishes the poem “I Release a Bird...” The third article is completely devoted to A.S. Pushkin, who, according to the author of the article, is already at the top of Russian poetry, despite his young years. It is worth noting that the publications of 1821 and 1824. were prepared by the bibliophile and bibliographer S. D. Poltoratsky. Moreover, the first article was anonymous, and the second was signed by the author.

In May 1825, the “Encyclopedic Journal” announced the publication of the first chapter of the novel in verses “Eugene Onegin” in the form of a brochure of 60 pages in St. Petersburg. The poet's syllable is characterized as light and graceful. The naturalness of the narrative and the plausibility of life pictures of St. Petersburg society, which is also confirmed in the works of modern researchers are among the author’s advantages (Faritov, 2017).

In June 1825, a note by Y. N. Tolstoy, poet, critic, secret adviser, government agent of Nicholas I in France, appeared in the issue of the Encyclopedic Journal. In addition to his main activities, he also covered the literary life in Russia on the pages of Parisian magazines. The Pushkin’s “Bakhchisarai Fountain”, “Eugene Onegin” and “Gypsies” are noted in the article by Y. N. Tolstoy among a large number of poetic works. According to the author of the article, the last poem, yet unpublished, but read in handwritten form, is already able to stand in line with other brilliant works of the poet.

In June 1826, Edm-Joachim Garraud is preparing an article on the publication of a free translation of the poem “The Bakhchisarai Fountain” by J.-M. Chopin's in Paris. In the first part of his article, the author acquaints the reader with the biography and work of A.S. Pushkin and clarifies that, by his talent, he will be able to compete with the best poets of Europe. Describing the creative path of A.S. Pushkin, Edm-Joachim Garraud dwells in detail on the poem “Ruslan and Lyudmila” and notes that this work has an extraordinary poetic flavor. The second part of the article is devoted to the characterization of the translation of J.-M. Chopin. Examining the text, Edm-Joachim Garraud points out some of the negative aspects of the original and how the translator tried to correct them. First, J.-M. Chopin gives the text the name “The Fountain of Weeping” for the sake of harmony. Secondly, the accuracy of the translation is noted, and it is separately indicated that the embellishments that J.-M. Chopin allowed himself improved the text significantly. On the whole, Edm-Joachim Garraud comments on the poem by A.S. Pushkin with some degree of criticality and admits that he expected more.

In April 1827, a short article appeared on the pages of the “Encyclopedic Journal”, which praised the following poet’s works (Ovid, Andrei Chenier, Napoleon, The Sea, The Imitation of the Quran, etc.), and reported on the upcoming publication of the Boris Godunov tragedy, which, as the author notes, already aroused admiration for those who managed to familiarize themselves with it in the manuscript (Kurochkin, 2017).

In May 1827, Edm-Joachim Garraud includes the paragraph “Copyright in Russia” in the journal, citing the procedure for paying for Pushkin's works as an example, pointing out his high fees. He writes with irony that the great French poets only have to dream about it.

In June 1827, a report was published on the publication in St. Petersburg of *Eda and Feasts* by E. A. Baratynsky. The author of the article calls the latter one of the best followers of the romantic movement in Russia, but at the same time, points to the imitative nature of his work. A.S. Pushkin is named among the original poets.

In January 1828, Edm-Joachim Garraud writes an article about the press in Moscow and points out that the “Moscow Courier” is one of the best publications, largely because the poet Alexander Pushkin collaborates with it. In the same year, a note by Y. N. Tolstoy on the publication of 4 and 5 chapters of the novel in verses “Eugene Onegin” in St. Petersburg appeared in the “Encyclopedic Journal”. In August 1828, the forthcoming publication of the “Boris Godunov” tragedy was announced, which, according to the author of the article, should become a new milestone in the development of Russian dramatic arts.

In the same year, the magazine “Le Mercure de France au dix-neuvième siècle” (Paris) published a lengthy article on Russian literature. An anonymous author notes the popularity of the French language and literature in the cultural space of Russia. This circumstance is explained, in his opinion, by the need to imitate, which entails a loss of identity. This is precisely what seems to be the main flaw in Russian literature. But the author adds that this remark does not apply to all poets and prose writers living in Russia; he considers A.S. Pushkin to worthy writers.

A message by Edm-Joachim Garraud about the publication of works that imitate A.S. Pushkin appeared in the “Encyclopedic Journal” in January 1829. So, the novel in verses “Eugene Velsky” is mentioned. According to Edm-Joachim Garraud, this work can be considered a parody of “Eugene Onegin” rather than a direct imitation.

In the same year, “Le Journal des sçavans” (Paris) published a message about new books published abroad, including the news on the sale of “Eugene Onegin”. The note contains a factual error: the poem “Ruslan and Svetlana” is indicated among the works of A. S. Pushkin, already familiar to the reader.

In March 1830, the last article in the period under review of the existence of the “Encyclopedic Journal” was published about A.S. Pushkin. J.-M. Chopin writes an article devoted entirely to the poet and his work “The Brothers the Robbers”, which was published in Moscow in 1827. The article begins with a free translation in prose of the first part of the poem, followed by comments on the Pushkin style, which, according to J.- M. Chopin, is characterized by the use of colorful expressions of local dialect. In the final part of the article, the author notes the development of political issues in the poem.

Even though the “Encyclopedic Journal” continued to be published until 1833, no articles were published on the works of A. Pushkin in subsequent issues. However, other publications, which initially did not show such close interest in Russian literature, were just starting to address this topic.

The article in the newspaper “Le sémaphore de Marseille” of July 7, 1830, entitled “The Marseille Athenaeum”, which refers to the public lecture of Prince Meshchersky on Russian literature in Marseille is of great interest. The journalist writes that the French have no idea about national literature in Russia and makes the assumption that the reason for this is the well-known cosmopolitanism of the Russian nobility. This circumstance, according to the author, suggests a lack of identity and creative genius in Russian

culture, and this is another reason for researchers to address the topic of noble bilingualism (Dmitrieva, 2019).

In March 1830, the journal “Le Forban: historique, littéraire et dramatique” (Paris) published a material on its pages that presented A.S. Pushkin as a rebellious poet who decided to openly confront the emperor. The author focuses the reader on his rebellious character. Thus, A.S. Pushkin is presented as a victim of power and censorship, whose brilliant talent remains dangerous even in exile (Larionova, 2018). A year later, “Gazette littéraire” published material on the Decembrist uprising. The author, a witness to events, also uses the name of A.S. Pushkin to brand the despotic regime. It seems interesting that the fact of personal censorship was perceived as a special favor from the emperor in Russia (Kurochkin, 2019).

In 1831 *Gazette littéraire: revue française et étrangère de la littérature, des sciences, des beaux-arts*, etc. (Paris) publishes an article in the section “Foreign Literature” whose purpose is to introduce Russia to the reader as a country in which intellectual activity thrives much more fruitful and significant than might be expected. The name of A. S. Pushkin appears in the context of the general characteristics of Russian literature. The author of the article focuses on the imitation of his work, pointing to the desire to first reproduce the forms of French literature, and then on the strong influence of Byron in the “Prisoner of the Caucasus” and “Bakhchisarai Fountain” in the poem, which he inaccurately called “Ruslan and Svetlana”. But modern scholars consider the poem “Ruslan and Lyudmila” as a study of the possibilities of mastering national experience (Markovitch, 2015; Virolainen, 2017).

In 1832, “The Trilby, mosaïque littéraire magazine” (Grenoble) published a note about Mr. A. Pushkin, who, according to the author, faces a big task – work for the benefit of enlightenment and the progress of his country. This is the condition that the Russian poet must fulfill in order to justify the name of the Russian Byron received from his compatriots. It is worth noting that this edition, published in Grenoble, did not become popular and lasted only one year.

Strasbourg was of particular importance for Russian culture, so it is not surprising that publications appearing in this city also cover the work of A.S. Pushkin. The publication of Ms. Sophie K. ... (Sophia-Maria Conrad), nee D'Ott, in the journal *Revue d'Alsace* (1834, Strasbourg) is of particular interest. It is a translation of a small prose work called “Ball” from Russian into French from the almanac of A. F. Smirdin “Novoselye”. It is worth noting that Ms. Sophie K. ... does not indicate the author of the short story, which was V.F. Odoevsky, hiding under a pseudonym. In the preface to the translation S.-M. Konrad clarifies the purpose of his work – to acquaint the French public with little-known Russian literature, describes the historical conditions for the development of literary art and the publication of this almanac, and clarifies that it includes works by the best poets and writers of Russia, which also include A.S. Pushkin.

## 7. Conclusion

As a result of the analysis of a number of sources that covered the work of A.S. Pushkin during the life of the poet, we come to the following conclusions.

### 7.1. The problem of originality of materials

Despite the general tendency to borrow in the French press of this period, there is a significant amount of original materials, regardless of the place of publication. Moreover, provincial publications, which are more open and interested in meeting new names, are of most interest.

It is noteworthy that the acquaintance of the readers of the Encyclopedic Journal with the work of A. S. Pushkin passed under the guidance of connoisseurs of Russian literature. Perhaps that is why there were no negative ratings on the pages of this publication.

### 7.2. The image of A. S. Pushkin on the pages of the French press

The provincial magazines from our selection were largely free from the condescending attitude that was characteristic of Parisian society. A common opinion is that Russian literature in the 1830s. has few works that can be of significant interest and reflects only some facets of national consciousness. Thus, we note significant differences in assessments of the work of A.S. Pushkin: from frankly dismissive to supportive and even enthusiastic. A similar trend can be traced to the present and the very concept of the universality of French culture has only recently begun to be questioned (Siouffi, 2010).

We assume that a significant influence on the formation of a condescending attitude could have been exerted by the fact that the image of an enlightened Russian man in France was formed thanks to the nobility, who adopted French culture. The commentary of a journalist from "Le Sémaphore de Marseille" regarding the responsibility of the upper class in Russia for shaping the image of their country, which is constantly borrowing, not appreciating its own traditions is noteworthy.

As for the perception of A.S. Pushkin as a secular person, this trend has not yet manifested itself sufficiently in the materials we have discovered. As you know, the topic of social life was most developed in obituaries and posthumous publications. The image of A. S. Pushkin played a supporting role in the sources considered by us, where it was possible to trace this topic. He was attracted mainly to illustrate the despotism of the monarchy or to express a compliment to some Russian figures.

## References

- Brintlinger, A. (2016). "The "remarkable" Pushkin". *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 60(2), 221-240. [www.jstor.org/stable/26633175](http://www.jstor.org/stable/26633175)
- Dmitrieva, N. L. (2019). O francuzskoj nadpisi na chernil'nom pribore, podarennom A. S. Griboedovym zhene: iz nabljudenij nad bilingvisticheskoj situaciej v rossii pervoj treti xix veka [About the French Inscription on the Inkpot Given by Griboedov to his Wife: From Observations over the Bilingualistic Situation in Russia of the First Third of the 19th Century]. *Russkaya literatura* [Russian Literature], 2, 82-86. <https://www.elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=38194759>
- Faritov, V. T. (2017). Filosofija vremeni v romane A. S. Pushkina «Evgenij Onegin» [The philosophy of time in A. S. Pushkin's Eugene Onegin]. *Tomsk State University Journal of Philology*, 47, 171-183. [http://journals.tsu.ru//philology/&journal\\_page=archive&id=1551&article\\_id=35509](http://journals.tsu.ru//philology/&journal_page=archive&id=1551&article_id=35509)
- Horowitz, B. (1999). Thus Spoke Moskovskii Pushkinist: Aleksandr Pushkin in Contemporary Russian Scholarship. *Slavic Review*, 58(2), 434-439. [www.jstor.org/stable/2673081](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2673081)
- Kurochkin, A. V. (2019). A. S. Pushkin v «Zapiskah o slovesnosti» grafa D. I. Hvostova [A. S. Pushkin in Count D. I. Khvostov's Notes on Literature]. *Russkaya literatura* [Russian Literature], 3, 73-92. <https://ras.jes.su/rusliter/s013160950006871-2-1-en>

- Kurochkin, A. V. (2017). Zametka grafa D. I. Hvostova o tragedii A. S. Pushkina "Boris Godunov" [Count D. I. Hvostov's Note on A. S. Pushkin's Tragedy Boris Godunov]. *Russkaya literatura* [Russian Literature], 3, 184-189. <https://www.elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=29826303>
- Larionova, Y. O. (2018). Pushkin v roli pojeta-izgnannika [Pushkin in the role of a poet exile]. *Russkaya literatura* [Russian Literature], 4, 20-24. <https://www.elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=36759226>
- Markovitch, V. M. (2015). Transformacii russoj liriki v pervye desjatiletija XIX veka [Transformations of the Russian Lyrical Poetry in the First Decades of the 19th Century]. *Russkaya literatura* [Russian Literature], 2, 5-28. <https://www.elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=23379751>
- Revue encyclopédique. (1819). *Etat de collection: 1819 (t. I, janv.)-1833 (t. LX, déc.)*. Paris. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb32859489x/date>
- Siouffi, G. (2010). De l'« universalité » européenne du français au XVIIIe siècle : retour sur les représentations et les réalités: *Langue française*, 167(3), 13-29. <https://www.cairn.info/revue-langue-francaise-2010-3-page-13.htm>
- Teplava, N. (2001). Pouchkine en France au XIXe siècle: empirisme et intraduisibilité: *Traductologie et diversité. TTR: traduction, terminologie, rédaction*, 14(1), 211-235. <https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/ttr/2001-v14-n1-ttr408/000534ar/>
- Terras, V. (1983). Some Observations on Puškin's Image in Russian Literature: *Russian Literature*, 14(4), 299-315. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/0304347983900017>
- Virolainen, M. (2017). "Uzly" i "cikly" v istorii russoj literatury ["Nodes" and "Cycles" in the Russian Literary History]. *Russkaya literatura* [Russian Literature], 3, 5-13. <https://www.elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=29826291>
- Volkhovskaya, F. (2019). A. S. Pushkin v ispanskoj presse pervoj poloviny XIX veka: novye materialy [A. S. Pushkin in the Spanish Press of the 1820-1850s: New Data]. *Russkaya literatura* [Russian Literature], 2, 78-82. <https://www.elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=38194758>
- Zaborov, P. (2019). N. I. Grech i «Revue encyclopédique» [N. I. Grech and Revue Encyclopédique]. *Russkaya literatura* [Russian Literature], 3, 36-41.