

**Title:** The Poor Knight Between Madonna and Meretrix: Pushkin's Lyrics and the Medieval Concept of Courtly Love

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A significant amount of Russian scholarly research has been dedicated to Pushkin's poem "Legend" ("Zhil na svete rytsar' bednyi...") (1829), while North American Pushkin specialists have devoted considerably less attention to it. The most important twentieth-century works on "Legend" belong to N. Sumcov (1900), G. Frid (1927), N. Gudzii (1930), D. Yakubovich (1937), R. Iezuitova (1974), and I. Surat (1995). The scholars' observations mostly concern the possible sources of "Legend," although they produced no veritable proto-text of Pushkin's poem. Several works point out the possible influence of V. Zhukovskii's translation of Schiller's ballad "The Knight Toggenburg" (1818). In more recent scholarship on "Legend" (V. Stark, N. Wills), the question as to why Pushkin's "poor knight" travels to Geneva has been raised and also left without a convincing answer.

In this paper I demonstrate that the poor knight's traveling to Geneva can be explained through the German original of Zhukovskii's translation (Ritter Toggenburg); furthermore, the mention of Geneva in "Legend" is actually proof of a connection between Zhukovskii's knight Toggenburg and Pushkin's poor knight. By conducting a comparative reading of "Legend" and several of Pushkin's love poems written in the same period, I argue that this connection reveals an inversion of the medieval concept of courtly love in his lyrics.