

Title: Did Tsar Nicholas Personally Censor Pushkin's *Boris Godunov*?  
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In 1826, Nicholas I declared that he would personally act as Pushkin's censor. The poet assumed this would allow him to publish his *Comedy about Tsar Boris and Grishka Otrepiev* without going through regular censorship; but a negative report on the play was produced, ostensibly written by Nicholas himself. Was the tsar personally involved? There is still considerable confusion about the process that led to the publication of a significantly revised version of the play in 1831. Ever since Grigorii Vinokur studied the manuscripts of the play, Pushkin's "editor" has usually been identified as his friend Vasilii Zhukovskii, and changes in *Boris Godunov* have been described as the result of the refinement of Pushkin's aesthetic sensibilities. But was Zhukovskii responsible for editing out passages that offended Nicholas? Chester Dunning argued that *Boris Godunov* was the product of sloppy censorship by someone other than Zhukovskii, but he did not examine all marks and corrections on the manuscripts of *Comedy* or systematically categorize changes in the play. Ekaterina Larionova complicated the issue by postulating the existence of a now-lost manuscript of the *Comedy* used to produce *Boris Godunov*; her important article appeared after Dunning's book went to press. By examining surviving manuscripts of *Comedy*, the diary of Pushkin's personal censor, and other documents, I hope to refine Dunning's conclusion and to demonstrate that although Zhukovskii participated in editing *Boris Godunov*, someone else – probably Tsar Nicholas – crudely censored the play. Careful differentiation between editing and censorship should affect evaluations of authorial intent and help restore the reputation of Pushkin's original *Comedy*.

Pushkinskii Dom, Rukopisnyi otdel, fond 244, opis' 1:  
No. 891 (fair copy of *Komediia*);  
No. 892 (clerk's copy of *Komediia*)

Chester Dunning with Caryl Emerson, Sergei Fomichev, Lidiia Lotman, and Antony Wood. *The Uncensored Boris Godunov: The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006.

E. O. Larionova. "Boris Godunov': Problema kriticheskogo teksta." *Pushkin i ego sovremenniki*, vypusk 4/43 (St. Petersburg, 2005). 279-302.

A. V. Nikitenko. *Dnevnik*, 3 vols. Leningrad, 1955.

G. O. Vinokur. *Kommentarii k "Borisu Godunovu" A. S. Pushkina*. Reprint: Moscow, 1999.