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| Gumilev, Nikolai (ГУМИЛЕВ, НИКОЛАЙ) (1886–1921) |
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| Nikolai Gumilev was a Russian writer known for his poetry, translations, and literary criticism. He is also remembered as the founder of the Acmeist movement, which included such outstanding poets as Anna Akhmatova (his wife) and Osip Mandelstam. He was born near St. Petersburg and lived there for most of his life, but he also travelled extensively, most famously to Africa. Gumilev distinguished himself as one of the few writers of his generation to serve in World War One. After the war, he returned to Russia, but did not embrace the new Soviet government. In 1921 he was arrested and executed for alleged participation in a Tsarist conspiracy. |
| Nikolai Gumilev was a Russian writer known for his poetry, translations, and literary criticism. He is also remembered as the founder of the Acmeist movement, which included such outstanding poets as Anna Akhmatova (his wife) and Osip Mandelstam. He was born near St. Petersburg and lived there for most of his life, but he also travelled extensively, most famously to Africa. Gumilev distinguished himself as one of the few writers of his generation to serve in World War One. After the war, he returned to Russia, but did not embrace the new Soviet government. In 1921 he was arrested and executed for alleged participation in a Tsarist conspiracy. Timeline 1889: born in Kronstadt near St. Petersburg  1905: first collection of poetry, *The Path of the Conquistadors* (*Put' konkvistadorov*)*,* is published  1906-1908: studies in Paris and makes his first trip to Africa  1908: joins the editorial board of *Apollo* (*Apollon*)  1909: second trip to Africa and first trip to Ethiopia  1910: marries Anna Andreevna Akhmatova (Gorenko)  1910: third trip to Africa  1911: forms the Acmeist group  1912: first Acmeist collection, *The Alien Sky* (*Chuzhoe nebo*), is published; son Lev is born  1913: fourth trip to Africa, funded by the Saint Petersburg Ethnographic Museum  1916: enlists to serve in World War I; *The Quiver* (*Kolchan)* is published  1918: returns to Soviet Russian-American  1918: *The Bonfire* (*Koster*) is published  1921: *The Pillar of Fire* (*Ognennyi stolp*), final major collection of poetry, is published  1921: arrested and executed  File: Gumilev.jpg  Figure 1 Gumilev with Anna Akhmatova and their son Lev in 1915  [[source: <http://gumilev.ru/gallery/img/43/>]]  Nikolai Stepanovich Gumilev was born on 15 April 1889 to a military family in the town of Kronstadt near St. Petersburg. There Gumilev attended a high school directed by the poet Innokenty Annensky and met his future wife and fellow-Acmeist Anna Akhmatova (born Gorenko). He began writing poetry at age twelve and published his first poem at age sixteen. In his early years, Gumilev was influenced by the Symbolist movement. He became acquainted with the poet Valery Briusov after the latter published a negative review of his first book of poems, *Put' konkvistadorov (The Path of the Conquistadors)* (1905). Gumilev appreciated the older writer's criticism and began to consider him his mentor. After spending two years studying at the Sorbonne in Paris and traveling as far as Egypt, Gumilev returned to St. Petersburg in 1908.  Photograph of Gumilev, Anna Akhmatova and son Lev in 1915.  During the period between 1908 and 1910, Gumilev actively participated in St. Petersburg literary life. He befriended the Symbolist poet Vyacheslav Ivanov, one of Briusov's rivals. He also became involved with the literary journal *Apollon (Apollo)*, where he published an influential review column, ‘Letters on Russian Poetry’. In 1909 he took another trip to Africa, this time visiting Ethiopia (then Abyssinia), a country that would become personally significant to him because of the personal and cultural connections he made there. In 1910, he married Akhmatova, and soon afterwards embarked alone on another, longer African journey.  In 1911, Gumilev and Ivanov had a serious literary quarrel. As a result, Gumilev and another of Ivanov's former students, Sergei Gorodetsky, formed an anti-Symbolist movement called Acmeism. The other official members of this group were Osip Mandelstam, Anna Akhmatova, Mikhail Zenkevich, and Vladimir Narbut. These poets were stylistically diverse, but united in their opposition to Symbolism's mystical worldview. They were affiliated with a larger group called the Poets' Guild. Gumilev's first Acmeist collection, *Chuzhoe nebo* (*The Alien Sky)*, came out in 1912.  In the same year Gumilev and Akhmatova had a son, Lev, who would become a famous and controversial historian, ethnologist and anthropologist. The couple became estranged soon afterwards. St. Petersburg's Ethnographic Museum sponsored Gumilev’s fourth journey to Africa in 1913. After returning, he published a range of new literary works, including several plays. In 1916 Gumilev enlisted in World War One, where he won two medals for bravery. The same year he published a collection of war poetry, *Kolchan (The Quiver).* After travelling in England and France, he returned to Soviet Russia, remarried, and began working as a translator and teacher of poetry. He also continued writing his own poetry, publishing his finest collections *Koster (The Bonfire)* in 1918 and *Ognennyi stolp* (*The Pillar of Fire)* in 1921. In this mature period, Gumilev's poetic work was notable for its unique combination of realism and myth, as well its distinctively modern verse techniques, such as the tonic or accentual *dolnik* meter*.*  File: Gumliev1921.jpg  Figure 2 Gumliev in 1921  [[source: <http://gumilev.ru/gallery/img/38/>]]  Although he willingly returned to Russia after the Revolution, Gumilev openly opposed the Bolshevik regime. In 1920 he became involved in the Taganstev group of conspirators. The extent of his participation is unknown, but in 1921 he was arrested for conspiring to restore the Tsar and executed. Gumilev is considered to be one of the first literary victims of the Red Terror. List of WorksPoetry Collections *Put' konkvistadorov (The Path of the Conquistadors)* [1905]  *Romanticheskie tsvety (Romantic Flowers)* [1908]  *Zhemchuga (Pearls)* [1910]  *Chuzhoe nebo (The Alien Sky)* [1912]  *Kolchan (The Quiver)* [1916]  *Koster (The Bonfire)* [1918]  *Ognennyi stolp (The Pillar of Fire)* [1921]  *Shater (The Tent)* [1921] Selected Plays *Akteon (Acteon)* [1913]  *Gondla* [1917]  *Otravlennaia tunika (The Poisoned Tunic)* [published posthumously] Selected Translations *Emali i kamei (Enamels and Cameos)* [translations from Theophile Gautier, 1914)  *Farforovyi pavil'on* *(The Porcelain Pavilion)* [translations of Asian poetry, 1918] Selected Other Works ‘Zhizn' stikha’ (‘The Life of Verse’) [article, 1910]  ‘Otkrytie Ameriki’ (‘The Discovery of America’) [long poem, 1910]  ‘Nasledie simvolizma i akmeizm’ (‘The Legacy of symbolism and Acmeism’) [article, 1913]  *Afrikanskaia okhota (African Hunt)* [excerpts from 1913 diaries, 1916]  *Mik* [long poem, 1918]  ‘Anatomiia stikhotvoreniia’ (‘The Anatomy of a Poem’) [article, 1921] |
| Further reading:  (Doherty)  (Lapeza)  (Basker)  (Monas)  (Sampson) |