

Title: Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* and Russian Heroides
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Abstract:

In the decades leading up to the Golden Age of Russian poetry, poems called "heroides" [*geroidy*] frequently appeared in journals and pamphlets. These works largely defined by use of the female voice had a pronounced influence on the development of Russian poetry and prose, including the lode star of Russian literature, Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*. Yet heroides have been largely overlooked in Russian literary studies. The entire corpus of Russian heroides consists of more than 60 works in verse and some in prose, written between 1759 and 1843. It includes translations of Ovid's famous *Heroides*, the main prototype of the genre, as well as Russian versions of French *heïroides* and original works by Russian poets, such as Aleksandr Sumarokov and Ekaterina Urusova.

Among other sources, Russian heroides drew on the plots of European epistolary novels, and early Russian epistolary novels used heroides to express characters' feelings and emotions. During the early stages in the development of the Russian novel when poetry was still the preferred mode, the heroide served as a useful bridge between poetry and prose. Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* provides evidence of heroides' influence on at least two occasions: in Lensky's elegy and in Tatiana's famous letter. These references indicate that the tradition of heroides – whose very existence has often been overlooked – still played a living role in Russian literary consciousness connecting the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries.