

Title: Pechorin's Last Journey: Literary Models and Historical Background

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The present paper deals with a discussion of a "Persian motif" in Mikhail Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time* (1839-1840). Why does Pechorin head to "Persia and further on" at the end of his life ("Maksim Maksimych")? What does this "further on" imply? What was the cultural content of the concept "Persia" in Russian literature of the 1830s? Were there any real prototypes for the hero of our time's last voyage?

To answer these questions I consider Pechorin's last enterprise within competing Romantic models of the Occidental journey, within the historical and political situation of the late 1830s, as well as within contexts of real trips by Russian travelers to "Persia and further on" in the discussed period. I draw special attention to the figure of a 30-year old Russian officer and Romantic wanderer Ivan Viktorovich Vitkevich, whose adventurous life, melancholy letters, and mysterious death in 1839 represent an interesting parallel to Pechorin's story. I argue that, to an extent, Pechorin not only acts, but also dies as the hero of his time.