Many critics have noted that one of the most characteristic features of Pushkin's poetic style is his presentation of emotional experience indirectly through external signs, and in a language clear and unadorned. Yet no one has pointed out the possible influence of the Greek Anthology on the development of this style. A close study of Pushkin's imitation of poems from the Anthology, however, will show that they have been one of the most important factors in the change that occurred from verse that was highly ornamental to verse that reflects the concise clarity of the Anthology.

Pushkin's attraction to the Greek literary tradition reflected basic changes in cultural attitudes in Russia in the 1820s. In the eighteenth century the overrefined elegance of Latin literature was the model to which poets turned; ancient Greek literature was considered too vulgar and simple for their taste. This attitude was common to European literature in general. Typical is Joseph Addison's comparison of the vulgarity of Homer to the refinement of Virgil:

Reading the Iliad is like travelling through a Country uninhabited, where the Fancy is entertained with a thousand Savage Prospects of vast Deserts, wide uncultivated Marshes. On the contrary, the Aeneid is like a well ordered Garden, where it is impossible to find out any Part unadorned, or to cast our Eyes upon a single Spot, that does not produce some beautiful Plant or Flower.

The hierarchy of genres also influenced to which of the ancient poets they would turn. The dominance of the so-called high genres such as tragedy, satire, epic and ode resulted in the popularity of Horace, Virgil, and Juvenal. Expression of strong emotion was repressed, and love lyrics became a form of playful amusement, or as Gilbert Highet puts it, they were "little images of the lighter aspects of life, frail pleasures or fleeting melancholy: love is not an overmastering deamon but a naughty Cupid."

In the poetic system of the eighteenth century, the presence of periphrasis rather than direct statement marked a poetic text from a non-poetic one. Any allu-

sion to ancient mythological figures in these periphrastic phrases would have a fixed meaning—Bacchus meant wine and the Parcae meant fate. Sign, not symbol played the major role. The importance of periphrastic expression in verse can be seen in Lord Chesterfield’s statement, 1739:

For example, in prose, you would say very properly, “it is twelve of the clock at noon,” to mark the middle of the day; but this would be too plain and flat in poetry, and you would rather say, “the Chariot of the Sun had already finished half its course.”

A new attitude toward antiquity in European culture goes back to the second half of the eighteenth century, when Winckelmann attracted the attention of the educated world to Hellenism in his work Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke (1754) and Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums (1764). Although Winckelmann was attracted to Greece because of an Apollonian restraint he saw exhibited in their art, Goethe and Schiller in their Sturm und Drang period were excited by its Dionysian aspect, strong passions expressed through myth and symbol. Later Goethe turned to the Greek Anthology in his collection of epigrams entitled “Antiker Form sich nährend” (1785-97), where personal feelings were expressed in clear, concise form, without adornment or poetic mannerism.

The eighteenth-century poet most influential in focusing attention to the lyric in France as a vehicle of profound rather than playful emotion was André Chénier. His imitations of the Greek Anthology showed that feelings could be conveyed in a poetic language free of periphrasis and figures of speech. The direct influence of these poems on Pushkin will be discussed in detail.

As in Western Europe, although eighteenth-century Russian poets produced Anacreontics, they considered their major works to be epics, satires, tragedies, and odes, and their models were mainly Latin rather than Greek. However, under the influence of Karamzin and Zhukovskii, the lyric began to assume greater importance. An article that provided a theoretical defense of the lyric was written by Batiushkov in 1816, “A Talk on the Influence of Light Poetry on Language.” To support his argument he turned to the Greeks, who admired Sappho, Bion and Moschus as much as they did Homer and Sophocles. He notes that longer genres allow for an uneven style, whereas the smaller genres demand more artistic perfection. These arguments are reminiscent of what has been referred to as “the most famous literary quarrel in antiquity,” the argument between Callimachus and Apollnios of Rhodes. Apollo defended the epic, Callimachus the short epigram, saying:

Apollo, lord of Lycia, spoke his mind;
‘Give me, good bard, for sacrificial fare
A victim fat: but let your Muse be spare.