Review Essays

Reflexivity and the Russian Professoriate

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Rustem Vakhitov, *Sud´by universiteta v Rossii: Imperskii, sovetskii i postsovetskii razdatochnyi mul´tinstitut* (The Fates of the University in Russia: The Imperial, Soviet, and Post-Soviet Disbursive Multinstitute). Moscow: Strana Oz, 2014. ISBN-13 978-5906139030.

E. A. Vishlenkova, R. Kh. Galiullina, and K. A. Il´ina, *Russkie professora: Universitetskaia korporativnost´ ili professional´naia solidarnost´* (Russian Professors: University Corporateness or Professional Solidarity). 648 pp. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2012. ISBN-13 978-5867939458.

E. A. Vishlenkova and I. M. Savel´eva, eds., *Soslovie russkikh professorov: Sozdateli statusov i smyslov* (The Estate of Russian Professors: Creators of Statuses and Meanings). 385 pp. Moscow: Izdatel´stvo Dom Vysshei shkoly ekonomiki, 2013. ISBN-13 978-5759810469.

Among the genres and subgenres of the perpetually specializing discipline of history, the history of universities is one of the most eternally renewable.[1] This is not hard to understand. Universities are, by definition, institutions full

The author would like to thank Ekaterina Pravilova, Willard Sunderland, and the other editors at *Kritika* for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this essay.

[1] The temporal and geographical span required for a comprehensive view of the university makes the enterprise intractable without collaboration. A good, though dated, foundation remains Lawrence Stone, ed., *The University in Society*, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974). For a more recent update, see the four-volume *History of the University in Europe*, ed. Walter Rüegg, especially those for the modern period—3: *Universities in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries (1800–1945)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); and 4: *Universities since 1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). For the American context, see Roger L. Geiger, *The History of American Higher Education: Learning and Culture from the Founding to World War II* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).

of literate people, the kind of individuals who produce conveniently located sources that historians might use. The compulsion of the genre grows stronger as you probe into subtopics. Consider, for example, the history of university professors. Most people interested in the history of university professors are members of that very sociological category, and just about without exception every last person who writes about the topic is.

The ensuing autohistoricization brings two conditions in its wake, conditions that can manifest into quagmires or opportunities depending on the historian's point of view. The first is reflexivity. If you are a university professor writing about the history of university professors (some of whom also wrote histories of university professors), then it behooves you to recognize your participation in a centuries-old tradition with its own tropes. To the extent that you concede the point and then exploit it to crack open the self-satisfaction that encrusts "official" university histories, the very proximity of the historian to the life-world under study is an invaluable asset. Failure to wield the double-edged battleaxe responsibly immeasurably complicates the second condition.

One might call it presentism, or Whiggism, or teleology, but none of these is quite right. The problem is rooted in the definition of the field itself: what precisely is the history of "university professors" the history *of*? There is no way to answer this question without stipulating a definition of the "university," the shopfloor on which these workers on the assembly line of knowledge and pedagogy ply their trade. All the lazy solutions to this problem are, predictably, intellectually disastrous. You could cite Justice Potter Stewart and just know universities when you see them—but the lack of rigor quickly results in incoherence. You could rely on actors' categories and deem universities only those that historical agents considered as such—but then you are at the mercy of marketing campaigns and end up flattening distinctions that might be useful. In what sense are Moscow State University, Oral Roberts University, and the University of Phoenix the same kind of place?[2] The third option, the most tempting and the one that total historians of the university resort to in a pinch, is functionalism: draw up a (historically and sociologically informed) list of functions fulfilled by a university of the ideal type, and then measure your real-world, historicized universities and

[2] Oral Roberts University is an interdenominational Christian institution located in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Named after a noted evangelist, the university also functions as a seminary (i.e., a professional school to produce pastors). The University of Phoenix is a for-profit institution, based in Arizona with outlets across the United States. It accepts all applicants who can pay the fee, and most of its pedagogy is online and offered by subcontractors.

their professors with respect to that ideal. It is a common solution, but not a satisfying one.

Functionalism in university history has produced enormous obfuscation in the history of the Russian university. The problem is neither new nor original, but I would be remiss to leave it out. We are back at the *Sonderweg*, a problem so Russian that only German historians could name it. Of course, the original question that the *Sonderweg* was supposed to address was how it was possible for a modern, educated, industrialized society, such as inhabited the German states in 1848, to "diverge" from the British/French pattern so badly as to end up at Nazism. A particular corner of this literature focused on universities, worrying the twin dilemmas of illiberalism and quietism in the Wilhelmine and Weimar universities in the face of Nazi anti-intellectualism and the organizational *Gleichschaltung* of the 1930s.[3] The internal circularity of this line of inquiry for the German case—rooted, at least in part, in the a priori ascription to British liberalism of the status of the "norm" from which deviations were to be measured—was already well criticized decades ago.[4] It was particularly awkward for historians of a functionalist bent to treat the German university as divergent, given that the model of the modern research university, autonomous and espousing *Lern- und Lehrfreiheit*, was conventionally ascribed to Wilhelm von Humboldt. The normative German university could not possibly be divergent.

That place was reserved for the Russians, who hurtled over the conventional history of the medieval and Renaissance universities to import the "modern university" retail from the West in either 1725 (the "university" associated with the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences), 1755 (the establishment of Moscow University under the spiritual penumbra of Mikhail Lomonosov), or 1804 (the first unified university statute that served as a hallmark of the enlightened reign of Alexander I), depending on how you count. The institutions dubbed "universities" went through periodic charter reforms (1835, 1863, 1884), which defined the boundaries of their limited "autonomy"—an important characteristic for the functionally inclined—then were rocked with disturbances from both the professors (genteel protests) and

[3] See, among many other examples, Steven P. Remy, *The Heidelberg Myth: The Nazification and Denazification of a German University* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); and Konrad H. Jarausch, *Students, Society, and Politics in Imperial Germany: The Rise of Academic Illiberalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982).

[4] The *locus classicus* is David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984). For an updated and balanced proposal for the utility of *Sonderweg* explanations, see Jürgen Kocka, "Asymmetrical Historical Comparison: The Case of the German *Sonderweg*," *History and Theory* 38, 1 (1999): 40–50.

students (terrorism), and in general did not seem to behave in the way proper 19th-century universities were supposed to. Once we entered the Soviet period … well, then a whole other *Sonderweg* account of the universities appeared. That was followed by the Wild East of the 1990s and the Putinist higher educational establishment of the present day.[5]

How are historians supposed to treat these institutions? Is it possible to give an account that resists establishing an abstract or concrete national university tradition as the norm and then measures the Russian case against it? Of the three books under review here, the first, Rustem Vakhitov's *The Fates of the University in Russia*, races down the *Sonderweg* at full throttle, while the two multiauthor volumes—both products of a single community of researchers engaged in a long-term project on historicizing the Russian university professoriate—provide in their kaleidoscopic fragmentation a set of alternative perspectives to writing the history of the "Russian university" in a manner cognizant of the past historical tradition without replicating it. The cure for *Sonderweg* fever is precisely a healthy dose of reflexivity.

Rustem Rinatovich Vakhitov is a candidate in the philosophical sciences and a docent of the chair of philosophy and history of science in the faculties of philosophy and sociology at Bashkir State University, located in Ufa. As befits the complexity of the Venn diagram of disciplines in which he sits, *The Fates of the University in Russia* is a mix of history, philosophy, and sociology, with an emphasis on the third. The book begins, as it happens, with a reflexive moment: Vakhitov found himself wondering, as he entered the classroom one day to begin a lecture or a seminar, why students greeted him standing. The answer, he believes, stems from the early 18th century, when Peter the Great incorporated into the Table of Ranks the stipulation that individuals lower on the table had to stand to greet their superiors. It is obviously an army regulation, he notes, but it is present in Russia's educational system as well (and not in the West). From this brief anecdote we see the central elements

[5] The bibliographies in the books under review provide extensive citations to the specialist literature. For an introduction to the chronology and some of the central historical questions (e.g., the role of students in the revolutionary movement), see Cynthia H. Whittaker, *The Origins of Modern Russian Education: An Intellectual Biography of Count Sergei Uvarov, 1786–1855* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1984); and Samuel D. Kassow, *Students, Professors, and the State in Tsarist Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). For reasons discussed in this review, there are intellectual challenges to presenting a broader work that synthesizes results across the imperial period as well as unifying the imperial and Soviet periods.

of Vakhitov's analysis: the Russian system is different, a difference rooted in a structural relationship to the state, and that this relationship was established at the very moment of the introduction of higher education to Russia.

In his strongly declensionist and dispiriting account of Russian higher education, Vakhitov insists that other (unspecified) scholars—the bibliography of secondary literature in the book runs to only half a page—misunderstand the nature of Russian higher education: "They a priori begin from the fact that here in Russia there are educational institutions, exactly as in the West, which fulfill essentially the same social functions, only their quality is worse. This delusion prevents them from seeing the reality, which consists in the fact that Russian and Western [forms of] higher education differ in their essence. The similarity that they have is only superficial" (9). To avoid making the same mistake, not only does Vakhitov start from an analysis of the functions of the Russian university in society, but his social theory is also Russian-born.[6] He explicitly acknowledges his debt to the ideas of O. E. Bessonova and S. G. Kordonskii, whose social models of disbursements (*razdachi*) and receipts (*sdachi*) animate the book.[7] But in the end, although he disagrees with the conclusions of other historians of the university, he replicates their methodology.

To establish the model, he begins where the functionalist Western models he critiques do: with Western universities. In the first chapter ("The Origin and Evolution of the University in the West"), he maps out three different versions of the "university in the West": the medieval university (fairly timeless and placeless), the Humboldtian research university (emphasizing 19th-century Prussia), and the "American Research University (AIU)" ("postmodern" research universities from the 1980s to the present).[8] Each description is accompanied by at least one, and usually several, schematics that

[6] A more comprehensive critique of functionalist studies of the Russian university, drawing on a global sociological literature, can be found in O. N. Zaporozhets, "Navigator po karte istoriko-sotsiologicheskikh issledovanii universiteta," the second essay in Vishlenkova and Savel′eva's *Soslovie russkikh professorov*.

[7] Vakhitov especially references O. E. Bessonova, *Razdatochnaia ekonomika Rossii: Evoliutsiia cherez transformatsii* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2006); and S. G. Kordonskii, *Soslovnaia struktura postsovetskoi Rossii* (Moscow: Obshchestvennoe mnenie, 2008).

[8] Vakhitov's characterization is interesting: "In the postmodern American research university, which has arrived to displace the Humboldtian, we observe the permeation of disbursement into the learning process itself. The university remains the recipient of state expenditures and a center of fundamental and applied scientific research, it preserves the freedom of teaching and learning, but now it is constrained. Alongside elective courses there are required ones; internal academic exams have appeared; a student is punished for a low grade point average, necessary for learning; and if the grade remains low, the student is expelled" (69). This is a lightly veiled critique of neoliberalism, similar to recent criticism of Anglo-American higher education in domestic public discourse.

tabulate the primary disbursements and receipts that connect the university to the state, the faculty to the university, the students to the faculty, and so on. As ideal types, these are somewhat helpful. Their principal drawback as analytic devices, however, is that they flatten the differences among and between the various incarnations, so that there is a normative "university" over in the West. It's just that Russia doesn't have a counterpart—never has.

Instead, Russia developed what he terms, in chapter 2, "multinstitutes." (The coinage is meant to highlight the lack of single purpose characteristic of the *uni*versity.) Since Vakhitov is interested in the incorporation of higher education into the fabric of the civil service and state disbursement networks, he begins with Alexander I's systematic university reform. If there is a moment when Russian education stepped onto the *Sonderweg*, it was here:

> In general, the university in Russia, after it began to acclimatize to our soil, began to completely differentiate from Western exemplars. It was not similar to the German Humboldtian university because it was not primarily a scientific institution; it lacked the freedom of teaching and of research and a philosophical faculty. At the same time, it was not similar to the medieval university, since it was not subordinate to the church; it lacked the theological and philosophical faculties and the foundations of corporate self-governance. It was different also from the French *Grande école* (professional higher schools established by the Jacobins instead of universities), because it preserved the diversity of profile [and] various faculties which did not correspond to a single science or area of activity. (81)

So much for what they were not. What they *were* "represented multi-profiled institutions of higher education (multinstitutes), preparing [students] for various forms of civil government service" (99)—a "machine that produced bureaucrats" (104). (By this metric, the contrast with the Prussian university is not especially stark.) The Soviet university, Vakhitov continues, was, after Iosif Stalin's reforms of 1932–38, simply more of the same, squelching the temporary blip of experimentation in the 1920s.[9] Straight through to the 1980s, the Soviet "multinstitute" persisted, although plagued by ever increasing levels of rent seeking and corruption.

The situation changed in the 1990s from bad to worse. With close readings of ministerial decrees and many citations to online sources, Vakhitov's much more textured and factually robust account describes a transformation that occasionally resembles the lexicon of Michel Foucault: "In post-Soviet Russia the mutation [from the Western university] continued and universities, just as

[9] Michael David-Fox, *Revolution of the Mind: Higher Learning among the Bolsheviks, 1918–1929* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

many other institutions of higher education, especially in the provinces, were transformed into institutions of higher education in name only. *In essence they were no longer educational, but penitential-caretaking establishments*" (173). The state began to turn a blind eye to the purchase of admission to the institutions as well as of high grades; it was no longer interested in training bureaucrats for the civil service—it wanted instead to isolate students within universities so that they refrained from political activity. Vladimir Putin for over a decade has attempted to reassert state control, as described in chapter 4, which Vakhitov characterizes as to some extent a reversion to the "multinstitute" model. The detail and texture of Vakhitov's account increases here, with pages devoted to the Uniform State Exam (EGE), the vagaries of the standardizing Bologna Process, and the rescinding from Moscow University and St. Petersburg University in 2009 of their right to appoint rectors (now appointed by the president of the Russian Federation). Any partial resemblances to the Western university that emerged from the chaos in the 1990s have been removed. As an account of what happened—and keeping in mind the wide diversity of institutions and outcomes elided by this approach—this depressing picture seems reasonably accurate in so far as we are able to judge from elliptical sources and without time-series data on outcomes. The question is how to make sense of it.

If Vakhitov thought that the Russian university had started from the same progenitor, he could frame this narrative as a story of decline from Western standards. But he insists that the intimate connection between the state and the institutions of higher education were already present from the Alexandrine reforms in the early 19th century, and a functional analysis combined with scrutiny of the cycle of state disbursements and then returns on those investments to the state presents the Russian university as entirely sui generis. If we should lament these transformations, should we not do so because both the process and the ends are bad for Russian education? Yet it is clear that throughout Vakhitov—both explicitly and more often implicitly—invites the reader to condemn the status of Russian higher education through the comparison with counterparts in the West. One wonders whether, if he subjected German universities (through the *Kaisserreich*, Nazism, West and East Germany, and then postreunification) and American universities (pre– and post–Cold War, pre- and post-Bayh-Dole commercialization), the deviant Russian model would stand out so sharply.[10] The constant juxtaposition of the reality of Russian institutions with ideal types of the West washes out the elements of reflexivity in the analysis with the specter of *Sonderweg* thinking.

[10] See, e.g., Philip Mirowski, *Science-Mart: Privatizing American Science* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

The other two volumes represent a rather different approach. First, they are primarily historical projects, based on close reading of primary sources and devoted—whether as a whole volume on the early 19th century in E. Vishlenkova, R. Galiullina, and K. Il´ina's *Russian Professors: University Corporateness or Professional Solidarity*, or as a series of focused essays across three centuries in E. A. Vishlenkova and I. M. Savel´eva's edited *The Estate of Russian Professors: Creators of Statuses and Meanings*—to much shorter spans of time. The local specificity this enables is the raison d'être of the whole endeavor.

These books represent, more or less, one project. Although over a dozen individuals are involved in the two volumes, they are products of a common research agenda about the history and historiography of Russian universities that comes mostly out of the A. V. Poletaev Institute of Humanistic Historico-Theoretical Researches of the Higher School of Economics. Not only is Vishlenkova listed on the spine of both volumes, but the texts themselves include myriad citations cross-referencing earlier scholarship by other contributors. (The first book is dedicated to the work of Irina Maksimovna Savel´eva, for example, who coedited the second volume and is profusely cited in both.)[11] Despite clear distinctions in the form of these two books, they benefit from being read next to each other and illustrate some of the richness that can be gained by incorporating the reflexivity of today's historian into the analysis of the history of Russian universities. The plural there is essential: in contrast to Vakhitov, who sketches a sociological analysis of a singular "Russian university," the point of the Higher School project is the tremendous diversity of the Russian university tradition, whether across geographical sites, over time, or even within a single institution at any given moment.

The goal of Vishlenkova et al.'s *Russian Professors* is to explore the cooperative (and corporate) unit of the Russian professoriate, its "professional culture" (7) in the early 19th century, dating from the erection of the university system by Alexander I until (roughly) the Crimean War. The periodization is significant because Alexander adopted a hybrid form of educational institution—Vakhitov essentially agrees—which combines elements of pre-classical and classical models: exercising medieval privileges of autonomy in certain areas while simultaneously acting as modern civil servants.

[11] Most of the collective draws inspiration from Savel´eva's work about Russian classicists: Irina Savel´eva and Andrei Poletaev, *Klassicheskoe nasledie* (Moscow: Izdatel´skii dom Gosudarstvennogo universiteta, Vysshaia shkola ekonomiki, 2010).

"Correspondingly, the account in our research is not of the extinguishing of university autonomy at the hands of imperial power (as Russian researchers sometimes consider it)," they note, "but of a new type of university that arose at the periphery of the Western world and in the conditions of rational administration" (10). Not only did professors not openly struggle against the state in this period, but they were often at pains to cooperate more extensively with it. When the administrative and bureaucratic balance was disturbed, students and professors would come to see themselves as antagonists; professors would ally with the bureaucrats, not their charges, which would in turn generate "deviant forms of student reaction—the disruption of lectures, denunciations, protests, catcalls, applause" (12).[12] The three analytic chapters in part 1 of the book and the hefty collection of archival documents in part 2 strive to illustrate this dynamic, and in this the volume is largely successful.

The analytic chapters historicize the various categories that functionalist analyses of the university often hold as fixed and timeless—"autonomy," for example. The mutable character of these foundational principles suggests immediately that the documents and charters of 1802–4 had a "declarative character" (25), and their vagueness about actual implementation needs to be treated with significant critical distance. The absence of a unified corporate sense among the professoriate as to what a university was supposed to *be*, as well as the significant distances from the capital(s) in the case of Kazan and Khar´kov—two of the three cases plumbed in depth here—accounts for the vulnerability to local autocratic takeover, as in the notorious reign of Mikhail Leont´evich Magnitskii (an important inflection point for the Higher School's researchers). When Alexander I actually visited some universities—Moscow University in August 1816 and Khar´kov in September 1817—he was disconcerted at the lack of scholarly heft and even, according to rumor, contemplated abolishing them.

Alexander's dissatisfaction and pathologies like Magnitskii's reign prompted the center to rethink university self-governance and explicitly articulate a new structure to implement the earlier ideal of the university. The University Charter of 1835 created bureaucrats out of some of the academics: a hierarchy of rector, deans, and professors. "No one could call this system a self-regulating organism or corporate autonomy even rhetorically" (65). The aftermath was intense bureaucratization of every area of university life, and at the same time a progressive alienation of the bureaucratic apparatus from the demands of academic society. Both processes took place during a massive

[12] The analysis strongly resembles Isaiah Berlin's classic articulation of the "liberal predicament," although he is not cited here ("Fathers and Children: Turgenev and the Liberal Predicament," in *Russian Thinkers* [New York: Penguin, 1994], 261–308).

expansion of the universities (and university system), further increasing the complexity of the institutions and intensifying the process. The result of this historical and gradual dynamic is an actual difference from the model of West European universities, but not quite a *Sonderweg:* "Not having in their genesis a time of guild existence independent of political power, Russian professors accepted dependence on the state a little more easily than their colleagues in the West, and therefore wanted government patronage of science and related to ministerial orders about research as to proclamations of personal recognition and expressions of confidence" (137). There were negative and positive aspects here; the negative seem obvious, the positive was rather generous financial and logistical support from the state, something that comes to be seen as an intrinsic characteristic of science (*nauka*, in the general sense of scholarship) in the Russian context (175).

As should be evident, the arguments and interpretation concerning the first half-century of the university system in Russia are impressive and deserving of serious engagement. Nonetheless, the second half of the volume, consisting of extensive archival publications, is likely to draw even more attention from historians of imperial Russia. The editors have carefully curated, in mostly chronological order, hundreds of pages of documents from Moscow, Khar´kov, and Kazan universities, with an emphasis on issues of university governance and corporate identity (including somewhat unexpected topics like student hygiene).[13] The three institutions were part of a system—once Moscow, the only 18th-century university (setting aside the academy's adjunct in St. Petersburg), was subordinated to the Alexandrine scheme—but distance from the capital, the ethnic and confessional challenges in the provinces, and the force of personality demonstrate as many differences as commonalities, which is surely part of the point of the collection. No doubt historians will mine this material for their own ends, and the editors assist creative exploitation of these materials with a list of documents, a bibliography (well populated with international scholarship), and an index of names mentioned in the documents (as well as a global index).[14]

The inclusion of the archival material is a gesture toward objectivity—let the readers judge for themselves from the primary sources—but it also brings us back to reflexivity: this is a book about Russian university professors and

[13] Due to war damage in Moscow (1812) and Khar´kov (1941–45), the archive in Kazan is the most complete.

[14] Unfortunately, the printers omitted all italicized phrases, which appear in the text as gaps in the page. This obviously has the ironic effect of eliminating precisely those words the editors (in their scholarly introduction) and the authors of the documents considered most important. This has been rectified by a loose errata sheet, and readers should ensure that any volume they consult contains it.

their corporate identity by a collective of Russian university professors at a time when the corporate identity of the professoriate is under significant strain. These archives, after all, were not natural structures like rock formations or river beds; they were consciously constructed by the university system that is being historicized, the "creation of which ministerial bureaucrats secured from the professors, allow[ing] them to rationalize the administration of the academic estate" (247). If at first the archive served the needs of the state, it soon was appropriated by professors for their own purposes: "Papers allowed a return to the roots of a conflict and reminded the sides of their original demands and promises. With the help of archival documents it was possible to point to past transgressions of overstepping colleagues or to convince bosses of their proper loyalty. It was another matter that such a relation gave birth to the aspiration to form a corporate memory" (250). This connection between the archive and historical memory—the proliferation of sources as a technology of reflexivity—animates the Higher School project as a whole.

The explicit intention of the essays collected by Vishlenkova and Savel′eva in *The Estate of Russian Professors* is to expand the set of cases, epochs, and sources accessible to historians in their quest to define the "Russian university" and the professors who populated it. As a rule, the essays are very good, and it is regrettably impossible to treat each of them fully here. After two conceptual introductory essays (by Vishlenkova and Savel′eva, and by O. N. Zaporozhets), the editors have thematically grouped this rather vibrant diversity into three sections—"Community through the Production of Texts," "Comparative and Interconnected History," and "Commemorative Solidarity"—but I concentrate on essays in the first and third groups to emphasize the role that a focus on reflexivity plays throughout the volume.[15]

Throughout these essays, genre is inescapable. Vishlenkova's second contribution, coauthored with A. N. Dmitriev ("The Pragmatics of Tradition, or the Current Past for Russian Universities") explores the explicit efforts, beginning with the first statutes of 1804, to create a university "tradition" for Russian institutions. The overwhelming tendency of this genre stresses continuity across social and political upheaval. Obviously, in the Russian context, this venture was going to hit a rocky patch in the 1920s and 1930s, but even the 1830s represent a rather dramatic caesura, especially for provincial universities. One consequence of the generic properties of university histories is that moments of dramatic discontinuity—such as the 1917 revolution and

[15] The second section consists mostly of transnational or comparative studies, including contributions about German and Polish universities. The two essays on the latter, by Johanna Schiller-Walicka and A. Iu. Bazhenova, bring needed attention to these often neglected imperial institutions.

subsequent Civil War—are rarely represented in university histories. Similarly, R. Kh. Galiullina and K. A. Il´ina's article, "Journals about Themselves and for Themselves: University Publications of the First Half of the 19th Century," takes readers through the backstory and controversies of documents that many of us (myself included) have simply read for their content, ignoring the peculiarity of their form:

> Thus the creation of "learned notes" (*uchenye zapiski*) in Russian universities had a positive and a negative side. Officially their designation consisted in the unification of the level of university education and research work. However, in reality these journals enabled the isolation of university communities. If earlier local university publications published in essence ethnographic and local-historical material, and the results of researches of universal sciences and humanistic researches that had a general-Russian ambit were presented in the publications of the capitals, then after the establishment of "learned notes" in provincial universities both became the monopoly and the representative activity of the local university. Thus the ground for scientific competition, polemic, and the conditions for the formation of a scientific reputation disappeared. (168)

B. E. Stepanov's essay, "'Natural Economy': Forms of University Solidarity and Scholarly Communication in the Post-Soviet Period," while dealing with a more recent era, undertakes a similar analysis for the *Vestnik* (Herald) genre that really began to explode only in the 21st century. Reading the very existence of these genres as primary sources for the collective identity of the Russian professoriate, therefore, yields patterns and lacunae that invite further, deeper study.

Two essays from the third and final section of the volume continue this line of inquiry. K. A. Il´ina and E. A. Vishlenkova's "Archivist: Keeper and Creator of University Memory," reads like a companion piece to the *Russian Professors* volume. The authors note that when they undertook this research, they at first had a hard time finding documents explicitly about archives, since these institutions were in the early 19th century invisible to the archival gaze, standing as they do at the eye of the hurricane. By tracking the personal papers of those who *served* as archivists, historians can begin to observe the incredible profusion of reflexive documentation about the university by the university. The formalization of this position at the ministerial and the university level happened at the cusp of the 1820s and 1830s—that is to say, as Russia began replacing its first generation of professors with another. The archives formalized in this transition became the material from which all later histories are built, and our discipline's relative ignorance about the specific circumstances calls out for more research into the role paper and

index cards served as technologies in university governance.[16] The final essay in the collection, A. N. Dmitriev's "Memoirs of Post-Soviet Humanists: The Standardization of Memory?," establishes the other bookend, treating these memoir texts as a new genre (although one with deep roots) that not only demonstrates the reflexivity of the Russian professoriate in action but also marks the same instinct to paper over discontinuity characteristic of university histories in general.

Where, then, does this leave us? At the very least, with a strong sense that the history of Russian higher education needs substantially more attention, deploying the full armament of techniques and ideas that comparative, transnational, poststructuralist, postcolonial, and other approaches have brought to the historiography of higher education in other contexts. Two points in particular must animate such a new historiography, well illustrated by all three texts here. The first is that it is no longer sufficient to treat the imperial university or the Soviet university by themselves, or only in relation to each other. (Crossing the border of 1917 is now de rigeur even in the history of higher education.) The point is broader: we now have seen over two decades of post-Soviet higher education, and recent developments in the Russian Federation and other Soviet successor states (the latter regrettably not present in these studies) can illuminate trends—especially trends of continuity—that were invisible earlier. Second, the growing vigor of Russophone historiography on the Russian university brings the need for reflexivity as a methodological anchor all the more to the fore. It is a clear path out of the historiography of the *Sonderweg* of the Russian university and the *Sonderweg* of the historians who write and have written it.

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[16] See, e.g., Ben Kafka, *The Demon of Writing: Powers and Failures of Paperwork* (New York: Zone Books, 2012); and Lisa Gitelman, *Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).