History, Memory, and the Modernization of 19th-Century Urban Russia

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History, Memory, and the Modernization of 19th-Century Urban Russia

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Aleksandr Borisovich Kamenskii, *Povsednevnost´ russkikh gorodskikh obyvatelei: Istoricheskie anekdoty iz provintsial´noi zhizni XVIII veka* (The Everyday Life of Russian Townsfolk: Historical Anecdotes of 18th-Century Provincial Life). 403 pp. Moscow: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet, 2006. ISBN 5728108075.

Aleksandr Ivanovich Kupriianov, *Gorodskaia kul´tura russkoi provintsii: Konets XVIII–pervaia polovina XIX veka* (The Urban Culture of the Russian Provinces in the Late 18th and First Half of the 19th Centuries). 476 pp. Moscow: Novyi khronograf, 2007. ISBN-13 978-5948810188.

Vladimir Vikent´evich Lapin, *Peterburg: Zapakhi i zvuki* (Petersburg: Smells and Sounds). 281 pp. St. Petersburg: Evropeiskii dom, 2007. ISBN-13 978-5801502205.

Georges Nivat, ed., *Les sites de la mémoire russe,* 1: *Géographie de la mémoire russe* (The Sites of Russian Memory, 1: The Geography of Russian Memory). 849 pp. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2007. ISBN-13 978-2213600604. €45.00.

Susanne Schattenberg, *Die korrupte Provinz? Russische Beamte im 19. Jahrhundert* (Corruption in the Provinces? Russian Officials in the 19th Century). 294 pp. Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2008. ISBN-13 978-3593386102. €29.90.

Alison K. Smith, *Recipes for Russia: Food and Nationhood under the Tsars.* 259 pp. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008. ISBN 0875803814. $40.00.

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At some point during the middle third of the 19th century, Russia was suddenly full of modern, middle-class Europeans: readers, shoppers, civic activists, urban *flâneurs*. We know their faces from paintings and photographs and their voices from memoirs and fiction. So deeply did these sons and daughters of merchants, clerics, and other "commoners" absorb the culture of modernity that in the following century, even the overthrow of two modernizing regimes, tsarist and communist, could not reverse the triumph of Western modernity itself—men kept shaving, girls still went to school, kaftans did not make a comeback, science and art and consumerism carried on as before. Yet we know little about this cultural process, both because many of those same modern Russians embraced the preposterous notion that Western middle-class attitudes were somehow alien to their national character, and because the politics of the 20th century focused attention on what made Russia different.

Two important weaknesses in our knowledge of Russian history are therefore how common Russians in the 19th century became modern middle-class Europeans, and why this has been so widely ignored. To plagiarize the titles of two canonical texts on modernity and nationalism, we might call this process "Provincials into (Modern) Russians" and "the invention of (Slavophile) tradition."

These themes—modernization and memory—are the focus of the books under discussion in this review. Aleksandr Kamenskii and Aleksandr Kupriianov describe pre-reform provincial towns as the crucibles of Russia's cultural modernization. Susanne Schattenberg examines a specific subgroup of pre-reform society, the provincial bureaucracy, as it confronted the dilemmas of modernity. Vladimir Lapin explores the modernization of the urban environment and how it affected Russians' sensory perception of the world around them. Alison K. Smith and the team of authors assembled by Georges Nivat take on the construction of identity and memory. Taken together, these books promise to shed new light on how Russians became modern middle-class Europeans and why this development has received so little attention.

Before discussing the books in greater detail, however, we should consider the historiographical problem that they address.

Danger and Opportunity

Russian elite culture long ignored Russia's urban realities. Russians knew Hogarth's gritty images of London, yet their own first real cityscape artist, Fedor Alekseev, preferred to paint St. Petersburg around 1800 to look like the idealized Venice that Canaletto had painted for British tourists, complete

with radiant Mediterranean sunshine.[1] Literature was similar. Abroad, the thousand-plus vignettes that composed Louis-Sébastien Mercier's *Le tableau de Paris* (1781–88) made Mercier, as Jeremy D. Popkin points out, "the spiritual ancestor of nineteenth-century campaigners for urban improvement," "the inventor of a new kind of urban journalism, known in France as the *feuilleton*," a forerunner of Balzac, and the original *flâneur* who roamed the city in search of new impressions.[2] Nikolai Karamzin knew his Mercier so well that in the 1790s, his own *Letters of a Russian Traveler* drew much of their allegedly autobiographical description of Paris from the *Tableau de Paris*.[3] Yet when it came to writing about life in his adopted hometown of Moscow, Karamzin preferred gauzy visions of a radiant Westernized future to the ambiguities of urban Russian reality.[4]

These attitudes evolved in the 1820s–30s under the impact of wider shifts in Russian and European culture, but the truly revolutionary change only occurred when, all of a sudden, a set of images of social types and realities crystallized that have remained with us ever since. Aleksandr Ostrovskii's first comedy appeared in 1847, Nikolai Dobroliubov's famous review of Ostrovskii ("The Dark Kingdom") in 1859,[5] and Nikolai Pomialovskii's *Seminary Sketches* in 1862–63.[6] Pavel Fedotov painted his urban genre scenes in 1848–51, and Vasilii Perov painted his in 1865–71. These images were so memorable that memoirists used them as a shorthand to describe their own lives: when the jurist Anatolii Koni met Moscow merchants in the 1860s, he later wrote, he discovered "how right Ostrovskii was in his comedies," and Pavel Bogatyrev recalled his teachers around 1860, former seminarians, as a "coarse, intellectually backward lot, right out of Pomialovskii's *Seminary.*"[7]

[1] Grigory Kaganov, *Images of Space: St. Petersburg in the Visual and Verbal Arts*, trans. Sidney Monas (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 43.

[2] Jeremy D. Popkin, ed., *Panorama of Paris: Selections from* Tableau de Paris *by Louis-Sébastien Mercier*, trans. Helen Simpson (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 1, 14, 17.

[3] Iu. M. Lotman and B. A. Uspenskii, "'Pis´ma russkogo puteshestvennika' Karamzina i ikh mesto v razvitii russkoi kul´tury," in N. M. Karamzin, *Pis´ma russkogo puteshestvennika* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1987), 650.

[4] See, for example, N. M. Karamzin, "Zapiski starogo Moskovskogo zhitelia," *Vestnik Evropy* (August 1803): 276–86.

[5] "Temnoe tsarstvo," *Sovremennik*, no. 7 (1859), sect. 3: 17–78, no. 9 (1859), sect. 3: 53–128.

[6] N. G. Pomyalovsky, *Seminary Sketches*, trans. Alfred Kuhn (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1973).

[7] Iu. N. Aleksandrov, ed., *Moskovskaia starina: Vospominaniia moskvichei proshlogo stoletiia* (Moscow: Pravda, 1989), 312, 130. See also I. A. Slonov, *Iz zhizni torgovoi Moskvy (Polveka nazad)* (Moscow: Tipografiia Russkogo tvorchestva pechatnogo i izdatel´skogo dela, 1914), 77;

Richard Nixon once observed: "The Chinese use two brush strokes to write the word 'crisis.' One brush stroke stands for danger; the other for opportunity. In a crisis, be aware of the danger—but recognize the opportunity."[8]

Russia's mid-19th-century crisis offers historians an opportunity, because for the first time ever, many Russians who knew their society firsthand, and whose family memories stretched back into the previous century, felt motivated to probe the psychology and semiotics of Russian life. Memoirs and fiction began paying close attention to who called whom *vy* or *ty*, what was signified by particular gestures or items of clothing, or how children were disciplined by parents and teachers. Authors developed an eye for the telling detail that illumined the social order. For example, caterers who arranged merchant weddings would invite a general or two to lend glamor to the festivities; the fee depended on the rent-a-general's rank.[9]

Danger lurks also, however. The new literature grew out of the debates surrounding the Great Reforms and reflected the ethos of the emerging intelligentsia, so it emphasizes the putative "Russianness" of social phenomena and dwells on the negative—corrupt bureaucrats, sadistic church-school teachers, merchants with fat wives and narrow minds. This agenda was not lost on contemporaries, like the priest who hated Pomialovskii's *Seminary Sketches* because it "gave the guffawing mob the right to point at me and say, there he is!"[10] The progress that urban Russia had made in the preceding century often got lost amid the handwringing, and an image was confirmed that the everyday social realities of Russian cities and towns were both terribly backward and somehow distinctively "Russian."

The historians whose books form the subject of this review see both danger and opportunity in the vision of pre-reform urban Russia that the 19th-century intelligentsia bequeathed to us. Kamenskii, Kupriianov, and Schattenberg see the danger and seek to set the record straight by reconstructing the reality,

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P. A. Viazemskii, "Dopotopnaia ili dopozharnaia Moskva," in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii kniazia P. A. Viazemskogo,* 12 vols. (St. Petersburg: Izdatel´stvo Grafa S. D. Sheremeteva, 1878–96), 7: 80–116, here 80; and Apollon Grigor´ev, *Vospominaniia*, ed. B. F. Egorov (Moscow: Nauka, 1988), 24–26.

[8] Joslyn Pine, ed., *Wit and Wisdom of the American Presidents: A Book of Quotations* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2000), 65.

[9] S—v [Il´ia Selivanov], "Vospominaniia o Moskovskom kommercheskom uchilishche 1831–1838 godov," *Russkii vestnik* 36 (November–December 1861): 719–54, here 722; [Anatolii] Koni, "Kupecheskaia svad´ba," in *Moskovskaia starina,* 313; I. A. Belousov, "Ushedshaia Moskva," in *Moskovskaia starina*, 378.

[10] Prot. V. M—n [Vasilii Ivanovich Marenin], *Shkol´nye i semeinye vospominaniia (Ocherk dukhovnoi shkoly i byta dukhovenstva v polovine proshlogo stoletiia)*, 1 (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Glazunova, 1911), 2.

as opposed to the myth, of pre-reform urban Russia. By contrast, Smith, the authors assembled by Nivat, and to some degree Lapin seize the opportunity to examine the emergence of the myths themselves.

The timespan encompassed by these books includes such portentous dates as 1776, 1789, 1815, and 1848. This era plays a central role in the historiography of Western Europe, because historians like periods of profound and dramatic change. Eric Hobsbawm famously described this as the age of the "dual" (French and industrial) revolution. German historians follow Reinhard Koselleck in describing the era from 1750 to 1850 as a *Sattelzeit* or "saddle period" between early modern and modern times.[11] Their French colleagues speak of the end of the *ancien régime*, by which they mean not just the Bourbon monarchy in France but the entire way of life of early modern Europe.

Russianists sometimes operate with a similar periodization, particularly in studying the emergence of modern Russian elite culture in the period from Karamzin to Pushkin to Turgenev. We also periodically rediscover the political, economic, and social dynamism beneath the crust of Nikolaevan conservatism.[12] But more commonly we treat the mid-imperial era as a time of stasis when what mattered was what did *not* happen: no constitution or emancipation under Alexander, no liberal revolution by the Decembrists, no military modernization or industrialization under Nicholas. Russianists therefore tend to flock in larger numbers to the more obviously dynamic periods before and after—from Peter to Catherine, and again from 1861 to 1917.

The oportunity cost of these choices is evident from the exciting things done by our colleagues who study Western countries during the *Sattelzeit.*

One area they study is the transformation of material culture and of emotional and sensory experience, because understanding modernity means understanding modern individuals and how they relate to the people and things around them. Modern classics in this field include—note the ubiquity of the word "revolution"—Alain Corbin's work on the "olfactory revolution" that created a modern sensibility about odor, Daniel Roche's study of the "vestimentary revolution" that transformed the nexus between clothing and social identity in France, Neil McKendrick's on the "consumer revolution"

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[11] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, 1789–1848* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1962); Melvin Richter, *The History of Social and Political Concepts: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 17–18.

[12] See, for example, Cynthia Whittaker, *The Origins of Modern Russian Education: An Intellectual Biography of Count Sergei Uvarov, 1786–1855* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1984); and W. Bruce Lincoln, *In the Vanguard of Reform: Russia's Enlightened Bureaucrats, 1825–1861* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986).

in 18th-century Britain, and Gordon Wood's argument that the American Revolution was genuinely "radical" because it overturned an everyday way of life that French historians would call an *ancien régime*.[13] Interest in such approaches shows no signs of abating.[14]

Russianists occasionally attempt this too. In fact, the flood of memoirs that began appearing in mid-19th-century Russia makes such approaches inviting because the authors were fascinated by the way people's everyday behavior used to be archaic but had since become modern. Some Russianists in the West have risen to the challenge. For example, David Ransel's recent book on the diary of the merchant Ivan Tolchenov reconstructs the modernization of the mental world of a proto-bourgeois during the *Sattelzeit*, and Christine Ruane has recently written on clothing and fashion throughout the history of imperial Russia.[15] Yet works like these remain unusual, evidently because we continue to assume that the more important changes in how Russians lived occurred either under enlightened absolutism or after the Great Reforms. As a result, how the distinctly modern human beings of 19th-century Russia came to be that way remains poorly understood.

Another exciting field in the study of the West's transition to modernity is urban history. Cities foster new approaches to governance and political participation, to managing nature and designing the built environment; they give rise to new social milieus and individual behaviors, new utopias

[13] Alain Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination*, trans. Miriam Kochan, Roy Porter, and Christopher Prendergast (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986); Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Regime*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Europa, 1982); Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1991); Murray Melbin, "Night as Frontier," *American Sociological Review* 43 (February 1978): 3–22; and Donald Reid, *Paris Sewers and Sewermen: Realities and Representations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

[14] Recent examples include Emily Cockayne, *Hubbub: Filth, Noise, and Stench in England, 1600–1770* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Laurent Turcot, *Le promeneur à Paris au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 2007); Robert Shoemaker, *The London Mob: Violence and Disorder in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2004); A. Roger Ekirch, *At Day's Close: Night in Times Past* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005); and Tim Hitchcock, *Down and Out in Eighteenth-Century London* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004).

[15] David L. Ransel, *A Russian Merchant's Tale: The Life and Adventures of Ivan Alekseevich Tolchënov, Based on His Diary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009); Christine Ruane, *The Empire's New Clothes: A History of the Russian Fashion Industry, 1700–1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

and dystopias.[16] The way West European history is periodized draws attention to cities in the *Sattelzeit* as incubators of modernity. Historians of Paris, for example, have obvious historical signposts in the revolutionary upheavals that swept the city between 1789 and 1871. Reflecting this influence, Daniel Roche's study of the common people of 18th-century Paris is governed by an explicit desire *not* to treat the century as a mere prelude to revolution. Simone Delattre's work on the modernization of nocturnal Paris—commerce, entertainment, crime, the rise of the *flâneur*—has the post-Napoleonic restoration and the Second Empire as convenient bookends. David Harvey's study of class conflict and the modernization of urban space is centered on the age of Baron Haussmann and is bracketed by the 1830 revolution and the Paris Commune.[17]

Russian urban history before 1905 provides few comparable signposts to dramatize longer-term processes of social and cultural ferment, though there are a few dramatic moments that could focus historians' attention. Moscow, for example, had the plague of 1771, the Napoleonic occupation of 1812 and subsequent reconstruction, and the cholera of 1830. Of these, however, only the plague has been the subject of even one English-language monograph that focuses on Moscow.[18] Historians of urban imperial Russia instead tend to rely on legal history for their periodization: pre-Catherinean, from Catherine to the Great Reforms, postreform. Because it operates with long historical periods that are defined by legal and bureaucratic factors, this approach draws attention to long-term institutional, socioeconomic, and demographic processes rather than the living people on the ground or the "revolutions"—consumer, olfactory, vestimentary, or other—that helped

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[16] See, for example, Mack Walker, *German Home Towns: Community, State, and General Estate 1648–1871* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971); Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981); John Lukacs, *Budapest 1900: A Historical Portrait of a City and Its Culture* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1988); Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Tristram Hunt, *Building Jerusalem: The Rise and Fall of the Victorian City* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2005).

[17] Daniel Roche, *The People of Paris: An Essay in Popular Culture in the 18th Century*, trans. Marie Evans and Gwynne Lewis (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Simone Delattre, *Les douze heures noires: La nuit à Paris au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2000); David Harvey, *Paris: Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

[18] John T. Alexander, *Bubonic Plague in Early Modern Russia: Public Health and Urban Disaster* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980). See also Roderick E. McGrew, *Russia and the Cholera, 1823–1832* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965); Albert J. Schmidt, *The Architecture and Planning of Classical Moscow: A Cultural History* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1989); and Christoph Schmidt, *Sozialkontrolle in Moskau: Justiz, Kriminalität und Leibeigenschaft 1649–1785* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996).

usher in modernity.[19] There are, of course, exceptions, but compared with Western Europe they are few and far between.[20] This is all the more surprising as there is an abundance of sources that could be used to do for, say, Moscow, what people like Roche, Corbin, Delattre, and Harvey have done for Paris.

An obvious focus might be 1812, when Muscovites faced sociopolitical and ideological challenges on a scale unparalleled between the Time of Troubles and 1905. What happened in Moscow that summer and fall, and its aftermath, is massively documented. There is, of course, an abundance of upper-class memoirs, but our sources go much deeper than that. For example, before World War I, the collector Petr Shchukin published ten volumes of documents relating to the 1812 war.[21] Many of these concern events in Moscow: complaints about looting by Russians, records of police investigations, or petitions from residents for post-occupation disaster relief. Over 18,000 such petitions were submitted; some were published by Shchukin, and the rest gather dust to this day in *fond* 20 of the Central Historical Archive of Moscow (TsIAM). Most indicate the overall value of the possessions that the petitioner lost in the occupation; many include inventories that list every last icon, spoon, and undershirt; and some provide autobiographical details.[22] Another type of source is the oral histories collected in the 1860s–70s by the journalist E. V. Novosil´tseva (whose pseudonym was Tat´iana Tolycheva), who interviewed Russian commoners—mostly from Moscow—about their memories of 1812.[23] The war was also an early example in Russia of an anti-revolutionary nationalist propaganda campaign aimed at wide strata of the

[19] George E. Munro, *The Most Intentional City: St. Petersburg in the Reign of Catherine the Great* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2008); Boris N. Mironov, *Russkii gorod v 1740–1860-e gody: Demograficheskoe, sotsial´noe i ekonomicheskoe razvitie* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1990); J. Michael Hittle, *The Service City: State and Townsmen in Russia, 1600–1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979); Manfred Hildermeier, *Bürgertum und Stadt in Rußland 1760–1870: Rechtliche Lage und soziale Struktur* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1986); Hildermeier, "Was war das Meščanstvo? Zur rechtlichen und sozialen Verfassung des unteren städtischen Standes in Rußland," *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte* 36 (1985): 15–53.

[20] Examples include Wladimir Berelowitch and Olga Medvedkova, *Histoire de Saint-Pétersbourg* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1996); Michael F. Hamm, *Kiev: A Portrait, 1800–1917* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); and Patricia Herlihy, *Odessa: A History, 1794–1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

[21] P. I. Shchukin, ed., *Bumagi, otnosiashchiesia do Otechestvennoi voiny 1812 goda*, 10 vols. (Moscow: A. I. Mamontov, 1897–1908).

[22] I discuss some of these petitions in "Down and Out in 1812: The Impact of the Napoleonic Invasion on Moscow's Middling Strata," in *Eighteenth-Century Russia: Society, Culture, Economy. Papers from the VII International Conference of the Study Group on Eighteenth-Century Russia, Wittenberg 2004,* ed. Roger Bartlett et al. (Münster: LIT, 2007), 429–41.

[23] For a bibliography of Novosil´tseva's oral histories, see A. G. Tartakovskii, *1812 god i russkaia memuaristika: Opyt istochnikovedcheskogo izucheniia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), 282–85.

population, and the city's destruction made possible extensive urban planning in the postwar reconstruction.

Muscovites thus experienced an urban crisis on a scale comparable to anything that happened in Europe between 1789 and 1871. In Spain and southern Italy, the horrific experience of the Napoleonic Wars turned so many people against liberal and revolutionary ideas that authoritarian regimes had little to fear; and in France, the savage suppression of the Paris Commune in 1871 reflected decades of pent-up Catholic provincial hatred for the radicals of the capital.[24] Did Moscow's experience in 1812 have a similar effect, helping to ensure that Russia experienced no "1848"? One might imagine so from the words of one former house serf who recalled around 1870 that after fleeing the chaos of Moscow in 1812, she had witnessed a riot behind the Russian lines: "they were all getting drunk, fighting, cursing," she told her interviewer Tolycheva: "it was a republic all right, absolutely a republic!"[25] How did the large-scale encounter with people from Europe affect Muscovites' sense of national identity? How did the massive destruction of houses and possessions affect material culture and class relations in Moscow? No one has done the research. There seems to be no significant work on the post-1812 petitions, the Tolycheva oral histories, or the Shchukin documents. Western scholars have rarely engaged these issues, and while Russians have filled whole libraries with studies of the war, they rarely question the paradigm that 1812 was mainly about patriotic mobilization and military heroism.

Historians have similarly shown little interest in other categories of sources that suggest that urban Russians in the early 19th century were experiencing sociocultural changes similar to those unfolding in Western Europe. For example, during the 1790s–1820s, a considerable literature on Russia was published in the West, mainly by Germans.[26] Compared with many British

[24] Michael Broers, *Europe under Napoleon, 1799–1815* (London: Arnold, 1996), 266–67; Harvey, *Paris*, chap. 18.

[25] "Rasskaz nabilkinskoi bogodelenki, Anny Andreevny Sozonovoi, byvshei krepostnoi Vasil´ia Titovicha Lepekhina," in "Rasskazy ochevidtsev o dvenadtsatom gode," *Russkii vestnik* 102 (November 1872): 291.

[26] Examples include Johann Gottlieb Georgi, *Versuch einer Beschreibung der Rußisch Kayserlichen Residenzstadt St. Petersburg und der Merkwürdigkeiten der Gegend* (St. Petersburg: Bei Carl Wilhelm Müller, 1790); Heinrich Storch, *Gemaehlde von St. Petersburg*, 2 vols. (Riga: Bei Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, n. d. [1794]); Storch, *Rußland unter Alexander dem Ersten*, 9 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1804–8); Engelbert Wichelhausen, *Züge zu einem Gemählde von Moskwa* (Berlin: Bei Johann Daniel Sander, 1803); Heinrich von Reimers, *St. Petersburg am Ende seines ersten Jahrhunderts: Mit Rückblicken auf Entstehung und Wachstum dieser Residenz unter den verschiedenen Regierungen während dieses Zeitraums*, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg: Bei F. Dienemann u. Comp., 1805); Georg Reinbeck, *Flüchtige Bemerkungen auf einer Reise von St. Petersburg über Moskwa, Grodno, Warschau, Breslau nach Deutschland im Jahre 1805*, 2 vols. (Leipzig:

or French writers, these Germans were much more likely to speak Russian, live in Russia for many years, move freely outside the expats-and-aristocrats bubble, and approach Russia without a priori hostility to its "despotic" regime or "idolatrous" religion.[27] What particularly interested them was measuring Russia's progress toward enlightenment by examining the details of daily life—just what the modern historian would also like to know. Georg Engelhardt, for example, reported that traders in St. Petersburg seemed to prefer doing business out of flimsy stalls even when permanent buildings were available; that as merchants acquired more formal education, to judge by an example from Petrozavodsk, their bedrooms began to hold more mirrors and fewer icons; and that literate serfs in Perm′ had plenty to read because back issues of journals from the capital cities were sold in bulk at the Makar′ev fair and spread from there across the countryside.[28] These authors disagreed about how much progress Russia was making, and their views are colored by their own degree of career success in Russia, but they consistently provide a remarkable level of concrete detail.

Like the petitions from 1812, this is quasi-virgin territory: in a search of names of such authors, Google Books on 21 May 2009 could not find a single reference in an English-language monograph to Georg Engelhardt, Friedrich Raupach, or Engelbert Wichelhausen, and only one to Georg Reinbeck. The references in German, French, or Russian are likewise few or none; Wichelhausen's extensive medical topography of Moscow under Catherine II, for example, appears to be the subject of only one article-length study.[29]

For a slightly later period there is the massive Russian literature, especially fiction and *feuilletons*, on urban social themes in the 1830s–70s. Authors include the group around Aleksandr Bashutskii, who published the almanac *Nashi*, as well as such figures as Pavel Vistengof, Ivan Kokorev, and Aleksandr

Bei Wilhelm Rein und Comp., 1806); Friedrich Raupach, *Reise von St. Petersburg nach dem Gesundbrunnen zu Lipezk am Don. Nebst einem Beitrage zur Charakteristik der Russen* (Breslau: Bei Wilhelm Gottlieb Korn, 1809); Johann Richter, *Russische Miszellen*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Bei Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1803–4); Georg Engelhardt, *Russische Miscellen zur genauern Kenntniss Russlands und seiner Bewohner*, 4 vols. (St. Petersburg: Bei der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, ?–1832).

[27] An excellent anthology of the French primary sources is Claude de Grève, ed., *Le voyage en Russie: Anthologie des voyageurs français aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1990).

[28] Engelhardt, *Russische Miscellen*, 3:119, 176–79, 4:230–31.

[29] Martin Dinges, "L'image de Moscou entre la description standardisée des Lumières et la recherche de la singularité russe: La topographie médicale (1803) de Engelbrecht Wichelhausen," *Cahiers du monde russe* 44, 1 (2003): 35–56.

Levitov.[30] None of these qualify as "great" literature, but they, too, focus on the same questions that dominate the social and cultural history of the early 19th-century urban West, such as the connections among profession, estate (*soslovie*) status, material lifestyle, patterns of everyday behavior, and social identity. Again, interest from Western scholars—at least from historians—has been limited: Google Books knows of only three English-language monographs in the field of history that cite *Nashi*, and only five for Vistengof.

There are, I think, several reasons for this neglect. The stereotypes created by Gogol′, Ostrovskii, and the others are so compelling as to discourage further research. More important, however, the traditional master narrative of imperial Russia's modernization was that it failed: no real bourgeoisie, maybe not even a real working class, and certainly not the liberal modernity that forms the glorious achievement of the 19th-century West. The past two decades have not been kind to this thesis, for the end of communism has restored a sense of possibility to Russia's trajectory and allowed historians, most prominently Boris Mironov, to make the case for the "normality" of imperial Russian history.[31]

Russianists are on a trajectory similar to their Germanist colleagues, who argued in the 1960s–70s that German history followed a *Sonderweg* but concluded later that it was probably a mistake to posit the existence of some benign Franco-British norm of liberal modernity against which other countries' experience could be measured and found wanting. Once we acknowledge that Russia was not predestined for totalitarianism and that modernity need not be benign or liberal, then the origin of the modern experience and sensibility self-evidently occupies the same central position in Russian history as in the West—and that means that our ignorance about olfactory, vestimentary, or any other such "revolutions" in pre-reform Russia becomes an important lacuna. It is this lacuna that the books under review here help to fill.

[30] *Nashi, spisannye s natury russkimi* (1841–42; repr. Moscow: Kniga, 1986); A. Bashutskii, *Panorama Sanktpeterburga*, 3 vols. (St. Petersburg: V tipografii vdovy Pliushar s synom, 1834); I. T. Kokorev, *Ocherki Moskvy sorokovykh godov* (Moscow: Academia, 1932); P. Vistengof, *Ocherki Moskovskoi zhizni* (Moscow: V tipografii S. Selivanovskago, 1842); A. Levitov, *Moskovskie nory i trushchoby*, 2nd ed. (St. Petersburg: V. E. Genkel′, 1869). See also Nikolai Nekrasov, *Petersburg: Physiology of a City*, trans. Thomas Gaiton Marullo (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2009); Kenneth E. Harper, "Criticism of the Natural School in the 1840s," *American Slavic and East European Review* 15 (October 1956): 400–14; and Aleksandr Grigor′evich Tseitlin, *Stanovlenie realizma v russkoi literature (Russkii fiziologicheskii ocherk)* (Moscow: Nauka, 1965).

[31] Boris Nikolaevich Mironov, *Sotsial′naia istoriia Rossii perioda Imperii (XVIII–nachalo XX veka): Genezis lichnosti, demokraticheskoi sem′i, grazhdanskogo obshchestva i pravovogo gosudarstva*, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 1999)

Provincials into (Modern) Russians

Social and cultural realities, as opposed to the myths that grew up around them, are the focus of the works by Kamenskii, Kupriianov, and Schattenberg. The first two treat very similar topics—everyday life in small-town provincial Russia—in two successive periods whose dividing line is the beginning of Catherine II's reign. We will begin with Professor Kamenskii of the Russian State Humanities University in Moscow, whose book on the small town of Bezhetsk in Tver´ Province studies the earlier period.

Kamenskii's book, *Povsednevnost´ russkikh gorodskikh obyvatelei*, both should and should not be judged by its cover, which shows a whimsical 18th-century doodle of a nobleman smoking a very long pipe. The same satiric tone is conveyed by the title, which is printed in a font that mimics archaic handwriting. The table of contents continues in this vein, with occasional chapter titles in the style of archaic chronicles ("Otkuda est´ poshel gorod Bezhetsk" [Where the Town of Bezhetsk Came From]) or breathless tabloids ("Kriminal´nyi Bezhetsk" [Criminal Bezhetsk]).

Readers acquainted with Russian intelligentsia culture experience an instant sense of recognition: the application of pompous, grandiloquent language to a provincial backwater suggests a satire in the style of Saltykov-Shchedrin. This impression remains as the book starts telling the stories of small-town folk as reflected in the clunky language of 18th-century chancery documents, and Kamenskii himself occasionally explicitly notes the Shchedrinesque qualities of his material (258, 264). His main concern, however, is not to validate or criticize 19th-century intelligentsia mythologies. Instead, his study is directed against a scholarly tradition—prerevolutionary, Soviet, and Western—that treats political–institutional and economic backwardness as the key feature of Russian towns (14–15), and his goal is to show that early modern Russian townsfolk shared the same general sociocultural traits as their counterparts elsewhere in the Atlantic world.

Kamenskii takes a two-pronged approach. He has read widely in the history of early modern Western culture and society, and the interpretive models he invokes include microhistory, the *Annales* school, historical anthropology, the history of everyday life, and the linguistic turn. Having chosen Bezhetsk for a case study of a typical provincial town, he set out to read every single one of its local-government documents for the period 1700–75 that are held by the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts (RGADA), something that turned out to be a "more labor-intensive process than one might have imagined" (33). This is an exploration of how much it is possible to know about an 18th-century town if we read every scrap of surviving evidence and adopt the

most sophisticated available theoretical framework. Graduate students should be encouraged to read this book as an introduction to what kind of history can be written with 18th-century Russian documents.

The book's structure is dictated by the nature of the evidence, which in turn reflects the concerns of the local bureaucracy. Part 1 consists of a series of short chapters on disparate topics, grouped under the *Annales*-like general heading of "The Milieu and Its Inhabitants" (*sreda obitaniia i ee obitateli*): the town's origins, its social and demographic makeup, local government, and other matters. Not surprisingly, given the the sources, the book's longest and thematically most coherent section is part 2, "Criminal Bezhetsk in the 18th Century," which focuses on interpersonal conflicts and has chapters on private disputes, hooliganism, major crimes, deviant behavior (suicide and fornication), and the local jail. Last, part 3 examines relationships: family life, relations between townsfolk *stricto sensu* and other groups (soldiers, clergy, outsiders), migration into and out of Bezhetsk, and material culture.

Because the book as a whole is constructed around a body of evidence, not a central interpretive question, Kamenskii has to address a broad range of themes. He lets the documents speak but also interprets them in light of the scholarship on other early modern societies. Letting the documents speak for themselves occasionally gets out of hand. For seven pages in the section on material culture, for instance, the book lists various people's household possessions with hardly any explanation or analysis (332–38), and it reproduces a long document on one man's schooling only to add that analyzing this document "is useless because as is well-known, how one does in school proves nothing" (363). But these cases are exceptional. Instead, two other approaches are more common.

One approach is to build chapters around the stories of particular individuals and let them speak, in sometimes Shchedrinesque tones, about life in the 18th century. For example, the last chapter of part 2 tells the story of Aleksei Dediukhin, the long-time boss of a local political machine and the terror of the opposition. At the end of the book, a lengthy appendix is devoted to a *déclassé* aristocrat named Matvei Voeikov, who hated having to lower himself to working as a provincial surveyor and avenged himself by picking fights with any random bystanders who he felt might have disrespected him.

The dominant pattern, however, is to link the documentary evidence with a wider historiographical interpretation. The pattern that Kamenskii most often notes is similarity with Western societies during the same periods, or at least the relevance of comparisons with the West. He notes that local

citizens readily admitted to having peasant roots (59), felt little civic pride in their town (103), and viewed service as watchmen as a state-imposed obligation, not a sign of municipal autonomy (116)—all ways in which Bezhetsk differed from towns in the West. At a more fundamental level, however, he detects long-term similarities. The most important is the emergence of a sense of individuality and civic participation. Building on ideas proposed by Nancy Shields Kollmann and similar to historians of Western Europe, he notes that disputes over public insults declined over the course of the 18th century. As people identified less with their estate, public insults against individuals were less likely to be seen as attacks on the entire estate, and there was correspondingly less pressure to bring charges. Moreover, as law enforcement became more professionalized, it tended to treat insulting behavior as offenses against public order, not personal honor, and the possibility of resolving disagreements through elected bodies of local government also served to defuse conflicts (174–76). Frequent conflicts with clerics, nobles, soldiers, and peasants attest that the townsfolk were not afraid to assert what they considered their rights, a stance facilitated by the poorly defined jurisdictions of the relevant government agencies (344).

Kamenskii's Bezhetsk is, *mutatis mutandis*, a town of the 18th-century Atlantic world, inhabited by citizens who were beginning to show modern attitudes about the individual and the social order. Aleksandr Kupriianov, who works in Moscow at the Academy of Sciences' Institute of Russian History, takes up the story where Kamenskii leaves off, in the 1770s, and carries it forward to the mid-19th century. Like Kamenskii's book, Kupriianov's *Gorodskaia kul´tura russkoi provintsii* is driven by the search for signs of sociocultural modernization at the grassroots level of urban provincial Russia and draws on anthropological, microhistorical, and comparative approaches.

Kupriianov makes the case that for Russia, the period 1775–1861 formed an "extended late 18th century," defined—in a manner analogous to the antebellum stage in American history—by the regime's effort to avoid confronting the overarching social question of the day, serfdom (10–11). It was also, however, a period when the country underwent a fundamental transformation as Russian townsfolk began assimilating and thereby nationalizing the foreign culture of the elite (4), in the process creating a social base for cultural products that were—here he borrows the notorious formula for Socialist Realism—"European in form and mostly national in content" (152, 474).

Moreover, it is during the "extended late 18th century" that citizens of Russian towns acquired the habit of more or less democratic self-government, and that a modern bourgeois sense of identity began to displace the previous

distrust of new people, ideas, or ways of living (420, 475). In *The Culture of Clothing*, Daniel Roche argues that in 18th-century France the democratization of fashion helped undermine the social hierarchy by blurring social identities; Kupriianov argues that Roche's thesis applies to Russia as well (381). Taking a broader view, one might say that his entire argument is that the *ancien régime* as a way of living was gradually fading in Russia during the "extended 18th century," with the provincial towns playing the leading role in consolidating the triumph of the new culture. Imperial Russia thus followed a trajectory of modernization fundamentally similar to that of other European societies.

The thesis and historiographical framework are fundamentally similar to Kamenskii's, but the way the material is chosen and organized could hardly be more different. Kamenskii focuses on one town and exhaustively mines all the local archival materials. Kupriianov, on the contrary, undertakes an interregional comparison of provincial towns in central Russia and western Siberia, specifically the provinces of Moscow, Tver´, Tobol´sk, and Tiumen´. The source material covers the usual gamut of printed and archival materials, and the book is structured thematically: first the institutional infrastructure of culture, then the perceptions and practices of political life, then the linkages between fashion and identity, and last, individual feelings and the social imaginary. Throughout, the goal is both to create a collective portrait of Russian townspeople in their interaction with the culture that surrounded them and to identify elements of unity and diversity in the cultural dynamics of these two dissimilar regions of ethnic Russia.

The institutional infrastructure of culture, which forms the subject of the book's first part, focuses specifically on schools, libraries, theaters, and clubs. What emerges is a sense of an awkward, hesitant courtship between the regime and the *grazhdanstvo*, a term that referred to urban residents who were not nobles, clerics, serfs, or peasants, and that resembled *citizen* or *Bürger* in that its meaning shifted over time from "burgher" to "member of the polity." The government and its allies, the nobles and officials, wanted to foster local cultural institutions but grew suspicious when commoners showed too much interest or there were the least indications of an autonomous civil society. The citizenry, meanwhile, kept their distance from noble-dominated institutions, where they did not feel welcome and whose cultural ethos they found alien, yet they also gradually absorbed elements of the new culture. Accordingly, provincial schools, libraries, theaters, and clubs typically had a hopeful but modest start and went through repeated phases of growth and decline before achieving a degree of permanence and stability by the mid-19th century.

The story of local political attitudes and practices, described in the book's second part, follows a similar pattern. Much is premodern about the politics that Kupriianov describes, such as the widespread popular monarchism and the use of written denunciations, addressed to the tsar, to create a direct bond between the subject and the tsar while bypassing the bureaucracy. Moreover, Catherine II's attempt to foster a local civic identity across estate lines was foiled by the exclusion, often self-imposed, of nobles and clergy from local elected institutions. Alongside such premodern elements, however, Kupriianov sees the emergence of something like a modern bourgeois democratic consciousness. He agrees with Mironov that the political institutions of the urban citizenry were no mere passive victims of bureaucratic oppression, but instead assertively stood up for local interests (210). Meddling by imperial officials and shenanigans by local politicos marred the way elections were held and institutions worked, but the electorate—among whom only the poor had no effective voice—took its job seriously, and by the mid-19th century local elected officials developed a "bourgeois consciousness" that made them increasingly impatient with the tutelage of the absolutist state (293–97).

Vestimentary questions were fraught to an even greater degree in Russia than in other *anciens régimes* because of the sharp split between those whose exterior was "Russian" or "European." Kamenskii, as we saw, raises the issue of material (including vestimentary) culture but does not pursue it very far. By contrast, Kupriianov discusses clothing at some length in part 3, and once more we have a zigzag, one-step-forward, one-step-back pattern. The laws that required people to dress and groom themselves according to their estate were loosened by Catherine II, tightened by Paul, loosened by Alexander I, tightened again by Nicholas I, and loosened again (but by no means abolished) under Alexander II.

What looked on paper like a rigid sartorial hierarchy could in practice be porous and fluid, similar to what Gregory Freeze and Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter have pointed out for the estate system itself.[32] For example, reflecting the regime's concern about controlling the diffusion of its Westernized culture, genteel public spaces were declared off-limits to people who were not dressed "respectably" (*pristoino*). The lack of clarity about just what that meant emboldened one provincial alehouse operator to petition the government to declare all lower-class dress to be non-"respectable." At stake were profits, not principles: by law, patrons of restaurants and coffeehouses had

[32] Gregory Freeze, "The Soslovie (Estate) Paradigm and Russian Social History," *American Historical Review* 91, 1 (1986): 11–36; Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter, *Structures of Society: Imperial Russia's "People of Various Ranks"* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994).

to look respectable while customers of alehouses did not, so granting the request would have increased the petitioner's market share at the expense of his competitors. (After discussion by the finance and interior ministries and the Senate, the government decided that the ban covered only peasant dress, not urban lower-class clothing [316–18].)

By the mid-19th century, a vestimentary compromise emerged between capitals and provinces, elites and commoners. A standardized Western form of dress spread down the ladder, but sometimes in eclectic combinations with elements of Russian dress. Beards spread upward, meanwhile, and acquired connotations of Russian nationality as opposed to lower-class status. As in 18th-century France, women took the lead in adopting upper-class fashions, in this case because of its effect on social mobility: a merchant's daughter who looked Western might be able to marry "up," while her male kin, whose prospects in life depended on their business success, found that neither nobles nor fellow merchants had much respect for a merchant in noble dress (341, 350).

The same image of cultural modernization emerges from the fourth part of the book, which concerns the cultural values and spiritual outlook of provincial townsfolk. It is perhaps unavoidable that this is the most speculative part of the book, since Kupriianov has to rely heavily on a small number of ego-documents by articulate, introspective individuals who almost by definition are unrepresentative. The overall impression is consistent with the one conveyed by David Ransel's study of the merchant Tolchenov (which Kupriianov cites): by the mid-19th century, the urban citizenry was developing greater openness to a humanistic education, a stronger civic awareness, aspirations to a refined material lifestyle, and a sense of community and solidarity with members of other estates.

To a large extent, Kupriianov argues, this new culture resulted from contact with a specifically German form of Western modernity. The nobility's culture, he argues, was shaped by France and was rejected by the people as alien. By contrast, the *embourgeoisement* of the upper stratum of commoners involved an orientation toward the values of the German *Bürgertum*, which Russians encountered through German schools, imports of German goods, foreign travel, and personal contacts with the often middle-class German diaspora (303–10, 360, 380).

Kupriianov points out variations among towns in the patterns he describes, though these do not conform to a simple pattern. The pace of cultural change had much to do with the presence of nobles and officials. They were especially thick on the ground in provincial capitals, but some towns had unusual concentrations because of the presence of schools, military bases, or

other government facilities. By contrast, proximity to Moscow or the presence of a wealthy landed nobility had a culturally retardant effect by siphoning off energies and resources that might otherwise have benefited provincial towns and because the presence of wealthy, powerful social elites reinforced a sense of conservative estate particularism up and down the social hierarchy. For these reasons, Siberian towns—which had many state servitors, exiles, and self-made businessmen but few rich nobles or old merchant families—were often culturally more dynamic than were the towns around Moscow.

Reading Kamenskii and Kupriianov makes one rethink whether Russian townsfolk were really as insular, backward, and un-European as they appear in the writings of an Ostrovskii or a Saltykov-Shchedrin. Exhibit A in the intelligentsia's gallery of rogues, however, was arguably not so much the provincial merchant or small-town *meshchanin* as the petty bureaucrat. Nobles and merchants alike, Kupriianov notes, had low regard for hirelings of any sort, but minor officials drew exceptional scorn and dislike (410). No one did more to turn these poor devils into the stuff of myth than Gogol′. "The Russian official," so Susanne Schattenberg begins the introduction to *Die korrupte Provinz,* "long ago acquired fame and notoriety throughout the world through Nikolai Gogol′'s grotesquely satirical works," such as the one where a nose wanders around St. Petersburg in the uniform of a collegiate assessor. "The Russian official of the early 19th century," she summarizes the ubiquitous cliché, "is reputed to have been a type who could be bribed, who cared only about his own well-being, and who did his office more harm than good" (11).

Professor Schattenberg, who teaches at the University of Bremen, shares Kamenskii's and Kupriianov's concern to debunk the myths, rooted in 19th-century intelligentsia culture, that represented much of Russian society as benighted and backward. Unlike the other two, however, Schattenberg is not out to prove her protagonists innocent of the traits imputed to them but rather to show that those traits were neither irrational nor dysfunctional. The claim that pre-reform Russian officials were somehow exceptionally flawed, she argues, has its origin in the hatreds of Russian revolutionaries, the frustrations of tsars who felt their policies stymied, the rhetoric that factions in the bureaucracy used to smear their rivals, anachronistic judgments by the later intelligentsia, and the mistaken belief that Max Weber's ideal type of modern bureaucratic rule reflected a reality that actually existed in the West and should serve as a yardstick for assessing Russia. These views, she argues, also pervade the work of modern scholars like Mironov, whose central thesis is that imperial Russia was becoming modern in a way similar to the West (14–15).

Schattenberg's aim is to show that behaviors that were attacked as ignorance, sloth, corruption, and lawlessness actually suited the conditions in which officials had to operate. Weber himself provides the underpinning for this argument. Weber, of course, offers a theory of modern, rational bureaucratic rule, but Schattenberg, paraphrasing Hans-Ulrich Wehler, calls that "only half of Weber." "The whole Weber," by contrast, also includes the "patrimonial official," an alternative ideal type that better fits Russian conditions and helps identify Russia's bureaucracy as a rational system of rule, not some grotesque bundle of pathologies (13–20, 44–48). Nor was this patrimonialism absent from other European countries; what was unusual about Russia is only that it remained dominant there much longer than in Western countries.

Compared with the other books reviewed here, Schattenberg's is by far the most systematic in being constructed around a theoretical model. One element of this model is Weber's patrimonial official. Another is *potlatch*, a term that describes the ritualized exchange of material and symbolic goods among members of indigenous peoples on the northern Pacific coast of North America. Following Marcel Mauss and Claude Lévi-Strauss, Schattenberg argues that such a system can create stable political relationships in a society that lacks formalized, permanent power structures. A Russian equivalent was the Muscovite system of *kormlenie*, which allowed officials to live off unofficial fees from the public rather than a salary from the crown, thereby creating a gift-giving system of reciprocity with the population. *Kormlenie*, she argues, effectively persisted until the late imperial period (49). Furthermore, drawing on Iurii Lotman's analysis, she argues that a vassal's service in medieval Rus´ was rewarded by his liege with material goods; this exchange of personal loyalty for goods that embodied honor and recognition likewise persisted and formed the template for officials' relationships with their own superiors.

Based on such gift-giving exchanges, officials were enmeshed in two sets of patronage relationships: with the public, which offered gifts and deference in return for government services; and with senior bureaucrats, to whom officials offered service and personal loyalty in return for promotions to higher rank, honors (*ordena*), and cash bonuses to supplement their miserly statutory salaries. "Ranks, *ordena*, and rewards," she writes, "were symbols of the faithfulness and loyalty that [a subordinate] had shown his lord. This understanding of honor and recognition was the foundation and the engine of the state service in the 19th century" (109). Like Kamenskii and Kupriianov, she thus contests the cliché that Russians were downtrodden and disenfranchised, instead arguing that the bureaucrats lampooned by Gogol´ were motivated by a keen sense of personal honor and dignity.

After laying this theoretical foundation, Schattenberg examines the various levels at which provincial patronage functioned. Similar to Kupriianov's, her approach is interregional, as she uses materials from central Russia, the Black Sea coast, and Siberia. Each chapter describes one link in the patronage chain, with memoirs by officials providing the evidence for their attitudes and perceptions.

The first link is the provincial chancellery official. She notes that when such officials later wrote memoirs during and after the Great Reforms, they felt obligated to express embarrassment about their lack of formal schooling and ignorance of the laws they were supposed to administer. These were anachronistic judgments, however, because at the time, particularly before the codification of Russian law in 1833, personal service to a patron mattered more than did formal qualifications: like Weber's patrimonial official, the Russian bureaucrat "served no abstract cause and had no need to know laws and regulations that were fixed in writing, because his iron law was his patron and the patron's will" (130).

The second link in the chain was the provincial governor. According to Weber, the ruler of a patrimonial society lacks institutionalized mechanisms of power and therefore relies on plenipotentiaries, who in turn are controlled by other officials who are sent after them. In the Russian context, the plenipotentiaries were the governors. They had to be personally known to the tsar, for whom they expressed a loyalty bordering on veneration, and their assignment was not so much carrying out complex government programs as simply enforcing peace and quiet (143–47). Once he arrived in "his" province, a governor had to work through officials who were clients of his predecessor, and who needed to be either purged or transformed into a new network loyal to the new governor. Hence the intense distrust and animosity at the first encounter of a new governor with local officialdom. He also needed to manage the complicated relationship with the rival network represented by local nobles and headed by their marshal of the nobility (165–68).

The governor was the nexus between patronage systems: one extending from the court to the provinces, the other within the provincial administration. Weber's model presupposes that the ruler sends special officials to watch over his plenipotentiaries, and these are discussed the next two chapters: the gendarmes, permanently stationed in the provinces, and the periodic "revisions" of a province by senators from the capital. Both had the function of controlling local officialdom's activity and permitting citizens, principally the nobility, to submit complaints directly to the tsar's agents, thereby establishing a personalized bond between the tsar and his subjects that cemented the

whole patrimonial system (196). Evidence of dysfunction in this system began to appear only when what W. Bruce Lincoln called "enlightened bureaucrats" under Nicholas I began treating revisions as opportunities to enforce an abstract, impersonal conception of the law instead of interventions in the turf wars among local factions (212).

Kamenskii and Kupriianov make the case that Russian townspeople acquired modern attitudes and learned to assert themselves against the bureaucracy, whereas Schattenberg argues that the bureaucrats themselves should not be blamed for living by patrimonial rules instead of modern ones. Although this does not by itself create a tension between their arguments, Schattenberg's does conflict with theirs in two respects. First, she argues that down to the present day, Russia has never really moved beyond patrimonial rule (250), implying that it was not engaged in the kind of modernization postulated by Mironov, Kamenskii, and Kupriianov. Second, she raises questions about whether such modernization was inevitable or even always desirable. It is not clear, she argues (here she cites the historiographic debate over the peasant courts of late imperial Russia [240]), whether most Russians actually believed that an abstract, legalistic understanding of law and government, in which ideally there would be no room for private negotiation and accommodation, really represented progress.

The three authors we have discussed so far have in common an interest in rectifying misleading stereotypes of provincial urban people. The approach taken by Vladimir Lapin and Alison K. Smith is altogether different: their focus is on understanding how the realities and perceptions of the material environment were processed by 19th-century Russian culture to help create a distinctively Russian sense of national identity.

That Russian Scent

The prologue to Pushkin's *Ruslan and Liudmila* includes the memorable lines: "Here, there's something Russian in the air; here I smell old Russia" (Tam russkii dukh, tam Rus´iu pakhnet!). This notion—that sensory perceptions of the nonhuman environment can help form national consciousness—also underlies *Peterburg: Zapakhi i zvuki* by Vladimir Lapin, a historian at the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of History in St. Petersburg who also teaches at the city's European University.

Lapin's theoretical framework is provided by a work from 1926 by Nikolai Antsiferov (1889–1958), a specialist on the history and culture of St. Petersburg. Lapin explains that his own book "is an attempt to dissect Petersburg's olfactory and aural background by the 'Antsiferov method.' That

scholar proposed representing the city as a living organism by employing the common division into anatomy, physiology, and psychology." "Anatomy" in this case means the natural and built environment, and "physiology" the activities of society; "psychology," a vaguer metaphor, has to do with collective memories, the lives of individuals, and the character of the population (12–13). The "Antsiferov method" provides a rough outline for the book: one chapter on "anatomy," three on "physiology," and then two additional chapters—one on filth and sanitation, the other on the sounds and smells of the revolution and the Leningrad Blockade.

I am not really persuaded by the "Antsiferov method." The biological metaphor offers little guidance for interpreting sources, and by operating with the kind of totalizing metaphor popular in the 19th century, the method blurs the line between analyzing a myth and perpetuating it. Then there is the opportunity cost: Lapin acknowledges the work on smells by Alain Corbin as well as environmental history and the role of sensory impressions in collective memory but incorporates such concepts only episodically. The Antsiferov method also, however, impedes the historiosophic speculations that occasionally intrude: about the Russian national essence, for example, or about the significance, not further explored, of St. Petersburg's location "at the intersection of European and Asian cultural currents" (27). The Antsiferov method has little substantive content of its own yet crowds out alternative approaches; as a result, the book lacks an overarching interpretive framework.

Taken as a series of short essays and individual vignettes, however, Lapin's book is marvelous. It evokes a vanished sensory environment and thereby draws our attention in startling and unanticipated ways to the social and the cultural. Easter under the monarchy, we learn, came to Moscow when at midnight the majestic Kremlin bells began to peal, answered within seconds by hundreds of churches across the city that rang their bells and illumined their towers. In militarized St. Petersburg, by contrast, it was cannon fire from the Peter–Paul Fortress that proclaimed Christ's resurrection (106). I have often seen references to Napoleon's troops using Russian churches as stables, but only reading Lapin made me focus on what it must have meant when a space devoted to the mystic aroma of incense began to reek of dung instead (14). Also, who would have thought that an unanticipated benefit of the economic collapse in 1914–21 and again during the Blockade was that industrial pollution disappeared (142, 270)? Or that one of the sounds of the revolution was the crunching underfoot of the shells of sunflower seeds that people chewed in large quantities to relieve their hunger and tension and to flaunt their revolutionary *farniente* (251)? Or that a smell of the revolution

was the odor of elite townhouses, abandoned by their former residents and turned into improvised latrines (225)?

The first, "anatomical" chapter of the book examines the sounds and smells of the seasons, the water, the pavement, the stone (as opposed to wood) used in the city's construction, the sensory experience of peasant migrants, and the music heard in the streets. The chapter has the typical features that are characteristic of the whole book. Small details bring to life a whole lost universe of sensations: for example, the oil-lit streetlights were illumined only from autumn through spring, so a sign that fall was coming was the smell of hempseed oil (38). Lapin also evokes with great effectiveness what rural migrants must have experienced on a sensory level upon arriving in the metropolis. Sometimes he provides a reality check for the myths of Russian intelligentsia culture: for instance, painted cityscapes of St. Petersburg look so majestic in part because artists deliberately ignored the unsightly columns of wood smoke that hovered over the city (41), and floods like the one described by Pushkin in *The Bronze Horseman* start to acquire an awfulness reminiscent of Hurricane Katrina when you realize that their residue included animal carcasses and the washed-out contents of graveyards and cesspits (47). Elsewhere, however, there are essentializing reflections about Russianness: "By the Neva," Lapin writes, "what greeted man was not the rustling of trees and the smell of the field, but the lapping of waves and the scent of water, which was alien to Rus′" (45). The invocation of the Petersburg–Moscow binary also seems rather to bolster traditional myths, and the tenets of the "St. Petersburg Text" of Russian culture (as well as the less developed "Moscow Text") are reproduced somewhat uncritically, as when the chapter discusses the literal and metaphorical associations of Petersburg with stone (by extension, with foreignness, masculinity, and so on) versus Moscow's with wood (Russianness, feminity, etc.) (56).[33]

The next three chapters deal with "physiology," that is, the functions of society. The first focuses on the military's role in the city's sensory environment—cannon fire, military bands, the clinking of the spurs on officers' boots—in contrast to the dominance in Moscow of the church. Bells, Lapin writes, were powerfully associated with Russian nationality (107), whereas

[33] See, for example, Ian K. Lilly, "Conviviality in the Prerevolutionary 'Moscow Text' of Russian Culture," *Russian Review* 63, 3 (2004): 427–48; Lilly, ed., *Moscow and Petersburg: The City in Russian Culture* (Nottingham, UK: Astra, 2002); Rolf Hellebust, "The Real St. Petersburg," *Russian Review* 62, 4 (2003): 495–507; and Alexander Shevyrev, "The Axis Petersburg–Moscow: Outward and Inward Russian Capitals," *Journal of Urban History* 30, 1 (2003): 70–84.

the cannon fire used in St. Petersburg for timekeeping and celebration was rooted in a naval tradition alien to Russians (122). Moreover, "the sound of a bell was made by a living human hand; this was a *musical instrument* that allowed individuality, personal style [*pocherk*], and other features of art to shine through." By contrast, "the thunder of guns announced that a *machine* had acted. Cannons insistently proclaimed the arrival of an age of mechanisms, next to which man's role would not be as craftsman and creator but as a servant who was trained and disciplined" (128). The next "physiological" chapter focuses on the sounds and smells of transport, industry, and commerce: the 19th-century odor of horse dung and the worsening of industrial pollution, for example, but also the eerie silence of semi-legal Soviet flea markets. The third "physiological" chapter deals with ethnicities and social classes—their languages, dialects, and odors. The final two chapters of the book, as indicated earlier, deal with sanitation and the smells and sounds of revolution and war.

Lapin is at his best, in my view, when he analyzes how particular sounds and smells were created and what they meant to contemporaries, whereas the wider interpretive framework has an eclectic quality that can be unsatisfying to the scholar. One suspects, however, that it may resonate with many Russian readers in its idealization of Orthodox spirituality, ambivalence about the militaristic splendor of the autocracy, and regret over revolutionary destructiveness, its tinge of nostalgia for the Soviet past, and its sense that although the intelligentsia images of Russian society are cultural constructs and hence fallible, they also contain important truths. In that sense, Lapin's book is itself also an artifact of the culture that it describes.

The link between nationality and smell, pervasive in Lapin's book, is also present in Alison K. Smith's *Recipes for Russia*, except that now the aroma wafts in from the kitchen, not the street, stable, factory, or outhouse. The early to mid-19th century was, of course, a golden age for attempts across Europe to codify just what constituted national identity, and Russia was no exception. The *littérateurs* of the early 19th century debated vigorously, for example, whether Russians should write in a language that developed more along West European or along folk and Church Slavonic lines, and Kupriianov's book vividly illustrates the analogous disputes over how Russians should dress.

A similar debate, as we learn from Alison Smith of the University of Toronto, raged over what they should eat. Attempts to define a Russian way of producing and consuming food, she writes, exposed the fault lines between Russia and the West, nobles and peasants, state and intelligentsia, and the variety of groups competing for authority in Russian culture—in this case,

officials, physicians, historians, ethnographers, and agricultural and culinary reformers (6–7).

Smith's book is built on a parallel discussion of policies and ideas about agricultural improvement and the culinary arts: growing food and consuming it. Beginning under Catherine II, we learn in chapter 1, the Russian government aggressively pursued populationist policies that demanded greater attention to public health, which in turn drew attention to the food supply. Much attention was focused on ensuring the supply of reasonably priced food in the towns, but the countryside remained largely beyond the reach of government regulators. Readers familiar with the period know that Russia was widely imagined to be a land of plenty. Russophobic foreigners sometimes scoffed at the cuisine (in Russia, "the principal articles of diet are the same everywhere—*grease* and *brandy*," groused one Englishman).[34] More commonly, foreigners who visited Russian towns and the upper classes were impressed with the wide variety and easy availability of food. Russians themselves, as their sense of national distinctiveness sharpened during the second quarter of the 19th century, came to imagine their country this way: Ian K. Lilly has shown the centrality of abundant food to the literary myth of Moscow, and the countryside in Sergei Aksakov's *Family Chronicle* likewise seems abundant.[35]

Smith argues, however, that the government's own confidence was shaken by crop failures in the early 1830s—and, one might add, by the growing tendency for images of "the people" to be informed by the cold findings of social science, not the gauzy imaginings of sentimentalist art, and by the specter of the pauperism, hunger, and revolution that haunted the urban slums and destitute countryside of the West. The government therefore decided, Smith writes, to take a more proactive role by promoting new crops and requiring peasants to store more grain. Both efforts had mixed success: the former because people didn't like how the new crops tasted (especially quinoa, less so potatoes), the latter because the state lacked enforcement capabilities. Agricultural backwardness, uncertainty about the nation's culinary preferences, and the paucity of rural interlocutors interested in agricultural improvement thus formed a single nexus.

The efforts by medical and ethnographic writers to identify what Russians should eat are the subject of the next two chapters. Dieticians in the early to mid-19th century fought on two fronts, against the inertia of Russian traditionalism and the universalizing claims of European science. For instance,

[34] Edward Daniel Clarke, *Travels in Various Countries of Europe, Asia and Africa*, 4th ed. (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1817), 1:117.

[35] Lilly, "Conviviality in the Prerevolutionary 'Moscow Text.'"

science associated meat consumption with good health and national vigor, yet the circumstances of peasant life conspired with Orthodox fasting rules to promote a mainly vegetarian diet. At the same time, European writers denounced preserved cabbage as unhealthful, thereby insulting a mainstay of Russian cuisine (60–64). Nationalistic dieticians struck back by associating refined foreign foods with upper-class decadence, thereby suggesting that the "rough quality of Russian food" was "a sign not simply of national difference but of national superiority" (69). When ethnographers studied what peasants actually ate, however, they reached the same depressing conclusion as the landscape artists studied by Christopher Ely and the observers of peasant life described by Cathy Frierson: like the scenery and the people, the food was monotonous, limited, and tediously uniform across Russia (76–78).[36]

Hope came, however, from a cuisine one might call Euro-Russian fusion. Pushkin, after all, created a great literary idiom by blending European, Church Slavonic, and folk elements; and the townsfolk studied by Kupriianov transcended Russia's vestimentary schism by mixing and matching Russian and European garments or trimming but not shaving their beards. Syncretism fostered a culture that was national but not insular, European but not imitative. The nobility's habit of mixing Russian with foreign dishes meant that this was possible at the dinner table, too. For Russian authors, culinary syncretism was "a source of pride," Smith argues: "Combining foods—and more to the point, seeing these foods as somehow connected and constituting a coherent whole—created a new sense of a Russian cuisine beyond mere Russian foods. Creating something new out of tradition and innovation was a new way of defining Russia" (97–98).

The question remained, however, who had the authority to decide how food was to be grown and cooked, and this is the theme of the remaining three chapters. Books on both estate management and cooking first appeared under Catherine II, usually translated from Western originals. The literature on agricultural improvement was reasonably unencumbered by ideology, but not so cookbooks: not only were Russian users often unfamiliar with foreign ingredients and cooking techniques, but they required dishes that satisfied Orthodox fasting rules, and fancy foreign recipes could in addition trigger concerns associated with the debates about the merits of luxury versus

[36] Cathy A. Frierson, *Peasant Icons: Representations of Rural People in Late Nineteenth-Century Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), e.g., 187; Christopher Ely, *This Meager Nature: Landscape and National Identity in Imperial Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002), 134–35, 140, 142.

moderation that raged across the Atlantic world in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.[37]

As in other cultural realms, questions of nationality and authority arose with increased keenness in the era of Nicholas I. In agriculture, it came to be accepted by writers in- and outside government that landlords had a patriotic duty to promote improved farming techniques. However, in a land of hidebound peasants who were overseen by uneducated and dishonest stewards who in turn served absentee landowners who cared little about farming, who was there to carry out such a program of reform? Publications were written with both landlords and peasants as target audiences, but by mid-century, Russia's agricultural improvers had yet to identify a rural stratum that was both receptive to their message and capable of acting on it (134–37).

Culinary writers initially faced the same vexing problem. Russian cookbooks in the early 19th century were usually texts written by Western master chefs for aspiring gastronomes among the *nouveaux riches* who proliferated thanks to Europe's political and socioeconomic upheavals, not the peasant women who did most of the cooking in Russian households. The breakthrough occurred under Nicholas I, when Russian authors began addressing a putative "middle-class housewife"—a new social type who was supposed to shift the bases of household management from rote traditionalism to modern scientific rationalism, and who existed in the pages of cookbooks even before she came into being in everyday social reality (148).

Thanks to her victory over the figure of the male gourmet, the middle-class housewife "dominated," Smith writes, "and dominated by doing something no agricultural writer of the time could do. She claimed authority over all culinary arts, including the foreign, in large part by labelling herself as truly Russian. She became the proper interpreter of foreign foods, and the one who could incorporate them into 'Russian cooking' without losing her Russianness. Agricultural writers might have tried to do just that, to create 'rational Russian agriculture' that incorporated foreign knowledge into a Russian context, but they failed. Their authority waned just as the middle-class housewife's began to wax" (146). It was, however, a pyrrhic victory, because elevating the constructed figure of the housewife backfired by defining the household as women's *only* proper sphere of activity, thereby strengthening an ideology of domesticity against which the housewife's daughters would eventually rebel (176).

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[37] John Shovlin, "The Cultural Politics of Luxury in Eighteenth-Century France," *French Historical Studies* 23, 4 (2000): 578–606.

Mystic Chords of Memory

Of the volumes under review here, none foreground the cultural constructedness of identities as explicitly as *Géographie de la mémoire russe*, the first of three planned volumes of *Les sites de la mémoire russe*. The title is a transparent allusion to the multivolume study of French collective memory edited by Pierre Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire*.[38] Georges Nivat, the volume's editor, explains in his introduction that an abridged version of Nora has appeared in Russian translation (19); *Les sites* is evidently an effort to apply Nora's methodology to Russian history. Of the authors, 32 are based in Russia or Ukraine versus only 9 (most with Slavic names) from various Western countries, and almost all the texts had to be translated into French, so the book tells us less about French scholarship than about the appropriation by Russians of a French methodology.

It is indeed inviting to apply the Nora approach to Russia. Similar to many Russians over the past two decades, Nora felt in the 1980s that sociocultural modernization plus the postmodern loss of ideological master narratives had robbed his countrymen of a sense of a meaningful collective past. The point of his project was to map the shared memories that helped constitute the French nation. A *lieu de mémoire* could be a geographic place, a cultural artifact—anything around which collective memories might crystallize. Reviewers were impressed with the scope and sophistication of Nora's project, though some discerned an essentializing nationalist teleology—what one called "that same old politically motivated self-divinization of the [national] collectivity."[39] Both in its methodological innovativeness and in its nation-affirming ideological agenda, Nora's project is a good fit for the intellectual conditions of present-day Russia.

Nivat's volume on the "geography of Russian memory" is a massive project: 748 pages of text, 41 authors, 64 essays. The principal "sites" of this geography of memory are cities (11 essays), institutions of the Orthodox Church (13 essays), and above all, intelligentsia cultural institutions (museums,

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[38] Pierre Nora, ed., *Les lieux de mémoire*, 3 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–92).

[39] Steven Englund, "Review Article: The Ghost of Nation Past," *Journal of Modern History* 64, 2 (1992): 299–320, here 320. On Nora, see also Natalie Zemon Davis and Randolph Starn, "Introduction" to "Memory and Counter-Memory," special issue of *Representations*, no. 26 (Spring 1989): 1–6, esp. 3; Patrick Hutton, "Recent Scholarship on Memory and History," *The History Teacher* 33, 4 (2000): 533–48, esp. 538; Hutton, "The Role of Memory in the Historiography of the French Revolution," *History and Theory* 30, 1 (1991): 56–69, esp. 67; Susan A. Crane, "Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory," *American Historical Review* 102, 5 (1997): 1372–85, esp. 1379; and Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 105–40, esp. 120–21.

libraries, universities, theaters—25 essays). Other topics include one essay each on Siberia and sites of folk religion, as well as essays on military museums, the names of warships, noble estates, parks, cemeteries, and the Russian emigration. The focus is squarely on the 18th and especially the 19th centuries, with some consideration of the 20th century; only the chapters on religion make any significant mention of the pre-Petrine period.

This is in many ways an unsatisfying book. The "Russian memory" that is mapped in this collection is really that of the intelligentsia, but even in that sense it has yawning lacunae. Ethnically, this "memory" is entirely Great Russian, which is odd for a society where many *intelligenty* were of non-Great Russian background or operated in an imperial context. The cover illustration shows a painting by Boris Kustodiev of a celebration in a peasant village, but the "Russian memory" described by the book is mostly urban: almost the only rural themes are noble estates, and virtually only manmade sites are included, not the semi-natural or natural ones that have left such a deep imprint in Russian intelligentsia culture (the road, the steppe, the forest, the Volga).[40] Aside from the one essay on folk belief, religion is represented only by the official Orthodox Church; there are no places connected with Old Believers (such as the Vyg Community or Moscow's Rogozhskoe Cemetery),[41] Orthodox sectarians (such as the mythical Belovod´e),[42] or non-Orthodox faiths. The memory presented here is also top-down: six of the seven essays on secular "sites of instruction" deal with institutions of higher learning, as do all four essays on religious education—which is surprising, given that it is the lower church schools that dominated the collective memory of religious schooling, most famously as a result of Pomialovskii's *Seminary Sketches*. Likewise, neither the sections on "sites of reading" nor those on "sites of spectacle" reach outside the sphere of elite culture. Mostly absent are government and warfare—there are no essays on, for example, memorable buildings (the Kremlin, the Winter Palace), battlefields (Borodino, Stalingrad), or icons of revolution (the site of Alexander II's assassination or the cruiser *Avrora*). Aside from the thoughtful essay on Ivanovo by Liudmila Vinogradova, there is virtually nothing on commerce or industry, either. It is difficult to accept the

[40] On the open road as a cultural theme, see John W. Randolph, "The Singing Coachman or, The Road and Russia's Ethnographic Invention in Early Modern Times," *Journal of Early Modern History* 11, nos. 1–2 (2007): 33–61; on the steppe, see Willard Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field: Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); and on landscape more generally, see Ely, *This Meager Nature*.

[41] Irina Paert, *Old Believers, Religious Dissent, and Gender in Russia, 1760–1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

[42] K. V. Chistov, *Russkaia narodnaia utopiia: Genezis i funktsii sotsial´no-utopicheskikh legend* (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2003).

"sites" described in these essays as forming a meaningful map of Russia even in the mind of the Great Russian urban intelligentsia, let alone the wider society.

A second but probably related issue has to do with how the question of "memory" is approached. Some essays are thought-provoking studies of the constructedness of cultural representations. For example, Wladimir Berelowitch makes the interesting point that the imperial intelligentsia viewed "provincial" towns with disdain but also treated them not as places with their own identity but rather, depending on their age and design, as variations on archetypes represented by Moscow and St. Petersburg (63–69). Vladimir Abashev argues that Perm′ was perceived as a sinister, inorganic, artificial frontier town located in an ancient and mysterious land; sources for this interesting argument range from Epifanii the Wise to 19th-century archaeology and the works of Diaghilev, Nabokov, and Pasternak (98–111). Tat′iana Kalugina argues that imperial Russian museums came into being more to represent the future than to preserve the past (186–91); and Ekaterina Dmitrieva traces the changing image of the noble country estate from the 18th century to the present (355–76). Similarly interesting are the introductory essay by Georges Nivat, Iakov Gordin's on Pushkin sites, Mikhail Rozhanskii's on Siberia, Andreas Schönle's on parks, and Iurii Piriutko's on cemeteries.

More common, however, are two other aproaches. Many authors simply provide brief histories of their subjects, with no particular reference at all to the question of collective memory; this is particularly true of the chapters dealing with Orthodox church institutions and with cultural or educational institutions.

Alternatively, historiosophical speculations are at times treated as historical realities. For example, Georgii Nefedev argues that every city has a timeless myth, and that Moscow's myth adheres to the archetype of the eternal city; however, when he discusses the unfolding of this myth across time—Moscow as pre-Petrine Third Rome, as the authentically "Russian" core of post-Petrine Russia, or as the capital of the revolution after 1917—he seems to suggest that these are true metaphysical insights from the depths of the historical process, not cultural constructs created by identifiable human beings. Similarly, in his essay on Iaroslavl′, Evgenii Ermolin explores the city's traditional bond with Moscow: "Within this couple, Iaroslavl′ is the virile principle, Moscow the feminine principle: Moscow is capricious, willful, perfidious, irascible, whereas Iaroslavl′ is true to its word and is stoic in the face of misfortune" (124). Essays in this vein are perhaps manifestations of the collective memory, but they do little to explore how it is constructed.

Perhaps such pitfalls are to be expected. Coordinating 41 scholars for any purpose is difficult, the more so if it involves a theoretical approach that is relatively new to the country where most of the participants live and work.

A number of contributors, however, make little or no concession of any kind to the notion of "memory," and the themes themselves—lists of cities, museums, universities, monasteries—almost invite uncreative approaches. One wonders what would have happened if the contributors had framed their work more idiosyncratically, for there is an arbitariness to the way memories attach to some sites and not others. Rather than identify categories of places or institutions and write symmetrical collections of case studies for each, the volume might have been better served by following the sources and writing about whatever comes up most often in memoirs, novels, or paintings. Lapin's book on the sounds and smells of St. Petersburg operates this way, and it contains any number of passages that explore how the construction of memory is associated with geographic locations. Kamenskii and Kupriianov reflect extensively on the connection between physical space and cultural representation, as do the works of the Moscow–Tartu school of semiotics or Richard Wortman's seminal study of court rituals.[43] The same, of course, is true of much of the source material from the 19th and 20th centuries, which pays close attention to how social experiences and personal or collective memories crystallized around peasant villages, schools, prisons, landscapes, government offices, markets, army barracks, ballrooms, factories, and other sites. A volume organized around themes of this kind might have proved more coherent methodologically and yielded deeper insight into the structures of Russian collective memory.

History and Memory

The books discussed in this review illustrate how far we have come, and how far we have yet to go, in understanding the fate of imperial Russia. Central to that fate is a paradox of success and failure.

[43] Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy*, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995–2000). Other interesting examples of such studies include, for example, G. S. Knabe, "Arbatskaia tsivilizatsiia i arbatskii mif," in *Moskva i "moskovskii tekst" russkoi kul´tury,* ed. Knabe (Moscow: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet, 1998), 137–97; and the chapter "Edem v Tavride: 'Krymskii mif' v russkoi kul´ture 1780–1790-kh godov," in Andrei Zorin, *Kormia dvuglavogo orla … Literatura i gosudarstvennaia ideologiia v Rossii v poslednei treti XIX–pervoi treti XIX veka* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2001), 95–122.

First the success. Coming out of the "rebellious" 17th century,[44] the Romanovs sought to stabilize the Russian order by adopting superior Western tools of governance and launching a "cultural revolution"[45] to create a social base for the reformed regime. The peasant masses were never part of the equation, but the towns and cities were to be systematically transformed. Sumptuary laws, public ceremonies, public architecture, building codes, city planning, police forces, welfare institutions—in countless ways, the regime worked to remake urban Russia's environment and infrastructure according to European models.

At the same time, the government also sought to integrate the social groups that formed the core of urban society—merchants, townspeople (*meshchane*), clerics, state officials—into the Westernized culture of the imperial elite. They were given access to Westernized culture through schools designed more or less specifically for them; even the schools for the clergy promoted Westernization by teaching Latin and Protestant scholasticism. They also received key legal immunities of the nobility: freedom from the head tax, corporal punishment, and conscription. Even those who did not receive these immunities outright—townspeople, low-ranking chancellery clerks, sacristans—could aspire to obtain them through success in business or service.

By the mid-19th century—as we see in the books by Kamenskii, Kupriianov, and Schattenberg—these policies were starting to work. Russian townsfolk increasingly dressed and behaved in ways that fused European culture with Russian tradition, and bureaucrats who wrote their memoirs felt a need to sound embarrassed about the premodern character of officialdom before the Great Reforms. The social types we see emerging by the mid-19th century reflected the aspirations underlying a century of effort by imperial policy makers. Mikhail Speranskii had tried to impose steep educational qualifications on bureaucrats a half-century before the Great Reforms. Thirty years earlier, Catherine II had created the legal framework for urban Russians of diverse estates to form a civic community headed by elected local officials. Catherine and her daughter-in-law, Mariia Fedorovna, even had a hand in inventing the "middle-class housewife" described by Alison Smith, through boarding schools that trained girls to become either rational stewards of their

[44] A. M. Panchenko, "'Buntashnyi vek,'" in *Iz istorii russkoi kul´tury*, 3: *XVII–nachalo XVIII veka* (Moscow: Iazyki russkoi kul´tury, 2000), 11–24.

[45] James Cracraft, *The Revolution of Peter the Great* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), esp. chap. 4 ("Cultural Revolution").

own households or governesses who taught other families' daughters to manage theirs.

All in all, the cultural revolution was thus a smashing success. We tend to take the Westernization of the urban middle strata for granted, yet we need look no farther than today's headlines to imagine the counterfactual alternative: how does one say *al Qaeda* or *Taliban* in Russian?

But if the cultural revolution was such a hit, why did it not achieve the goal of creating a broad, lasting base of support for the regime? A fateful dynamic was that the Europeanization of Russian culture raised expectations of political participation and the rule of law that were continually disappointed, leading many educated Russians to see the regime as an obstacle to the sort of progress that the autocracy itself had earlier promoted. This disappointment was then projected backward, in the collective memory of the Westernized middle strata, onto earlier decades when the autocracy had in fact been a vigorous force for modernization.

A key problem was the timing of when memory ended and history began. Russia's modern secular culture—fiction, memoirs, journalism, drama, painting—came into its own in the middle of the 19th century, at a time when living memory reached back into the late 18th century. As we know from countless memoirs, the first culturally modern Russians were often people who came of age under Nicholas, when the structures of urban society were stagnant and growing obsolete, and they had heard stories from old-timers about the time of Catherine, who had created those structures; what came before, they knew only from history books. In the intelligentsia memory, the dynamism of the Catherinean era was therefore obscured by the stagnation that prevailed later.

A small example may illustrate this phenomenon. The streets of Moscow were mostly pitch dark until after the mid-18th century, when Catherine launched the large-scale installation of oil-burning street lights. While the streets were never bright by the standards of, say, London (which was easier to illumine because of its high-density pattern of development), Moscow by the early 19th century was not especially backward by Western standards. As one Russian author wrote proudly in the early 1820s, "The total of the streetlights in Moscow is 5,010; in Paris, the count is over 4,777. There the entire city is illumined within forty minutes, but in Moscow, within a half-hour."[46] Alexander I and Nicholas I, however, failed to make the switch to gas or even to increase dramatically the number of oil lamps, so Moscow's

[46] A. F. Malinovskii, *Obozrenie Moskvy* (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1992), 114.

lighting appeared increasingly obsolete just as Russian literature and journalism emerged as powerful social forces.[47] By the time of the Great Reforms, local officials' verdict was merciless: "In times past, when Moscow was illumined with archaic lamps and hempseed oil served as fuel, the poverty of the light was in complete harmony with the scantiness of the time during which these modest night-lights were lit."[48]

This dismissive view of the regime's modernizing impetus held in other domains as well. It was entirely characteristic that when Mikhail Pyliaev in 1891 published his popular history *Old Moscow: Tales From the Past Life of the Old Capital*, what he meant by "Old Moscow" was "Catherinean Moscow." The book begins thus: "Moscow under Empress Catherine II still lived according to the traditions of the ancient past. As contemporaries describe it, much could still be found that remained untouched by the reform era of Peter the Great."[49] The men and women who peopled this "old" Russia were recalled through a similar lens. The first people who were themselves modern Russians emerged from an evolutionary process launched by Peter and Catherine, but the social types that marked earlier stages of that evolution—autocratic country squires, aristocrats with better French than Russian, or seminary teachers who knew only rote memorization and corporal punishment—had become alien to them.

Two fundamental processes of 19th-century Russian history are thus the real history of modernization and the constructed memory of backwardness. We can be grateful to the authors of the books reviewed here for their contribution to illumining these twin developments.

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[47] N. M. Bychkov, "Istoricheskii ocherk osveshcheniia goroda Moskvy," *Izvestiia Moskovskoi Gorodskoi Dumy*, no. 1 (October 1895), sect. 2: 1–52.

[48] A. Petunnikov, "Po povodu osvetitel´nogo kalendaria na 1878 god," *Izvestiia Moskovskoi Gorodskoi Dumy*, no. 1 (15 January 1878): 35–45, here 35.

[49] M. I. Pyliaev, *Staraia Moskva: Rasskazy iz byloi zhizni pervoprestol´noi stolitsy* (Moscow: Svarog, 1995), 1.