

LITERARY SOCIETIES IN RUSSIA OF THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19th CENTURY: PROBLEMS OF INTERDISCIPLINARY DESCRIPTION

The first third of the 19th century is traditionally, and with good reason, seen as the era of literary societies in Russia: during the reign of Alexander I they acquire “the significance of a literary fact”,¹ become “the most characteristic <...> form of the organization of literary life”,² and occupy an important place among the “institutions of literature”.³ Their emergence and their activities become part of a wider process of the formation of various public associations, both those created and supported by the state like the Bible Society (*Bibleiskoe obshchestvo*) and secret societies created by the political opposition forces — the “Decembrist movement” (in a broad sense).⁴ The close connection between power, politics, and ideology with the “literary space” whose growing autonomy was characteristic for the period of the late 1810s — early 1820s has steadily inspired the interest of various methodological schools and academic disciplines. The development of this research field was successfully launched by the scholars of the historical school, it also attracted the attention of the Formalists and their immediate followers,

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¹ *Eikhenbaum B.M.* Predislovie [Preface] // Aronson M., Reiser S. *Literaturnye kruzhki i salony* [Literary circles and salons]. Moskva, 2001. P. 9. (In Russ.) (reprint of the book published in 1929).

² *Iezuitova R.V.* *Literaturnye ob"edineniia i zhurnaly pervoi chetverti XIX v.* [Literary Associations and Journals in the First Quarter of the 19th Century] // *Istoriia russkoi literatury: V 4 t. T. 2. Ot sentimentalizma k romantizmu i realizmu* [A History of Russian Literature: In 4 vols. Vol. 2. From sentimentalism to romanticism and realism]. Leningrad, 1981. P. 39. (In Russ.)

³ *Kahn A., Lipovetsky M., Reyfman I., Sandler S.* *A History of Russian Literature.* Oxford, 2018. P. 348–351 (Part IV. The Nineteenth Century. 1. Institutions. Male Poetic Circles: Friendship and Intellectual Networks).

⁴ It was in this context — as an “inseparable part of the Decembrist history” — that orthodox Soviet historians of literature viewed literary societies that “contributed to the spread of advanced political and literary-aesthetic views”. See, for instance: *Meilakh B.S.* *Dekabristskie literaturnye organizatsii i organy pechati* [Decembrist literary organizations and press media] // *Istoriia russkoi literatury: V 10 t. T. 6. Literatura 1820–1830-kh godov* [A History of Russian Literature: In 10 vols. Vol. 6. Literature of the 1820s-1830s]. Moskva, Leningrad, 1953. P. 21. (In Russ.)

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and, unlike many other topics, it was not excluded from the research in the later Soviet years. The resulting bulk of research on the history of literary associations,⁵ at first glance, produces the impression that the “era of literary societies” is generally well described, at least on the factual level. However, the studies done in the recent decades have shown that this impression is deceptive, and the history of literary associations of the 1800s-1830s requires not only serious factual research and additions but also a significant expansion of the research context. In this paper I will attempt to systematize the main achievements in the study of literary societies, as well as to analyze the approaches to the topic in the papers and monographs of the last twenty years (including, undoubtedly, an earlier period) and compare the methods developed in various humanitarian disciplines in the study of literary and, in a broader sense, public organizations of the period. The focus will be, first of all, on the institutionalized forms of literary communities (circles, literary societies). Less “formal” associations, such as salons or high society home circles (often associated with *jours fixes* such as Nestor Kukolnik’s “Wednesdays”) and the works devoted to them are of interest primarily from the point of view of the proposed methods of description.

⁵ These are the most significant publications, which are still relevant: *Sukhomlinov M.I.* Istoriiia Rossiiskoi Akademii [History of the Russian Academy]. Issue 7. Sankt-Petersburg, 1875. (In Russ.); *Kolupanov N.P.* Biografiia Aleksandra Ivanovicha Kosheleva [Biography of Alexandr Ivanovich Koshelev]. Vol. 1. Books 1–2. Moskva, 1889. (In Russ.); *Sreznevskaiia L.I.* Arkhiv Vol'nogo obshchestva liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti [The Archive of the Free Society of Lovers of Russian Literature] // *Svedeniia o rukopisiakh, pechatnykh izdaniakh i drugikh predmetakh, postupivshikh v Rukopisnoe otdelenie Biblioteki Akademii nauk v 1904 godu* [Data on Manuscripts, Editions and Other Items Brought into Manuscript Department of the Academy of Sciences Library in 1904]. Sankt-Petersburg, 1907. P. 225–277. (In Russ.); *Istrin V.M.* Druzheskoe literaturnoe obshchestvo 1801 g. (Po materialam arkhiva brat'ev Turgenevykh) [Friendly Literary Society of 1801 (on the materials of the Turgenev brothers' archives)] // *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo prosveshcheniia* [Journal of the Ministry of Public Education]. 1910. No. 8. Section 2. P. 273–307. (In Russ.); *Slovar' chlenov Obshchestva liubitelei Rossiiskoi slovesnosti pri Imperatorskom Moskovskom Universitete, 1811–1911* [Dictionary of Members of the Society of Lovers of Russian Letters at Moscow University, 1811–1911]. Moskva, 1911 (In Russ.); *Aronson M., Reiser S.* Literaturnye kruzhki i salony [Literary circles and salons]. Leningrad, 1929. (In Russ.); *Gorelov A.* (Ed.). Arzamas i arzamasskie protokoly [Arzamas and the Arzamasian protocols]. Leningrad, 1933. (In Russ.); *Bazanov V.G.* Vol'noe obshchestvo liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti [The Free Society of Lovers of Russian literature]. Petrozavodsk, 1949. (In Russ.); *Desnitskii V.A.* Iz istorii literaturnykh obshchestv nachala XIX veka [From the history of Literary Societies of the Early 19th century] // *Desnitskii V.A.* Izbrannye stat'i po russkoi literature XVIII–XIX vv. [Selected Articles on Russian Literature of 18–19 cc]. Moskva, Leningrad, 1958. P. 92–191. (In Russ.); *Lotman Yu. M.* Andrei Sergeevich Kaisarov i literaturno-obshchestvennaia bor'ba ego vremeni [Andrei Sergeevich Kaisarov and Literary and Social Struggle of his Time] (Uchenye zapiski Tartuskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta [Transactions of Tartu State University]. No. 63). Tartu, 1958. (In Russ.); *Bazanov V.G.* Uchenaiia Respublika [The Republic of Letters]. Moskva, Leningrad, 1964. (In Russ.); *Kolominov V.V., Fainshtein M.S.* Khram muz slovesnykh (Iz istorii Rossiiskoi Akademii) [The Temple of the Muses of Letters (From the History of the Russian Academy)]. Leningrad, 1986. (In Russ.). For more details, see: *Piksanov N.K.* Dva veka russkoi literatury [Two Ages of Russian literature]. Moskva, Petrograd, 1923. P. 51–59. (In Russ.); *Muratova K.D.* (Ed.). Istoriiia russkoi literatury XIX veka: Bibliograficheskii ukazatel' [History of Russian literature of the 19th century: Bibliographical Index]. Moskva, Leningrad, 1962. P. 66–70. (In Russ.); *Muratova K.D.* (Ed.). Istoriiia russkoi literatury XIX — nachala XX vekov: Bibliograficheskii ukazatel'. Obshchaia chast' [History of Russian literature of the 19th — early 20th centuries: Bibliographical Index. General Part]. Sankt-Peterburg, 1993. P. 292–296. (In Russ.); *Khmelevskaya N.A.* (Comp.). Literaturnye obshchestva, kruzhki i salony v Rossii v XIX veke: spisok literatury na russkom ia-zyke za 1828–1993 gg. [Literary societies, Circles and Salons in Russia in the 19th century: List of Sources in Russian for 1828–1993]. http://nlr.ru/nlr_visit/dep/artupload/media/article/RA2020/NA18391.pdf (access date: 31.10.2020). (In Russ.)

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An important factor that determined the direction of studies of literary societies in the 1990s-2010s was not only and not so much the rich empirical material accumulated in pre-revolutionary historiography and in the works of the Soviet period but also the existing conceptual approaches as well as historical and literary narratives.

On the one hand, it is the “Soviet history of literature” which existed in its most orthodox shape in the 1940s and early 1950s and, with some minor refurbishing, was followed in the works of the 1970s and 1980s. From the point of view of Soviet Marxism, all literary societies pursued mainly social and political goals: the most “progressive” associations were either “literary branches of secret societies” (like the Free Society of Lovers of Letters, Sciences and the Arts (*Vol'noe obshchestvo liubitelei slovesnosti, nauk i khudozhestv*, VOLSNIH), or the Free Society of Lovers of Russian Literature (*Vol'noe obshchestvo liubitelei Rossiiskoi slovesnosti*, VOLRS), or their precursors (as the abovementioned VOLSNIH, the Friendly Literary Society (*Druzheskoe Literatunoe obshchestvo*), and to some extent, Arzamas). At the same time, the main goal of their opponents (primarily the Colloquium of Lovers of the Russian Word (*Beseda liubitelei russkogo slova*)) was the fight against “progressive trends in public life” and “propaganda of reactionary ideas”.⁶ Such an ideological reduction of literary tasks, selective use of material, ignorance of facts, and the construction of “imaginary substances” required revision and refutation, all the more necessary since many conclusions of the “old” works are still used uncritically, though in a less odious phrasing

In the struggle against this tradition, the concept that proved to be especially effective and meaningful was the concept of literary environment (*literaturny byt*) and “literary domesticity” proposed in the late 1920s by Boris Eikhenbaum and developed in the works of the participants of his seminar, primarily in the book by Mark Aronson and Solomon Reiser *Literary Circles and Salons* (1929). In the article “Literary Environment” [“Literaturnyi byt”] and other works of similar theme included in “My Chronicle” (“Moy Vremennik”) Eikhenbaum argued that the facts that lie outside literature proper, but affect both literature and its creators and readers should be included into the Formalist discourse on literary evolution. The notion of “literary environment” meaning the immediate sphere of literature’s social existence (writers’ associations and circles, editorial offices of periodicals, bookselling industry, etc.) emphasized the close connection of this socio-cultural world with the literary world and helped to avoid the straightforward causality of Marxist sociologism (cf.: “Literature <...> is not generated by the facts of other spheres and therefore cannot be *reduced* to them. The relations between the facts of the literary sphere and the facts lying beyond it cannot be simply causal, but can only form relations of correspondence, interaction,

⁶ *Meilakh B.S.* A.S. Shishkov i Beseda liubitelei russkogo slova [A.S. Shishkov and the Colloquium of Lovers of the Russian Word] // *Istoriia russkoi literatury*: V 10 t. T. 5. *Literatura pervoi poloviny XIX veka* [A History of Russian literature: In 10 vols. Vol. 5. Literature of the First Half of the 19th Century]. Part 1. Moskva, Leningrad, 1953. P. 193. (In Russ.)

dependence or conditionality”⁷). Eikhenbaum’s ideas, as is well known, caused skeptical attitudes in his inner circle⁸ and, due to external circumstances, were not explicitly developed after the publication of Aronson’s and Reiser’s book and Nikolai Brodsky’s book.⁹ Those ideas, however, were again in demand already in the second half of the 1970s–1980s when Yuri Lotman published his works on the poetics and semiotics of everyday behavior, which introduced (though from a different perspective) everyday life material into the sphere of philological study. Another reason for the renewal of interest in those ideas were works on the history of literary criticism, and, in particular, Russian Formalism (starting with republications of Yuri Tynyanov’s works *Pushkin and His Contemporaries* (1968) and, in particular, *Poetics. Literary history. Cinema* (1977)).

The renewed interest in the literary material of everyday life was characterized by its focus on the text: the research focus now was on literature and specific literary texts, their connection with the immediate sociocultural context, as well as the expansion, the spread of the “literariness” to other spheres. An indication of that is the definition of the “literary environment” proposed by Oleg Proskurin, one of the leading contemporary researchers of Pushkin’s epoch in the preface to his book “Literary Scandals of Pushkin’s Era” (2000): “the literary environment <...> is not so much a form of society’s influence on literature and not so much an auxiliary factor of literary evolution, but rather a channel through which literature itself influences neighboring (and indirectly, more remote) “spheres” or “social practices”: culture, politics and forms of social life”.¹⁰ This understanding of the literary environment — semiotic and not sociological¹¹ — showed both the influence of the Tartu-Moscow school and hostile wariness towards sociologism in any of its manifestations, which several generations of researchers inevitably associated with the Soviet academic officialdom. On the other hand, the text-centered nature of the new “literary environment” studies was fueled, it

⁷ *Eikhenbaum B.M. Literaturnyi byt [The Literary environment] // Eikhenbaum B.M. O literature. Raboty raznykh let [On literature. Works of different years]. Moskva, 1987. P. 433. (In Russ.)*

⁸ See memories of Lidiya Ginzburg about the reaction of the participants of the Eikhenbaum’s seminar to his concept of the literary environment (*Ginzburg L. Ya. Problema povedeniia (B.M. Eikhenbaum) [A problem of behaviour (B.M. Eikhenbaum)] // Ginzburg L. Ya. Zapiski knizhki. Vospominaniia. Esse [Notebooks. Memories. Essays]. Sankt-Peterburg, 2002. P. 445. (In Russ.)*), also sharp comments of Shklovskii and Tynyanov (*Chudakova M.O. Sotsial’naia praktika, filologicheskaiia refleksii i literatura v nauchnoi biografii Eikhenbauma i Tynianova [Social Practice, Philological Reflection and Literature in the Scholarly Biography of Eikhenbaum and Tynyanov] // Tynianovskii sbornik. Vtorye Tynianovskie chteniia [Second Tynyanov’s readings]. Riga, 1986. P. 120–123. (In Russ.)*; here also see detailed analysis of reasons behind disagreement between the Formalists in the late 1920s).

⁹ *Brodskii N.L. (Ed.). Literaturnye salony i kruzhki: Pervaia polovina XIX veka [Literary Salons and Circles: First Half of the 19th century]. Moskva, Leningrad, 1930. (In Russ.)*

¹⁰ *Proskurin O.A. O literaturnom byte i istorii literatury. Vmesto predislovia [On the Literary Environment and the History of Literature. In lieu of a Preface] // Proskurin O.A. [Literary Scandals of Pushkin’s Era]. Moskva, 2000. P. 16. (In Russ.)*. A polemic and partly provocative character of such definition of the literary environment was noted in Mikhail Velizhev’s review (*Velizhev M.B. O knige Olega Proskurina “Literaturnye skandaly pushkinskoi epokhi” [On Oleg Proskurin’s book “Literary Scandals of Pushkin Era”] // Novaia russkaia kniga/ 2000. No. 6. P. 51–54. (In Russ.)*).

¹¹ See on this: *Zenkin S.N. Otkrytie “byta” russkimi formalistami [Discovery of “byt” by Russian formalists] // Zenkin S.N. Raboty o teorii [Works on Theory]. Moskva, 2012. P. 323. (In Russ.)*

seems, also by the tradition of the historical commentary, which in the late Soviet time became an important and widely recognized form of the ideologically unbiased philological science.¹²

With regard to the study of literary societies, these presuppositions manifested themselves, among other things, in the choice of subjects and perspectives of research: the focus was, first of all, on literary circles of friends, informal associations, as well as texts and everyday life practices generated by and within this environment. However, this preference for home circles and salons belonging to the sphere of private life, as opposed to official societies and associations¹³ was already visible in the pioneering work of Eikhensbaum's students. In the introduction to *Literary Circles and Salons*, Aronson explained the choice of material as follows: "home circles, which are born freely and are not restrained by the inertia of official existence, are less dependent on external factors and more devoted to literature. They create literature themselves, while official societies feed on it",¹⁴ "while the circle helps us to elucidate the issues of literary production, the salon will elucidate for us the issues of literary consumption".¹⁵

The most important achievement in the works of the last thirty years was a significant expansion of the source and factual base (which is clearly seen in comparison with the material that was compiled in the work by Aronson and Reiser), the introduction of previously unknown and unpublished sources, such as circle transcripts, epistolary documents and memoirs of participants, which made it possible sometimes to not only clarify and supplement the available information but also to revise the ideas about the activities and the role of the circle in the history of literature.

Of these, we should mention the studies devoted to the "Arzamas Society of Obscure Men" (1815–1818)¹⁶ (a "model" unofficial circle which,

¹² Cf. characteristic polemics on the status of commentator practices at the 11th Lotman Conference (December 18–20, 2003) in vivid description by Vera Milchina (*Milchina V.A. Khroniki postsovetskoi gumanitarnoi nauki: Bannye, Lotmanovskie, Gasparovskie i drugie chteniia* [Chronicles of Post-Soviet Humanitarian Science: Bannye, Lotman, Gasparov and other Conferences]. Moskva, 2019. P. 179–182. (In Russ.)), and also a shorthand record of the round table "Commentary: Splendour and Misery of the Genre in the Modern Era" (*Okhotin N.G., Zorin A.L., Zhivov V.M. et al., Kommentarii: blesk i nishcheta zhanra v sovremennuiu epokhu* (stenogramma "kruglogo stola" v ramkakh XI Lotmanovskikh chtenii. Moskva, RGGU, 20 dekabria 2003 g.) [Commentary: Splendour and Misery of the Genre in the Modern Era (shorthand record of the round table within the framework of the 11th Lotman Readings)] // *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*. 2004. No. 66. P. 103–120 (In Russ.)).

¹³ Cf. the typology adopted in the recognized dictionary of literary associations of a later period: societies (standing, "formed"), circles, salons (*Shrubina M. Literaturnye ob"edineniia Moskvy i Peterburga 1890–1917 godov: Slovar'* [Literary associations of Moscow and Petersburg in 1890–1917: Dictionary]. Moskva, 2004. P. 7. (In Russ.)).

¹⁴ *Aronson M.I. Kruzhki i salony* [Circles and salons] // Aronson M., Reiser S. *Literaturnye kruzhki i salony* [Literary Circles and Salons]. Moskva, 2001. P. 47. (In Russ.)

¹⁵ *Ibid.* P. 48.

¹⁶ Having no opportunity to provide a comprehensive list of the vast Arzamas bibliography of the last 20 years (see, for instance, conference proceedings devoted to Arzamas: *Piatkin S.N.* (Ed.). *Literaturnoe obshchestvo "Arzamas": kul'turnyi dialog epokh: materialy mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii* [Arzamas Literary Society: a Cultural Dialogue of Epochs]. Arzamas, 2005. (In Russ.); *Stroganov M.V.* (Ed.). "Lipetskii potop" i puti razvitiia russkoi literatury: sbornik nauchnykh statei [The "Lipetsk Flood" and the Development of Russian Literature: a Collection of Articles]. Lipetsk, 2006. (In Russ.); *Piatkin S.N.* (Ed.). *Literaturnoe obshchestvo "Arzamas": istoriia i sovremennost'*: sbornik nauchnykh statei [Arzamas Literary Society: History and Modernity: a Collection of Articles]. Arzamas; Nizhnii Novgorod, 2015. (In Russ.)), let us mention the most significant and, in the author's opinion, brilliant works: *Proskurin O.A.* *Novyi Arzamas — novyi*

despite the brevity of its existence, had a decisive influence on the development of the literary system),¹⁷ on The Friendly Literary Society,¹⁸ the Green Lamp,¹⁹ Semyon Raich's circle,²⁰ and also the on the literary salons of Sofia Ponomareva²¹ and Zinaida Volkonskaya.²²

Jerusalim. Literaturnaia igra v kul'turno-istoricheskom kontekste [The New Arzamas — The New Jerusalem. Literary Play in the Cultural and Historical Context] // *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*. 1996. No. 19. P. 73–128. (In Russ.); *Proskurin O.A.* Bednaia pevitsa: Literaturnye podteksty arzamasskoi rechi S.S. Uvarova [A Poor Singer: Literary implications of S.S. Uvarov's Arzamas speech] // *Proskurin O.A.* Literaturnye skandaly pushkinskoi epokhi [Literary Scandals of the Pushkin era]. Moskva, 2000. P. 152–187. (In Russ.); *Proskurin O.A.* Kogda zhe Pushkin vstupil v Arzamasskoe obshchestvo? (Iz zametok k teme "Pushkin i Arzamas") [When did Pushkin Enter Arzamas Society? (From the notes on the topic "Pushkin and Arzamas")] // *Toronto Slavic Quarterly*. 2005. No. 14. (In Russ.); *Vatsuro V.E.* Zametki k teme "Pushkin i Arzamas" [Notes on the topic "Pushkin and Arzamas"] // *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*. 2000. No. 42. P. 150–160. (In Russ.); *Vinitshii I. Yu.* Poeticheskaiia semantika Zhukovskogo, ili Rassuzhdenie o vkuse i smysle "Ovsiianogo kiselia" [Poetic Semantics of Zhukovskiy, or Reflection on the Taste and Sense of "Oatmeal Jelly"] // *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*. 2003. No. 61. P. 119–152. (In Russ.); *Mayofis M.L.* O tekh, kto ekhal verkhom na galimat'e, i o tom, chto ostalos' pozadi: Opyt personologicheskogo analiza arzamasskikh protokolov [About Those who Rode on Nonsense and what was Left Behind: An Attempt of Personological Analysis of Arzamasian Protocols] // *Istoriia i Povestvovanie* [History and Narration]. Moskva, 2006. P. 122–162. (In Russ.); *Dougii O.L.* Pushkin i Khvostov v "Khvostovskoi Lavke" "Arzamasa" [Pushkin and Khvostov in "Khvostov's shop" of Arzamas] // *Poetika russkoi literatury* [Poetics of Russian literature]. Moskva, 2009. P. 158–183. (In Russ.); *Koshelev V.A.* "Zapros Arzamasu": ob Odnom Ekspromte K.N. Batiushkova ["A Request to Arzamas": on K.N. Batiushkov's Improvisation] // *Pushkin i mirovaia kul'tura* [Pushkin and the World Culture]. Sankt-Peterburg; Arzamas; Bolshoe Boldino, 2008. P. 20–30. (In Russ.); *Ivinskii D.P.* Viazemskii, "Arzamasskii" Zhurnal i Russkaia Literatura XVIII veka: Zametki k Teme [Vyazemskii, the "Arzamas" Journal and the Russian Literature of the 18th Century: Notes on the Topic] // *Pushkinskii muzeum: al'manakh* [Pushkin Museum: Almanac]. No. 8. Sankt-Peterburg, 2017. P. 237–249. (In Russ.). On the monograph by Mariia Mayofis (*Mayofis M.L.* *Vozzvanie k Evrope: Literaturnoe obshchestvo "Arzamas" i rossiiskii modernizatsionnyi proekt 1815–1818 godov* [Appeal to Europe: Arzamas Literary Society and the Russian Modernization project of 1815–1818]. Moskva, 2008. (In Russ.)), strongly contributing to the "Arzamas Society of Obscure Men", see further.

¹⁷ The historical and cultural reputation of Arzamas, reaching beyond the academic community, was pointedly manifested in the choice of the title for the famous educational project — Arzamas academy.

¹⁸ *Zorin A.L.* U istokov russkogo germanofil'stva (Andrei Turgenev i Druzheskoe literaturnoe obshchestvo) [At the onset of Russian Germanophilism (Andrei Turgenev and the Friendly literary society)] // *Novye bezdelki*. Sbornik k 60-letiiu V.E. Vatsuro [New trifles. Collection for the 60th anniversary of V.E. Vatsuro]. Moskva, 1995/1996. P. 7–35. (In Russ.); *Dzyadko F.V.* "Za chto nam drug ot druga otdaliat'sia?" K istorii literaturnykh otnoshenii A.F. Merzliakova i V.A. Zhukovskogo: "versiiia" Merzliakova ["Why Should we Drift Apart from Each Other?" On the History of Literary Relationship of A.F. Merzliakov and V.A. Zhukovskiy: Merzliakov's "version"] // *Pushkinskie chteniia v Tartu* [Pushkin Readings in Tartu]. Tartu, 2004. No. 3. P. 112–136. (In Russ.); *Cooper D.L.* "Narodnost'" avant la lettre? Andrei Turgenev, Aleksei Merzliakov, and the National Turn in Russian Criticism // *Slavic and East European Journal*. 2008. Vol. 52. No. 3. P. 351–369.

¹⁹ *Peschio J.* Lighting the Green Lamp: Unpublished and Unknown Poems // *Dinega Gillespie A.* (ed), *Taboo Pushkin: Topics, Texts, Interpretations*. Madison, 2012. P. 84–111; *Peschio J.* The Green Lamp: Sexual Banter // *Peschio J.* *The Poetics of Impudence and Intimacy in the Age of Pushkin*. Madison, 2013. P. 60–67; *Pilshchikov I.* Aleksandr Pushkin mezhdu libertinazhem i dendizmom [Alexander Pushkin between libertinage and dandyism] // *Russian Literature*. 2014. Vol. 76. No. 1–2. P. 36–45. (In Russ.)

²⁰ *Rogov K. Yu.* K istorii "moskovskogo romantizma": kruzhok i obshchestvo S.E. Raicha [On the History of "Moscow Romanticism": the Circle and Society of S.E. Raich] // *Lotmanovskii sbornik*. Moscow, 1997. No. 2. P. 523–576. (In Russ.)

²¹ *Vatsuro V.E.* S. D.P. Iz istorii literaturnogo byta pushkinskoi pory [S. D.P. From the History of Literary Life of the Pushkin Epoch]. Moskva, 1989. (In Russ.)

²² *Saikina N.V.* Moskovskii Literaturnyi alon kniagini Zinaidy Volkonskoi [Moscow Literary Salon of the Duchess Zinaida Volkonskaya]. Moskva, 2005. (In Russ.)

Thus, the collection of texts, documents, and memoirs related to the activities of Arzamas was significantly enlarged and systematized (primarily due to the publication of the correspondence of the Society of Obscure Men).²³ The study of unpublished materials found in diaries and in Andrei Turgenev's correspondence made it possible to show in a new way the significance of the Friendly Literary Society, of the participants' literary and ethical views, not only for the development of elegiac poetics but also for the «life-building» and everyday life practices of several generations of Russian romantics.²⁴ The revision of the published sources on the history of the so-called "Liubomudry Society" (the *Lovers of Wisdom Society*), along with the rich materials of Mikhail Pogodin's archives related to the history of the circle and to Raich's society demonstrated that the established concept of the "Liubomudry" was "largely a construct accumulating information about the circle and meetings of the Moscow followers of Schelling", while the structure of their social network included several associations (Raich's circle, the "archival circle" (the association of young clerks of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives), the circle of the *Moscow Herald* ("Moskovsky Vestnik"), etc.) and even within 1822–1827 it was very dynamic.²⁵

At the same time, both for newly found and previously published yet underestimated texts, exquisite historical and literary interpretations were often offered, showing the influence of the circle life and the alignment of forces within a circle or salon on literary texts as such, on their poetics, plots, and pragmatics. An exemplary study in this vein is Vadim Vatsuro's work on the literary salon of Sofia Ponomareva,²⁶ where, using comments on texts from her album, unpublished epistolary and ego-documents of her salon visitors, the author paints a vast picture of the St. Petersburg literary life of in the early 1820s and vividly presents artistic and emotional biographies of the prominent writers of the period — Evgeny Baratynskii, Anton Delvig, Alexander Izmailov, Orest Somov, and Vladimir Panaev.

A number of "historical and literary novellas" associated with the history of Arzamas and the Free Society of Lovers of Letters, Sciences and

²³ Vatsuro V.E., *Ospovat A.L.* (Eds.). Arzamas: V 2 kn. [Arzamas: In 2 books]. Moskva, 1994. (In Russ.)

²⁴ See first of all works by Andrei Zorin (see above, note 18), summed up in the book: Zorin A.L. *Poiavlenie geroia: Iz istorii russkoi emotsional'noi kul'tury kontsa XVIII — nachala XIX veka* [Emerging Hero: From the History of Russian Emotional Culture of Late 18th — Early 19th centuries]. Moskva, 2016. (In Russ.)

²⁵ Rogov K. Yu. *K istorii "moskovskogo romantizma": kruzhok i obshchestvo S.E. Raicha* [On the history of "Moscow romanticism": the circle and society of S.E. Raich]. P. 538–539. (In Russ.). Rogov's arguments were adopted in a number of recognized works (see, for instance, general monograph by Bokova, where the corresponding section is called "The Associations of Moscow Schellingians" — Bokova V.M. *Epokha tainykh obshchestv: Russkie obshchestvennye ob'edineniia pervoi treti XIX v.* [The Era of Secret Societies: Russian Public Associations of the First Third of the 19th century]. Moskva, 2003. P. 157–170, 203. (In Russ.)), although, of course, has not yet been able to overcome the historiographic inertia. Cf. also the generalizing and conditional name — the "Moscow youths", proposed by Natalia Mazur, which does not evoke associations with any of the existing associations of Moscow Schellingians and makes it possible, if necessary, to designate this entire group, regardless of belonging to a particular circle (*Mazur N.N.* Pushkin i "moskovskie iunoshi": *okrug problemy genia* [Pushkin and the "Moscow Youths": on the Problem of Genius] // Pushkinskaia konferentsiia v Stenforde, 1999: *Materialy i issledovaniia* [Pushkin Conference at Stanford, 1999: Research materials]. Moskva, 2001. P. 54, 91–92. (In Russ.)).

²⁶ Vatsuro V.E. S. D.P. *Iz istorii literaturnogo byta pushkinskoi pory* [S. D.P. From the History of Literary Life of the Pushkin Time]. Moskva, 1989. (In Russ.)

the Arts, were included in the book by Oleg Proskurin *Literary Scandals of the Pushkin Era*; also the traces of Arzamasian poetics and polemics in the texts by Vasily Zhukovskii, Pyotr Vyazemskii and Alexander Pushkin were convincingly demonstrated in the works of Ilya Vinitskii, Natalia Mazur,²⁷ and others.

The correlation between the study of literary associations and the problems of everyday behavior, which traces its origin to Yuri Lotman's work on cultural semiotics, is manifested in the latest research on the Green Lamp society.²⁸ In a series of works written both individually and in co-authorship, Joe Peschio and Igor Pilshchikov, using, among other things, unpublished texts from the archives of the Green Lamp, demonstrated that "lampists" had followed the tradition of the French libertinage, which most convincingly explains the combination of political free thought with erotic (including homoerotic) frivolity in the texts and in the everyday behavior.²⁹ At the same time, the Green Lamp is regarded by researchers as a kind of a "libertine school" for young Pushkin, in whose everyday behavior and literary texts, traces of libertine "poetics" are also found.³⁰

Focus not only on the texts but also on the poetics of Pushkin's everyday behavior determined reflection on the social dimension of the literary environment (*literaturny byt*). In his recent work, Peschio proposed to distinguish three types of "communicative contexts" in which a literary text or everyday act could function in the Pushkin's era: the space of "domesticity", "inner" circle perceived as a private space — *society*, the noble society — and *state* service sphere, bureaucratic relations.³¹ The researcher uses the conventional distinction of these contexts to describe the literary and everyday phenomenon of a prank (*shalost'*), which presupposes a deliberately defiant transference of "domestic behavior" into public and/or official space. However, it seems that this distinction can be productive for describing the activities of literary circles and associations which, depending on the type of organization, are constantly present in the convergence zone of these spheres.

²⁷ Vinitskii I. Yu. Poeticheskaia semantika Zhukovskogo, ili Rassuzhdenie o vkuse i smysle "Ovsianogo kiselia" [Poetic Semantics of Zhukovskii, or Reflection on the Taste and Sense of "Oatmeal Jelly"] // *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*. 2003. No. 61. P. 119–152. (In Russ.); Mazur N.N. Maska neistovogo stikhotvortsia v "Evgenii Onegine": polemicheskie funktsii [Furious poet's mask in "Eugene Onegin": polemic functions] // *Pushkin i ego sovremenniki* [Pushkin and his contemporaries]. No. 5. P. 141–208. Sankt-Peterburg, 2009. (In Russ.)

²⁸ See above, note 19.

²⁹ This seemingly paradoxical feature of society caused contradictory research interpretations, ranging between "orgic" society (as defined by Pavel Annenkov) and a "filial branch" of the Union of Prosperity. For a brief overview of the Green Lamp controversy see: *Pilshchikov I. Aleksandr Pushkin mezhdu libertinazhem i dendizmom* [Alexander Pushkin Between Libertinage and Dandyism]. P. 38–44.

³⁰ On traces of libertinage in *Eugene Onegin* see: *Pilshchikov I. Aleksandr Pushkin mezhdu libertinazhem i dendizmom* [Alexander Pushkin between libertinage and dandyism]. P. 52–54, 55–58. (In Russ.); also: *Dobritsin A.A. Libertinskaia model' povedeniia i iazyk frantsuzskogo libertinazha v "Evgenii Onegine"* [Libertine model of behavior and the language of French libertinage in "Eugene Onegin"] // *Vremennik Pushkinskoi komissii* [Chronicle of the Pushkin committee]. No. 32. P. 145–170. Sankt-Peterburg, 2016. (In Russ.); *Nemirovskii I.V. Pushkin — liberten i prorok: Opyt rekonstruktsii publichnoi biografii* [Pushkin as a Libertine and a Prophet: An Attempt of Reconstruction of a Public Biography]. Moskva, 2018. (In Russ.)

³¹ *Peschio J. The Poetics of Impudence and Intimacy in the Age of Pushkin*. P. 16–17.

This sociological perspective of the development of the literary environment was also, in a broad sense, previously proposed in the works on literary associations. In the book *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin*, William Miles Todd III³² was apparently one of the first to apply the concept of the institutions of literature to Russian material: he proposed to consider the literature of the 1800s–1830s as a social institution or, more precisely, as a system of coexisting and competing institutions — patronage, friendly communities (circles and salons), literary almanacs and journals, professional or commercial literature. Todd describes these institutions and the social functions of literature they imply, using the communication model proposed in the classical article by Roman Jakobson. For each of them he identifies the *addresser* (the author), the *addressee* (the type of the reader), the *message* (literary texts of different genres), the *context* (social or ideological “reference point” of the literary text), the *code* (language and style), the *contact* (a method of presenting the message to the addressee).³³ In this perspective, a literary circle (and to a lesser extent a salon) turns out to be the space of equal communication, where the roles of the author and the reader “ideally merge”, and the code and the context are set by the “society”, which can mean both the “society of the chosen few” included in this circle or salon and the high society as a whole.³⁴

For Todd, such institutional arrangement demonstrating the autonomy of literature as being separate from the state is important since it reinforces the significance of society for all literary agents: society provides the *contact* between the author and the audience, the language of society largely determines the *code*, that is, the language of literary texts; finally, the life and ideology of society become a reference *context* for works of fiction, and all this together has an impact on the poetics of the *message*, which is demonstrated in the book by the example of *Eugene Onegin*, *A Hero of Our Time* and the *Dead Souls*.

The institutional approach seems to be productive, not only and perhaps not so much for describing poetics, but for studying the social role of various literary associations — in their correlation with other social institutions and with the state system, which significantly influenced the formation of the *public sphere* in the 19th century Russia. In this perspective, it is not “private” circles and salons that are of particular interest, but “official” societies that have a prescribed structure, disclosed principles of membership as they interact to a greater extent with the field of power. In the period under study, societies of this type played a significant role in the range of literary associations, such as the Colloquium of Amateurs of the Russian Word (1811–1816), the Free Society of Lovers of Letters, Sciences and the Arts (VOLSNIH, 1801–1826), the Free Society

³² *Todd III W.M. Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin: Ideology, Institutions, Narrative*. Harvard, 1986; Russian Translation: *Todd III W.M. Literatura i obshchestvo v epokhu Pushkina* [Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin] / Transl. from English by A. Yu. Mirolyubova. Sankt-Peterburg, 1996. (In Russ.). See also Definition of Literary Institutions Given in the Preface to the Latest Book: *Todd III W.M. Sotsiologiya literatury: ideologiya, instituty, narrative* [Sociology of Literature: Ideology, Institutions, Narrative]. Sankt-Peterburg, 2020. P. 8–9. (In Russ.)

³³ *Todd III W.M. Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin: Ideology, Institutions, Narrative*. P. 47–51.

³⁴ *Ibid.* P. 55–72.

of Lovers of Russian Literature (VOLRS, 1816–1825), originally called the Society of Education and Charity Competitors, The Society of Lovers of Russian Letters at Moscow University (1811–1930), etc.

These associations, of course, were not ignored by researchers, but their activities were consistently interpreted in ideological and political categories,³⁵ and often based on the specific viewpoints of individual members of societies. Thus, in Soviet historiography, the idea of the “reactionary” nature of Beseda was promoted, substantiated mainly by the political conservatism of Shishkov, and, on the contrary, the revolutionary-progressive and Decembrist reputation of VOLRS, which was confirmed by the personal participation of Kondraty Ryleev, Aleksandre Bestuzhev, and Fedor Glinka. Such interpretations, especially the history of VOLRS and VOLSNH, were outwardly convincing due to the rich factual material collected in the monographic works of Vasilii Bazanov³⁶ and Vladimir Orlov.³⁷ However, as shown by the new access to the archives of these societies, the selection of sources and facts was no less biased than their interpretation. The “monumental” early history of VOLSNH, which appeared in Orlov’s description as an arena of struggle between the “radical-democratic” wing of the “Radishchev followers” and the “liberal right” party of Dmitri Zazykov, was effectively and convincingly demythologized by Oleg Proskurin, based on materials from the VOLSNH archives and the analysis of its participants’ literary views.³⁸ An overview of the early history of VOLRS, which was not actually covered in the works of Bazanov, also made it possible to doubt both the established characteristics of this period in the history of society and the interpretation of its status.³⁹ The society, consistently seeking the royal approval and striving to gain the patronage of the Minister of Religious Affairs and Public Education Alexandre Golitsyn, does not fit too well into the idea of a “literary branch of the Union of Prosperity.”

Historical and literary works on societies of this type, published since the 1980s, have significantly clarified the understanding of their role in the literary and social fields. The activities of the Colloquium of Amateurs of the Russian Word (*Beseda liubitelei russkogo slova* or, simply, *Beseda*) were described in detail in the works of Mark Altshuller (see, first of all, his monograph, published by the “Ardis” in 1984 and

³⁵ Tynyanov objected against this mixture of historical, literary, and political features concerning the Beseda members and the “young Archaists” in his classical article “The Archaists and Pushkin” (1926) (*Tynyanov Yu.N. Pushkin i ego sovremenniki* [Pushkin and his Contemporaries]. Moskva, 1968. P. 25–26. (In Russ.)).

³⁶ *Bazanov V.G. Vol'noe obshchestvo liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti* [The Free Society of Lovers of Russian literature]. Petrozavodsk, 1949. (In Russ.); *Uchenaia Respublika* [The Republic of Letters]. Moskva, Leningrad, 1964. (In Russ.)

³⁷ *Orlov V. (Ed.). Poety-radishchevtsy; Vol'noe obshchestvo liubitelei slovesnosti, nauk i khudozhestv* [Poets — followers of Radishchev; The Free Society of Lovers of Letters, Sciences and the Arts]. Leningrad, 1935. (In Russ.); *Orlov V.N. Russkie prosvetiteli 1790–1800-kh gg.* [Russian enlighteners of the 1790s–1800s]. Moskva, 1950. (In Russ.)

³⁸ *Proskurin O.A. Literaturnye skandaly pushkinskoi epokhi* [Literary Scandals of the Pushkin era]. Moskva, 2000. P. 51–57. (In Russ.)

³⁹ See: *Bodrova A.S. K institutsional'noi istorii Vol'nogo obshchestva liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti* [On the Institutional History of the Free Society of Lovers of Russian literature] // *Pushkinskie chteniia v Tartu 6* [Pushkin’s Readings in Tartu 6]. Tartu, 2019. No. 1. Pushkin v krugu sovremennikov [Pushkin among his contemporaries]. P. 253–284. (In Russ.)

reprinted with addenda in 2007⁴⁰). A comprehensive analysis of literary and aesthetic position of the Beseda members (primarily Shishkov and Derzhavin), the specifics of their views on the value of literary society and communities — in the perspective of their personal and official biographies — are presented in the dissertation of Ekaterina Lyamina.⁴¹ Due to the investigations of Oleg Proskurin,⁴² the activities of the Free Society of Lovers of Letters, Sciences and the Arts were now established in historical and literary terms — both at the initial stage of its existence⁴³ and in a later period (1811–1813) when VOLSINH became a place of consolidation of anti-Shishkov forces and an arena of ardent literary and linguistic polemics. Another free society — the Free Society of Lovers of Russian Letters (VOLRS) — has recently attracted attention in connection with its publishing activity⁴⁴ or the role of the Society in the literary fate of its individual participants.⁴⁵

A conceptual study of the activities of official societies is impossible without expanding the source base, and important steps have also been taken in this direction. The Society of Lovers of Russian Letters at Moscow University had the privilege of a detailed description of its activities, including references to archival materials, as the subject of a thorough study by Raisa Kleimenova.⁴⁶ Another significant achievement in this regard was the publi-

⁴⁰ *Altshuller M.G.* Predtechi slavianofil'stva v russkoi literature (Obshchestvo "Beseda liubitelei russkogo slova") [Forerunners of Slavophilism in Russian literature (The Colloquium of Amateurs of the Russian Word)]. Ann Arbor, 1984. (In Russ.); *Altshuller M.G.* Beseda liubitelei russkogo slova: U istokov russkogo slavianofil'stva [The Colloquium of Amateurs of the Russian Word: At the Source of Russian Slavophilism]. 2nd ed., enlarged. Moskva, 2007. (In Russ.) Among new works on Beseda, one should note the proceedings of the conference devoted to the 200th anniversary of the society: *Morozova N.P.* (Ed.). "Beseda liubitelei russkogo slova". 200 let: Sb. nauch. statei [The Colloquium of Amateurs of the Russian Word. 200 years: A Collection of articles]. Sankt-Peterburg, 2013. (In Russ.)

⁴¹ *Lyamina E.E.* Obshchestvo "Beseda liubitelei russkogo slova": Avtoref. dis. ... kand. filol. Nauk [The Colloquium of Amateurs of the Russian Word: Abstract of PhD thesis in philology]. Moskva, 1995. (In Russ.)

⁴² See: *Proskurin O.A.* Literaturnye skandaly pushkinskoi epokhi [Literary Scandals of the Pushkin Era]. Moskva, 2000. P. 47–80, 116–151. (In Russ.)

⁴³ Important clarifications of the prehistory and early history of VOLSINH were made in the article by Andrei and Tatiana Kostin dedicated to the collection of poems *Idle Time* discovered in the library of the Kazan State University, which included unknown poems by Alexei Volkov and Vasily Popugaev: *Kostin A.A., Kostina T.V.* Stikhotvornyi sbornik "Prazdnoe vremia" (1798): K predystorii Vol'nogo obshchestva liubitelei slovesnosti, nauk i khudozhestv [The Collection of Poems "Idle time" (1798): On the Prehistory of the Free Society of Lovers of Letters, Sciences and the Arts] // XVIII vek [18th century]. Vol. 25. Sankt-Peterburg, 2008. P. 175–205. (In Russ.)

⁴⁴ *Ivanitskaya E.M.* Zhurnal "Sorevnovatel' prosveshcheniia i blagotvoreniiia" v istoriko-literaturnom kontekste 1820-kh gg. [Journal "Competitor of Education and Charity" in the Historical and Literary Context of the 1820s] // Vestnik RGGU. Ser. Literaturovedenie. Iazykoznanie. Kul'turologiia [Herald of RHSU. Series Literature Studies. Language studies. Cultural Studies]. 2012. No. 13 (93). P. 57–65. (In Russ.)

⁴⁵ *Polyakova A.A.* Tvorcheskaiia istoriia "Poezdki v Revel" A.A. Bestuzheva [History of creation of "A Trip to Revel" by A.A. Bestuzhev] // Russkaia literatura [Russian Literature]. 2019. No. 2. P. 68–78. (In Russ.); *Martynenko A.I.* E.A. Baratynskii i "Uchenaia Respublika": k istorii formirovaniia literaturnoi reputatsii poeta [E.A. Baratynskii and the Republic of Letters: on Formation of Baratynsky's Early Literary Reputation] // Pushkinskie chteniia v Tartu [Pushkin's Readings in Tartu]. [Vol.] 6. No. 2. Pushkin's Era. Tartu, 2020. P. 38–51 (In Russ.)

⁴⁶ *Kleimenova R.N.* Obshchestvo liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti, 1811–1930 [The Society of Lovers of Russian Letters at Moscow University, 1811–1930]. Moskva, 2002. (In Russ.); *Kleimenova R.N.* (Comp.) Pushkin i Obshchestvo liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti [Pushkin and the Society of Lovers of Russian Letters at Moscow University]. Moskva, 1999. (In Russ.); *Kleimenova R.N.* (Comp.) Gogol' i obshchestvo liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti [Gogol and the Society of Lovers of Russian Letters at Moscow University]. Moskva, 2005. (In Russ.); *Kleimenova R.N.* (Comp.) Lev Tolstoi i obshchestvo

cation of VOLSNIH archives materials undertaken by Aleksei Saveliev, Nikolai Nikolaev, and Andrei Sokolov in the framework of the digital project of the Scientific library of St. Petersburg State University “The Free Society of Lovers of Letters, Sciences and the Arts” (<http://www.library.spbu.ru/rus/Volsnx/>).⁴⁷ Due to this project, an extensive corpus of VOLSNIH protocols was introduced into scientific circulation, representing a chronicle of the society’s activities, periodicals of the VOLSNIH, and a publication of its participants’ works, like those by Aleksandre Vostokov and Mikhail Milonov. One may hope that this digital project will be continued — for example, most of the internal reviews of the texts recited in the Society remain unknown in the press, and they represent, as rightly noted, “an interesting source on one of the early periods in the formation of Russian literary critique”,⁴⁸ as well as many other documents from the Society’s archive.

The study of ideology (primarily the state ideology) as a “cultural system”⁴⁹ actively developing in the 1990s-2000s, and an interest for the broad topic “the Literature and the State” — in both the ideological and institutional perspectives — contributed to the opening of the boundaries of literary history and the “literary environment” issues, including in relation to the history of “official” societies. In this regard, the attention of both philologists and historians was attracted by a number of state ideologists whose activities in the early research tradition were clearly described with a certain bias, relying on the lifetime reputation, often exaggerated in the “liberal” pre-revolutionary and Soviet historiography. Among such important participants and/or patrons of literary societies are Alexandre Shishkov,⁵⁰ the founder of the Colloquium of Amateurs of

liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti [Leo Tolstoi and the Society of Lovers of Russian Letters at Moscow University]. Moskva, 2008. (In Russ.). Important bibliographic reference should also be noted: *Kleimenova R.N.* (Comp.) *Sistematicheskaja rospis' izdaniĭ Obshchestva liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti pri Moskovskom universitete, 1811–1930* [Systematic List of Publications of the Society of Lovers of Russian Letters at Moscow University, 1811–1930]. Moskva, 1981. (In Russ.)

⁴⁷ The purpose and aims of the project see: *Saveliev A.A.* *Arkhiv Vol'nogo obshchestva liubitelei slovesnosti, nauk i khudozhestv (1801–1826): opyt raskrytiia arkhivnogo fonda universitetskoi biblioteki* [Archives of The Free Society of Lovers of Letters, Sciences and the Arts (1801–1826): an attempt of discovering the archival fund of the university library] // *Universitetskie biblioteki: proshloe, nastoiashchee, budushchee* [University libraries: past, present, future]. Sankt-Peterburg, 2003. P. 123–129. (In Russ.)

⁴⁸ *Vol'noe obshchestvo liubitelei slovesnosti, nauk i khudozhestv (1801–1826): istoricheskaja i bibliograficheskaja spravka* [The Free Society of Lovers of Letters, Sciences and the Arts (1801–1826): historical and bibliographic reference]. <http://www.library.spbu.ru/rus/Volsnx/istoria.html#strukt> (access date: 31.10.2020). (In Russ.)

⁴⁹ A brief overview on the history of the study and principles of describing ideology in different scientific systems, see: *Zorin A.L.* *Literatura i ideologija* [Literature and ideology] // *Zorin A.L. Koromia dvuglavogo orla: Russkaja literatura i gosudarstvennaia ideologija v poslednei treti XVIII — pervoi treti XIX veka* [Feeding the Double-Headed Eagle: Russian Literature and State Ideology in the Last Third of the 18th — First Third of the 19th centuries]. Moskva, 2001. P. 9–30. (In Russ.)

⁵⁰ See first of all works of the 1980s-2000s by Boris Uspenskiy and Viktor Zhivov, Mark Altshuller, Oleg Proskurin, Andrei Zorin et al. included in the “personal” bibliographic index: *Korovin V.L., Strizhev A.N.* (Comp.) *Aleksandr Semenovich Shishkov (1754–1841): materialy k bibliografii* [Alexandr Semyonovich Shishkov (1754–1841): materials for bibliography] // *Literaturovedcheskii zhurnal* [Literary Journal]. 2011. No. 28. P. 150–209. (In Russ.). Out of the latest works, and specifically those concerning Shishkov’s activities in the Colloquium of Amateurs of the Russian Word, see: *Kamchatnov A.M.* *Russkii drevoslov Aleksandra Shishkova: lingvisticheskoe nasledie A.S. Shishkova v nauchnom i kul'turnom kontekste epokhi* [Russian historical and Derivational Dictionary of Alexandr Shishkov: Linguistic Heritage of A.S. Shishkov in the Scientific and Cultural Contexts of the Period]. Sankt-Peterburg, 2018. (In Russ.)

the Russian Word and a long-term president of the Russian Academy; Alexandre Golitsyn,⁵¹ an honorary member of the Beseda, the trustee of VOLRS, the founder and the president of the Russian Bible Society; Sergei Uvarov,⁵² an important member of the Arzamas Society of Obscure Men, as well as an honorary member of Beseda, VOLSNIH, and VOLRS.

The works devoted to these figures and other representatives of “Russian conservatism” reconstructed the European and Russian genesis and context of their views, and clarified the connection between their political projects of different periods and literary or near-literary activities. In this way, they discussed the problem of correlation between the state policy, public institutions (including associations of various types), and the literary production. In this respect, the monograph by Maria Mayofis is indicative,⁵³ due to its extensive material employed to demonstrate the “political dimension” of the activities of Arzamas, the isomorphism of literary, educational, and ideological projects of its participants, for whom “the construction of the structure of Russian literature and the state was perceived as an aggregated and common cause”.⁵⁴ This example is all the more striking since Arzamas was commonly interpreted as a classic literary circle, jocular and informal one, entirely belonging to the sphere of literature and it was going beyond this sphere that in 1817–1818 led to an internal split and then to the termination of the society activities. At the same time, the value of the “Appeal to Europe...” is not limited to clarifying or revising the history of Arzamas: a detailed reconstruction of the political, ideological, and social context of the second half of the 1810s undertaken in the book makes one look at the activities of other societies and circles and problematize their strategies in relation to both state institutions and the literary field.

A comparison of literary associations with other public organizations and associations, which in that period were by no means reduced to secret political societies of future Decembrists, helps to clarify their institutional specifics. In such a broad context, literary societies, salons, and circles are

⁵¹ See: *Martin A. Romantics, Reformers, Reactionaries: Russian conservative thought and politics in the reign of Alexander I.* DeKalb, 1997; *Minakov A. Yu. Russkii konservativizm v pervoi chetverti XIX veka* [Russian Conservatism in the First Quarter of the 19th century]. Voronezh, 2011. P. 284–330. (In Russ.); *Nazarenko E. Yu. Kniaz’ A.N. Golitsyn v obshchestvenno-politicheskoi i religioznoi istorii Rossii pervoi poloviny XIX veka* [Prince A.N. Golitsyn in Social, Political and Religious History of Russia of Early 19th Century]. Voronezh, 2014. (In Russ.); *Kondakov Yu. E. Kniaz’ A.N. Golitsyn: pridvornyi, chinovnik, khristianin: monografiia* [Prince A.N. Golitsyn: Courtier, Official, Christian: Monograph]. Sankt-Peterburg, 2014. (In Russ.)

⁵² See: *Whittaker C.H. Graf Uvarov i ego vremia* [Count Sergei Semenovich Uvarov and His Time]. Moskva, 1999. (In Russ.); *Zorin A.L. Kormia dvuglavogo orla: Russkaia literatura i gosudarstvennaia ideologiia v poslednei treti XVIII — pervoi treti XIX veka* [Feeding the Double-Headed Eagle: Russian Literature and State Ideology in the Last Third of the 18th — First Third of the 19th Centuries]. Moskva, 2001. P. 339–374. (In Russ.); *Mayofis M.L. Vozzvanie k Evrope: Literaturnoe obshchestvo “Arzamas” i rossiiskii modernizatsionnyi projekt 1815–1818 godov* [Appeal to Europe: Arzamas Literary Society and the Russian Modernization Project of 1815–1818]. Moskva, 2008. (In Russ.) (according to the index); *Mayofis M.L., Velizhev M.B. Uvarov Sergei Semenovich // Russkie pisateli. 1800–1917. Biograficheskii slovar’* [Russian Writers, 1800–1917: A Biographical Dictionary]. Vol. 6. Moskva, Sankt-Peterburg, 2019. P. 364–369. (In Russ.)

⁵³ *Mayofis M.L. Vozzvanie k Evrope: Literaturnoe obshchestvo “Arzamas” i rossiiskii modernizatsionnyi projekt 1815–1818 godov* [Appeal to Europe: The Arzamas Literary society and the Russian modernization project of 1815–1818]. Moskva, 2008. (In Russ.)

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* P. 30.

reviewed in the monograph by Vera Bokova,⁵⁵ which, contrary to the title, contains basic information not only on secret societies (although a substantial part of the book is devoted to the Union of Prosperity and related societies and associations) but also on various scholarly and friendly circles, charitable and religious associations, provincial societies and associations.⁵⁶

With a wide scope of the material, Bokova's work is aimed more at reviewing and classification ("to bring together the maximum amount of available information about public associations, if possible, describe them or at least register the fact of their existence...", "to classify public associations, identify their typical features", to highlight "internal ideological, organizational, and practical trends in the development of associations"⁵⁷) rather than analysis and interpretation — and as a reference book, this is perhaps the most balanced and thorough work available today. It is important, however, that Masonic lodges, national patriotic circles, as well as scholarly and professional associations (such as the Free Economic Society, the Society of Russian History and Antiquities), remained outside the scope of the monograph.

A different institutional perspective for the study of literary societies, both official and "domestic", was outlined in the dissertation research and in related numerous publications by Liudmila Rogushina.⁵⁸ In spite of archaic methodological language and excessive trust in some Soviet ideological constructs, they are valuable for the new material, including archival findings, and the very formulation of the problem. Various educational and charitable societies of the Alexander era are viewed as social institutions ("forms of organizing public life") in their relations with "government structures", in other words, as a form of interaction between the society and the state. Describing, first of all, the organizational and structural features of various associations and characterizing their relations with various institutions of power, Rogushina distinguishes three types of societies: 1) "societies founded on special grounds" (that is, those under the patronage of the monarch or members of the imperial family and enjoying state financial and organizational support); 2) societies opened with the royal approval ("free", voluntary societies, which, however, could also

⁵⁵ *Bokova V.M.* Epokha tainykh obshchestv: Russkie obshchestvennye ob"edineniia pervoi treti XIX v. [The Era of Secret Societies: Russian Public Associations of the First Third of the 19th Century]. Moskva, 2003. (In Russ.)

⁵⁶ Scientific and literary societies actively developing in different cities of the empire (first of all, those with a large number of universities) in the 1790s-1820s often became the subject of study in recent historiography — see, for instance: *Aristov V.V.* Pervoe literaturnoe obshchestvo Povolzh'ia (K istorii Kazanskogo obshchestva liubitelei otechestvennoi slovesnosti v 1806–1818 gg.) [The First Literary Society of the Volga region (To the history of Kazan Society of Lovers of Russian Literature in 1806–1818)]. Kazan, 1992. (In Russ.); *Zhiglii Yu. V.* Kazanskoe obshchestvo liubitelei otechestvennoi slovesnosti, 1806–1853 (iz istorii literaturnogo kraevedeniia): Uchebno-metodicheskoe posobie dlia studentov-filologov [Kazan Society of Lovers of Russian Literature, 1806–1853 (from the history of literary study of local lore): Teaching aid for students of philology]. Kazan, 2012. (In Russ.)

⁵⁷ *Bokova V.M.* Epokha tainykh obshchestv: Russkie obshchestvennye ob"edineniia pervoi treti XIX v. [The Era of Secret Societies: Russian Public Associations of the First Third of the 19th Century]. Moskva, 2003. P. 5. (In Russ.)

⁵⁸ *Rogushina L.G.* Blagotvoritel'nye i prosvetitel'skie obshchestva Sankt-Peterburga v pervoi chetverti XIX veka. Dis. ... kand. ist. nauk [Saint Petersburg Charitable and Educational Societies in the First Quarter of the 19th Century. Dis. ... cand. ist. sciences]. Sankt-Peterburg, 2002. (In Russ.); the valuable materials, including the archive findings, put together in the dissertation, are published — sadly, with no additions or changes, — in the short papers in the "Herzen Readings".

apply for patronage or funding to the patron or directly to the monarch); 3) “informal” societies.⁵⁹ The author focuses on the first two types: the “official” literary associations, such as Beseda, VOLSNIH and VOLRS and those “free societies”, which, however, managed to achieve the highest approval, appear to be under consideration. Study of their organizational features, their interaction with various state institutions (such as the Ministry of Public Education, the Committee of Ministers, the imperial court) allowed Rogushina, as in the case of other public societies (St. Petersburg Scientific Pharmaceutical Society, the Society of Botanical and Natural Sciences, Free Society of Establishment of Schools of Lancasterian System), to come to a reasoned conclusion about a much closer connection of this social institution with state power and politics.

Another important context outlined in Rogushina’s work is the juxtaposition of educational and charitable societies, all the more justified since many scholars and literary associations (for example, VOLRS) included “charity” in their statutory activities and contributed to the development of various philanthropic projects. Study of this problem also seems promising from the point of view of the history of philanthropy, which has been actively developed in recent years, with the use of Russian materials as well (cf., for example, the pioneering works of Adele Lindenmeyr⁶⁰ and the synthesis research of Galina Ulyanova).⁶¹

This expansion of the institutional context allows to connect the material of literary associations with a broader and a more relevant socio-historical problem: the definition and description of the “public sphere”, the history of its formation and its role in the establishment of civil society, whose institutional core, according to Jürgen Habermas and his followers, are voluntary associations. This issue, especially in relation to the Russian situation, has caused heated debates in the historical, sociological, and political research of recent decades.⁶² The interest in the history of the formation of the Russian public sphere has led to the growth of research on specific institutions of this type aimed at generalizing the specifics of the imperial experience of social life,⁶³ a distinctive feature of which was a strong state influence and, as a consequence, more active interaction or even integration of many public associations with state structures. Due to their intermediate status, associations of this type — unlike “private” literary circles or secret societies and, in a broader view, the “revolutionary movement” — were the least studied until recently.

⁵⁹ Ibid. P. 54–55.

⁶⁰ Lindenmeyr A. *Voluntary Associations and the Russian Autocracy: The Case of Private Charity* (The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies. No. 807). Pittsburgh, 1990; Lindenmeyr A. *Poverty is Not a Vice: Charity, Society and the State in Imperial Russia*. Princeton, 1996.

⁶¹ Ulyanova G.N. *Blagotvoritel’nost’ v Rossiiskoi Imperii: XIX — nachalo XX veka* [Charity in the Russian Empire: 19th — early 20th centuries]. Moskva, 2005. (In Russ.)

⁶² A summary of different points of view on the concept of “civil society” applied to the history of pre-revolutionary Russia, see, for instance: Bradley J. *Voluntary Associations in Tsarist Russia*. Cambridge, Mass., 2009. P. 6–8 (see the main sources on the topic in the notes to this section); Tumanova A.S. *Vvedenie* [Introduction] // Tumanova A.S. (Ed.), *Samoorganizatsiia rossiiskoi obshchestvennosti v poslednei treti XVIII — nachale XX v.* [Self-Organization of Russian Public Sphere in the Last Third of the 18th — early 20th Centuries]. Moskva, 2011. P. 6–9. (In Russ.)

⁶³ See first of all the joint monograph Tumanova A.S. (Ed.), *Samoorganizatsiia rossiiskoi obshchestvennosti v poslednei treti XVIII — nachale XX v.* [Self-Organization of Russian General Public in the Last Third of the 18th — early 20th Centuries]. Moskva, 2011. (In Russ.)

Meanwhile, it is these institutions that, according to the leading researcher of this field Joseph Bradley provided the experience of self-organization, social interaction, setting and solving socially significant problems, thereby contributing to the formation of civil society, throughout the 19th century and in the pre-revolutionary years.⁶⁴

Bradley emphasizes the large number and the developed status of the system of public organizations in pre-revolutionary Russia (according to his calculations, by the beginning of the 20th century there were about 10 thousand of them in Russia⁶⁵). Also, by the example of a number of voluntary associations (the Free Economic Society, the Moscow Agricultural Society, the Russian Geographical Society etc.) he shows the multidimensional nature of interaction (often mutually beneficial) between voluntary associations and the state, their role in shaping the state agenda in relation to science and education, and, at the same time, the distrust of the authorities towards any public associations. It is essential that all these features of the interaction of social institutions with the institutions of power are not specific to Russia. Drawing on European material (first of all, the history of the scholarly and educational societies of France and Germany in the 18th-19th centuries), Bradley demonstrates that “the mixture of nurture and suspicion on the part of the authorities, the concession system and the requirement of government permission and registration for an association to have a legal status, the fear that seemingly innocent activities were a cover for politics, and the monitoring of societies’ activities by the police — all were Europe-wide features of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century associational life”.⁶⁶ Bradley’s research, combining an in-depth analysis of specific material with a wide contextualization (including European) and supported by historical institutional interpretation, is an important model for describing the activities of literary associations.

Such a description of literary societies seems all the more necessary since they have attracted less attention of social historians. Bradley hardly touches upon literary associations in his works. In the monograph *Self-Organization in the Russian Public Sphere in the Last Third of the 18th — Early 20th Centuries* “literary and artistic associations” are described superficially, often with outdated sources and only on the material of the late 19th — early 20th centuries.⁶⁷ At the same time, reliance on the language of institutional description developed within this discipline will make it possible to embed the history of literary associations in the history of the “public sphere”, and on the other hand, it will allow to depart from the ideologically unacceptable Soviet sociological language in the history of literature.

The institutional approach seems all the more promising since it allows viewing the activities of various participants in the literary process both within the framework of literature itself and in their interaction

⁶⁴ See: *Bradley J.* Voluntary associations in Tsarist Russia. P. 1–5; Russian translation, with helpful introductory article by A.S. Tumanova: *Bradley J.* Obshchestvennye organizatsii v tsarskoi Rossii: nauka, patriotizm i grazhdanskoe obshchestvo [Public Organizations in Tsarist Russia: Science, Patriotism and Civil society]. Moskva, 2012. P. 25–35. (In Russ.)

⁶⁵ *Bradley J.* Voluntary Associations in Tsarist Russia. P. 1.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* P. 35.

⁶⁷ See the corresponding section: *Tumanova A.S.* (Ed.). Samoorganizatsiia rossiiskoi obshchestvennosti v poslednei treti XVIII — nachale XX v. [Self-Organization of Russian Public Sphere in the Last Third of the 18th — early 20th Centuries]. Moskva, 2011. P. 432–467. (In Russ.)

with other institutions, primarily with the state and with the emerging public sphere. Aimed at the description of social interactions, it enables researches to analyze various connections (literary, friendly, official, etc.) both within the society and beyond it (the interaction of the institution and individual participants with government bodies, censorship, etc.). This approach will make it possible to describe various aspects of the activities of literary societies and their interconnection, as well as to trace the evolution of this type of public associations.

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