

Auch wenn die Namensgebung erst zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts in den USA erfolgte, reichen in Europa die ersten Ansätze der Ideengeschichte viel tiefer in die Vergangenheit zurück. Im Laufe der letzten knapp einhundert Jahre erlebte die ideengeschichtliche Forschung dabei ihre Höhen und Tiefen, wurde als interdisziplinäre Praxis mal mit Begeisterung, mal mit Reserve aufgenommen, ihre Begriffe immer wieder aufs Neue definiert und in manchen Sprachkontexten sogar durch neue ersetzt. Heutzutage – und neuerlich mit besonderer Überzeugung – wird verstärkt versucht zu bestimmen, was sie „eigentlich“ sein soll.

Bevor man aber zu einer Übereinkunft kommen kann, was die Ideengeschichte sei und was sie in der Zukunft *nicht* sein soll, ist es nötig, die Vielfalt der Traditionen dieses immer wieder umgedachten Begriffs anhand ausgewählter Beispiele in einer Zwischenbilanz zu würdigen.

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KOWALEWICZ (HRSG.) · FORMEN DER IDEENGESCHICHTE

VESTIGIA IDEARUM HISTORICA
BEITRÄGE ZUR IDEENGESCHICHTE EUROPAS

FORMEN DER IDEENGESCHICHTE

HERAUSGEGEBEN VON MICHEL HENRI KOWALEWICZ

mentis

Kowalewicz (Hrsg.) · Formen der Ideengeschichte

VESTIGIA IDEARUM HISTORICA
BEITRÄGE ZUR IDEENGESCHICHTE EUROPAS

Herausgegeben von Michel Henri Kowalewicz und Riccardo Campa

Band 2

Michel Henri Kowalewicz (Hrsg.)

Formen der Ideengeschichte

mentis
MÜNSTER

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


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Vestigia Idearum Historica
 Beiträge zur Ideengeschichte Europas

Dem neuen Forschungszentrum für Ideengeschichte an der Jagiellonen Universität Krakau, History of Ideas Research Centre at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, liegt die Überzeugung zugrunde, dass die Ideengeschichte nach wie vor für alle akademischen Disziplinen und überhaupt für Kultur und Gesellschaft von großer Bedeutung ist: Sie dient dem besseren Verständnis der eigenen Gegenwart, deren Kultur und Denkweisen bestimmten Traditionen aufrufen und die deshalb nicht aus sich selbst verständlich sind. Nicht sind wir Europäer, weil wir auf einem bestimmten Territorium wohnen und weil die Zeitgeschichte über neuere europäische Verträge berichten kann, sondern weil die europäische Kultur durch bestimmte Grundgedanken und Einstellungen geprägt ist. Deren ausdrückliche Aneignung und Stellungnahme ist nur über den Umweg über ihre Geschichte möglich: Ideengeschichte durchleuchtet unsere geistig-kulturellen Voraussetzungen und kann dadurch zu begründeter Affirmation und Kritik führen – nicht nur zur Kritik tradiertter Ideen, sondern auch der gegenwärtigen Situation, die oft erst vor dem Hintergrund früherer Überzeugungen und Leitgedanken ihre Mängel zeigt. Während die historische Forschung sich zunehmend spezialisiert, werden Untersuchungen nötig, welche gemeinsame Voraussetzungen und verbindende Gedanken aufdecken und so interdisziplinäres Arbeiten begünstigen – und auch gerade dies ermöglichen Studien zur Ideengeschichte, die häufig auf mehrere Disziplinen gleichzeitig zurückgreifen müssen. Wegen dieser Fruchtbarkeit ideengeschichtlicher Forschungen bringt das Zentrum hiermit auch eine neue Buchreihe auf den Weg.

Allerdings ist der Begriff der Ideengeschichte inzwischen leider konturlos geworden. Nachdem Lovejoys Forschungsprogramm, das auf der Annahme konstanter *unit-ideas* beruhte, durch die historische Forschung eher widerlegt als sinnvoll erwiesen wurde, kann mit dem Begriff der Ideengeschichte jedwede Untersuchung aus dem Bereich der Geistesgeschichte bezeichnet werden. Demgegenüber versucht die neue Forschungsstelle, der Ideengeschichte wieder ein etwas schärferes Profil zu geben. Ideen sind für sie Gedanken, Vorstellungen und Phantasiebilder, die verschiedene Ausdrucksgestalten haben können: Sie manifestieren sich vor allem in der Sprache, aber auch in nicht-sprachlichen Medien, ja auch in Handlungen, Riten und Gebräuchen. Deshalb tun sie sich auch nicht immer unmittelbar kund, sondern liegen zuweilen bestimmten kulturellen Phänomenen nur zugrunde, um dann auch ihre sprachliche Bezeichnung zu finden. In dieser Weise fällt die Ideengeschichte weder mit der Begriffsgeschichte (*history of concepts*) noch mit der allgemeinen Geistesgeschichte (*intellectual history*) zusammen. Denn jene

creation and re-creation. Bearing the ark, this temporary island meant salvation, preservation and future but it also established the ark as vestige, trace and memory as, in the Latin etymology of ark, *arca* connected with the notion of containing.⁶⁰

Containing, summing up, enlarging, and opening, are issues that characterize space.

For Montaigne, the opening of the world, which he develops in “L’Apologie de Raymond Sebond”, reflected the opening of the world of the intellect, the possibility of questioning, controversy and change.⁶¹ Montaigne’s ideas, as he himself predicted, gave way to other patterns and ideas. What today, however, seems a preoccupation of geography and sociology—an idea exposed by Jean Viard in *La Dérive des territoires*⁶²—is the limit, the leveling of the world expressed as a global economic reality, a world of closure and uniformity, excluding man and rejecting him in a multiplicity of *heterotopias*, an idea already developed by medievalist Paul Zumthor at the end of his book *La Mesure du monde*.

Such a position is also vindicated by Ricœur, particularly in relation to *utopia*. Islands often appear in utopian systems that were rooted in the humanist hope of better prospects for mankind, which may explain why these texts were written in pre-Reformation or Reformation times, however ironical their texts may have been and however well aware of the illusion of *utopia* their authors may have been.

Idealistic as he may sound, Jean Viard seems to have faith that ideas and creation may be an answer, may still be what he calls “an open territory”,⁶³ probably as creative, open, “there”, both as close and meaningfully distant, as welcoming as Baudelaire’s “Invitation au voyage”, inviting to an imaginary space with no precise location, far from reality, where “Le monde s’endort / Dans une chaude lumière”.⁶⁴

60 In Latin, *arca* implies containing and covers a range of meanings from coffer, coffin, to cell.

61 Montaigne: *Œuvres complètes* (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade), ed. by A. Thibaudet/M. Rat, introd. by M. Rat, Paris: Gallimard 1962, ch. XII *Essais* (Apologie de Raymond Sebond), p. 555: “Les Géographes de ce temps ne faillent pas d’asseurer que meshuy tout est trouvé et que tout est veu [...]. Scavoir mon, si Ptolomée s’y est trompé autrefois sur les fondemens de sa raison, et si ce ne seroit pas sottise de me fier maintenant à ceux que ceuxcy en disent, et s’il n’est pas plus vray-semblable que ce grand corps que nous appelons le monde, est chose bien autre que nous ne jugeons”.

62 J. Viard: *La Dérive des territoires*, pref. by E. Morin, Le Paradou: Actes Sud 1981, pp. 92–96; p. 160.

63 “Un territoire ouvert”, *ibid.*, p. 160.

64 “The world falls asleep/In a warm glow of light”.

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SOME RULES OF
HISTORIOGRAPHICAL METHOD:
THE CONCEPTS OF
“ENLIGHTENMENT” AND “SOCIETY”
AS APPLIED TO
THE RUSSIAN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY
OF THE LATE 18TH – EARLY 19TH CENTURIES

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent years have seen a marked increase in the number of Russian experts in the field of intellectual history and political theory who are relying in their work on the latest achievements of the history of ideas in the West. In particular, it is not uncommon today that Russian intellectual historians make reference to the Cambridge school of intellectual history in the vein of Quentin Skinner, as well as to that of conceptual history and historical semantics in the vein of Reinhart Koselleck. In general, however, the community of Russian historians remains fairly conservative. The approaches and language used by them most often either go back to the Soviet historiography, or manifest an attempt to return to the old, pre-revolutionary Russian historiographical tradition, which look quite archaic today. This paper examines the need for the further epistemological renovation of Russian intellectual history and political theory, as well as for new research paradigms and languages, which would be more adequate for the realities of the contemporary world. I will suggest some rules for the historiographic method, which could contribute to such a renovation, and I will illustrate their heuristic capabilities with a particular example. The paper will be focused on the concepts of the “Enlightenment” and “society” as applied to the Russian intellectual history of the late 18th – early 19th centuries. In my opinion, when it comes to studying the Enlightenment, the task of epistemological renovation of Russian historiography is at the moment both of scholarly and civic importance.

The origins of civil solidarity and the value of individual rights, to the extent that they are characteristic of the modern Western world, are in the philosophical, socio-political and moral thought of the European Enlightenment. The history of Russian culture also has its own Enlightenment movement, which was an integrated part of the pan-European Enlightenment phenomenon. However, for a number of historical reasons, its influence on modern Russian culture and socio-political activity turned out to be less significant than its role in the life of West European societies.

This essay is an attempt to demonstrate the capabilities of the genealogical research method (“genealogical” in the vein of Michel Foucault¹), by focusing on several forms of Russian political, social and moral thought characteristic of the Russian Enlightenment. I will try to briefly analyze the origins and usage of a number of key concepts of this form of thought in the texts of the period, including not only the notion of “society”, but also those of other key concepts, like “civil society”, “the people”, “nation”, “republic”, “the social”, “the civil”, “the public”. I will take a closer look at the historical period when the word “society” (*общество*) was introduced both into literary and spoken Russian (last third of the 18th – early 19th centuries) as associated, on the one hand, with the idea of the social contract, which was common for European political thought of the 18th century, and, on the other hand, with the main topics of the European republican tradition. At the same time, this period of Russian history sees the beginning of the development of modern Russian socio-political language.

The main subject of this study is not simply a chronology of the meaning of words over the course of Russian intellectual history (“society” in particular) in a fixed period of time. Rather, this study will present an examination of the *Russian Enlightenment style of thought*. The Enlightenment movement will be viewed—in accordance with the established intellectual tradition—as a socio-cultural phenomenon, whose chronological framework does not match that of any given century or reign.² The tradition that I am relying on considers the European

Enlightenment as an emancipatory project (in the spheres of both thought and public life), whose implementation becomes possible due to the literary and political *public spheres* taking shape in European societies in the 17th–19th centuries.

2. RUSSIAN ENLIGHTENMENT: EMANCIPATORY PROJECT OR STATE MYTHOLOGY? THREE MEANINGS OF THE CONCEPT OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Is it fair to consider the Russian Enlightenment as a truly emancipatory project? Historians studying Russian culture of the 18th century often give a negative answer, arguing that, unlike the Enlightenment in Western Europe, which developed in parallel with the gradual waning of absolute monarchy, in Russia it served to strengthen the autocracy. In this respect, the view held by Victor Zhivov, one of the greatest authorities on the history of Russian culture in the 18th century, is revealing. Zhivov believes that in Russia, the Enlightenment was in fact nothing more than an ideological justification for a new absolutist and centralized state, as during Catherine’s reign it actually turned into an official state ideology (“guardianship”, in Kant’s words) and strengthened the state’s control over public thought and more generally, over culture. In Zhivov’s opinion, the Russian Enlightenment was not in fact an emancipatory movement (or, in Kant’s words, “the human being’s emergence from his self-incurred minority”³), but rather an element of state mythology, a “Petersburg mirage”. Thus, while in 18th century France, culture began to free itself from state control and “aspired to lead the way”, the opposite processes were taking place in Russia:

When answering the question “Was ist Aufklärung?”, Kant defines the Enlightenment as parting with mankind’s immaturity, a parting which strictly distinguishes between the spheres of subordination and free thought (see M. Foucault: *Qu’est-ce que les Lumières?*, *op. cit.*). The culture of the European Enlightenment is obviously part of the latter sphere, and the accompanying process can be called the “emancipation of culture”: getting ahead of the state, culture rids itself of state-set limitations and acquires autonomy and sustainability. Nothing like that took place in the early 18th century Russia, the Russia of Feofan Prokopovich and Antiokh Kantemir. [...] While in Western Europe, the Enlightenment marked the old age of absolutism, whereby the latter is offered to sign a constraining contract with the free mind (see M. Foucault: *ibid.*), in Russia the same Enlightenment is the childhood of autocracy, within which the monarch, like a young god, presents himself in

1 On genealogy as a form of historical and critical work see M. Foucault: *Nietzsche, la généalogie, l’histoire*. In: *id.: Dits et écrits*. Paris: Gallimard 1994, vol. 2, pp. 136–156. See also *id.: L’usage des plaisirs*. Paris: Gallimard 1984, pp. 9–19.

2 When it comes to the concept of the Enlightenment, I am working within the Kantian critical tradition in contemporary social and political theory; see: I. Kant: *Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?* (1784). See also: Foucault: *Qu’est-ce que les Lumières?* In: *id.: Dits et écrits*. Paris: Gallimard 1994, vol. 4, pp. 562–578; J. Habermas: *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*. Neuwied: H. Luchterhand Verlag 1962; R. Chartier: *Public Sphere: Eighteenth-Century History*. In: *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, ed. by N. Smelser/P. Baltes, Amsterdam: Elsevier 2001, pp. 12590–12594; *id.: Les origines culturelles de la Révolution française*. Paris: Seuil, 1990). On Russian Enlightenment in this perspective, see В. Каплун: *Что такое Просвещение? – Рождение публичной сферы и публичной политики в России*, в кн.: *Публичное пространство, гражданское общество и власть: опыт развития и взаимодействия*/под ред. А. Ю. Сунгурова и др., Москва: Российская ассоциация политической науки/РОССПЭН 2008, с. 333–345.[V. Kaploun: *What*

is Enlightenment? – Birth of the Public Sphere and Public Politics in Russia. In: *Public Space, Civil Society and Power: Experience of Development and Interaction*, ed. by A. Sungurov (et al.), pp. 333–345].

3 See Kant: *An answer to the question: What is enlightenment?* In: *id.: Practical Philosophy*, ed. by M. J. Gregor, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996, p. 11.

the apotheosis of absolute power [...] This is exactly how the culture of the Enlightenment is created in Russia. It is primarily a mythological enterprise of state power. Russian Enlightenment is a Petersburg mirage.⁴

According to Victor Zhivov, in Russian empire the Enlightenment was a state instrument and thus used to control culture rather than for its emancipation, and for this reason the real emancipation of thought in Russia only became possible after the phenomenon of the Enlightenment ended. Here, the Enlightenment enslaved public thought rather than set it free:

Because the culture of Russian Enlightenment was, unlike French, the state culture, a direct embodiment of the Russian version of state mythology, the end of this epoch gained extra significance here. In Russia, Enlightenment tied culture, both secular and spiritual, fast together with the state. This profound generic connection was quite outstanding even in the beginning of Catherine's reign... [...] Therefore, the end of Enlightenment epoch was associated in Russia with emancipation of culture, and here Russia was a complete opposite of France.⁵

While Catherine herself contributed to the rise of the Enlightenment (in particular, through contributing to journal publications and, more generally, to the development of the public sphere—for instance, by founding the first Russian satirical magazine “*Vs'akaya vs'achina*” [All Sorts of Miscellany], she did so only to better control and direct the processes of its development. For reasons such as these, the Enlightenment and free thought became incompatible, and emancipation of thought could only begin after the epoch of the Enlightenment had come to an end:

In the 1750-s, when Catherine was reading the Encyclopaedists, preparing to present Russia with a new image of an enlightened ruler, the educated elite, to whom alone the enlightened declarations could be addressed, was so unsubstantial, that it was not only possible to follow the train of thoughts of its every member, but also to control it. As early as in the 1760-s, the social parameters of secular education changed substantially. [...] Catherine does not give in at once, she is obviously still hoping to bring order into the not too numerous ranks of her educated subjects by starting *Vs'akaya vs'achina* in 1769, but the task turned out much more difficult than the conquest of Crimea. The society turned out not obedient enough and kept taking their own, unexpected ways. This was what constituted emancipation of culture.⁶

4 В. Живов: *Язык и культура в России XVIII века*. Москва: Языки русской культуры 1996, с. 422–424 [V. Zhivov: *Language and Culture in 18th Century Russia*, pp. 422–424].

5 *Ibid.*

6 *Ibid.*, p. 426.

At the same time, according to Zhivov, the end of the Enlightenment Age in Russia and, consequently, the beginning of the emancipation of public thought, coincides, with the final period of Catherine's reign, that is, with the moment when Catherine's government took a turn from progressive reforms to conservative policy and police repressions:

The emancipation of culture meant that its development was reaching beyond the mythology framework, growing into the reality of Russian life and becoming impossible to control. Consequently, the government policy was becoming more conservative. Closing down of free publishing houses, the new role of censorship, Fonvizin's disgrace and the arrests of Novikov and Radishchev were some of the manifestations of the new state of affairs.⁷

Although Zhivov's description draws a vivid picture of the interaction between public thought and government during the 18th century, I believe it also contains a conceptual discrepancy, which is characteristic and quite common for Russian cultural historians of the time. In my opinion, in describing the end of the Enlightenment Age in Russia, Victor Zhivov is, in fact, unwittingly giving us a very distinct description of its actual beginning.

From my perspective, Zhivov's view is an implicit mix of three different approaches to the Enlightenment phenomenon, and, as a consequence, three different ways of understanding this concept: the formalistic historical approach the Enlightenment as a chronological period, the 18th century (or the 18th century up to the French Revolution), the traditional approach in terms of the history of ideas (the Enlightenment as an ideology, or as a corpus of politico-philosophical concepts) and the approach of modern critical social and political theory in its post-Kantian version (the Enlightenment as an emancipatory process associated with the struggle for what Kant called the liberty of the “public use of reason” and to the emergence of new public spheres in European countries – first in the literary, and later the political field). If we focus on the third meaning of the word “Enlightenment” (which is, in fact, the way the Enlightenment is understood by Zhivov, who cites the works of Kant and Foucault), then it did, indeed, begin to develop at the time of Catherine's reign. So Catherine's gradual transition to conservative policy at the end of her reign is, in fact, a symptom of its actual development.

It seems to me, therefore, that it would be more correct to say that Russia also witnessed the Enlightenment as an emancipatory process, but here this process—in the realm of thought as well as in social reality—begins to develop later than in France or in other countries of Western Europe. Its real beginning, in fact, coincides with Catherine's reign, and its end (in the forms characteristic of the

7 *Ibid.*, p. 426.

European 18th century) – with the reign of Nikolai I, when the process of its development was forcibly interrupted by the government.

Obviously, this process in Russia had its own distinct characteristics. In Western Europe, according to Zhivov, who, in turn, refers again to Kant and Foucault, the “Enlightenment is the old age of Absolutism, when the latter is offered to sign a restricting contract with the liberated reason”, – unlike in Russia, where the Enlightenment developed in parallel with the childhood of the autocracy.⁸ One could object that the “childhood of autocracy”, which Zhivov identifies with the Russian Enlightenment, was very short-lived in Russia. In particular, in the writings of the Russian Enlightenment, particularly the representatives of the early Alexandrian epoch, we already find suggestions of some sort of “contracts” akin to those proposed by Kant to the Prussian Emperor Frederick II in his article: “Answering the question: »What is Enlightenment?«”: the self-restriction of monarchy and certain civil rights and freedoms in exchange for the safety of the throne.⁹

An important characteristic of the Russian Enlightenment of the time is that it is culturally rooted mainly in the nobility. Apart from that, in all things concerning political emancipation, Russian thought of the time is mostly guided not by the radical republican, but rather by the “neo-Roman” model (especially the “generation of fathers”, formed during Catherine’s reign), which is, admittedly, also quite common for European thought of the mid-18th century.¹⁰ However, in

8 *Ibid.*

9 For more on this type of “contract propositions” in the works of Radishchev and Karamzin see Каплун: Общество до общественности: “общество” и “гражданское общество” в культуре российского Просвещения, в кн.: *От общественного к публичному*, под ред. О. Хархордина, Санкт-Петербург: Европейский университет в Санкт-Петербурге 2011, с. 431sq; 460–464. [Kaploun: Society before intelligentsia: “society” and “civil society” in the culture of Russian Enlightenment. In: *From the social to the public*, ed. by O. Kharkhordin, pp. 431sq; 460–464].

10 The term “neo-Roman” was coined by Quentin Skinner to refer to those authors of the republican intellectual tradition of the 17th and 18th Centuries who believed that republican rights and freedoms of the people could be implemented even in such a form of government as monarchy, in the case where a monarch does not stand above the rule of the law, but obeys it the same as the rest of the citizens. Even if he/she enjoys, as we would put it today, incomparably more powers than other citizens, these powers are considered to be delegated to him/her by the society, and this determines the legitimacy of regal power and, simultaneously, the need to make it accountable to civil society. This is why the monarch in “legitimate monarchies” has to rely on the word of the law and abide to the principle of “public good”. For detail see: Q. Skinner: *Liberty before Liberalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998, pp. 1–58. On the “neo-Roman” version of republican thought in Russia during the Enlightenment Age, see Каплун: Свобода в раннем российском республиканизме: гражданский республиканизм в России и европейская республиканская традиция Нового времени, в кн. *Что такое республиканская традиция (сб. статей)*, под ред. О. В. Хархордин, Санкт-Петербург: Издательство ЕУСПб 2009, с. 131–152. [Kaploun: Liberty in the early Russian republicanism: civic republicanism in Russia and the European republican tradition of modernity. In: *What is republican tradition?*, ed. by O. Kharkhordin, pp. 131–152].

my opinion, even considering all the specific characteristics of the Russian Enlightenment, it has to be, in fact, viewed as a form, and an integral part of, the pan-European emancipatory Enlightenment movement. This is not only due to “ideological closeness”. The point of similarity lies in the social processes that were beginning to develop in Russia during that period, processes that were similar to the ones that took place several decades earlier in France and other European countries: it is the period in which elements of the public sphere emancipated from the government begin to emerge in Russia, and a new, as yet thin, sociocultural layer begins to take shape – “the educated public”. In the same period a new cultural figure emerges in Russian culture—to put it into modern words—the figure of the “public intellectual”, with his/her own identity, with novel forms of critical reflection and new types of cultural practices.¹¹

In my opinion, the proponents of the view of the Russian Enlightenment as “a Petersburg mirage” are often misled by the fact that the state ideology in Catherine’s times and, partly, the practices of Catherine’s political and legal reforms, mostly addressed the same thought style which was at that time characteristic of republican (or neo-Roman) thinking, peculiar to the Russian educated public and Russian “public intellectuals”.¹² This orientation was manifest in the type of wording that was used in the official state documents of the time in contexts in which the word “society” was used.¹³ However, this partial language similarity ceases to mislead us, when we switch our attention from the wording of the official docu-

This form of government can be seen as the antecedent of such a form of modern political systems as the presidential republic.

11 See Каплун: Что такое Просвещение? [Kaploun: What is Enlightenment?], *op.cit.* See also *id.*: Российский республиканизм как социокультурная традиция, Публичные лекции Полит.ру <<http://www.polit.ru/lectures/2008/03/27/kaplun.html>> [07.12.2014] [*id.*: Russian republicanism as a socio-cultural tradition, Public lectures on Polit.ru].

12 See the analysis of the state and legal history of Catherine’s reign in: О. А. Омельченко: “Законная монархия” Екатерины второй. *Просвещенный абсолютизм в России*. Москва: Юрист 1993. [О. А. Omel’chenko: “Legal Monarchy” of Catherine II. *Enlightened absolutism in Russia*]. See also: А. Б. Каменский: Реформаторская программа Екатерины II и ее идейная основа, в кн.: *id.*: *От Петра I до Павла I. Реформы в России XVIII века. Опыт целостного анализа*. Москва: РГГУ 1999, с. 330–371 [F. B. Kamenski. The reform program of Catherine II. Ideological basis. In: *id.*: *From Peter I to Paul I. Reforms in 18th century Russia. A holistic analysis*, pp. 330–371]. On the state ideology during Catherine’s reign and its interrelations with literature of the period see А. Л. Зорин: *Кормя двуглавого орла [...] Литература и государственная идеология в России в последней трети XVIII - первой трети XIX века*. Москва: Новое литературное обозрение 2004. [A. L. Zorin: *When feeding the two-headed eagle [...] Literature and state ideology in late 18th century Russia*].

13 On the use of “society” in the official political language during Catherine’s reign, as well as in manifestos, verdicts and other state acts written by the Empress see, for instance: I. Schierle: Zur politisch-sozialen Begriffssprache der Regierung Katharinas II. *Gesellschaft und Gesellschaften: »obščestvo«*. In: *Katharina II. Rußland und Europa. Beiträge zur internationalen Forschung*, ed. by C. Scharf, Mainz: von Zabern 2001, S. 279–290.

ments and theoretical treatises to the everyday cultural practices and cultural identities of Russian *hommes de lettres* in this period. When analyzing the Russian Enlightenment as an emancipatory project, we have to consider it not only at the level of “ideas”, but also at the level of the “public sphere”, which was just beginning to take shape during the reign of Catherine II and Alexander I (first in the literary, and later in the political field), as well as at the level of identity types and cultural practices of the social actors engaged in the public sphere.

Elsewhere I have analyzed the thought style concerned with “society” (*общество*), which was characteristic of the wide circles of “Russian intellectuals” of the period (from Alexander Nikolayevich Radischev and Michael Nikitich Muravyov to Nikolai Mikhailovich Karamzin).¹⁴ The paper showed that, in spite of the substantial differences in the views of Russian *hommes de lettres*, we can, nevertheless, establish a certain thought style common for all of them. The main social concepts it is based on at the common sense level are the classical concepts of the European tradition of the *contrat social*, while the basic cultural references forming the corresponding identity type are the main motifs and figures of thought characteristic of the European republican intellectual tradition. In terms of methodology, the study was an analysis of the range of meanings that stood behind the notion of “society” in the socio-political and moral language of the period. The range of meanings itself was determined by the analysis of consistent word usage practices in the texts of various genres referring to everyday cultural practices (memoirs, diaries, educational instructions, designed to shape the standard value system and the framework for everyday behavior, etc.). This usage was studied in particular contexts, where “society” is used as a strictly defined term.

In what follows I will try to formulate some of the epistemological grounds for this historiographical method and to show some of its heuristic advantages.

3. “THOUGHT STYLE” AS AN OBJECT OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH

What is “thought style” as an object of historical research? This concept is more concerned with historical sociology and social theory than with classical historiography.¹⁵ We do not mean here research into the unique attitudes of a certain historical character or, for instance, the personal characteristics of Catherine II, or

14 See Kaploun: Общество до общности: “общество” и “гражданское общество” в культуре российского Просвещения [Kaploun: Society before intelligentsia: “society” and “civil society” in the culture of Russian Enlightenment], *op. cit.*

15 On the difference between approached used in historical sociology and traditional historiography see, for instance, N. Elias’s *Sociology and Historiography* (the first chapter of *The Court Society*). In: *id.*: *The Court Society*, trans. by E. Jephcott (*The Collected Works of Norbert Elias* vol. 2), ed. by S. Menell, Dublin: University College Dublin Press 2006, pp. 3–38. See also Chartier: *Formation sociale et économie psychique: la société de cour dans le procès de civilisation* (pref. à Norbert Elias:

the analysis of the politics of Catherine’s government. Neither do we mean the analysis of “attitudes of the political opposition” to the existing government, or, vice versa, those of the pro-government circles. The concept of thought style refers to a deeper level of what Foucault called “the discourse order”, and in his later works – “games of truth”. He understood the latter to be language forms determining the conditions of possibility for certain “forms of experience” of individuals, as well as for institutions and cultural practices.¹⁶ To put it more simply, what we mean here is a common “intellectual background” for a certain socio-political and moral tradition of the period. It is generally known that the very term “thought style” was introduced into modern historical sociology of knowledge and sociology of science by Ludwik Fleck in order to designate the regulatory way of operating with basic concepts, characteristic of a “thought collective”, which is in many ways similar to common sense for the members of such a collective. To use the term suggested by Thomas Kuhn, which has much in common with Fleck’s “thought styles”, we can say that what interests us in the culture of the Russian Enlightenment is the “paradigm” of thinking about society that was shared by a large number of educated people of the period.¹⁷ Various people belonging to the intellectual community could have different views and attitudes in respect to certain questions of politics and public life, but they were all nevertheless built on the same foundation of the common thought style.

This epistemological position is also close to the approach developed by the praxeological tradition of the philosophy of language, originating in the work of the later Wittgenstein. In Wittgenstein’s tradition of studying “language games” and “life forms”, the meaning of every word (or symbol) is determined through its usage in language practice. To use Wittgenstein’s famous metaphor in respect to our subject, what we mean here is the historical analysis of the language usage practices, which form “the channel along which thoughts flow”.¹⁸ Or, to use one

La Société de cour). In: N. Elias: *La société de cour*, trans. by P. Kamnitzer/J. Etoire, pref. by R. Chartier, Paris: Flammarion 1985, pp. I–XXVIII; P. Veyne: *Le pain et le cirque. Sociologie historique d’un pluralisme politique*. Paris: Seuil 1995, pp. 11–13.

16 On the concept of “games of truth” see Foucault: Foucault. In: *id.*: *Dits et écrits*, vol. 4, pp. 631–636; *id.*: *L’usage des plaisirs*, p. 12sq; Chartier: *Au bord de la falaise: L’histoire entre certitudes et inquiétude*. Paris: Albin Michel 2009, pp. 243–246.

17 I am using these terms here in the strict Fleck-Kuhnian meaning. In my opinion, these concepts, as developed by historical sociology of science, have their heuristic value not only in terms of analyzing natural worlds, but also, in some cases, in terms of analyzing political and moral worlds. From my point of view, Russian Enlightenment is exactly this type of case. See the details of the concept of thought style in: L. Fleck, *Entstehung und Entwicklung einer wissenschaftlichen Tatsache. Einführung in die Lehre vom Denkstil und Denkkollektiv* (1935). Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1980; *id.*: *Problems of the Science of Science* (1946). In: *Cognition and Fact – Materials on Ludwik Fleck*, ed. by R. S. Cohen/T. Schnelle, Dordrecht: Reidel 1986. On the concept of “paradigm” see: Th. S. Kuhn, *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press (1970).

18 “It might be imagined that some propositions, of the form of empirical propositions, were hardened

more metaphor of Wittgenstein's, we focus on the analysis of the word usages taken as a "bedrock" that serves as a foundation for the whole language building, enabling people to make empirical and assessing statements, i.e. serving as conditions for the possibility of their cultural experience and cultural practices.¹⁹ This "bedrock" of the tradition defines the nature of people's "life world" (to use a term of phenomenological sociology). In particular, this is true for the socio-political and moral worlds.

4. ON THE MEANING OF "SOCIETY" IN THE THOUGHT STYLE OF THE RUSSIAN ENLIGHTENMENT

The main idea that we want to stress here is the following: The word "society" in its "strong", specialized socio-political meaning (i.e. taken as a concept) in this period did not mean the same thing for the Russian educated public as it would come to mean for the liberal intelligentsia of the second half of the 19th century. Neither did it mean the same thing as in modern Russian everyday or socio-political language – although some elements of the thought style formed during the Enlightenment Age are still implicitly present in actual Russian thought styles (and word usage) and are still having certain effects on the latter. In the culture of Russian *hommes de lettres* who were involved in the Enlightenment movement, the concept of "society" characterizes the thought forms and vision of the social world resulting from two overlapping intellectual trends of the time. The first one is the European thought tradition in the framework of the "social contract" and "natural law", which has become the foundation for modern political liberalism; the second is the republican tradition of the European socio-political and moral thinking based on the concept of "common (or public) good".

Where does this new meaning come from? In the Russian language of second half of the 18th century, the very word "society" had a number of meanings. In everyday language, it could mean "nice", noble, or court society (thus, it was possible to say about someone, that he/she "joined the society early on in life"), or society "with good manners". The word was also often used in the meaning of

and functioned as channels for such empirical propositions as were not hardened but fluid; and that this relation altered with time, in that fluid propositions hardened, and hard ones became fluid.

[...] the river-bed of thoughts may shift. But I distinguish between the movement of the waters on the river-bed and the shift of the bed itself; though there is not a sharp division of the one from the other. [...] And the bank of that river consists partly of hard rock, subject to no alteration or only to an imperceptible one, partly of sand, which now in one place now in another gets washed away, or deposited" (L. Wittgenstein: *On Certainty (Über Gewissheit)*, ed. by G. E. M. Anscombe/G. H. von Wright, trans. by D. Paul/G. E. M. Anscombe, Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1969–1975, §§ 96–99).

19 See Wittgenstein: *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. by G. E. M. Anscombe, Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1968; *id.*: *On Certainty*, *op. cit.*

"company" (to "be in someone's society", to "love someone's society"). It can also be used to signify a circle of high society/educated people in some town or region. For instance, Karamzin (1789) writes the following in his "Letters of a Russian traveler": "Societies in Lausanne differ from those of Berne in that, first, they are always playing cards and, second, they are more liberal in intercourse..."²⁰. These meanings of the word "society" are obvious enough. But we are not interested in them.²¹ In the period under consideration (approximately that of Catherine's reign), this word acquired one more meaning, a meaning that became widely used. This change reflects the spread of the new forms of socio-political and moral thought, as well as the cultural practices that had never before existed. In particular, these processes were manifested in the new types of word usage, which gradually became part of the literary and everyday language. Based on the analysis of this new word usage practices, we can establish and describe changes in the minds and social reality characteristic of the Russian Enlightenment, i.e. the ways in which people of the period perceived their social world and acted in it.

The first edition of the Dictionary of the Russian Academy (*Словарь Академии Российской*) published by the Imperial Academy of Sciences (1789–1793) offers two distinct groups of meanings for the word "society":

1. The people living by the same laws, known bylaws, regulations, living close together. *To live in society. Man is born for society. Man should be useful for society. Fight back the enemy by the whole society.*
2. An order of people; association of many individuals having the same intention and object. *The society of learned men. The society of merchants, industrialists, craftsmen.*²²

We can see that "society" is here defined in its first meaning as a set of people ("nation"), living together and united by *common and known laws and regulations* (such an interpretation of society also implies the existence of a "state" as a mechanism for organizing and regulating social ties). In its second meaning (to leave out the meaning of "order", which is of no interest to us), "society" is interpreted as an association of people who have joined together for certain purposes.²³

20 Н. М. Карамзин, *Письма русского путешественника*, в кн. *id.*: *Избранные сочинения в 2 т.*, Т. 1, Москва–Ленинград: Художественная литература 1964, с. 283. [N. M. Karamzin: *Letters of a Russian traveler*. In: *id.*: *Collected papers in 2 volumes* vol. 2, p. 283].

21 An extensive list of everyday meanings of the word "society" can be found in the corresponding article of the *Dictionary of the Russian language of the 18th century* 16 [*Словарь русского языка XVIII века*, Вып. 16, Ленинград–Санкт-Петербург: Наука, 1984, с. 118–122].

22 *Словарь Академии Российской*, Ч. I–VI, Санкт-Петербург: при Императорской Академии Наук, 1789–1794, с. 601. [*Dictionary of the Russian Academy*, Parts 1–6, Sankt Petersburg: At the Imperial Academy of Sciences 1789–1794, p. 601].

23 On the meanings of "society" that are given by other dictionaries of the 18th century see, e.g.: D. Smith: *Working the Rough Stone: Freemasonry and Society in Eighteenth-Century Russia*. De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press 1999.

These two groups of meanings reflect the nature of the intellectual paradigm under consideration, each in its own way. The emergence and consolidation of the second group of meanings is due to the spread of various voluntary civil associations in the Enlightenment period, whose prevailing purpose was “to educate” and “enlighten” (although “society” could also designate trading or industrial companies). These associations are an important part of the public sphere taking shape in Russia at that time. The culture of such associations (which were very different both in terms of membership and declared purpose) started to form around the last decades of the 18th century. In Alexandrian times, it reaches its climax and became to some extent politicized. The very word “society” is at the time often part of the name of the association: “Free Economic Society” (*Вольное экономическое общество*) – one of the first Russian scientific public organizations established in 1765 with Catherine’s support, “Friendly Erudite Society” (*Дружеское ученое общество*), “Free Society of Literature, Science and Arts Lovers” (*Вольное общество любителей словесности, наук и художеств*), “Free Society of Russian Literature Lovers” (*Вольное общество любителей российской словесности*), “Military Society” (*Военное общество*), “Bible Society” (*Библейское общество*), “Secret Societies” of Decembrists (*Тайные общества декабристов*), etc. These associations also include an increasing number of various kinds of circles, literary salons, clubs, free mason lounges, etc., which did not have the word “society” as such in their name.

The second meaning of the word “society” offered by the Dictionary of the Russian Academy is more fundamental, and draws a better picture of the thought style of Russia’s contemporaneous educated class (or, at least, a significant part of it). It is concerned with the classical concept of the social contract theory and the pan-European republican (or “neo-Roman”) intellectual tradition. What is this new specified meaning of the word “society”? An analysis of the word usage within contemporary texts shows that in special contexts the term “society” (*общество*) is used as a full synonym for the phrase “civil society” (*гражданское общество*), and *vice versa*. As a synonym for the word “society” in such contexts one can also find the expressions “political society” (*политическое общество*) and “people’s society” (*народное общество*). At the same time, “society”, or “civil society”, is not categorically opposed to “state” (*государство*), “government” (*правление*), “power” (*власть*) etc., as is the case with its usage in the second half of the 19th century, or even, for the most part, with modern Russian (and not only Russian) socio-political usage. The latter suggests, explicitly and implicitly, that “state” (or “government”) and “society” are disconnected entities belonging to the same logical type, which can choose to listen to each other or not, to interact with each other, to maintain a specific kind of relationship with each other (for example, they could be allies or antagonists), etc. The thought style we are concerned with is completely different, it uses different meanings of all these concepts, and the corresponding words are used in a different sense.

In this respect the socio-political thought of the last third of the 18th – early 19th century is an organic part of the classical pan-European social contract tradition of the 17th–18th century, where “society” and “civil society” (acting as synonyms in this framework) are categorically opposed not to the “state” or “government”, but to man’s “natural state” (in accordance with the classical thesis of the two states of man – “state of nature” and “state of society”). This concept denotes the community, living on the basis of laws approved by the citizens, intended both to protect individual rights and to follow the principle of the “common (public) good”. The term “member of society” is in this context synonymous with “citizen”.

The original theoretical goal of this intellectual tradition, corresponding to the general emancipation project of Modernity, was to conceive of a society, which is opposed to the self-identification of Medieval societies and is emancipated from the dictatorship of any external authorities; a non-religious society that has a foundation not in the external (supernatural) divine will, but in itself.

This is the task that is first and foremost being tackled in the 17th century by such theoreticians of natural law as Hobbes and Pufendorf. In general, however, this tradition is concerned with imagining such conditions which would envisage the possibility of a self-establishing and self-regulating society as creating its own institutions without any support from powers external to the society itself; a society as setting its own rules of common existence and governing itself based on these rules.²⁴ In the 18th century, the concept of the social contract in its classical form receives universal recognition in Europe and becomes a self-evident way of understanding social life.²⁵

In Russia, this intellectual tradition develops in several stages, and in dialogue with European texts. The first close encounter of Russian thought with the theory of the social contract (in the Hobbes-Pufendorf version) occurred during the reign of Peter the Great. But it is only during the last decades of the 18th century that this tradition becomes the basis for the thought style of the larger part of the Russian educated public. However, as mentioned earlier, this is now a new version of the contract concept, the “republican” or “neo-Roman” one.

24 See the review of the main motifs of this tradition and analysis of their evolution during the 17th–18th century in P. Rosanvallon: *Le Capitalisme utopique. Histoire de l'idée de marché*. Paris: Seuil 1999, pp. 11–33) In particular, Rosanvallon shows that while in the 17th century (Hobbes, Pufendorf, etc.) the major subject matter in the framework of this tradition was the question of *establishing societies* (civil societies) from the natural human condition, in the 18th century the attention gradually shifts to the forms and mechanisms of *societal regulation* once it becomes civil, that is to the proper system of laws and political *institutions* (from Locke and Rousseau to Montesquieu, Helvetius, Beccaria and Bentham).

25 According to Rosanvallon, for the European socio-political and legal thought of the 18th century the concept of social contract becomes just an element of common sense (*op. cit.*, p. 15).

While in the Hobbes-Pufendorf version of the social contract (and state theory) the monarch, who is delegated the right to govern the society (including the monopolistic right to exercise violence in respect to those who break the contract), is *above* society and the law, in the versions typical for 18th century Europe, the monarch is considered to be a citizen, who obeys the law like all the others. Thus, while the 17th century versions were a theoretical justification for an absolute monarchy, in the 18th century they are mostly concerned with looking for ways to constrain the monarchy and to prevent it from turning into a despotic state.

It is these new versions of the concept of social contract that the Russian socio-political thought of the three last decades of the 18th century relies on in its attempts to conceive an enlightened and constrained monarchy (constrained by law, political institutions, morals or other mechanisms), which could function as one of the institutes of the self-governing political body (the civil society). Therefore, the Russian authors adhering to this tradition could be called “neo-Roman”, in terms of Quentin Skinner. Let us give a brief description of this thought style.

5. THE THOUGHT STYLE OF THE RUSSIAN ENLIGHTENMENT: A GENERAL CHARACTERISTIC

It is widely known that the thought style of the educated Russian public of the period, as well as of contemporaneous written Russian language, were formed in dialogue with the European written culture of the Enlightenment Age. It is not surprising, therefore, that synonymous usage of the words “society” and “civil society” in contemporary Russian language in the contexts which contain explicit or implicit allusions to the intellectual tradition of the social contract corresponds to their usage in various European languages, which were a point of reference for the Russian socio-political vocabulary.²⁶ The main influence on Russian socio-political language was, obviously, the French language of the 18th century, namely, the correlation between the French *société* and *société civile* and their synonymous meaning in the corresponding contexts.²⁷

26 Nonetheless, the fact that the concepts of “society” and “civil society” are used in the texts of that epoch as synonyms, and also that, according to the logic of word usage of this intellectual tradition, “civil society” should encompass the government and state, often causes surprise on the part of nowadays Russian historians. See, for example: В. Я. Гросул: *Русское общество XVIII – XIX веков. Традиции и инновации*. Москва: Институт истории РАН 2003, с. 56 [V. Ya. Grosul: *Russian society of the 18th – 19th centuries. Traditions and innovations*. Moscow: History Institute of Russian Academy of Sciences 2003, p. 56]. Grosul’s example shows us how the failure to understand that in the culture under discussion the concept “society” explicitly or implicitly refers to the *contract social* theory and the European republican tradition of the 17th – 18th centuries leads to errors of interpretation and anachronisms in the historical research.

27 The term *société civile* obviously enters the French language only in the second half of the 17th century. At the time it is simply a loan-translation from English, which, according to the usage introduced

The problematic of “society”, or “civil society”, as opposed to the natural state and primeval savagery, are inextricably linked with that of “morals” and “civic freedoms”. It is, in fact, the morals and mechanisms ensuring civic freedom that are seen as a measure of how far “society” (“civil society”) has advanced above the “savage state”, as a measure of its level of civilization.²⁸ It should be noted that the “morals” category in this intellectual tradition and the “softening of morals” are thought to be one of the aims of the civilizing process. This refers not only to the concepts of good manners and courteous civility that were characteristic of the ideology of the nobility, but also to the republican concept of *virtu* (civic virtue-valour), which is associated with the idea of commitment to the “common good”. It is also worth noting that during this period in the works of Russian authors we already find nostalgic pleas in the spirit of Rousseau and Horace to give up the sinful life of the “social man” (i.e., civilized in the shallow sense of courtesy and good manners, leading an empty life at court which only requires servility) in exchange for the clean life of the natural man, living in close contact and harmony with nature.²⁹ At the same time, such a “natural” life was regarded by some authors

by Hobbes, describes a man’s state which is opposed to the “natural state” (it was Hobbes who introduces the term *civil society* and develops it into a concept in the “formal” sense of the word). In certain contexts this term can be used as a synonym to the word *société*. Under the influence of the French translations of Hobbes and Pufendorf *société civile* is most commonly used as synonyms for the concepts “state” (*Etat*) and “political society” (*société politique*). The separation of the meanings of “civil society” and “state” in French begins in the 18th century. See F. Rangeon: *Société civile : histoire d’un mot*. In: *La société civile* (Centre universitaire de recherches sur l’action publique et le politique), Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1986, pp. 9–32. On the history of the concept of “civil society” (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) in Germany see, for example: M. Riedel: *Gesellschaft, bürgerliche*. In: *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. by O. Bruner/W. Conzel/R. Kosellek, Stuttgart 1975, vol. 2, pp. 719–800.

28 Civil society as a “civilized society” is yet another nuance of meaning that deserves separate analysis. The understanding of the Russian phrase *гражданское общество* (civil society), a word-for-word loan-translation of the French *société civile* and English *civil society*, was changing during the 18th century following the changes in meaning of its European original counterparts. The adjective *civil(e)* takes on new shades of meaning in the middle of the 18th century, in connection with the noun *civilisation* (Fr. and Eng.) entering other European languages at the exact same period, mainly from French, referring to both the *process* of the development of society and its *result*, a certain level it has reached. At the same time, the concept of the “civilization level” of a society at that period embraces good manners, courtesy, the ability to maintain a dignified posture, and the advances of technology and crafts, the level of scientific progress, as well as the development of literature and arts. For details on the dynamics of the concept “civilisation” in the second half of the 18th century and the correlating thought styles, see: N. Elias: *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, trans. by E. Jephcott, with some notes and corrections by the author, ed. by U. Dunning/J. Goudsblom/St. Menell, Oxford, UK/Malden (Mass.): Basil Blackwell 2000, pp. 3–44 (part I: On the sociogenesis of the concepts of “Civilisation” and “Culture”).

29 Rousseau is well known to have criticized his contemporary society (civil society). I will remind you of a famous fragment from Rousseau’s work *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality*

of the Russian Enlightenment as an opportunity to become a subject of the enlightened mind and true civic virtues.³⁰

Alongside the concepts of “society” and “civil society”, in similar contexts we find the concepts of “the people” (*народ*), “state” (*государство*), “ruling” (*правление*), and power (*власть*). In the thought style we are focused on, neither “ruling” nor “the people” are opposed to “society” (“civil society”).

At the same time, several important nuances of meaning deserve attention. While the concepts of “the people” and “state” in contemporaneous language correlate with the concept of “society” (“civil society”), they are not identical to it. Strictly speaking, these concepts are of different logical orders. As to the concept of “the people”, its meaning in the texts of the epoch proves to be vague. For our purposes, we distinguish between two main meanings of this word. In some contexts the term “the people” can, in fact, be used in the sense which is close to the concept of “civil society” (or “people’s society”, or just “society”), so in contemporary language it is possible to use the word in combinations like “to establish a people”, “to found a people”, or, for example, “the founder of the people” (synonymous to “the founder of the society”).³¹ This specific meaning of “the people” was evidently formed under the influence of the French (and, in a wider sense, European) Enlightenment, and started to be used in the corresponding contexts as an analogue of the French *nation* (in modern Russian words, “civil nation”). We find this, in particular, in the translations of French authors into Russian.³² This usage of the word “the people” apparently takes shape

among Men (1755): “The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying *This is mine*, and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society” (trans. by G. D. H. Cole). Rousseau, while criticizing society (civil society), where, due to the private property rights, inequality develops between people, and they begin to foster vicious passions and proclivities, opposes the social man to the natural man, a kind savage inclined to empathize with others like him. The phrase “civil society” (*société civile*) is used here in the traditional way for the politico-philosophical thought of the 18th century, as a synonym for the term “society” in the framework of social contract theory. However, it should be noted that in some contexts Rousseau differentiates between the concepts “civil society” and “state”.

30 See, for example, I. M. Muraviov-Apostol in his [Letters from Moscow to Nizhnyi Novgorod], letter 15 “Life in the country” (1815) (И. М. Муравьев-Апостол, *Письма из Москвы в Нижней Новгород*. Санкт-Петербург: Наука, 2002, с. 99–108) and his: Short discourse on Horace (1811), in: *ibid.*, pp. 124–128.

31 See, for example, the quote from a text by Radishchev, footnote 32.

32 As an example, here is a fragment from “Observations sur l’histoire de la Grèce; ou Des causes de la prospérité et des malheurs des Grecs” by abbot de Mably translated into Russian by Alexander Radishchev in 1773. Here, the French word “nation” is translated by the Russian “the people” (highlighted by me – V. K.). “А как Монархии не прешли еще в самодержавство, отъемлющее у души все ея пужины, то гражданин соблюдал чувствование добродетели и мужества, а государь созидал, если хотел, **народ совсем новый**” (А. Н. Радищев: *Полное собрание сочинений в 3 т.* Москва/Ленинград: Изд-во АН СССР 1938—1952, Т. 2 (1941), с. 282 [A. N. Radishchev: *Complete Works in 3 Volumes* vol. 2 (1941), p. 282] (“And as the Monarchies had not yet degenerated into autocracy, which would devoid the soul of all the springs, so the citizen observed the sense of virtue

only starting from the second half of the 18th century. At the same time, “the people” is used in a wider and more indistinct sense that has its roots in the past – in the socio-political language of the reign of Peter the Great. In this old range of meanings, “the people” could refer to the people as an ethnic group, as a language-based community, and as a population living in a specific territory, etc. – with an emphasis on the meaning of the people as a community of subjects of a Ruler which forms a state.³³

But even in its new, specified meaning the concept of the people is not quite identical to the concept of civil society. In the contexts which are concerned with “the people” as a “nation” (with an explicit or implicit reference to the social contract theory and the republican intellectual tradition), the “civil society” concept is used to characterize a certain *state* of the people, namely, living according to the laws and principles of “the common good” (which still implies that state institution should be in place). Therefore, the language of this period makes it possible to speak about the peoples who are not living in “civil societies”, about barbaric peoples or, for instance, about “overthrowing” the peoples to their “natural state” (the state of civil chaos and anarchy opposed to the “civil order”).

The concepts of “state” and “ruling” are not synonymous to “society” or “civil society” either, in the thought style in question. As already said, “state” and “society”, strictly speaking, are categories of different logical orders. In this logic, “state” is rather an instrument or machine for governing the “society” (or society’s self-government).

An important feature of this thought style is the categorical differentiation of “monarchy” (individual rule corresponding to established principles, where the power is delegated to the monarch by the society on certain conditions), and “autocracy” (individual arbitrary rule). This differentiation, which is a major one for the thought style in question, seems to have entered the Russian language in

and courage, while the ruler **created**, according to his wish, a **people quite new**”). In the original source by Mably: “et quand les monarchies ne sont pas encore dégénérés en ce despotisme qui ôte à l’âme tous ses ressorts, le citoyen conserve le sentiment de la vertu et du courage, et le prince se crée, lorsqu’il le veut, **une nation nouvelle**”. It is known that Radishchev avoided using foreign words in his translation of Mably (see, for instance, Gukovsky’s comments in: А. Н. Радищев: *ibid.* p. 411). However, in his translation, alongside “the people” (*народ*) we also come across the word “nation” (*нация*). Thus Radishchev translates Mably’s French word “nation” alternately with the Russian word *народ* (the people), and with the word *нация* (loan translation from French *nation*). At the same time, the adjective *народный* (“people’s”) can serve as a derivative from the substantive *нация* (“nation”); for instance *сенат всяя нации* (the senate of the whole nation) can be the body of *всяя народная власти* (of the whole people’s power) (*ibid.*, pp. 312sq).

33 This conclusion can be made from the continuous analysis of the dictionary articles of foreign words in Peter the Great’s period compiled by N. A. Smirnov based on wordbooks and other works of Peter’s epoch (see Н. А. Смирнов: *Западное влияние на русский язык в петровскую эпоху*. Санкт-Петербург 1910 [N. A. Smirnov: *Western influence on Russian language in Peter’s epoch*]). The same word “the people” (*народ*) in its different forms and combinations was widely used in that period to translate and explain the meanings of various foreign words.

the second half of the 18th century, at the same time as “the people” in the meaning of “civil nation”. It does not seem to have existed in Peter’s times, much less before that, when the “legitimate ruler” could only be opposed to an “imposter”. In the foreign words dictionaries of Peter’s times, “monarchy”, a foreign word coming from Western Europe, was simply defined as “autocracy” (*самодержавство*).³⁴ However, as we have seen, in his translation of Mably, Radischev used the Russian word for “autocracy” (*самодержавство*) in a completely different sense – to signify “monarchy” which has degenerated to a despotic state (remember that Radischev, in trying to avoid using foreign words, translated the French *despotism* as *самодержавство*). Thus the words that were completely synonymous, even in Peter’s times, are strictly opposite in their meanings in Radischev’s word usage.

Such world usage practice is not something characteristic of Radischev personally. On the contrary, it was quite typical for a number of authors in the last decades of the 18th – early 19th century. The same juxtaposition of these concepts can be found, for instance, in the classification of state forms by M. N. Muravyov (preceptor of the future emperor Alexander I and his brother, Grand Duke Konstantin, as well as father of Nikita and Alexander Muravyovs, future founders and leaders of the Decembrists’ movement). Following the classification by Montesquieu in his treatise “On the Spirit of Laws”, Muravyov distinguished four forms of state rule – democracy, aristocracy, monarchy and despotism, where the latter is opposed to monarchy: “Monarchy entrusts superior power to one person based on laws. Despotism puts the sovereign above the laws”.³⁵ In Muravyov’s classification, “monarchy” is a legitimate state form contributing to the rise of civil society; “despotism” is illegitimate in principle.

Notably, Muravyov’s classification does not claim to originality. It is sketched in one of his minor instructive essays of the late 1780s – early 1790s, which must have been designed for instructing the young dukes. In the late 18th century, this view of ruling forms becomes for Russian *hommes de lettres* a kind of alphabet of political science in the spirit of the age.

We can compare it with the classification of forms of rule dating back to the period of Peter the Great. For instance, it occurs in the translation of Samuel Pufendorf’s “Introduction to European History” (*Введение в историю европейскую*) made by Gavriil Buzhinsky and published in St. Petersburg in 1718. Here, the terms *государство* (“state”) and *общество* (“society”) are used as full

34 See *id.*: *op. cit.*, с. 19sq. See also the definition of “monarchy” (*монархия*) as “autocracy” (*самодержавство*) in: *Словарь русского языка 18 века*, Т.13 (2003), [*Dictionary of the Russian language of the 18th century*, vol. 13]. *Op. cit.*, pp. 22sq.

35 М. Н. Муравьев: Черты нравоучения, в кн.: М. Н. Муравьев: *Полное собрание сочинений* Т. 3. Санкт-Петербург: в Типографии Российской Академии 1820, с. 13 [M. N. Muravyov: *Aspects of Moral Philosophy*. In: *id.*: *Complete works in 3 Volumes* vol. 3, Saint Petersburg: Typography of Russian Academy 1820, p. 13].

synonyms, and only three forms of rule are distinguished: “The rule of states or societies is threesome. Monarchy, Aristocracy and Democracy...”³⁶ “Monarchy” is here synonymous with “Autocracy”, and the language does not allow for the logical distinction between the “legitimate” and “illegitimate” forms of individual rule.

It is evident that the introduction of new concepts and the transformation of meaning of the old ones in the Russian language of the period speaks to more than just the evolution of vocabulary. Underlying the changes in the socio-political vocabulary and word usage we find fundamental changes in the thought style, the system of values and the general view people take of their own social world.

We can clearly draw the following general conclusion. The thought style of the Russian Enlightenment, which is manifest, in particular, in the usage practices of the word “society”, or “civil society”, is formed under the influence of three main factors: changes in word usage, which took shape during the reign of Peter the Great and contributed to the further development of the literary Russian language; the European tradition of thought in the framework of the social contract and natural right, which became the basis of modern political liberalism (with an emphasis on protecting individual civil rights and freedoms); and the European intellectual and cultural tradition of civil republicanism with its main motifs (the interest towards classical antiquity with an emphasis on the understanding of freedom as opposed to slavery; the issues of civic virtues/valour (morals); the problematique of institutions (citizens taking part in (self)governing the society and forms of civil self-organization); the problematique of recognition of the another; the motif of the sublime, glory and life “on the stage of History” etc.).³⁷

In brief, this process can be described as follows. The word usage practices that define the meaning of “society” and “civil society” in the literary Russian language of the second half of the 18th – early 19th century are formed as a result of an intense dialogue between Russian thought and European political theory, and, wider, the European written culture, spanning the whole of the 18th century. This

36 Cited from: *Словарь русского языка 18 века*, Т. 16 (2006), с. 119 [*Dictionary of Russian language of the 18th century*, vol. 16 (2006), p. 119].

37 For details on the European intellectual tradition of civil republicanism see: I. Honohan: *Civic Republicanism*. London/New York: Routledge, 2002; Ph. Pettit: *Republicanism: a theory of freedom and government*. Oxford: Clarendon Press 1997; J. G. A. Pocock: *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 1975; P. Vidal-Naquet: *Tradition de la démocratie grecque*. In: M. Finley: *Démocratie antique et démocratie moderne*. Paris: Payot 1994; Skinner: *Liberty before Liberalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998; О. Хархордин: Что такое республиканская традиция? (в цикле «Публичные лекции Полит.ру» <<http://www.polit.ru/lectures/2007/12/27/respublica.html>> [01.12.2014]), 2007 [О. Kharkhordin: What is the republican tradition? (In: Public lectures of Polit.ru)]; Д. Ахмеджанова/В. Волков/Е. Герасимова/В. Каплун/Е. Рошин/С. Трояновский/О. Хархордин/С. Чуйкина: *RES PUBLICA. Возрождение интереса*, в кн.: *Что такое республиканская традиция*, под ред. О.В. Хархордин, Санкт-Петербург: Издательство ЕУСПб 2009, с. 7–22. [D. Akhmedzhanova/V. Volkov

dialogue started to actively develop during the reign of Peter the Great. In particular, as demonstrated by A. A. Alekseev, in the first decades of the 18th century the word “society” is used to translate the Latin *res publica*, often identifying it with “state”.³⁸ As shown by Alekseev, such word usage is already found, amongst other works, in the 1718 translation of Pufendorf’s “Introduction to European History” which we mentioned earlier (we have already noted that in the corresponding contexts this text features “state” and “society” as full synonyms). The use of the word “society” to mean *res publica* can also be found in earlier works. In particular, such word usage is manifested in a work printed in 1709, where tutors from The Slavic-Greek-Latin Academy published several translations of Latin inscriptions from the memorial arch erected in order to provide a ceremonial greeting to the army returning from Poltava. This translation, as noted by Alekseev, relied on the correlation between *общий* (common-social) and *publicus*, documented, for example, in the “Lexicon” of Fyodor Polycarpov (1704).³⁹

The same period witnesses the beginning of the use of the phrase *гражданское общество* (“civil society”) with the similar meaning. In particular, it can be found in “Arithmetic” of Leonty Magnitsky (1703) as an equivalent of the Latin *societas civile*. He also uses the words *общество* (“society”) and *гражданства* (the plural of the word “citizenship”) – as equivalents to the Latin *societas* and *civitas*.⁴⁰ So the word “society” is used at the time as a translation of both *res publica* and *societas*. This particular period also witnessed, according to Alekseev, the development of the tradition of word usage that served as a reference point for the translator of Pufendorf’s work, where “society” becomes synonymous with the concept of “state”. This tradition can also be traced in the works of other contemporary

/E. Gerasimova/V. Kaploun/E. Roschin/S. Troyanovskiy/O. Kharkhordin/S. Tchouikina: RES PUBLICA. Revival of interest 2009, pp. 7–22]. On its deflection in Russia in the end of the 18th – early 19th century see: Каплун: Жить Горацием или умереть Катонem: российская традиция гражданского республиканизма (конец XVIII – первая треть XIX вв). In: *Неприкосновенный запас* 5 (2007), с. 197–219 [Kaploun: To live as Horace or to die as Cato: Russian tradition of civic republicanism (late 18th – the first third of the 19th century). In: *Неприкосновенный Запас* 5 (2007), pp. 197–219].

38 See A. A. Алексеев: Из истории общественно-политической лексики петровской эпохи, в кн. *XVIII век, сборник 9: Проблемы литературного развития в России первой трети XVIII века*. Ленинград: Изд-во Наука ленинградское отделение 1974, с. 313–317 [A. A. Alexeev: From the history of the socio-political vocabulary of Peter the Great’s epoch. In: *18th century, collection 9: Problems of literary development in Russia in the first third of the 18th century*, pp. 313–317]. On the history of the Russian concept of *государство* (“state”) see: О. Хархордин, Что такое *государство*? Русский термин в европейском контексте, в кн.: *Понятие государства в четырех языках*, под ред. О. Хархордин, С. Петербург/Москва: ЕУСПБ-Летний Сад 2002, с. 152–217. [O. Kharkhordin: What is “State”? The Russian term in European context. In: *The concept of State in four languages*, ed. by O. Kharkhordin, pp. 152–217].

39 Алексеев [Alekseev]: *op. cit.*, p. 314.

40 *Ibid.*

authors, such as Theophan Prokopovich and Vasily Nikitich Tatischev.⁴¹ It correlates with the Hobbesian tradition of word usage, which spreads across European languages in the second half of the 17th century.⁴²

The word usage characteristic of the culture of Russian *hommes de lettres* in the last three decades of the 18th century and the early 19th century partly inherits this “state-oriented” tradition, which, for them, dates back to rather recent times.⁴³ But, although the genealogical connection is manifest, it is by no means a decisive factor. The thought styles and language of the socio-political and moral culture of the Russian Enlightenment during the reigns of Catherine II and Alexander I are essentially different from those of their predecessors. I have already mentioned that, starting from the mid-18th century, the language tradition of Peter’s period is being simultaneously overlaid by two new thought styles, which are new and very important for the Russian culture of the period. The first one involves the language and thought forms of the Western social contract tradition, in their post-Hobbesian versions, where the “state” and “civil society” are beginning to separate from each other. The second one is the republican political theory, relying on the principle of the “common good” (which was very important for 17th century England and 18th century France and, to some extent, Germany). The corresponding word usage in the Russian language takes shape largely as an effort to find some analogues for the French, German and English usage. The well-developed Russian literary language, in terms of which the educated Russian public begins to think, write and, finally, speak during the last three decades of the 18th century and the early 19th century, for the most part results from this search. As a result, the understanding of “society” as it had formed in the language of the educated classes, becomes typical not only for high-browed theoreticians, but turns into a wide-spread trope. In a simplified form, it enters everyday language and occurs in many works of various genres (from poetry to memoirs) by a wide circle of authors, who were often far from expert in theoretical issues.

Let me emphasize one more important point. During this period, the same idea occurs insistently in texts of various genres (not just theoretical treatises, but also

41 *Ibid.*

42 However, during the reign of Peter the Great *общество* (society) could be used as a translation of the Latin *universitas* (Алексеев [Alekseev]: *op. cit.*, p. 313), and *societas* is translated as *дружество* (friendly association), which, according to the idea of Alekseev, is also used to mean *государство* (state) in the same context (*ibid.*, p. 315). In the same period another word is used in a similar meaning – *общенародие* (people as a whole), which is also used to translate the Latin *res publica* and can, at the same time, mean “state”. Later, in the 1760s–70s, *общенародие* is often used to refer to the French *le public*, but afterward it disappears, having been replaced by “society” (*ibid.*, pp. 316–317). As Alekseev puts it, all these processes are the expression of the search for lexical means to convey the meaning of the concepts of the new theory of state in the Russian language.

43 Although the term “tradition” as used by Alekseev is probably too strong – these are just intellectual and linguistic experiments of a small circle of people standing behind Peter’s reforms and just a limited number of word usages.

fiction, diaries, etc.): the rise of a developed “society”, or “civil society” is not possible without the development of the “Enlightenment”. This thesis is also a common intellectual trope of the period (at least in educated circles). I will give a few examples from the texts by A. N. Radischev, M. N. Muravyov and N. M. Karamzin.

The first one is a fragment from Radischev’s notes *О законоположении* (“On Statutes”) written in 1801–1802, where he describes the functions and obligations of a sovereign in respect to his “society” or “people” (Radischev also used the phrase “people’s society”). The notes were not written as an abstract speculation on the philosophy of law, rather, they had practical aims: to aid the preparation of an overall legislative reform in the beginning of Alexander’s reign (Radischev was a member of the Committee for law compilation). In his notes he is trying to justify the necessity of the development and approval of new and modernized statutes in Russia. The text holds the whole range of concepts under discussion, which are linked with the noun *общество* (“society”) and adjective *общественный* (“social-public-common”).

It is due to the spreading of the Enlightenment, Radischev says, that it became necessary to approve the new statutes. The Enlightenment (which Radischev literally called “the mind of the wisdom lovers, accompanied by the lanterns of sciences”) had already taken root both among common people (“in the people’s society”) and among sovereigns (“rulers of the peoples”). Therefore, Radischev says, the existing law system, which is chaotic, inconsistent and contradictory, has become outdated. The new enlightened legislative system should correspond to the “primary goal of society”:

Always and everywhere, it has been necessary to correct the laws obsolete, approve the new and eliminate the old ones. But when the mind of wisdom lovers accompanied by the lanterns of sciences has spread its beneficial influence over the people’s society, and even the very rulers of the peoples; and when all begin to care for the social-common-public good (*блага общественном*) and to perceive the fundamentals of their rights and obligations; when they get better understanding of all things – then comes the favourable day for giving the people new statutes based on the true and indisputable concepts of all social-common-public (*общественных*) pretexts, according to the general common sense and not heeding the ancient harmful prejudice... A wise legislator [...] will found a law common for all, imminent in action, inexorable in words, which will reveal for all the initial purpose of society and will plant itself firm in the hearts of all citizen. Then will the common safety ensue, the thrones of the rulers of peoples’ will be inviolable, and the peoples’ good will stop being a task that is only to be tackled by lovers of mankind...⁴⁴

44 Радисhev: *Полное собрание сочинений в 3 т.* Москва/Ленинград: Изд-во АН СССР, 1938—1952, Т. 3 (1952), с. 146sq [Radischev: *Complete Works in 3 Volumes* vol. 3 (1952), pp. 146sq].

An enlightened sovereign, the “wise legislator” (Radischev is here addressing Alexander I, who has just been enthroned, seeing in him a progressive reformer), should give the citizens common laws (which the sovereign should also observe), which should correspond to the “initial purpose of society” (the common good, implying the good for everyone).

The Enlightenment as a precondition for the true “civil society” is also a frequent motif in the works by M. N. Muravyov. Here is a citation from his minor essay called *Черты Нравоучения* (“Aspects of Moral philosophy”), written for pedagogical purposes. Its meaning is self-evident and does not require any additional comment. The author briefly relates some elements of the social contract concept in a didactic form:

When finding in the ways of life, that several wild people who were first dissipated in the woods, unite into one society, taking on mutual obligations and founding towns, we derive the following moral law from this: that Man is created for society and should sooner or later achieve enlightenment. [...] Man is forced by his very nature to compose a society. The first type of society is the family, then comes the tribe and further the people and the state. [...] Every member of society entrusts it with his natural rights and commits himself to the common will in order to preserve them. Declaration of the will of society or its majority is called *the peoples’ law*. Ruling is an image that society has appropriated in order to implement its laws and enforce them. This image can be simple and mixed. It is *simple* when society has delegated superior power either to one person or a legislative assembly of people. It is *mixed* when society is ruled by a multitude of collateral powers. [...] Birth and improvement of writings (*рождение и совершенство письмен*) is a necessary consequence of society’s achievements.⁴⁵

The same thesis can be found in an extract from a sketch called “Romul and Kiy”, which is part of the literary cycle “Talks of the Dead” (not a treatise, but within the tradition of *belle lettres*). In this didactic text, which was also written for moral and teaching purposes, Romul, the founder of Rome, in a dialogue with Kiy, the founder of Kiev, is forced to admit that Russia has taken over the initiative of Rome, the formerly great republican city, and become the emblem of glory and enlightenment (note that the latter two are here inseparable):

– Kiy:
... You were able to put in the nascent people (*в рождающийся народ*) the deep feeling for glory and prepare it for conquering the universe. But recognize that Kiy is founder of the capital Kiev, one of the ancestors of the *Russian* peo-

45 М. Н. Муравьев: *Полное собрание сочинений* Т. 3, Санкт-Петербург: в Типографии Российской Академии 1820, с. 2sq [M. N. Muravyov: *Complete works in 3 Volumes* vol. 3, Saint Petersburg: Typography of Russian Academy 1820, pp. 2sq].

ple, whose glory now undaunted marches on a par with the past glory of your *Quirites*. [...] But look at the very Rome now, which has changed so much in its own walls, without the Senate, without triumphs, and strange monks trampling with ease the remains of Emilius and Caton; and look at Russia, spreading Enlightenment from the Baltic sea to the waters washing the New World; its armies, fleets, arts and institutions.

– Romul:

I can see that all peoples (*каждой народ*) shine in turn on the stage of the universe, and that the glory and enlightenment are washing the whole globe.⁴⁶

And, finally, another small indicative quote from a sketch called “Horace and Duke Antioch Dmitrievich Kantemir”, which is part of the same cycle:

The Peoples (народы) achieve true glory only when their power is embellished with writings and enlightenment... [...] Writings help to bring up sensitive youths and promise enlightenment to the people (*народу*), virtues and happiness.⁴⁷

The same topic of the Enlightenment and types of word usage are characteristic of the texts by N. M. Karamzin. For instance, in the “Letters of a Russian Traveller” we read:

Everything rises and falls, the peoples of earth are like spring flowers; they wither in their own time... [...] One thing is my consolation—that with the fall of the peoples the whole mankind does not fall; one gives place to another, and if Europe falls into waste, then in Africa or Canada new political societies will flourish, sciences and arts.⁴⁸

One could cite numerous examples from the texts of the period illustrating the importance of the subject of the Enlightenment. We will note one more important motif associated with this subject: a new understanding of the concept of “the public” in contemporary culture. In the framework of the thought style we have considered in this work, the public is often interpreted as an ensemble comprised of educated citizens who are bound together into a community through the spread of “writings”, that is, by means of the printed word.⁴⁹ The transformation of the people into such public (which, in modern words, implies the development of critical thinking, the total acknowledgment, due to enlightenment, of one’s natural and civil rights and obligations and the development of civil solidarity among peo-

46 *Ibid.*, T. 1 (1819), c. 299–301. [*Ibid.*, vol. 1 (1819), pp. 299–301].

47 *Ibid.*: 378–381.

48 Карамзин [Karamzin]: *op. cit.*, p. 363.

49 The Russian word “writings” (*письмена*) which we find in contemporary texts (in particular, in the cited fragment from the work of Muravyov) is a loan-translation of the French word *lettres*, meaning literature in the wider sense of the word. In the modern Russian language it has gone out of everyday

ple) is the key to the successful development of the “society” (“civil society”, “political society”, “people’s society”). This is also the reason for the acknowledgment by contemporary Russian Enlightenment activists of their civic and historic mission, which is to help develop, educate and unite the public – by acting in the public space by means of the printed word. It is in this same period that a new cultural figure emerges in Russia—to put it in modern words—the figure of the “public intellectual”, with the then new forms of critical reflection and new types of cultural practices. The emergence of this figure in Russia goes parallel with the birth of the literary and political *public sphere*. However, the genealogy and meaning of concept of “the public”, and the specific character of the figure of the “public intellectual” at the time of its emergence in the culture of the Russian Enlightenment, is a subject deserving separate analysis.

use, although it can sometimes be found in fiction, both poetry and prose. In the 18th century this word is used in search of the lexical ways of expressing new European and Russian realities. In mid-18th century France the word *lettres* acquires a new meaning of intellectual activities and written culture, in the general sense of the word (from philosophy to poetry, from works on history to satirical pamphlets), as a result of the great influence of the literary culture on the public opinion and the political processes in the country. The specific cultural situation at the time of the French Enlightenment led to the situation when, as Tocqueville puts it in “The Old Regime and the Revolution” (III, 1, title), “... in the middle of the 18th century literary men (in Tocqueville – *hommes de lettres* – V. K.) have become in France the most influential politicians”. The term *литераторы* (“literary men”) which is used in the modern Russian translation does not accurately render Torcqueville’s *hommes des lettres*, which refers to the 18th century situation. This term is rather concerned with the people, who could be called “public intellectuals” in modern language – philosophers, writers, poets, journalists, historians, etc., who influence public opinion through the written word. On the place of *hommes des lettres* in 18th century France see, for instance, Chartier: *Les Origines Culturelles de la Revolution française*. Paris: Editions du Seuil 1990, pp. 37–60.