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Anne Mézin and Vladislav Rjéoutski, *Les Français en Russie au siècle des Lumières: Dictionnaire des Français, Suisses, Wallons et autres francophones en Russie de Pierre le Grand à Paul 1^{er}*. Paris: Centre international d'étude du XVIII^e siècle, 2011. 2 volumes. xlv + 528 pp; 840 pp. Maps, tables, illustrations, figures, notes, biographical entries, bibliography, and indices. 160 €. (hb). ISBN 978-2-84559-035-9.

Review by N. Christine Brookes, Central Michigan University.

A hefty two-tome work, *Les Français en Russie au siècle des Lumières* is one of several recent publications on French-Russian archival resources.[1] These editions follow in the wake of France's 2010 "cultural season," l'Année France-Russie, and have anticipated the bicentennial of Napoleon's Russian campaign in 1812. For this wide-reaching study, Anne Mézin and Vladislav Rjéoutski directed a team of over thirty researchers who pulled together archival and print resources from private and public collections in Russia, France, and elsewhere in Europe. Largely a biographical dictionary, it explores French and French-speaking professional and social networks in eighteenth-century Russia.

To illuminate this pivotal era in French-Russian relations, Mézin (a graduate of l'École pratique des hautes études) and Rjéoutski (a graduate of the l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, now at Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense) state that their goal is to explore the physical presence of the French-speaking community within Russia. As they point out, there are other such encyclopedias of the French in Russia at this time period, but their focus is limited. These works do not get at the heart of the momentous impact that the émigrés had on Russian social, artistic, political, and commercial circles.[2] The expatriate community held considerable sway since the celebrated influence of Voltaire, Rousseau and company was from afar, French travelers to Russia were few, and French literature was not in wide circulation in Russia during this era. *Les Français en Russie* thus investigates a broad swath of those French, Swiss, Walloon, and other French speakers settled and living in Russia and their daily interactions with each other and with Russian nobility (pp. xx-xxi).

This proves to be a difficult project given the relative obscurity of the many foreigners who worked as priests, pastors, tutors, artisans, or artists. However, church and government records of births, marriages, and deaths begin to knit together the disparate stories of connections (marriages, godparents) between French speakers and Russians. Following these histories through subsequent generations exposes even more about networks, successes, and failures of the families over the eighteenth century. Finally, while the work privileges biography of individuals, inventories of belongings and cultural productions also sharpen our understanding of émigrés' successes and failures (pp. xx-xxi).

How do the editors define the French? One cannot speak of nationality at the time, nor can one apply evenhandedly the notion of subject. What then of language? Here, however, it is difficult to find those who did *not* speak French in eighteenth-century European elite circles. Thus, the definition of "French" is a careful consideration of those individuals with French as a native language, their place of birth (in France or in other French-speaking regions of Europe), and their ancestry (pp. xxii-xxiii).

The French community in Russia delimited as such turns out to be a fascinatingly heterogeneous group. In the expansive introduction, Mézin and Rjéoutski pull together this loose cast of characters, surveying the century through three different periods: Peter I's reign, post-Petrovian Russia, and the Golden Age of Russian Empire under Catherine the Great. Readers discover the assorted (and sometimes curious) stories of individuals and families spanning the century. For example, the history of Huguenot emigration to Russia—where both Protestants and Catholics alike were welcomed—from England, Holland, Switzerland and German states like Brandenburg yields accounts of individuals who won the praises of the Russian court like Sophie Lafont. Daughter of Huguenot wine merchant Jean Dubuisson, she began one of Russia's foremost educational establishments, the Smolny Institute, modeled after Madame de Maintenon's boarding school for girls (pp. 116-118). There is also an account of Alexandre-Pierre Mackensie-Douglas. Born in Scotland to a French mother, he played a key role in re-establishing diplomatic relations between France and Russia (pp. 39-41). There are also tales of exile and isolation in a post-1789 Russia, one of the most fascinating of which is the story of the French parish of Saint-Louis Catholic Church in Moscow. After the execution of Louis XVI in 1793, an imperial *ukase* ordered that the church no longer be designated as "French," which greatly damaged the fragile expat religious community (pp. 141-142). That same year, Catherine the Great issued another *ukase* that required all French subjects living in Russia swear an oath of loyalty to the French monarchy (pp. 141; 167-202). From Peter the Great's cultivation of French immigration to Catherine II's diplomatic about-face after revolutionary regicide, *Les Français en Russie* holds a multitude of chronicles of French communities in Russia.

Following the introduction, the editors have added several annexes at the end volume one. Some of these are previously unpublished archives; some are aids to the reader. They are as follows: 1. *Prisonniers de guerre à Dantzig*; 2. *Colons français en Russie en 1764*; 3. *Français résidant à Moscou en 1777*; 4. *Le serment de 1793*; 5. *Religieux émigrés en 1798*; 6. *Paroissiens de l'église Saint-Louis à Moscou en 1798*; 7. *Chevaliers de l'Ordre de Malte en 1798*; 8. *Capitaines de navires marchands*; 9. *Personnes mentionnées*; 10. *Chronologie*; 11. *Table des rangs russes à la fin du XVIIIe siècle*; 12. *Poids et mesures, toponymes, rangs, institutions*. Following this are comprehensive lists of sources (archival, print, and reference) and multiple indices to facilitate research into socio-professional questions and place of birth. Illustrations and some not entirely relevant maps are also included throughout volume one. The biographical dictionary makes up volume two. While varying in length and detail, the entries are succinct compilations narrating the information culled from the archives and other works cited.

The breadth (and sometimes depth) of the primary resources on which the two volumes are based—just as the editors had hoped—offers fresh perspectives and sometimes intimate details of the French in eighteenth-century Russia. There is ample material for historians to tease out professional and social networks, immigration trends, diplomatic intrigues, and the ripples of the Revolution as felt abroad. The new angles on the Huguenot diaspora and the exile of French nobility at the end of the century accentuate the work's value to the history of eighteenth-century Europe.

Far from rehashing the well-known anecdotes of the interactions of both worlds' social or intellectual elite, these volumes provide a broad picture of the day-to-day shuffle of emigrant communities, flowing from the imperial court to the artisans' workshops. The books help us to comprehend and explore the deep and enduring influence this particular expatriate population had on a fast-changing Russian Empire, even during a century over which French presence went from being courted to being under strict surveillance. Consistent with trends in the humanities and social sciences, this work continues to add to the blurring of lines demarcating national cultural borders and, therefore, cultural production. With it, Mézin and Rjéoutski pull back a curtain, revealing that the tidy partitions once cordoning one culture off from another were no more real than the mythical Potemkin mock villages of Catherine II's Russia.

NOTES

[1] See the following: Annie Charon, Bruno Delmas and Armelle Le Goff, *La France et les Français en Russie: Nouvelles sources et approches (1815-1917)* (Paris: Editions de l'École Nationale des Chartes, 2011); Bruno Delmas, Eugène Starostine and Grigori Lanskoï, *Les Sources de l'histoire de France en Russie: Guide de recherché dans les archives d'État de la Fédération de Russie à Moscou (XVIe-XXe siècle)* (Paris: Éditions de l'École Nationale des Chartes, 2010); and Anne Mézin, *Correspondance des consuls de France à Saint-Pétersbourg: 1713-1792* (Paris: Archives nationales, 2009).

[2] The authors cite the works of Ernest-Victor Veuclin, one of the most prolific authors treating this subject. They include his ten titles written at the end of the nineteenth century in their extensive bibliography (p. 332).

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