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EARLY
KANTIANISM IN RUSSIA:
J.W.L. MELLMANN
AND J.G. BUHLE

The early reception of Kantianism in Russia took place at Moscow University at the turn of the 18th century and was connected with the endeavours of two graduates of Göttingen University. J.W.L. Mellmann was the first adherent of Kant's critical philosophy in Russia and thus provoked a philosophical-theological-administrative conflict, which led to his untimely death. J.G. Buhle taught one of the first courses on Kant's philosophy of the critical period and safely returned to Germany after a 20 year residency in Russia.

Key words: early Kantianism, Moscow University, philosophy of religion, ethics, university philosophy.

The first steps of Kant's philosophy in Russia relate to the Moscow activities of two graduates of the University of Göttingen – Johann Wilhelm Mellmann (1764 or 1765–1795) and Johann Gottlieb (Theophil) Buhle (1763–1821). They were good acquaintances and both studied under the same professor – the famous classical philologist Chr.G. Heyne; however, their lives took very different paths in Russia.

The first to arrive in Russia upon Heyne's recommendation, having defended a thesis and published a comment to Ovid [53], was Mellmann, who signed a 6 year contract with Moscow University [43, p. 412–413]. He became the rector of the University's gymnasium and a teacher of ancient languages [31, p. 8–9; 28, p. 11; 29, p. 13]. At first, his Moscow life was a success. The young teacher enjoyed the support of senior colleagues – J.M. Schaden, I.A. Heim, I.I. Melissino [57, S. 70]. In the new country, Mellmann continued to lead a secluded lifestyle, which he was famous for in Germany. In 1789 and 1791, he published two textbooks on the Latin language [55; 54]. Moreover, the scholar tried to bring order to the university library, sorting the books kept in boxes [57, S. 72]. Mellmann's letters to his friends show how seriously he took his responsibilities of a teacher of the youth [57, S. 74–77]. He argued with his university teacher Heyne about the need to teach Latin in Russia. Heyne believed that it

would be more appropriate to teach Russians Ancient Greek, while Mellmann was convinced that Latin was excessive for most Russians, as well as most Germans, since only few are able to learn ancient languages. However, he put forward several arguments in favour of studying Latin in Russia: delivering lectures for medical students and learning basics of Latin as early as primary school; Ancient Greek was studied in Russia only by the clergy [57, S. 78–79].

Despite the fact that Moscow University infringed the terms of the contract with Mellmann in 1789, the young teacher was satisfied with his position and was even ready to stay in Russia permanently. He preferred the gymnasium to the university, but he did not want to be bound by a contract in the future and wanted to take a trip to Germany to get acquainted with the work of German gymnasiums. The situation deteriorated in 1792, when Mellmann started to suffer serious eyesight problems. The internal conflict of the German scholar resolved by itself: the same year [32, p. 13, 17; 33, p. 9, 13] one of his colleagues died, and he had to replace him as a professor of Moscow University without any pay rise. In his new position, he taught Greek grammar. He also used the opportunity to work at Moscow libraries, including the Synodal one, where he compared certain works of Homer at the request of Heyne. At the same time, he expressed a desire to found a journal dedicated to school problems in order to influence Russian educational institutions [57, S. 82]. As it was a tradition at the time, Mellmann, as well as other Moscow professors, headed a boarding school. Among his brightest students were G.M. Yatsenkov and A.M. Gussyatnikov – the latter studied at the German professor's boarding school. To encourage his further education, Mellmann even wanted to take him to Göttingen. Although the scheduled six month trip did not take place, it sparked outrage among Mellmann's colleagues. Moreover, Gussyatnikov was not issued a passport [57, S. 92].

I.F. Timkovsky recalled Mellmann as follows: "A truly German young scholar of 32 years, he stood taller than most men, his gait was rapid and stooping; he was round-faced, with blond reddish hair <...> He was always immersed in himself, his pipe, and books. <...> He was an acknowledged expert in his subjects and an adequate teacher. <...> He was committed to truthfulness and honesty in the classroom" [45, p. 23]. F.P. Lubyansky characterised his professor as follows: "Mellmann, rumoured to be the favourite student of Kant, was our professor of aesthetics. A man in his late thirties, always alone, as if in a cell, always immersed in his thoughts, he was considered by the literary circle a fearless hermit, deeply in love with merciless critique – the daughter of philosopher Kant. However, he was a man of considerable ability and possessed a gift of eloquence – a Cicero of Latin philology. Having acquainted us with Horace, Lucretius, Vergil, Cicero, and Tacitus – he further developed their moral and political thought, praised their intelligence and, with great eloquence, took us on a journey from one of them to another as if across a flowery meadow, from one beautiful flower to another, more magnificent one, ascribing to them ideas, which those gentlemen could never imagine, as we thought at the time. We also suspected that he did not always tell us everything that was in his heart. However, we took great pleasure in listening to him. Suddenly, he stopped attending lectures. In several days, it was whispered that Mellmann had been sent to metropolitan Platon; later, that he had been surreptitiously taken abroad; finally, that he had shot himself before reaching Königsberg [21, p. 113].

Unfortunately, Lubyansky's recollections are full of misconceptions, which are still often propagated in literature on Mellmann. Strictly speaking, the subject taught by Mellmann was not aesthetics proper. At the same time, the

1793–1794 catalogue of university lectures says that Mellmann, “Doctor of Philosophy and Liberal Arts, Master of the Greek and Latin languages, Public and Extraordinary Professor of Greek and Latin Classes, the Rector of the University Gymnasium” will analyse “the selected fragments of various Latin authors according to the rules of aesthetics and provide a short introduction to that science” [33, p. 9]. At the time, Mellmann was approximately 30 years old. It is positive that he never was a student of Kant and knew about the philosophy of the Königsberg professor only through his published works. And, of course, Mellmann could not have been Kant’s “favourite student”. Moreover, it is very unlikely that Kant ever heard about the young doctor. Finally, Mellmann did not commit suicide.

According to Timkovsky, Mellmann was “the first to bring to the University the fresh teaching of Kant’s critical Philosophy and was always eager to talk about it, because of its novelty” [45, p. 23]. This claim is corroborated by the authors of the bibliographical dictionary of Moscow University professors of the 19th century: “Alongside philology, he [Mellmann] was acquainted with Kant’s critical philosophy, and was the first to have introduced its ideas to the Moscow scholarly circle; due to its novelty and fascination, he often talked about it with his interlocutors freely and with pleasure, thus acquainting them with its major principles” [26, p. 46]. However, all sources available today corroborate that Mellmann was the first adherent of Kant’s critical philosophy not only at Moscow University, but in Russia in general. It is his university speech of 1790 that contains the earliest known to me mention of Kant in Russia – namely that of “Kantian philosophy” as a “new school” initiated by the “famous Königsberg philosopher” [56, p. 23]. Mellmann’s ardour for Kant’s critical philosophy ended tragically. The authors of the anniversary edition mention shyly: “Despite his scholarly expertise and other merits, Mellmann, expressed his one-sided erroneous convictions regarding religious matters too freely, as a result of which, by order of the University Administration of January 1795, he was relieved of his position and had to leave Russia” [26, p. 46–47].

Archive materials can help answer the question as to what the “one-sided” statements of the adherent of Kantian philosophy, which brought about a dramatic change in his life in Russia, consisted in: the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts keeps a thick folder that casts light on the events of the time [27]. Mellmann’s case was initiated by a cleric – the Moscow metropolitan Platon (P. Ye. Levshin), who did not like some of Mellmann’s observations on religion. The metropolitan did not leave it unnoticed, although, later, he tried to downplay his role in this case¹. At first, on January 1795 O.S., Mellmann was dismissed from the university. However, that decision was not final. There were attempts to persuade the German professor to renounce his views. Mellmann did not agree and had to answer numerous questions of his colleagues, which strongly resembled an interrogation. The case became known in Saint Petersburg. In February, Empress Yekaterina II ordered the Prosecutor General to bring Mellmann to the capital for an interrogation by the Secret Expedition [27, p. 1] – an institution founded to prosecute and punish political criminals. However, there was no need to bring the “secret prisoner” to the capital [41, p. 2–2 ob.], for the professor left for Saint Petersburg of his own accord. In this difficult time, the German scholar was supported by his student Gusyatnikov. Mellmann’s house in Mos-

¹ Metropolitan Platon’s autobiography does not say a word about Mellmann [38].

cow was searched, his belongings sealed; In Saint Petersburg, he was arrested and taken for actual interrogation.

After bullying² Mellmann the following decision was taken: on the March 12, 1795 the Secret Expedition was to prescribe Mellmann not to disclose everything that happened to him, to give him the rest of his wage, expel him from Russia and forbid him to return. March 28, Mellmann was escorted to Polish city Staropole "in a sad, terrible melancholy and greatest weakness" [10, p. 129, 13, p. 44–45]. Shortly after crossing the border, the following happened: "Mellmann didn't eat anything at all, and his strength was leaving him, and he literally died of starvation in Georgenburg (now village Mayevka. – A. K.) – in the vicinity of Insterburg (now Chernyakhovsk. – A. K.), half an hour after arriving there, on April 12, 1795, and it is stated in the death certificate, which was written out by a priest in Georgenburg and Mellmann was buried there" [57, S. 107–108]. Moscow property of a former professor consisted of used clothing and a superb collection of books, which was anyway immediately sought after in Moscow.

What was that terrible blame that Mellmann was accused of? Firstly, Mellmann, "when he was at His Eminence Metropolitan Platon of Moscow, found showed some blasphemous and offensive thoughts against the Christian religion..." [11, p. 199] he said that the pagan authors of morality can teach more than the church fathers. Secondly, Mellmann "was guilty, that he, while explaining his disciples the classical authors, intertwined it with his blasphemous and insulting thoughts against the Christian religion, and beyond that he, during his detention there, suffered some mental disorder..." [40, p. 120]. Thirdly, "Mellmann... stated that the Christian religion must be based on human reason and on philosophy..." [39, p. 199–200].

Mellmann clearly explains that the reason for disagreement was largely to be found in the critical philosophy of Kant, of which he spoke openly in Russia, "for the exact belief in key subjects I owe to Kant's study and similar works" [23, p. 109]. Mellmann turned to Kant while dealing with the problems of education, he wrote about it in a letter to Heine [57, S. 86–87]. He ventured to translate the works of Kant in Latin, but then he gave up, having learnt that this endeavor is "in the hands of others (F. G. Bourne? – A. K.) was supposed to benefit from that" [57, S. 100]. Under the influence of the same philosopher from Koenigsberg, Mellmann began to show interest in the issues of ethics while reading ancient authors: "I do not myself in the recent years, when carefully exercising philosophy (inasmuch the important business allowed me to do so) and especially the writings of one, still alive Koenigsberg scientist Professor Kant from his esteemed college in the German state (=school. – A. K.) in the recent years more often than before tried moral adjustment to the ancient writers, who should be interpreted" [24, p. 101]. In his testimony, Mellmann said that "he is a Kant follower and he can't avoid the moral and religious issues when teaching about the ancient writers" [42, p. 200].

Mellmann explained his own religious views with reference to Kant: "Regarding my views on philosophy, theology and preaching, I refer to the writings of Kant, of which the last and most crucial is the following:" The law within the limits of the Pure Reason "(within the Bounds of one reason"³. – A. K.). As for

² There is very little evidence on physical tortures, the ambiguous phrase in Mellmann's evidence is not sufficient to prove the fact [25, p. 99]. Though such belief prevails in publications.

³ The detailed translation from German done by Mellmann himself says: "Religion in the boundaries of pure mind" [27, p. 137–138].

the content thereof is only one moral law (= religion⁴. – A.K.), such as the inclination to respect and fulfill one's obligations as the commandments of God.

Following the model of how to fulfill this law (= the law of religion, see [27, p. 138]. – A.K.), it is divided into natural or the law of reason (= the religion of reason, see [27, p. 138]. – A.K.), and the revealed one, the latter must be consistent with the first, and have, indeed, contain it in itself.

It is impossible to reject the possibility and existence of supernatural revelation, because our knowledge of these things is not sufficient, and if someone had the courage to claim these things to be true, at least, he is obliged to respect every other belief and to the books, which are revered for their revelation [24, p. 102].

It is noteworthy that Kant's work on religion was published in the spring of 1793, less than two years before the posed questions, at a time when Mellmann had for a long time already been in Russia. Nevertheless, he followed the new literature, especially the works of Kant, in which he was assisted by Buhle, who was then still in Germany, "Professor Buhle... cared after my purchase of books and I sometimes notified of the state of philosophical literature" [22, p. 118].

Speaking out his mind, Mellmann meant his inner urge to always tell the truth and show some respect to it: "That's what I wish as a person who is praying after Kant (if it is to be called praying), and Kant himself is a reproducer and supporter of Christ's words and Gospel to glorify the God and answer the Divine call" [25, p. 98; compare 27, p. 151]. These words were enough to take the final decision on Mellmann's fate. The frank evidence given by the German professor, further convinced his prosecutors in his tainted character and insanity.

Unlike his prosecutors (the only one who showed some sympathy and compassion to Mellmann was the general-prosecutor A.N. Samoilov), through the whole trial process Mellmann demonstrated stamina and decent courage but he had great difficulties keeping up that way. He even included a phrase in Russian into one of his replies: "Don't judge and you will never be judged yourself"⁵. The professor was honest to write about the "exhaustion of my head" [25, p. 100] and "a bit impaired health of mine" [24, p. 104–105], which was immediately interpreted as an admission of his own insanity.

It's absolutely not to justify the persecutors of Mellmann but rather to support the facts if I mention that his tragic fate in Russia was not unfortunately accepted as something extraordinary in the context of the Western Europe at that time. Some episodes of the last years of Mellmann's life in Russia have remained vague so far. Firstly, little is known about the correspondence of Mellmann with Heine, which was selectively cited in his German obituary of 1797. The preliminary research in the University of Göttingen did not give any positive results. Today it can be hardly said if the Mellmann's correspondence to Buhle has been preserved. A special interest would, of course, be taken to the letters of Metropolitan Platon about Mellmann. In his study I.M. Snegirev mentioned letters of Metropolitan about Mellmann in the Bethany library and Mellmann's letters of very favorable acclaim of Metropolitan. I failed to identify their true location; addressing the library of Moscow religious academy did not bring any results. This correspondence could bring some extra clarity to the fact of relations between a clergyman and an academician⁶. The content of this correspondence is

⁴ In Mellmann's original – «Religion» [27, p. 138].

⁵ Mellmann mastered the Russian language quite well, and did so as a true philologist – he studied colloquial vocabulary as well [45, p. 46].

⁶ V.S. Ikonnikov supported the view that the Metropolitan Platon took a moderate and rather secondary role in Mellmann's case [14, p. 516].

not known to me first hand, but anyway I am aware of what Mellmann wrote in his last letter of January 20, 1795 from Russia to Germany: "Tension, which was to fear after a conversation with a clergyman, really deepened over me, but after some waves three days later it calmed down, so I'm now dismissed from my post, but still remain under the protection of the university, and in the worst case it will probably result in exile, though in peace and harmony. What pleases me most is the fact that the clergyman was only an innocent pre-text to bear a reason. He is my friend and will remain so! Ultimately, the case feels like a comedy rather than a serious event. But the fact that we, people, play with others where we could have done something else – all times and circumstances are the same, and to some extent they should always remain so. Whatever happens no matter how strange it could seem, you are more likely to get an oral accurate account of the events from me rather than a written one. Then I rely on your favorable attitude and hope that I will be able to justify my behavior in your eyes, no matter what result it would bring (except for lack of common sense in some of my judgments or hasty actions when I was controlling them. What a fault it could have been if it hadn't been for an incident, nobody knows. Whatever could happen now, when the situation has taken its turn, will surely either happen according to law and order in peace and harmony in the world or will end up with it. God bless us to see it as the beginning of the good!" [57, S. 105–106].

Finally, it would be important to track more closely an unusual fate of Alexey Gusyatinikov (? -1812) (see [20, p. 166–167]), the closest disciple of Mellmann – perhaps it could bring some light to some episodes of the German professor's life in Russia. Most likely, the story of what really happened to Mellmann in Russia was kept secret from foreigners⁷. In any case, a decade after the event, in 1804, professor Buhle came to the same Moscow university. But Buhle was still supposed to know something about the case with his friend, because even in Göttingen, before the philosopher left for Moscow, one of his students was a matured Gusyatinikov.

Since 1805 Buhle taught various courses at Moscow University, in the 1805/06 academic year – a natural and international law, as well as tutored philosophy [50, p. 14], in the 1806/07 academic year, along with the public and the people's natural right to Buhle analyzed "Philosophical systems of Kant, Fichte and Schelling" [34, p. 1], in the next academic year – an empirical psychology, logic and the history of philosophy [35, p. 1–2] and 1808/09 academic year – a natural right and a "critical metaphysics in Latin", [36, p. 2]. But next year Buhle transfers from the ethical-political department of the university to the linguistics, where he teaches up to 1812; his lectures on philosophy are followed by his lectures on "mythology" and "archeology" [37, p. 11, 30, p. 8].

Buhle deserved a reputation as a first-class historian of philosophy, the author of a multivolume edition, which is still of high scientific value. However, his "History of Philosophy" [49] was published in Göttingen, and although the covers of the last volumes write that Buhle is "a Russian court counselor and professor in Moscow", it wouldn't be unfair to mention that after his departure to Russia he faded into obscurity for his German colleagues. It can be partly explained by the fact that in Moscow Buhle did not publish anything comparable to his work of Göttingen period. Nevertheless, a number of minor works appeared in Russia, but they focused on some other issues: early Russian icons, the earliest geographic maps of Russia, etc. Like Mellmann, he did not just serve a

⁷ German obituary says that it is unlikely to ever learn the details of Mellmann's case [57, S. 99, 107].

term of the contract in the new country, but was genuinely interested in its life and culture.

Probably the decline in his creative activity as a philosophical author was to some extent associated with the peer review journal "Moscow scientists Gazette", that was published under the editorship of the German professor and took most of his time. This journal was another source to study both Buhle's activities in Russia and the attitude towards Kant's philosophy, as some reviews mentioned the name of Kant [2, p. 18, 44, p. 356–357, 52 p. 315]. A series of reviews contained more detailed examination of Kant's philosophy. So, a review on the physics work by I.T. Mayer says that "in Chapter 1, the author proposes the idea of how external things affect our senses according to Kant's system" [12, p. 98]. Finally, in 1805, there is a review of Kant's lectures on pedagogy, published by F.T. Rink. Its anonymous author comes to the conclusion that "Kant focuses on challenges in education rather than the ways to solve them. Often he indulges in practical philosophy and follows established principles instead of showing the means of talking a child into performing them, which is the main objective of education" [3, p. 120].

Of course, all this is not enough to create a complete picture of the editor's attitude to Kant's philosophy. However it seems that the attitude is objectively neutral: in comparison with the newest philosophers at the time, Fichte and Friedrich Schelling, and a "sect of transcendental aestheticists" [4, p. 87], the preference is given to Kant, at the same time, Kant is not preferred in all respects to pre-Kantian philosophy, for example, that of Chr. Wolff [5, p. 264]. This is evident from the reviews on the works of Fichte and Schelling. Buhle himself wrote a very critical review of the work of Fichte, "The Nature of the scientist and the phenomena in the area of freedom". Did Buhle know about the scandal in the year Fichte's work was published and contributed to his failure to be elected to the Berlin Academy of Sciences? That is uncertain, but some of the lines suggest such discussion (about this [18]): "Fichte's Science of Science is almost forgotten and nowhere can be heard, either I or not-I. — For this reason Fichte was very unhappy with German public, and even in the preface to his present-day treatise he wrote abruptly and dryly: "What he always felt was an inner resistance to be in connection with it", such discourtesy clearly proves that the very author of the book about the true properties of the Scientist himself does not have the bespoke properties due to violation of the necessary virtues of modesty" [51, p. 338–339]. In an anonymous review of the "Lectures on the method of academic teaching," Schelling says that in the book — "a solemn eloquence, which, since the school of Kant was founded, is hardly clear to German philosophers" [1, p. 255]. As one of the disadvantages the author of the review indicates that the work "never mentioned a single philosophical system which, like Kant's system, are contrary to that notion (of unique science of philosophy. — A. K.)" [1, p. 256]. Some researchers argued that the German professor in his lectures in Russia was negative about "Critique of Pure Reason." They referred to the notes to Buhle's lectures made M. Ya. Chaadayev, brother of the famous Russian thinker. Russian State Archive of Literature and Art is mentioned as the place where the manuscript is kept [16, p. 705]. However, I failed to find it in the mentioned archive. At the same time the archive keeps notes on Professor F. Chr. Reinhard's lectures taken by M. Chaadayev [47] — but the lecture shows nothing negative about Kant. At the same time, S. A. Fomichev and P. S. Krasnov mentioned a manuscript of Buhle's course which is kept in N. K. Piksanov's archives in Pushkin's House: it is a course taught at the University of Moscow in 1808, taken down by M. Y. Chaadayev in German after a joint visit to the lectures with his brother, P. Y. Chaadayev and A. S. Griboedov [17, p. 339].

Manuscript of lectures [46] has the following subsections: speculative philosophy, logics, metaphysics, “Critique of Pure Reason” by Kant, Fichte’s science of knowledge, and apodictics by Butterveik and Shelling’s philosophy⁸. In these lectures Buhle devoted a special section to Kant. However, in general comments on the tasks of philosophy and its parts, Buhle mentions Kant’s question about the possibility of metaphysics, considering “Critique of Pure Reason” to be a critique of philosophy [46, p. 7, vol. 8, § 13]. In its turn, the criticism of philosophy is construed by Buhle as transcendental philosophy [46, p. 8, § 14]. Kant [46, p. 65, § 19] and I. Tetens [46, p. 66, § 19] are viewed by Buhle as thinkers who fought against determinism. In a special section of lectures devoted to Kant [46, p. 82–91, § 1–26], Buhle consistently considers the most characteristic Kantian concepts: reason, sensibility, *a priori*, *a posteriori*, and others [46, p. About 82–82., § 1–3], then moves on to the basic ideas of transcendental aesthetics [46, p. 83–86, § 4–10], paying more attention to Kant’s arguments regarding space [46, p. 84, § 6], than regarding time, and espousing the foundations of mathematics that follow from Kantian theory of space. In the analysis of transcendental logic Buhle focuses on Kant’s table of judgments [46, p. 87, § 13] and categories [46, p. 87–88, § 14–17]. He doesn’t approach transcendental dialectics. In his lectures he gives almost no evaluation to the thinkers he considers, and remains neutral and objective⁹. The allegations of his lectures containing overly critical remarks against Kant’s “Critique of Pure Reason” are, therefore, grossly inaccurate¹⁰.

It was Mellmann who first spoke in Moscow (and in Russia) about Kant. No matter how tragic and at the same time ironic it may sound, just a few months after his death, in August 1795, I. M. Schaden, who was involved in “Mellmann’s case”, began to teach the first Russian course on Kant’s philosophy [19]. A script of this course in Latin [58] awaits its readers in the Russian State Archive of Old Acts¹¹. Buhle and Reinhard continued this tradition at the very beginning of the XIX century.

Even today the evaluations of Buhle, given by G. Shpet in his essay on the history of Russian philosophy are still widely known in Russia [48, p. 311–312]. But Buhle was not a “primitive Kantianist”, nor he was exclusively Latin-lecturer. His objectives did not include indoctrination of students and telling them the one true teaching, introduction to philosophy as a “rigorous science” in the phenomenological sense. If the names of brothers Chaadaev, Griboyedov [9, p. 531; 7, p. 23; 8, p. 1522–1529], and Professor I. Davydov were not enough to demonstrate Buhle’s influence, you should ask the question: whose influence was stronger? Unlike Mellmann, Buhle safely returned home in 1814, after the war with Napoleon.

⁸ The whole manuscript consists of 226 filled pages.

⁹ Even addressing Fichte [46, p. 92–97], whom Buhle treated rather negatively (and he proved that in his articles and reviews on several occasions), the German professor never allowed to use either offensive language or critical remarks in his lectures.

¹⁰ The most ridiculous is the remark made by T. V. Artemieva addressing Buhle. Speaking about his arrival at Moscow university, she said: “Obviously, it was the first Russian Department of “criticism” aimed at overthrowing new philosophical systems rather than studying them” [6, p. 119]. It is only a person who has never opened Buhle’s works or understood nothing in them who could blame such a diligent and thorough philosophy historian as Buhle for negativism towards new philosophy.

¹¹ The manuscript includes 143 double-sided pages, divided into paragraphs and headings. The beginning dates back to August 20, 1795; the latest notes are dated 1797, when the writing stops. The course included no fewer than 75 classes. As Shden planned to complete the course before June 17, 1797, it turns out that he almost accomplished it.

Summing up, it is worth mentioning that first university courses in Kant's philosophy were taught in Russia rather early, in the mid-90s of the XVIII century. Russia was 10 years lagging behind Germany (look up for the first courses on the Kantian philosophy in Germany, [60]), which can be explained by geographic, linguistic and cultural differences. However, it is unlikely that any non-German universities were ahead of Russia in this matter. By the way, the first translations of important works of Kant into Russian were initiated earlier [15] than in other languages (the only, and quite special, exception being Latin).

As for the level of philosophy teaching, even though due to the large group of visiting foreign professors, Moscow University at the turn of XVIII-XIX centuries was first class institution. It is important to emphasize the fact that mere religious affiliation of foreigners in the Russian imperial universities (and even theological academies!) was not generally seen as an obstacle, although the sad fate of Mellmann must be kept in mind.

Philosophical news were reaching Russia almost immediately during the late XVIII century, as Kant's "Religion within the bounds of mere reason" aptly demonstrates. Contrary to popular belief, Wolffian philosophy in university courses had been largely supplanted (although the same cannot be said about seminaries and theological academies in Russia during the same time). Most clearly it is demonstrated by the curriculum announcements, made during that time – a surprisingly and unfortunately underestimated source of historical and philosophical information in Russia – providing rich material to study the university philosophy of the late XVIII – early XIX century. A new edition of curriculum announcements with reference section would have significantly improved the situation.

Kantianism of Mellmann and Buhle shows new facets of influence of Göttingen University in Moscow that could be equally interesting even for Pushkin studies. Translation and critical edition of Buhle's lectures at Moscow University, as well as of those of Reinhard and Shaden, would have become a valuable contribution to the study of Kant's philosophy in Russia and our understanding of Russian philosophy of XVIII – XIX centuries. Historical and philosophical works by Shpet (and V. V. Zenkovsky), which became significant events at the time of their first publication, as well as for the early 90-ies of XX century in Russia, no longer meet the current demands of research in history of philosophy in a range of issues. Instead of shallow replications of their theses it is more useful to invest efforts into new material research and new studies that would take into account the whole array of knowledge of Kantian philosophy in Russia, prospective and already existing.

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