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## **Social Portrait of Professors and Lecturers at the Novorossiia Imperial University in Odessa**

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### **Abstract**

The article represents the main history stages of the first higher education institution in Southern Ukraine from its academic staff perspective. Considering historiographical traditions, modern approaches as well as the defined social portrait of professors and lecturers at the Novorossiia Imperial University in Odessa, we generalized its organizational, academic, international and other transformations.

The analysis of different sources made it possible to single out features of the social portrait of university professors and lecturers (especially, those of world-famous graduates and members). Among them, there were founders of new scientific trends, theories, methodologies, schools, etc.

The social portrait of professors and lecturers at the Novorossiia Imperial University was established via analysis of classes, professions, job duties and other principles. Therefore, we found out that teaching duration determined staff contributions to university development. In such a way, many professors of the Novorossiia Imperial University became its honorary members.

The social and academic prestige of the Novorossiia Imperial University professors is explained by their membership in different societies (including the foreign ones).

It is stated that employees of the Novorossiia Imperial University came from different social and professional classes: nobles, petits bourgeois, clerics. Also, there were academic dynasties.

**Keywords:** higher education, professors, social portrait, educational policy, educational reform, educational access, sustainable development in education, education policy.

### **1. Introduction**

As social phenomena, universities are a significant component of sociocultural, outlook and scientific influence on creating a city community. With established academic institutions, cities

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got a specific title of academic ones. Therefore, universities became an integral part of the city image. Besides, universities inherited the local intellectual tradition they previously accumulated.

The origin of higher education in Southern Ukraine dates back to 1817 when the famous Richelieu Lyceum was founded. Initially, the lyceum worked as a noble boarding institution. In the 1830s, it became similar to a university entity (according to its structure and duties). A great contribution to such a reorganization was done by N.I. Pirogov, a famous scientist.

The Novorossiia Imperial University was founded in May 1865. It comprised three faculties: history and philology, physics and mathematics, law were taught. In 1900, the medicine faculty was created. After the February 1917 events, the Novorossiia Imperial University folded in 1920.

Today, the historical image archetype of the Odessa University covers three separate periods: the Novorossiia Imperial University (1865 till 1920); the Soviet higher education institution (1920 till the 1990s beginning); the modern European university (today).

The emergence of the first Southern Ukrainian university exerted a considerable influence on the intellectual, cultural and public life of the region. The government applied it for satisfying local needs and spreading its pan-Slavic dominance over the Balkans.

Within the first decades, the university employed a range of excellent lecturers and scientists. The most prominent among them were professors M.D. Zelinskii, I.M. Sechenov, I.I. Mechnikov, etc. Thanks to them, the institution rose to the world science standards. This level is being kept today as well.

Thus, derived from the Richelieu Lyceum and founded in 1865, the Novorossiia Imperial University became the fourth Ukrainian educational institution (after those in Lviv, Kharkiv and Kyiv). Its historic succession is directly conditioned by the industrialization of Ukrainian education and science.

## **2. Materials and methods**

To prepare the manuscript, we have analyzed sources and documents to trace the academic community formation in Southern Ukraine from the 19th century end to the 20th century beginning. In particular, that concerns ministerial resolutions and other acts on higher education work in the Russian Empire ([Tablitsa ustavov..., 1901](#); [Dneprov, 2017](#); [Naznacheniya, 1865](#); [Obozrenie..., 1865–1917](#); [Otchet..., 1865-1915](#)).

Besides, we considered biographies of some professors and lecturers at the Novorossiia Imperial University ([Odeski istoryky, 2009](#); [Profesory, 2020](#); [Vcheni, 2003](#); [Naznacheniya, 1865](#)).

A relevant historic source about the Novorossiia Imperial University is the Odessa Government Memory Book ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1869-1916](#)). It mentions common lists of officers, including those from the Novorossiia Imperial University.

The digitized funds of the Research Library at the I.I. Mechnikov Odessa National University provide many old and rare publications, books and periodical collections. Also, you can find here personal archives of university professors and lecturers ([Arkhiv, 2022](#)).

An important account for the institution history is the Novorossiia Imperial University Notes, a journal in 1867-1913. It comprised research results, some studies and translations by professors and lecturers of the university. Moreover, protocols of the university academic board were published here. Since 1909, the journal was split into topical publishing sections by university units: 1 – administration; 2 – history and philology; 3 – law; 4 – physics and mathematics; 5 – medicine. Annually, several volumes of the Notes were published. Totally, 113 volumes were printed ([Zapiski..., 1867–1913](#)).

All of these sources and documents allowed defining the social portrait of professors and lecturers at the Novorossiia Imperial University (from the social, class, age, professional and ethnical perspectives).

The research methodological base covers the principles of historicism, verification, consistency and objectivity of historical source analysis. They are realized within the application of general scientific and specific methods. For manuscript preparation, we used the historical-analytical method to process and arrange the researched data. The classifying method was involved to sort the source base. The biographical method made it possible to analyze the living path of professors and lecturers at the Novorossiia Imperial University within the current historical, sociocultural and political transformations in Ukraine. The comparative analysis method was applied to find a contrast between social portraits of academic staff at the St. Volodymyr Kyiv University ([Lebid, Lobko, 2022](#)), the Kharkiv Imperial University ([Lebid, 2022](#); [Lebid,](#)

[Shevchenko, 2021](#); [Lebid, Stepanov, 2023](#)), the Novorossiia Imperial University ([Lebid, Degtyarev, 2023](#)) and the Kyiv Theological Academy ([Lebid, 2023](#)).

Among general scientific methods, we should mention the historical, logical, chronological problem and structural system analysis.

### **3. Discussion**

In this article, we would like to reflect the Novorossiia Imperial University history via biographies and activities of its professors and lecturers. Finally, we obtain their social portrait.

The analyzed biographical and other data on professors and lecturers of the Novorossiia Imperial University are derived from a made-up questionnaire. It is based on methodological recommendations of the Biographical Research Institute and the V.I. Vernadskii Central Academic Library of the Ukrainian National Science Academy.

To prepare the manuscript, the main sources were employment records of professors and lecturers of the Novorossiia Imperial University, academic board protocols, reports, curricula, journal articles, text materials (at the Odessa National University Academic Library, the Odessa Oblast State Archive, the university archive), publication card indexes. This list includes history studies of the university itself and other Odessa institutions. Also, history of science branches, biographies, encyclopedias, bibliographies and reference books are covered.

It is worth saying that various anniversary research papers do not define the social portrait of professors and lecturers of the Novorossiia Imperial University properly ([Markevich, 1890](#); [Odeski istoryky..., 2009](#); [Popruzhenko, 1915](#); [Domin, Khmarskyi, 2010](#); [Yurzhenko et al., 1965](#); [Odesskyi unyversytet..., 1991](#); [Istoriia Odeskoho..., 2000](#); [Odesskyi natsionalnyi..., 2015](#); [Odesskij universitet..., 1940](#)). They only partially contribute to determining approaches to the research of university education history in Southern Ukraine.

The corpus of publications on history of the Novorossiia Imperial University and its staff development is reasonable to sort by several topical sections.

Firstly, it is bibliographical and reference literature about professors and lecturers at the Novorossiia Imperial University ([Odeski istoryky..., 2009](#); [Profesory..., 2000](#); [Profesory..., 2020](#); [Vcheni..., 1995a](#); [Vcheni..., 1995b](#); [Vcheni..., 1995c](#); [Vcheni..., 2003](#); [Vcheni..., 2004](#); [Orlov, 1866–1907](#); [Naznacheniya..., 1865](#)).

Secondly, that deals with works on general development trends of higher education in Ukraine and the Russian Empire within the 19th century till the 20th beginning ([Andreev, 2009](#); [Andreev, Posohov, 2012](#); [Posohov, 2014](#); [Posohov, 2017](#); [Siropolko, 2001](#); [Ursu, 2014](#)). Here, general issues of university education development in the Russian Empire are considered. Besides, university sociocultural impact and intellectual space formation are discussed.

Thirdly, there is a section of papers on main activities of professors and lecturers at the Novorossiia Imperial University. Their academic and research achievements are reflected ([Rennenkampf, 1909](#); [Lyapunov, 1916](#); [Sabinin, 1882](#)).

Separately, we should mention contemporaries' memories and professors' obituaries. In them, valuable life facts within the Novorossiia Imperial University can be found ([Novopokrovskij, 1916](#)).

An education development researcher may be also interested in works by professors and lecturers at the Novorossiia Imperial University. As sources about the specific academic class, you can find here both scientific and biographical data ([Sabinin, 1882](#) and etc.).

### **4. Results**

In 1817, Odessa created a prestigious educational lyceum. He was called in honor of Armand Emmanuel Sophie Septimanie de Vignerot du Plessis, 5th Duke of Richelieu and Fronsac. Various people taught here. Its history can be subdivided into two periods: 1817–1837 (secondary education) and 1837–1864 (higher education).

Its lyceum achievements are connected with D. Kniazhevich and N. Pirogov (administrators of the Odessa Educational District). The latter promoted the lyceum transformation into the university.

In May 1865, the Novorossiia Imperial University was founded on the basis of the Richelieu Lyceum. Today, it is the I.I. Mechnikov Odessa National University. Initially, at the university there were three faculties: history and philology, physics and mathematics, law. The medicine faculty was created in 1900. The first university rector was professor I. Sokolov. In 1920, the Novorossiia

Imperial University was reorganized into institutes: national education, social upbringing, physics and chemistry, professional education.

For defining the social portrait of professors and lecturers at the Novorossiia Imperial University, it is reasonable to study its history via the prosopographical portrait of the university academic staff. Among lecturers of the Novorossiia Imperial University, there were full-time and part-time employees, ordinary and extraordinary professors, associate professors, etc. The latter contributed to the total number of university lecturers (including those of the Novorossiia Imperial University). A significant academic role was played by assistants, prosectors, astronomers, librarians, museum curators, etc. Eventually, scholarship holders taught as well. However, they did not belong to the main staff. Their role was secondary.

The common problem of all universities in the Russian Empire was a permanent lack of the teaching staff. Some departments (art history, law history, etc.) did not have any full-time teachers for a while. On the contrary, there were many part-time employees.

A certain rise happened in the final stage of the Novorossiia Imperial University existence. In 1915, there were 36 ordinary and 16 extraordinary professors, 4 lecturers, 54 privat-docents and 18 part-time professors after 30 seniority years ([Obozrenie..., 1865–1917](#); [Profesory..., 2000](#); [Profesory..., 2020](#); [Vcheni..., 1995a](#); [Vcheni..., 1995b](#); [Vcheni..., 1995c](#); [Vcheni..., 2003](#); [Vcheni..., 2004](#)). The sources show that the Novorossiia Imperial University had 145 persons teaching in 1865–1890 and 350 people working in 1890–1920 ([Obozrenie..., 1865–1917](#); [Profesory..., 2000](#); [Profesory..., 2020](#); [Vcheni..., 1995a](#); [Vcheni..., 1995b](#); [Vcheni..., 1995c](#); [Vcheni..., 2003](#); [Vcheni..., 2004](#)).

The contribution of professors and lecturers to the university development was not equal (considering the teaching duration). For example, at the Novorossiia Imperial University, an ordinary professor I. Ivanov lectured for one term only while M. Ushinsky taught for almost a year. Most honorary ordinary professors worked at the university for 20–30 years. The longest teaching duration showed S. Yaroshenko – about 40 years. Other academic veterans were V. Petriashvili and P. Melikishvili (33 years), A. Kochubinsky and M. Lange (32 years), G. Peretiatkovich (31 years), V. Voitkovsky (30 years). The shortest teaching position was held by A. Almazov who died in some months after his assigning in 1912 ([Obozrenie..., 1865–1917](#); [Profesory..., 2000](#); [Profesory..., 2020](#); [Vcheni..., 1995a](#); [Vcheni..., 1995b](#); [Vcheni..., 1995c](#); [Vcheni..., 2003](#); [Vcheni..., 2004](#)).

Additional authority for members of the Novorossiia Imperial University was taken via membership in prestigious research institutions. V. Rotert came to Odessa as a corresponding member of the Kraków Science Academy. V. Grigorovich belonged to the Saint Petersburg Science Academy. Being an Odessa lecturer, F. Leontovich was elected a member of the Serbian Research Society. Similarly elected persons were A. Kochubinsky (the Czech Science Academy), I. Linnichenko (the Saint Petersburg Science Academy), A. Kovalevsky (the Saint Vladimir Imperial University).

For its whole history, the Novorossiia Imperial University had 76 people as honorary members, 15 persons got the honorary doctor title ([Markevich, 1890](#); [Obozrenie..., 1865–1917](#); [Profesory..., 2000](#); [Profesory..., 2020](#); [Vcheni..., 1995a](#); [Vcheni..., 1995b](#); [Vcheni..., 1995c](#); [Vcheni..., 2003](#); [Vcheni..., 2004](#)). Sometimes, the honorary members were officials participating in the university development. For example, such a man was S. Witte who contributed to the medical faculty foundation. Other honorary members were outstanding home and foreign researchers.

Most honorary members acquired the title post factum (I. Sechenov, V. Grigorovich) or as lecturers of other educational institutions. A. Pavlov was the only person who got the honorary doctor title of the Novorossiia Imperial University as its valid employee. However, some honorary members and doctors of the Novorossiia Imperial University lectured here after obtaining the title itself. Other people worked at the Novorossiia Imperial University for several periods with long interruptions ([Obozrenie..., 1865–1917](#); [Profesory..., 2000](#); [Profesory..., 2020](#); [Vcheni..., 1995a](#); [Vcheni..., 1995b](#); [Vcheni..., 1995c](#); [Vcheni..., 2003](#); [Vcheni..., 2004](#)).

Like all institutions within the turn of the 19th–20th century, males prevailed at the Novorossiia Imperial University (students and lecturers). The first female years were the 1910s. Being a graduate from the city of Nancy (France), M. Stanishevskaya was elected a privat-docent of the Infectious Disease Department. Previously, she had successfully defended her thesis at the Novorossiia Imperial University with the conferred DSc in Medicine degree (for the first time as a female). In the whole Russian Empire, such a case was rare among females.

The internal staff hierarchy of the Novorossiia Imperial University was typical. Determined by the statutes as of 1863 and 1884, the system included ordinary professors (usually DSc before

1884), extraordinary members (masters), associate professors and privat-docents (for selective courses). Sometimes, it was difficult to proceed to higher career stages. Besides, it happened when the thesis defense did not contribute to the career rise. For a while, A. Markevich and V. Lazursky could not proceed further from the privat-docent position.

Superior merit professors could be appointed privat-docents due to the lack of the corresponding vacancy. For the whole history of the Novorossiia Imperial University, there were 158 ordinary professors: 46 – history and philology, 55 – physics and mathematics, 35 – law, 22 – medicine. Moreover, 3 theology professors lectured for all faculties ([Obozrenie..., 1865-1917](#); [Profesory..., 2000](#); [Profesory..., 2020](#); [Vcheni..., 1995a](#); [Vcheni..., 1995b](#); [Vcheni..., 1995c](#); [Vcheni..., 2003](#); [Vcheni..., 2004](#)).

Among extraordinary professors, the university totally had 59 people for all faculties: 11 – history and philology, 20 – physics and mathematics, 8 – law, 20 – medicine. Privat-docents were 300 lecturers: 42 – history and philology, 101 – physics and mathematics, 24 – law, 133 – medicine. Foreign language teachers were 14 members ([Obozrenie..., 1865-1917](#); [Profesory..., 2000](#); [Profesory..., 2020](#); [Vcheni..., 1995a](#); [Vcheni..., 1995b](#); [Vcheni..., 1995c](#); [Vcheni..., 2003](#); [Vcheni..., 2004](#)). It should be underlined that most ordinary lecturers passed all stages of career growth at the Novorossiia Imperial University.

The Novorossiia Imperial University staff came from different social and professional classes. We managed to define 338 such cases. They were nobles (117 individuals), petits bourgeois (69 persons), clerics (65 people: Orthodox, Lutheran, rabbi). There were 27 soldiers, 19 peasants, 9 officials, 2 sailors, 1 Don Cossack, 1 craftsman. 8 teachers belonged to foreign citizens ([Obozrenie..., 1865-1917](#); [Profesory..., 2000](#); [Profesory..., 2020](#); [Vcheni..., 1995a](#); [Vcheni..., 1995b](#); [Vcheni..., 1995c](#); [Vcheni..., 2003](#); [Vcheni..., 2004](#)).

The initial livelihood level of the Novorossiia Imperial University staff was various. For example, V. Rotert was a son of the Riga Bank director while his colleagues came from very poor families. Thus, L. Pisarzhevsky lost his father early and worked since the age of 14. As an orphan seminarian, P. Tsitovich went on foot 500 versts to the Kharkiv University. There were successors of parent professors and researchers: M. Lange, F. Korsh, M. Grot, B. Liapunov. Intellectual family representatives were V. Krusman, D. Kryzhanovsky. Many lecturers came from families of famous artists and public figures ([Obozrenie..., 1865-1917](#); [Profesory..., 2000](#); [Profesory..., 2020](#); [Vcheni..., 1995a](#); [Vcheni..., 1995b](#); [Vcheni..., 1995c](#); [Vcheni..., 2003](#); [Vcheni..., 2004](#)).

Among the Novorossiia Imperial University members, there were also academic dynasties. Especially, that concerns the Malinins. N. Malinin graduated from the Novorossiia Imperial University and acquired the professor title. The same was done by his son Ivan who was elected a privat-docent of the history and philology faculty. The similar situation was for the Prendels, the Tanatarovs, the Mochulskys.

58 members of the Novorossiia Imperial University graduated from the Moscow University. Besides, people previously studied at the Saint Petersburg University (53), the Saint Vladimir University (28), the Saint Petersburg Medicine and Surgery Academy (26), the Kharkiv Imperial University (22), the Dorpat University (20). Other institutions' graduates: the Kazan University (11), the Warsaw University (4), the Saint Petersburg Pedagogical Institute (4), the Moscow Theological Academy (4), the Kyiv Theological Academy (3), the Kazan Theological Academy (3), the Saint Petersburg Institute for History and Philology (3), the Saint Petersburg Theological Academy (2) and the Nizhyn Institute for History and Philology (2) ([Obozrenie..., 1865-1917](#); [Profesory..., 2000](#); [Profesory..., 2020](#); [Vcheni..., 1995a](#); [Vcheni..., 1995b](#); [Vcheni..., 1995c](#); [Vcheni..., 2003](#); [Vcheni..., 2004](#)).

The Novorossiia Imperial University teachers graduated from 12 foreign institutions as well. 3 persons came from the Heidelberg University. The Vienna University had 2 future members. 1 lecturer graduated from the Athens, Prague, Magdeburg, Leipzig, Naples, Bern and Nancy Universities. The same concerns the Berlin Polytechnical University, the Royal Gumbert Lyceum in Naples, the Freiberg University of Mining ([Obozrenie..., 1865-1917](#); [Profesory..., 2000](#); [Profesory..., 2020](#); [Vcheni..., 1995a](#); [Vcheni..., 1995b](#); [Vcheni..., 1995c](#); [Vcheni..., 2003](#); [Vcheni..., 2004](#)).

The Novorossiia Imperial University staff belonged to 5 confessions. There were 409 Orthodoxes, 34 Protestants, 31 Catholics, 14 Jews, 2 Gregorian Armenians ([Obozrenie..., 1865-1917](#); [Profesory..., 2000](#); [Profesory..., 2020](#); [Vcheni..., 1995a](#); [Vcheni..., 1995b](#); [Vcheni..., 1995c](#); [Vcheni..., 2003](#); [Vcheni..., 2004](#)). That reflected the general religion tendency in the Russian Empire.

According to their birth place, 374 members of the Novorossiia Imperial University came from 18 countries (for other people, we could not define the data). They were born in Ukraine (149), Russia (145), Georgia (13), Moldova (12); Poland and Belarus (9 each); Latvia (8); Lithuania and Finland (6 each); Estonia and Italy (3 each); England, Germany, Croatia and the Czech Republic (2 each); Bulgaria, Greece and Denmark (1 each) ([Obozrenie..., 1865–1917](#); [Profesory..., 2000](#); [Profesory..., 2020](#); [Vcheni..., 1995a](#); [Vcheni..., 1995b](#); [Vcheni..., 1995c](#); [Vcheni..., 2003](#); [Vcheni..., 2004](#)). Many belonged to mixed races, which made it difficult to identify their origin.

## 5. Conclusion

The Novorossiia Imperial University was founded to develop higher education in the Russian Empire. The statute as of 1863 provided an opportunity to make radical changes in higher education. The Novorossiia Imperial University started its work with the temporary staff: ordinary and extraordinary professors, associate professors and foreign-language teachers. The staff was going to be reformed with 29 ordinary and 13 extraordinary professors (DSc), 16 associate professors and 4 foreign-language teachers.

Since its foundation, the Novorossiia Imperial University played a significant role in public life of the city and region. In particular, the academic staff actively participated in all-Russian events: archeological, statistical (1868), agricultural (1876). Besides, they were interested in local agricultural, entomological and other events.

The university organized a range of all-Russian congresses. In 1883, it held the 7th Congress of Naturalists and Physicians (over 1000 participants). In 1884, the university hosted the 6th Archeological Congress (over 370 researchers).

Like other institutions, the Novorossiia Imperial University was a complex public organism with teaching and extra-teaching functions. Its relevance was “the school life”. Regardless of official acts, the university policy exceeded the academic scope, which produced new ideas in the paradigm “university – city”. The social portrait study of the Novorossiia Imperial University staff proves a significant role and influence of the university on higher education image and city development.

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