

CRITICAL FORUM: ENTANGLED SPATIAL HISTORY

Horizontal Threads: Towards an Entangled Spatial History of the Romanov Empire

Catherine Gibson  and Anton Kotenko 

¹University of Tartu, Estonia and ²Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf, Germany

Corresponding author: Catherine Gibson; Email: catherine.helen.gibson@ut.ee

Abstract

This article outlines an emerging approach in the spatial history of the Romanov empire. Similar to other empires of the long nineteenth century, the Romanov empire has traditionally been understood as a spoked wheel, whose vertical axes of power and lines of communication flowed between the metropolitan “core” and the “peripheries.” We argue for the need to move beyond this well-worn image of the empire as a vertical structure of “center-periphery” relations. Instead, we consider the heuristic potential of studying horizontal “periphery-periphery” entanglements interconnecting this state, following threads which were not necessarily woven through the metropole. The argument is illustrated through a discussion of several examples from the Baltic and southwestern provinces, which highlight both the challenges and potentials of intra-imperial entangled history.

Keywords: Romanov empire; spatial history; entanglements; horizontal connections; nineteenth century

Several years ago, the authors of this article met during a workshop on the historiography of east European imperial borderlands and, as often happens, the conversation turned to a discussion of our recent archival finds. The first case concerned donations collected in

We thank the editor and reviewers of the journal for their valuable reflections. We were encouraged to think about this topic during a workshop at the Slavic-Eurasian Research Center in Sapporo in November 2022, and are grateful to Yoko Aoshima for the invitation. In 2023 and 2024, we presented drafts of the article at the University of Eastern Finland and Södertörn University and are thankful to our hosts for providing us with this opportunity and to the participants for the discussion. Nick Baron, Per Bolin, Andrei Cușco, Julia Malitska, Jani Marjanen, Wiktor Marzec, Darius Staliūnas, and Ricarda Vulpius kindly read and commented on early versions of this text, and we appreciate their critical feedback and suggestions for how to strengthen the argument. Catherine Gibson’s work on the article forms part of the project “Empire of Solidarities: A Connected History of Private Charity Across a Decentered Romanov Empire, 1855–1914,” funded by the European Union (ERC, EMPSOLID, 101162204). Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Council Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them. Anton Kotenko’s research was carried out as part of “Zootopia: Geschichte der zoologischen Gärten im Romanow-Reich,” funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation), project number 522242213.

© The Author(s), 2025. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution and reproduction, provided the original article is properly cited.

Estliandiia province in 1887 for victims of an earthquake in Semirech'e region.¹ This charitable effort was not an isolated event, as attested to by the numerous other files about fundraising initiatives in the Baltic provinces on behalf of those living in distant parts of the empire, including aid sent to help victims of a fire in Samara province and those affected by flooding in Irkutsk province.² (Figure 1)

The second and the third cases revealed other examples of intra-imperial ties, this time in the sphere of human–animal relations. In one instance, in 1894, members of the Odessa (Odesa) Society for the Protection of Animals requested the board of their Warsaw counterpart to share samples of protective horn covers for cattle, which prevented animals from being hurt during railway transportation.³ Similarly, in 1901, having received an order from the governor of Lifliandiia to stop catching urban dogs with iron lassos and replace them with nets, Riga municipal authorities contacted their colleagues in nearby Revel' (Tallinn) and St. Petersburg to ask whether they were already using nets to catch dogs, how they did it, and, if possible, to share a sample of the net.⁴ These everyday life stories of charitable donors and animals, buried in seemingly unremarkable archival files of bureaucratic correspondence and accounting records, struck us as illuminating examples of a particular type of spatial history of the Romanov empire that has thus far remained somewhat inconspicuous in the existing scholarship.

Spatial history is an approach that has gained notable traction in the past three decades, also in the context of East European and Eurasian Studies.⁵ In 2007, Nick Baron surveyed a vast body of research on the Romanov empire and Soviet Union which emerged in response to the spatial turn in humanities and divided it into three categories dealing with global, national-territorial, and everyday life spaces.⁶ In subsequent years, the field mapped by Baron was further elaborated in two edited volumes that explicitly presented their contributions as a “new spatial history.”⁷ The stories of contacts between different regions and cities of the empire—Estliandiia and Semirech'e, Odessa and Warsaw, Riga and Revel'—from which we started this article are, however, largely missing from the discussion of the field so far.

We argue that we can conceptualize such cases as examples of entangled histories, which foreground connections *within* the empire and *across* imperial regions, which were not necessarily woven *through* the metropole. In contrast to histories of global interrelations, national-territorial particularities, and spaces of everyday life delineated by Baron, entangled history emphasizes multidirectionality, relationality, and the proliferation of

¹ Eesti Rahvusarhiiv (National Archives of Estonia, hereafter RA), EAA.29.2.2444 (O sbore pozhertvovani). Throughout the article, toponyms are presented according to the name given in the sources, with the contemporary name provided in parentheses at the first mention in instances where they differ.

² RA, EAA.30.9.2057 (O sbore sredstv); RA, EAA.29.1.2937 (O sbore dobrovol'nykh pozhertvovani).

³ “Na poslednem zasedanii,” *Odesskie Novosti* 2882, February 24, 1894, 2.

⁴ By the end of July, they received a reply from Revel', according to which local dogcatchers were still using iron lassos and their attempt to introduce nets “has not yet led to a final result”: Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs (Latvian State Historical Archive), fonds (collection) 2724, apraksts (inventory) 2, lieta (file) 179 (Obiazatel'nye postanovleniia o merakh protiv beshenstva), 46, 52, 58.

⁵ For a recent overview of spatial history as an approach, see Riccardo Bavaj, Konrad Lawson, and Bernhard Struck, eds., *Doing Spatial History* (New York, 2022). On its application to the region, see, for instance Malte Rolf, “Importing the ‘Spatial Turn’ to Russia: Recent Studies on the Spatialization of Russian History,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 11, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 359–80.

⁶ Nick Baron, “New Spatial Histories of Twentieth Century Russia and the Soviet Union: Surveying the Landscape,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 55, no. 3 (2007): 374–400.

⁷ Mark Bassin, Christopher Ely, and Melissa Stockdale, eds., *Space, Place, and Power in Modern Russia: Essays in the New Spatial History* (DeKalb, Illinois, 2010); Sanna Turoma and Maxim Waldstein, eds., *Empire De/Centered: New Spatial Histories of Russia and the Soviet Union* (Surrey, UK, 2013).

86

Korjamise leht.

Konowere Valla walitsuse poolt, nende rahwa headuseks
kes maade wäristamise läbi suure puuduse sisse
langenud on, Wernõi linnas ja selle ümberkaudu.

		Rubla	Kop
1	Peremees Karli Milt andis.	-	40
2	Peremehe poeg Jüri Milt andis.	-	10
3	Peremees Jaan Meier andis.	1	-
4	Peremehe poeg Jaan Meier andis	-	25
5	Peremees J. Haamon	-	40
6	Peremees A. Kroll.	-	25
7	Peremehe poeg J. Kroll.	-	5
8	Peremees Jaan Hau	-	60
9	Peremehe poeg Mikkel Hau	-	20
10	Julane Jõnis Krausberg	-	10
11	Peremees J. Päästlane	-	20
12	Jüri Päästlane	-	10
13	Johannine Päästlane	-	10
14	Peremees J. Hau	-	60
15	Peremees Jüri Tamberg	-	30
16	Peremehe poeg Jüri Tamberg	-	10
17	naine Jüri Tamberg	-	20
18	Peremees F. Teder	50	
19	Peremees M. Teder	50	
20	Peremees M. Hau	5	
21	Johann M. Hau	10	
22	Peremees J. Hau	50	
23	Peremees M. Elwei	20	
24	naine Anna Elwei	5	
25	Julane Kartaw Paba	5	

Figure 1. First page of a list of the names of forty-two villagers from Konowere (Konuvere), Vigala parish, in Estlandia province, who in 1887 collectively donated 10 rubles and 50 kopeks "for the good of those people who fell into great poverty during the earthquake in the town of Verny [Almaty] and its surroundings": National Archives of Estonia, EAA.29.2.2444.86.

non-state circulations, exchanges, mobilities, and influences.⁸ In this article, we characterize these entangled histories using the metaphor of horizontal threads interlinking the empire's various regions. The metaphor of threads has been previously used on several occasions by historians of the Romanov empire, possibly inspired by Richard Wortman's 1989 article that employed the term in a narrower sense and was based on a quotation from a 1913 text by Andrei Elchaninov praising the imaginary "invisible threads" of devotion of the empire's people to the emperor.⁹ More recently, this metaphor was taken up by Charles Steinwedel, who attributes the phrase "invisible threads" to a 1906 article by Petr Koropachinskii, Ufa Provincial Zemstvo Chairman, which discussed the "creation of shared cultural understandings that would link residents of a great state."¹⁰ Unlike historians and their protagonists (Wortman and Elchaninov, Steinwedel and Koropachinskii), we reverse the use of the metaphor to characterize not vertical connections between the emperor and his subjects but horizontal entanglements within the empire. Moreover, in contrast to other spatial metaphors commonly used in imperial studies more broadly—such as that of a wheel-and-spoke or of a web (to be discussed below)—we prefer the notion of horizontal threads as it allows us to bring to light the multidirectional "warp and woof" weaving the fabric of imperial society together, and not only those connections facilitated by a infrastructural central axel (in the case of a wheel) or the agency of a spider pulling on strings from the center (as in a web).¹¹

In what follows, we argue that incorporating horizontal entanglements into the toolbox of approaches used to study the empire will not simply add another layer to the larger narrative of imperial history, but can provide us with one way of answering a key question in the historiography posed by Mark von Hagen already in the early 1990s. Von Hagen distinguished between the two prevalent paradigms of writing the empire's history: that of expansionism and conquest, and that of decline and fall. "What has been missing," he argued, "is much sense of how the empire worked for as long as it did, how it evolved over time, how it accommodated the very differing communities and territories that it came to command, and how those communities and territories themselves were transformed by their place in the imperial system."¹² We argue that, on the one hand, an exploration of intra-imperial networks of communication and cooperation, competition and conflict, can help us understand the neglected nuts and bolts of how the empire functioned. On the other hand, paying attention to both the strengthening and "snapping of the imperial threads" can contribute to explanations of the empire's longevity, malfunction, and eventual breakup.¹³ For instance, Alexander Motyl has proposed that "a growing harmony of interests between periphery and periphery...supplant[s] the harmony of interests that earlier characterized core and periphery. As the hublike structure changes—and the 'wheel'

⁸ Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmerman, "Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity," *History and Theory* 45, no. 1 (February 2006): 30–50.

⁹ Richard Wortman, "Invisible Threads": The Historical Imagery of the Romanov Tercentenary," *Russian History* 16, no. 2–4 (1989): 389–408. For instance, the metaphor was used in Catherine Evtuhov, *Portrait of a Russian Province: Economy, Society, and Civilization in Nineteenth-Century Nizhnii Novgorod* (Pittsburgh, 2011), 14, and in Joshua Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse: The Great War and the Destruction of the Russian Empire* (Oxford, 2014), 183.

¹⁰ Charles Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire: Loyalty and Tsarist Authority in Bashkiria, 1552–1917* (Bloomington, 2016), 3–4.

¹¹ The metaphor of society as a woven fabric comes from the 1910 novel by E. M. Forster, *Howards End* (New York, 1921), 127, which has the tagline "Only connect..."

¹² Mark von Hagen, "Writing the History of Russia as Empire: The Perspective of Federalism," in Catherine Evtuhov, Boris Gasparov, Alexander Ospovat, and Mark von Hagen, eds., *Kazan, Moscow, St. Petersburg: Multiple Faces of the Russian Empire* (Moscow, 1997), 397.

¹³ Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse*, 183.

progressively loses its spokes and gains a rim—the empire becomes susceptible to attrition.”¹⁴ Further empirical studies of horizontal threads can help to substantiate or disprove such statements.

The aim of this article is to provide an overview of the state of the art of Romanov imperial spatial history and outline several arguments for how focusing more on intra-imperial connections might interject new perspectives into studies of the empire’s past. We begin by sketching the prevalent historiographical approaches characterizing the empire as a set of vertical entanglements between the “center” and “peripheries.” Then, we trace the attempts to move beyond this image by writing transnational, transimperial, and global histories of the empire. The next section adds a third spatial framework to the conversation—horizontal entanglements between regions of the empire—and points to some directions for future research, drawing on insights from archival materials we have encountered. Finally, we conclude by reflecting on several challenges and limitations of the approach. We are historians of the long nineteenth century, and our argument is grounded in historiographical insights and empirical cases from our respective regions of specialization—the Baltic and southwestern provinces. Acknowledging that our views are not necessarily representative or applicable to the empire as a whole, we nonetheless hope that they will be generative for those working on other imperial regions and on the eighteenth century as well.

Vertical Entanglements: “Center-Periphery” Histories of Empires

Historians have traditionally conceptualized nineteenth-century empires as “radial power structure(s),” consisting of vertical axes of power, lines of communication flowing outward from the metropolitan “core” to the “peripheries,” and systems of governance designed to “maintain distinction and hierarchy.”¹⁵ As Karen Barkey argues,

Empires conquered and ruled by maintaining a pattern structurally resembling a hub-and-spoke network pattern, where each spoke was attached to the center but was less directly related to the others. The fact that imperial relations were vertically integrated, and that peripheral entities communicated mainly with the center and with one another only through the center, provided centers with added control over the various peripheral entities.¹⁶

The same approach has often been applied to the Romanov empire, whose rulers have been characterized as intent on creating a highly centralized state.¹⁷ Histories of the empire are still commonly framed spatially along binary axes of capital and borderland, or Russian versus non-Russian regions. Metaphorically speaking, much historiography seems to have

¹⁴ Alexander Motyl, *Imperial Ends: The Decay, Collapse, and Revival of Empires* (New York, 2011), 53–54.

¹⁵ Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Princeton, 2014), 614, 427; Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, 2011), 8.

¹⁶ Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge, Eng., 2008), 10. Elaborating on this idea, Barkey notes how “The structure of relations between the center and the periphery both maintained the provision of goods and services to the center as part of imperial state-society contracts, as well as made peripheral elites dependent on the center, communicating only with the center rather than with one another. The segmentation principle at the heart of empire retains the vertical integration of elites at the expense of horizontal linkages”: Barkey, *Empire of Difference*, 17–18. For a discussion of the “hubs and spokes” metaphor, see Motyl, *Imperial Ends*, 13–15.

¹⁷ John LeDonne, *Forging a Unitary State: Russia’s Management of the Eurasian Space, 1650–1850* (Toronto, 2020).

been guided by the “center-periphery” organization of the empire’s ways of communications, which by the end of the century, according to one contemporary, “were arranged to be convenient only with capital cities and abroad.”¹⁸

Many intellectuals of the late nineteenth century vigorously contested the empire’s vertical structure.¹⁹ Likewise, over the past several decades mounting scholarly criticism of this approach has led historians to reflect on the contingency of the seemingly rigid concepts of “center” and “peripheries,” and bring them into the same analytical field to show that they were mutually constitutive.²⁰ Moreover, as Leonid Gorizontov argued, the notion of the “center” was also constructed, and the extent and scope of what was defined as part of the “center” could vary considerably.²¹

Despite widespread recognition of the limitations of the binary division of the empire into a “center” and subordinated “peripheries,” relatively few studies (see below) have elaborated this point empirically. As summed up by Catherine Evtuhov, the historiography of “the ‘biggest country’—famously, one-sixth of the world’s surface—has remained largely confined to a flattened, homogenized, centralized perspective.”²² The result of this is that “peripheries” have often been studied as sites of interventions from the imperial center. This approach is exemplified by studies of “Russification” policies across the empire, of inhabitants’ vertical threads of loyalty to the emperor, or of resistance to policies imposed by the “center.”²³ Another shortcoming of analyzing the past in terms of “center” and “peripheries” has been to focus on Russians and Russian experiences as paradigmatic of the whole of the empire, a tradition of scholarship following in the footsteps of the authoritative *Course of Russian History* by Vasilii Kliuchevskii.²⁴ Perhaps, this also explains why

¹⁸ For a contemporary critique of this model, see Dmitrii Protopopov, “Po russkim gorodam,” *Gorodskoe Delo* 24 (1909): 1299.

¹⁹ For the history of various projects to reform the empire, see Dimitri von Mohrenschildt, *Toward a United States of Russia: Plans and Projects of Federal Reconstruction of Russia in the Nineteenth Century* (Rutherford, New Jersey, 1981); Mark von Hagen, “Federalisms and Pan-Movements: Re-Imagining Empire,” in Jane Burbank, Mark von Hagen, and Anatolyi Remnev, eds., *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700–1930* (Bloomington, 2007), 495–510.

²⁰ Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, “Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda,” in Anna Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, 1997), 1–56. For an example of the production of notions of “center” and “peripherality” through power relations and struggles on a later example of Soviet Karelia, see Nick Baron’s *Soviet Karelia: Politics, Planning and Terror in Stalin’s Russia, 1920–1939* (New York, 2007). Baron characterizes this region as a “dual periphery,” depending on Helsinki as much as Moscow. On the problematization of the seemingly uncontested nature of “peripherality” or “liminality,” see also Anssi Paasi, “The Social Construction of Peripherality: The Case of Finland and the Finnish-Russian Border Area,” in Heikki Eskelinen and Folke Snickars, eds., *Competitive European Peripheries* (Berlin, 1995), 235–58.

²¹ Leonid Gorizontov, “The ‘Great Circle’ of Interior Russia: Representations of the Imperial Center in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” in Burbank, von Hagen, and Remnev, eds., *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power*, 85.

²² Evtuhov, *Portrait of a Russian Province*, 6. Evtuhov’s book differs from our approach as it focuses on the story of one province rather than interconnections between places.

²³ Edward Thaden, ed., *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855–1914* (Princeton, 1981); Ricarda Vulpius, *Nationalisierung der Religion: Russifizierungspolitik und Ukrainische Nationsbildung, 1860–1920* (Wiesbaden, 2005); Darius Staliūnas, *Making Russians: Meaning and Practice of Russification in Lithuania and Belarus After 1863* (Amsterdam, 2007); Alexei Miller, “Russification or Russifications?,” in Alexei Miller, *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism: Essays in the Methodology of Historical Research* (Budapest, 2008), 45–66; Mikhail Dolbilov, *Russkii kraj, chuzhaia vera: Etnokonfessional’naia politika imperii v Litve i Belorussii pri Aleksandre II* (Moscow, 2010); Karsten Brüggemann, *Licht und Luft des Imperiums: Legitimations- und Repräsentationsstrategien russischer Herrschaft in den Ostseeprovinzen im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden, Germany 2018); Darius Staliūnas and Yoko Aoshima, eds., *The Tsar, the Empire, and the Nation: Dilemmas of Nationalization in Russia’s Western Borderlands, 1905–1915* (Budapest, 2021).

²⁴ On Kliuchevskii and his narrative, see Robert Byrnes, “The Survey Course that Became a Classic Set: Kliuchevskii’s Course of Russian History,” *The Journal of Modern History* 66, no. 4 (December 1994): 737–54. Boris Mironov’s *Rossiiskaia imperiia: Ot traditsii k modernu* (St. Petersburg, 2014), which centers on Russia in its post-1991 borders, can be considered as a pinnacle of the development of Kliuchevskii’s narrative.

historians continue to uncritically name the empire through the prism of ethnicity as the “Russian empire,” rather than employing the neologism of the “Romanov empire” as an analytical category derived from the ruling dynasty to acknowledge the empire’s ethnic heterogeneity, as our colleagues in Habsburg, Ottoman, or Qing studies do.²⁵

Since the 1990s, as a result of the “imperial turn” and the flurry of methodological novelties in the field, there has been a concerted effort to challenge some of these assumptions about the workings of the empire and to pay more attention to the experiences of those living outside of the imagined “core.”²⁶ Andreas Kappeler’s path-breaking study attempted to rewrite a more inclusive history of the empire that incorporated its ethnically, religiously, and socially diverse inhabitants.²⁷ In a similar vein, the journal *Ab Imperio* has contributed to shaping a body of historiography that sought to chart a “new imperial history” emphasizing the heterogeneity of the “imperial situation.”²⁸ Others, building on earlier traditions of local history (*kraevedenie*) and regional studies (*regionovedenie*), argued for the importance of looking beyond metropolises to bring “provinces into focus.”²⁹ Another endeavor in this direction is the multivolume “New Literary Review” series on the “Borderlands of the Russian Empire,” which presently comprises nine parts.³⁰ More recently, a new generation of graduate students has increasingly pursued research on various “peripheries” of the Romanov empire, researched in state and regional archives in countries across the former empire, and placed more emphasis on learning other regional languages besides Russian.³¹ Nevertheless, scholarship still mostly examines the regions as either detached from one another or vis-à-vis an imperial center.

Running parallel to these developments in the historiography of the Romanov empire, however, historians of other empires were actively involved in discussions about the need to complement “center-periphery” approaches to imperial history by bringing “periphery-periphery” connections into the analytical field. Several alternatives for foregrounding

²⁵ For this reason, throughout the article we use “Romanov empire,” and not “Tsarist empire” or “Russian empire,” as an analytical term to stress its heterogeneous nature and the incompleteness of its Russification in the second half of the nineteenth century. For examples of terminological inconsistency in the naming of empires, see Karen Barkey, ed., *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building: The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires* (Boulder, 1997), and the recent edited volume, which opens with a reference to “the territories of the former Ottoman, Qing, Russian, and Habsburg Empires”: Ivan Sablin and Egas Moniz Bandeira, eds., *Parties as Governments in Eurasia, 1913–1991: Nationalism, Socialism, and Development* (London, 2022), 1.

²⁶ For a discussion of literature on center-regional relations, see Baron, “New Spatial Histories,” 392–93. On the “imperial turn,” see Michael David-Fox, Peter Holquist, and Alexander M. Martin, “The Imperial Turn,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 7, no. 4 (June 2006): 705–12.

²⁷ Andreas Kappeler, *Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History*, trans. Alfred Clayton (Harlow, UK, 2001), originally published in German in 1992. For a recent concise iteration of this argument, see Andreas Kappeler, “Vielvölkerreich Russland. Historische Voraussetzungen im Zarenreich,” *Osteuropa* 74, no. 1–3 (April 2024): 5–23.

²⁸ For a programmatic article outlining the editors’ intervention, see I. Gerasimov, S. Glebov, A. Kaplunovskii, M. Mogilner, and A. Semyonov, “In Search of a New Imperial History,” *Ab Imperio* no. 1 (2005): 33–56.

²⁹ Susan Smith-Peter, “Bringing the Provinces into Focus: Subnational Spaces in the Recent Historiography of Russia,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12, no. 4 (Fall 2011): 835–48; Evtuhov, *Portrait of a Russian Province*; Katherine Pickering Antonova, *An Ordinary Marriage: The World of a Gentry Family in Provincial Russia* (Oxford, 2013); Susan Smith-Peter, *Imagining Russian Regions: Subnational Identity and Civil Society in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Leiden, 2018).

³⁰ As of 2024, the series includes volumes on Alaska, Bessarabia, Central Asia, Far Eastern Republic, North Caucasus, Siberia, Kingdom of Poland, southern steppe borderland, and western region. Indicative of the approach is the latter, which presents the northwestern and southwestern regions as parallel, rather than connected spaces. For another example of the historiography of provinces as detached entities, see Ekaterina Boltunova and Willard Sunderland, eds., *Regiony Rossiiskoi imperii: Identichnost’, reprezentatsiia, (na)znachenie* (Moscow, 2021).

³¹ The *Peripheral Histories?* blog (est. 2016) shares research done in this direction by graduate students and early career scholars. See: <https://www.peripheralhistories.co.uk/> (accessed May 13, 2025). See also Catherine Gibson, Susan Grunewald, Siobhán Hearne, Jo Laycock, Hanna Matt, and Alun Thomas, “Peripheral Histories: Reflections on a Digital History Project in an Evolving Field,” *Ab Imperio* 3 (January 2023): 245–53.

horizontal entanglements between imperial regions and colonies were proposed. For the British empire, Tony Ballantyne argued that “the traditional metaphor for conceptualizing the empire, the spoked wheel, is in desperate need of revision,” and instead suggested using webs as an “organising analytical metaphor” to study the circulation of ideas between the local, national, and imperial levels.³² Karen Barkey contended that the proliferation of horizontal ties and associations in the Ottoman empire over the long eighteenth century led to the emergence of a “networking society,” meaning that “spokes were joined, just not at the hub, but now also on the rim of the periphery ... forging new patterns of social organization, *faute de mieux*, away from empire and toward the nation-state.”³³ Within Habsburg studies, Jana Osterkamp used the term “cooperative empire” in her study of communication and collaboration between provincial institutions, which substantially weakened the “old radial and vertical arrangement of power structures between core and province.”³⁴ In a broader context, a dynamic body of literature has emerged among scholars of the “connected world(s)” of globalizing anticolonialisms of the twentieth century, which focuses on “south-south” relations to “build an understanding of the world not as arranged according to a ‘core-periphery’ western-centric model, but as following lateral, networked, and ‘periphery-periphery’ lines of connection.”³⁵

Historians of the Romanov empire have thus far not been active participants in these wider debates about how to rethink the spatial history of empires horizontally. On the one hand, this oversight is epistemological. Guided by methodological nationalism, historians of the Romanov empire have often favored post-imperial states as “the fundamental unit” of historical investigation, which “obscures the role of exchange relationships” between them.³⁶ This has had a strong impact on, and was influenced by, the national historiographies of the states established on the empire’s former territories, which often downplayed or even entirely omitted the imperial context from histories of their nations during the nineteenth century.³⁷ In cases where the empire is incorporated into national narratives, it is usually in terms of “center-periphery” relations. For example, Karsten Brüggemann notes how Estonian historiography typically displays a “fixation on the imperial center” and perpetuates a narrative of nationalism as a centrifugal force that shattered the empire from the borderlands inwards.³⁸ In Ukrainian historiography, according to Georgiy Kasianov, the nationalized and essentialized history of the 1990s and 2000s consisted “entirely of the nation’s struggle for survival and its contest with internal and external enemies; it

³² Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (Houndmills, UK, 2002), 14. On the benefits of applying such an approach to topics such as the lateral mobilities of experts and indentured labor migrants, see, for instance, Anna Greenwood and Harshad Topiwala, *Indian Doctors in Kenya, 1895–1940: The Forgotten History* (New York, 2015); Sascha Auerbach, *The Overseer State: Slavery, Indenture and Governance in the British Empire, 1812–1916* (Cambridge, Eng., 2024).

³³ Barkey, *Empire of Difference*, 27.

³⁴ Jana Osterkamp, “Cooperative Empires: Provincial Initiatives in Imperial Austria,” trans. Jamie Hyland, *Austrian History Yearbook* 47 (April 2016): 134, 144.

³⁵ Dominic Davies and Elleke Boehmer, “Postcolonialism and South-South Relations,” in Elena Fiddian-Qasimiyeh and Patricia Daley, eds., *Routledge Handbook of South-South Relations* (New York, 2019), 48; see also Benedict Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (London, 2005); Su Lin Lewis and Carolien Stolte, “Other Bandungs: Afro-Asian Internationalisms in the Early Cold War,” *Journal of World History* 30, no. 1–2 (June 2019): 1–19.

³⁶ Sebastian Conrad, *What Is Global History?* (Princeton, 2016), 3.

³⁷ Catherine Gibson, *Borderlands Between History and Memory: Latgale’s Palimpsestuous Past in Contemporary Latvia* (Tartu, 2016), 97–8. See also the articles by Andrej Nowak, Volodymyr Kravchenko, Siarhei Tokts’, and Darius Staliūnas in Mikhail Dolbilov and Aleksei Miller, eds., *Zapadnye okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii* (Moscow, 2006), 429–552.

³⁸ Karsten Brüggemann, “Baltic History after 24 February 2022: The Charm of Transnational Peripheries?,” *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 71, no. 3 (January 2022): 425.

is constantly ‘othering’ neighbors to produce a black-and-white high-contrast world.”³⁹ These trends in Estonian and Ukrainian national historiography chime with what Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper noted in a different context, namely how “colonial history has been so nationally bound that it has blinded us to those circuits of knowledge and communication that took other routes than those shaped by the metropole-colony axis alone.”⁴⁰

On the other hand, the well-worn image of the Romanov empire as a set of relations between a “center” and “peripheries” has been influenced by practical and structural factors. The organization of archives around the former vertical administrative power and decision-making structures, tradition of doing fieldwork in just two main sites (archives of St. Petersburg/Moscow and in the collections dealing with one region of the empire), and the nature of scholars’ specializations and language skills (knowledge of Russian and a language[s] relevant for the region of specialization), have all contributed to the perpetuation of the “center-periphery” paradigm.

Extra-Imperial Entanglements: Transnational, Transimperial, and Global Histories of the Empire

In the past decades, three spatial approaches—transnational, transimperial, and global history—expanded the field beyond nationally-bounded ways of writing history by exploring connections across borders. Challenging the idea that states are the exclusive and exhaustive units of analysis, historians foreground circulations, interactions, and transfers.⁴¹ In the case of the Romanov empire, transnational history approaches have been applied in the context of various national histories of its former territories.⁴² Moreover, a number of scholars have viewed the empire as a whole through a transimperial lens to challenge isolationist tendencies in the writing of its history and embed it instead in a wider system of networks and interconnections.⁴³

Several topics have been at the forefront of transnational and transimperial approaches to the Romanov empire. Studies of borderlands and inter-imperial contact zones—for instance, in the Romanov-Ottoman and Romanov-Habsburg border regions, the Baltic Sea, and the Far East—have been generative for thinking about cultural, economic, political, and social networks permeating across state boundaries.⁴⁴ As Andreas Kappeler noted, inquiries into “contacts and interactions between empires” allow scholars to understand

³⁹ Georgiy Kasianov, “‘Nationalized’ History: Past Continuous, Present Perfect, Future...,” in Georgiy Kasianov and Philipp Ther, eds., *A Laboratory of Transnational History: Ukraine and Recent Ukrainian Historiography* (Budapest, 2009), 20.

⁴⁰ Stoler and Cooper, “Between Metropole and Colony,” 28.

⁴¹ Ángel Alcalde, “Spatializing Transnational History: European Spaces and Territories,” *European Review of History: Revue européenne d’histoire* 25, no. 3–4 (July 2018): 554; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Connected Histories: Notes Towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia,” *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 3 (July 1997): 735–62.

⁴² See, for instance, Kasianov and Ther, eds., *A Laboratory of Transnational History*; Karsten Brüggemann, “Transnational History and the History of a Nation: The Case of Estonia,” *Acta Historica Tallinnensia* 27, no. 1 (January 2021): 3–38.

⁴³ Martin Aust, Rikarda Vulpius, and Aleksei Miller, eds., *Imperium inter pares: Rol’ transferov v istorii Rossiiskoi imperii, 1700–1917* (Moscow, 2010).

⁴⁴ Paulus Adelsgruber, Laurie Cohen, and Börries Kuzmany, *Getrennt und doch verbunden: Grenzstädte zwischen Österreich und Russland 1772–1918* (Vienna, 2011); Lucien Frary and Mara Kozelsky, eds., *Russian-Ottoman Borderlands: The Eastern Question Reconsidered* (Madison, 2014); Michael North, *The Baltic: A History*, trans. Kenneth Kronenber (Cambridge, Mass., 2015); Alyssa Park, *Sovereignty Experiments: Korean Migrants and the Building of Borders in Northeast Asia, 1860–1945* (Ithaca, 2019); Houri Berberian, *Roving Revolutionaries: Armenians and the Connected Revolutions in the Russian, Iranian, and Ottoman Worlds* (Oakland, 2019); Sören Urbansky, *Beyond the Steppe Frontier: A History of the Sino-Russian Border* (Princeton, 2020).

better how empires “survived for centuries, how they were organized and structured, and how imperial rule was established and maintained.”⁴⁵ Another research stream deals with voluntary and forced mobility, including labor migration, emigration, and expulsion, deepening our knowledge of social and economic networks that spanned different continents.⁴⁶ Scholars of religion have drawn attention to pilgrimages and entangled cross-border confessional communities.⁴⁷ Others have focused on the circulation of ideas and practices.⁴⁸ Increasingly, historians have started paying greater attention to environmental histories and the mobility of nonhuman animals or plants that were not bound by human borders.⁴⁹

Global history is the most recent newcomer to the historiography of the Romanov empire, and, compared to its nineteenth-century imperial counterparts, the field is far less developed.⁵⁰ Several themes have emerged as particularly fruitful for breaking away from a tendency to cast the Romanov empire as isolationist and exceptional, instead presenting it as part of the globalizing world. Aside from general histories of the empire that embed it in the broader context of nineteenth-century, a growing body of research has examined the influence of the world on the empire through economic migration, transfers of technologies, or connections to global markets.⁵¹ At the same time, the empire is also

⁴⁵ Andreas Kappeler, “Spaces of Entanglement,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 477–78.

⁴⁶ Vadim Kukushkin, *From Peasants to Labourers: Ukrainian and Belarusian Immigration from the Russian Empire to Canada* (Montreal, 2007); Nora Vilmane, *Latvieši Brazīlijā: Vārpas Kolonija* (Riga, 2019); Vladimir Hamed-Troyansky, *Empire of Refugees: North Caucasian Muslims and the Late Ottoman State* (Stanford, 2024). For a general account of migration, see Lewis Siegelbaum and Leslie Page Moch, *Broad Is My Native Land: Repertoires and Regimes of Migration in Russia's Twentieth Century* (Ithaca, 2015).

⁴⁷ Eileen Kane, *Russian Hajj: Empire and the Pilgrimage to Mecca* (Ithaca, 2015); James Meyer, *Turks Across Empires: Marketing Muslim Identity in the Russian-Ottoman Borderlands, 1856–1914* (New York, 2014); Mustafa Tuna, *Imperial Russia's Muslims: Islam, Empire and European Modernity, 1788–1914* (Cambridge, Eng., 2015).

⁴⁸ Jan Surman, “Paris–Wien–St. Petersburg oder Alger–Brno–Charkiv? Wissenstransfer und die ‘composite states,’” *Quaestio Rossica* 3 (2015): 98–118; Mustafa Tuna, “Kazan Tatar Teacher School: The Global Entanglement of a Local Imperial Institution in The Late Russian Empire,” *Past & Present* 245, no. 1 (November 2019): 153–85.

⁴⁹ David Moon, *The Plough that Broke the Steppes: Agriculture and Environment on Russia's Grasslands, 1700–1914* (Oxford, 2014); Bathsheba Demuth, *Floating Coast: An Environmental History of the Bering Strait* (New York, 2020); Tomasz Samojlik, Anastasia Fedotova, Piotr Daszkiewicz, and Ian D. Rotherham, *Białowieża Primeval Forest: Nature and Culture in the Nineteenth Century* (Cham, Switzerland, 2020); Jennifer Keating, *On Arid Ground: Political Ecologies of Empire in Russian Central Asia* (Oxford, 2022).

⁵⁰ For an overview of the historiography on the Romanov empire in world and global history, see Martin Aust, “New Perspectives on Russian History in World History,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 17, no. 1 (Winter 2016): 139–50. Recent translations of Sebastian Conrad's introduction to the field (Conrad, *What is Global History?*) into at least three languages of the former empire—Estonian, Russian, Georgian—might promote the future development of such research: Sebastian Conrad, *Mis on globaalne ajalugu?*, trans. Olavi Teppan (Tallinn, 2018); Sebastian Konrad, *Čhto takoe global'naia istoriia?*, trans. Andrei Stepanov (Moscow, 2018); Sebastian Conrad, *Ra aris globaluri ist'oria?*, trans. Nino Doborjginidze, Oliver Reisner, and Tilmann Kulke (Tbilisi, 2023).

⁵¹ Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (London, 2000); Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World*; Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*; Choi Chatterjee, *Russia in World History: A Transnational Approach* (London, 2022). On economic migration, see for instance: Heloisa Rojas Gomez, “Migrazioni italiane in Crimea e Nuova Russia: Tracce, fonti, contesti,” *Eurasiatica* 8 (2017): 117–44. On technological and knowledge transfers, see Richard Haywood, *The Beginnings of Railway Development in Russia in the Reign of Nicholas I, 1835–1842* (Durham, NC, 1969); Anna Mazanik, “Learning from Smaller Cities: Moscow in the International Urban Networks, 1870–1910,” in Eszter Gantner, Heidi Hein-Kircher, and Oliver Hochadel, eds., *Interurban Knowledge Exchange in Southern and Eastern Europe, 1870–1950* (New York, 2021), 119–33. On connections to global markets, see Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, *Lodz. Geschichte einer multikulturellen Industriestadt im 20. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn, Germany, 2022), 6–47; Agata Zysiak, Kamil Śmiechowski, Kamil Piskala, Wiktor Marzec, Kaja Kaźmierska, and Jacek Burski, *From Cotton and Smoke: Łódź—Industrial City and Discourses of Asynchronous Modernity 1897–1994* (Łódź, Poland, 2018), 17–102; Alison K. Smith, “A Microhistory of the Global Empire of Cotton: Ivanovo, The ‘Russian Manchester,’” *Past & Present* 244, no. 1 (August 2019): 163–93; Katja Wewel, “The Most Successful Trading Hub in Late Imperial Russia: Using Historical GIS to Map Riga as a Global Port City,” *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 70, no. 3 (September 2021): 389–415.

conceived not only as a recipient but as an influencer and contributor to the globalizing world, whose subjects actively participated in agriculture, intellectual exchange, international law, missionary work, and trade across the world.⁵² Another strand of research has probed how Romanov subjects maneuvered as inter-imperial “go-betweens” in the service of other empires.⁵³ By integrating the Romanov empire into global history, these studies have presented an important counterpoint to the *Sonderweg* narrative, which stresses the singularity and exceptionality of Russia’s “special path.”⁵⁴

Horizontal Entanglements: Intra-Imperial Connections

We argue that there exists yet another avenue for challenging the “center-periphery” approach besides extra-imperial entanglements, namely by studying interconnections *within* the empire and *between* its constituent regions. Catherine Evtuhov already hinted that “a network of ‘invisible threads’ linked the provinces to each other and to the nation as a whole, providing a mechanism for coordinating strategies of management.”⁵⁵ Similarly, Kelly O’Neill deployed the metaphor of “connective tissue that lent the imperial project coherence,” which helps us to see “the empire as a continuous space, though a differentiated one.”⁵⁶ In drawing attention to intra-imperial connections as a fully-fledged area of historical inquiry for the Romanov empire, we highlight several areas of entanglements, which have been preliminarily explored by historians in various case studies, but merit further, consolidated attention.

Currently, intra-imperial entanglements are especially visible in the scholarship on imperial life stories. Biographical and family histories follow “imperial subjects” who lived and worked in different parts of the empire.⁵⁷ Although this is usually a male-dominated story, scholars have also drawn attention to women’s similar experiences.⁵⁸ Within this field, the role of the imperial administrative apparatus in facilitating the mobility of civil

⁵² David Moon, *The American Steppes: The Unexpected Russian Roots of Great Plains Agriculture, 1870s–1930s* (Cambridge, Eng, 2020); Sho Konishi, *Anarchist Modernity: Cooperatism and Japanese-Russian Intellectual Relations in Modern Japan* (Boston, 2013); Martin Aust, “On Parallel Tracks at Different Speeds: Historiographies of Imperial Russia and the Globalized World around 1900,” *Comparativ: Leipziger Beiträge zur Universalgeschichte und Vergleichenden Gesellschaftsforschung* 29, no. 2 (2019): 78–105; Johanna Skurnik, “Encountering Colonial Worlds Through Missionary Maps in the Late-Nineteenth-Century Grand Duchy of Finland,” in: Raita Merivirta, Leila Koivunen, Timo Särkkä, eds., *Finnish Colonial Encounters: From Anti-Imperialism to Cultural Colonialism and Complicity* (Cham, Switzerland, 2021), 199–222; Clare Griffin, *Mixing Medicines: The Global Drug Trade and Early Modern Russia* (Montreal, 2022).

⁵³ Ulrike Plath, “Estonians, Orchids, and Exotic Others: Baltic Colonial Entanglements Revisited,” in Corina L. Apostol, ed., *Orchidelirium: An Appetite for Abundance* (Tallinn, 2022), 53–102: https://cca-admin.cca.ee/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Orchidelirium_hr_spreads.pdf (accessed May 13, 2025); Mikko Toivanen, “A Nordic Colonial Career Across Borders: Hjalmar Björling in the Dutch East Indies and China,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 51, no. 3 (2023): 421–41.

⁵⁴ For more on the *Sonderweg* in the Russian context, see introductions and the first part of Timur Atnashev, Mikhail Velizhev, and Andrei Zorin, eds., “*Osobyi put’*”: *Ot ideologii k metodu* (Moscow, 2018), 9–274.

⁵⁵ Evtuhov, *Portrait of a Russian Province*, 13–14.

⁵⁶ Kelly O’Neill, *Claiming Crimea: A History of Catherine the Great’s Southern Empire* (New Haven, 2017), 4.

⁵⁷ Martin Aust and Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, “Imperial Subjects: Patterns of Identification and Self-Perception in the Continental Empires of Eastern Europe,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 68, no. 2 (2020): 256–69; Andreas Kappeler, *Russland und die Ukraine: Verflochtene Biographien und Geschichten* (Vienna, 2012); Alexander M. Martin, *From the Holy Roman Empire to the Land of the Tsars: One Family’s Odyssey, 1768–1870* (Oxford, 2022); Malte Rolf and Benedikt Tondera, “Imperial Biographies Revisited,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 68, no. 2 (2020): 270–81.

⁵⁸ Susanne Rabow-Edling, *Married to the Empire: Three Governor’s Wives in Russian America 1829–1864* (Fairbanks, 2015); Alexa von Winning, *Intimate Empire: The Mansurov Family in Russia and the Orthodox East, 1855–1936* (Oxford, 2022).

servants has garnered notable attention.⁵⁹ Summarizing the results of their comparative project on elites in the Romanov and Habsburg contexts, Tim Buchen and Malte Rolf flagged how the “circulation of officials established closer links *between* the various provinces.”⁶⁰ Administrators of the empire were often transferred from one region to another and, according to Buchen and Rolf, homogenized the state with the similar policies that these officials applied in different contexts.⁶¹

The administrative entanglement of the empire, however, did not necessarily require the physical mobility of officials. It was commonplace for provincial bureaucrats to correspond and exchange expertise on matters both peaceful and coercive. For example, on May 2, 1888, the governor of Warsaw sent an inquiry to his counterpart in Kovno (Kaunas) informing him of a newly created commission to improve the material well-being of local policemen without “burdening the state treasury,” and asking about the extent to which the towns “of neighboring provinces” are involved in funding their police.⁶² Two years later, in 1890, the governor of Perm’ province wrote to the governor of Estliandiia asking for donations to be collected to help victims of fires at two factories, which had left 10,000 people without homes or belongings.⁶³ Similarly, in 1892, the Minister of Internal Affairs informed the governor of Bessarabia of the “successful results” of an extermination campaign against ground squirrels in Orenburg province and shared a copy of the guidelines for killing the animals used in Orenburg as a model for Kishinev (Chişinău) to emulate.⁶⁴ Even though these inter-provincial communications might have been expected from—and were indeed often facilitated by—the center, sometimes such exchanges could take place in ways not planned in St. Petersburg. This is how, for example, in November 1908, the city governor of Odessa reached out to the governor of Poltava province, asking him to share his experience of shutting down the local Ukrainian cultural association *Prosvita*, as had already been done in Poltava.⁶⁵ Such stories can open up avenues for further research about the extent to which governors were simply representatives of the “center” and how much agency they had when dealing with local matters.

⁵⁹ Lea Leppik, “Social Mobility and Career Patterns of Estonian Intellectuals in the Russian Empire,” *Historical Social Research* 33, no. 2 (2008): 42–62; Willard Sunderland, *The Baron’s Cloak: A History of the Russian Empire in War and Revolution* (Ithaca, 2014); Ulrich Hofmeister, “Der Halbzar von Turkestan: Konstantin fon Kaufman in Zentralasien (1867–1882),” in Tim Buchen and Malte Rolf, eds., *Eliten im Vielvölkerreich: Imperiale Biographien in Russland und Österreich-Ungarn (1850–1918)* (Berlin, 2015), 74–81; Ricarda Vulpius, “Count Otto Heinrich Igelström and the Failure of Enlightened Reform in Russia’s Southern Empire,” in Rodolphe Baudin, Alexei Evstratov, Paul Keenan, and Vladislav Rjéoutski, eds., *Russia, Europe and the World in the Long Eighteenth-Century: Proceedings of the Xth International Conference of the Study Group on Eighteenth-Century Russia* (Strasbourg, 2023), 59–71.

⁶⁰ Tim Buchen and Malte Rolf, “Elites and Their Imperial Biographies,” in Buchen and Rolf, eds., *Eliten im Vielvölkerreich*, 33.

⁶¹ Ibid. Inadvertently answering in an affirmative way Theodore Weeks’ question of whether “General K. Kaufman’s fundamental understanding of the *russkoe delo* differed when he was transferred from Vil’na to Tashkent?” (Theodore Weeks, “The Challenges of Writing a Multi-national History of the Russian Empire,” *Ab Imperio* 4 [2008]: 367), the case studies in the volume, however, do not elaborate the argument empirically.

⁶² Lietuvos Valstybės Istorijos Archyvas (Lithuanian State Historical Archives), fondas (collection) 1567, aplankas (inventory) 1, byla (file) 2604 (Po otnosheniiu Varshavskogo gubernatora), 1–3. Apparently, officials in Kovno compiled a table listing all provincial towns, the number of policemen, and the amount and sources of funding.

⁶³ RA, EAA.29.2.3159 (O sbore pozhertvovanii), 1–3.

⁶⁴ Agenția Națională a Arhivelor (National Agency of Archives of Moldova), fond (collection) 9, inventar (inventory) 1, dosar (file) 46 (O meropriiatiiakh po bor’be s suslikami), 19, 20–21v.

⁶⁵ Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv (Russian State Historical Archive, hereafter RGIA), fond (collection, hereafter f.) 1284, opis’ (inventory, hereafter op.) 188–1908, delo (file, hereafter d.) 159 (Ob ukrainskikh prosvetitel’skikh obshchestvakh “Prosvita”), 11. For more on the story, see Anton Kotenko, “Ukrainians as ‘Aliens’ (*Inorodtsy*): Governmental Regulation of Ukrainian Cultural Associations, 1905–17,” *The Russian Review* 83, no. 2 (April 2024): 174–92.

Officials were not the only threads linking the empire, however. Internal migration created connections between different regions, such as in the case of Lutheran Estonian-speaking settlers in Siberia or the Caucasus and Ukrainian-speaking migrants to Kuban' or the Far East.⁶⁶ Universities promoted the mixing of students from all over the empire in “cauldrons of science and politics,” while prisons and exile did the same for the empire’s prisoners and deportees.⁶⁷ Political activists took lessons and inspiration from one another on how to fight autocracy.⁶⁸ Associations and societies modeled themselves after their peers.⁶⁹ Non-human animals moved between the empire’s hitherto unconnected regions.⁷⁰ Scholars have also shown how members of some ethnic groups, such as Tatars and Armenians, operated dispersed networks of patronage and affinities across the empire.⁷¹ Finally, economic historians have long argued that commercial connections neither followed the administrative borders of the provinces nor necessarily went through St. Petersburg or Moscow, despite these being the two most important hubs of imperial communications. This story is exhaustively told in the twelve-volume *Trade and Industry of European Russia According to the Regions* and visualized earlier in the cartographic appendix to Ivan Bliokh’s *Influence of Railways on the Economic State of Russia* (Figure 2).⁷²

Urban histories offer other promising insights into horizontal entanglements between the empire’s various regions.⁷³ Earlier scholarship tended to discuss particular cities, and attempts at writing entangled urban histories were largely limited to stories of interactions (or lack thereof) between different ethnic or religious groups within one place.⁷⁴

⁶⁶ Barbara Anderson, *Internal Migration During Modernization in Late Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Princeton, 1980); Aivar Jürgenson, *Siberiga seotud: Eestlased teisel pool Uuraleid* (Tallinn, 2006); Aivar Jürgenson, “The Role of Religion in the Connection between Estonian Settlements in Abkhazia and the Estonian Homeland,” *Acta Historica Tallinnensia* 27, no. 1 (2021): 133–64; Viacheslav Chornomaz, *Zelenyi Klyn (Ukraïns'kyi Dalekyi Skhid): Entsyklopedychnyi dovidnyk* (Vladivostok, 2011); Oleksandr Polianichev, “Rediscovering Zaporozhians: Memory, Loyalties, and Politics in Late Imperial Kuban, 1880–1914” (PhD diss., European University Institute, 2017).

⁶⁷ On universities as “cauldrons of science,” see: Norman Naimark, *The History of the “Proletariat”: The Emergence of Marxism in the Kingdom of Poland, 1870–1887* (Boulder, 1979), 57. On students, see also Trude Maurer and Alexander Dmitriev, eds., *Universitet i gorod v Rossii v nachale XX veka* (Moscow, 2009); Sergei Isakov, *Skvoz' gody i rassstoiania: Iz istorii kul'turnykh svyazei Estonii s Ukrainoi, Gruziei i Latviei v XIX–nachale XX veka* (Tallinn, 1969). On exile, see: Sarah Badcock, *A Prison Without Walls? Eastern Siberian Exile in the Last Years of Tsarism* (Oxford, 2016).

⁶⁸ Naimark, *The History of the “Proletariat,”* 74–75.

⁶⁹ For instance, in 1912 the economic, social, and spatial organization of a Kiev (Kyiv) vegetarian canteen was carefully studied and described by members of the Odessa Vegetarian Society looking to open a similar establishment: Julia Malitska, “The Peripheries of Omnivorousness: Vegetarian Canteens and Social Activism in the Early Twentieth-Century Russian Empire,” *Global Food History* 7, no. 2 (June 2021): 141–46.

⁷⁰ For example, in 1894 a newspaper from Odessa reported on the attempts to start breeding Karakul sheep from Bukhara in Poltava: “V imperatorskom obshchestve sel'skogo khoziaistva iuzhnoi Rossii,” *Odesskie Novosti* 2910, March 27, 1894, 3.

⁷¹ Danielle Ross, *Tatar Empire: Kazan's Muslims and the Making of Imperial Russia* (Bloomington, 2020).

⁷² *Torgovlia i promyshlennost' Evropeiskoi Rossii po raionam*. 12 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1880–1909). On intra-imperial trade, see Katja Wezel, “The Baltic Timber Trade and the Port of Riga: Economic Empowerment of Middlemen and New Entrepreneurs in Imperial Russia’s Western Provinces (1860s to 1914),” *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte / Economic History Yearbook* 65, no. 2 (November 2024): 379–406.

⁷³ For an example of a study of municipal networks in the British Empire, see John Griffiths, “Were there Municipal Networks in the British World c. 1890–1939?,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 37, no. 4 (November 2009): 575–97.

⁷⁴ Michael Hamm, ed., *The City in Russian History* (Lexington, 1976). Most recently, this approach was vividly exemplified in a study of Ekaterinoslav (Katerynoslav, Dnipro): Andrii Portnov, *Dnipro: An Entangled History of a European City* (Boston, 2022). See also Ulrike von Hirschhausen, *Die Grenzen der Gemeinsamkeit: Deutsche, Letten, Russen und Juden in Riga, 1860–1914* (Göttingen, Germany, 2006); Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865–1923* (Bloomington, 2010); Theodore Weeks, *Vilnius Between Nations, 1795–2000* (DeKalb, IL, 2015); Serhiy Bilenky, *Imperial Urbanism in the Borderlands: Kyiv, 1800–1905* (Toronto, 2018); Florian Riedler and Ulrich Hofmeister, eds., *Imperial Cities in the Tsarist, the Habsburg, and the Ottoman Empires* (New York, 2024).

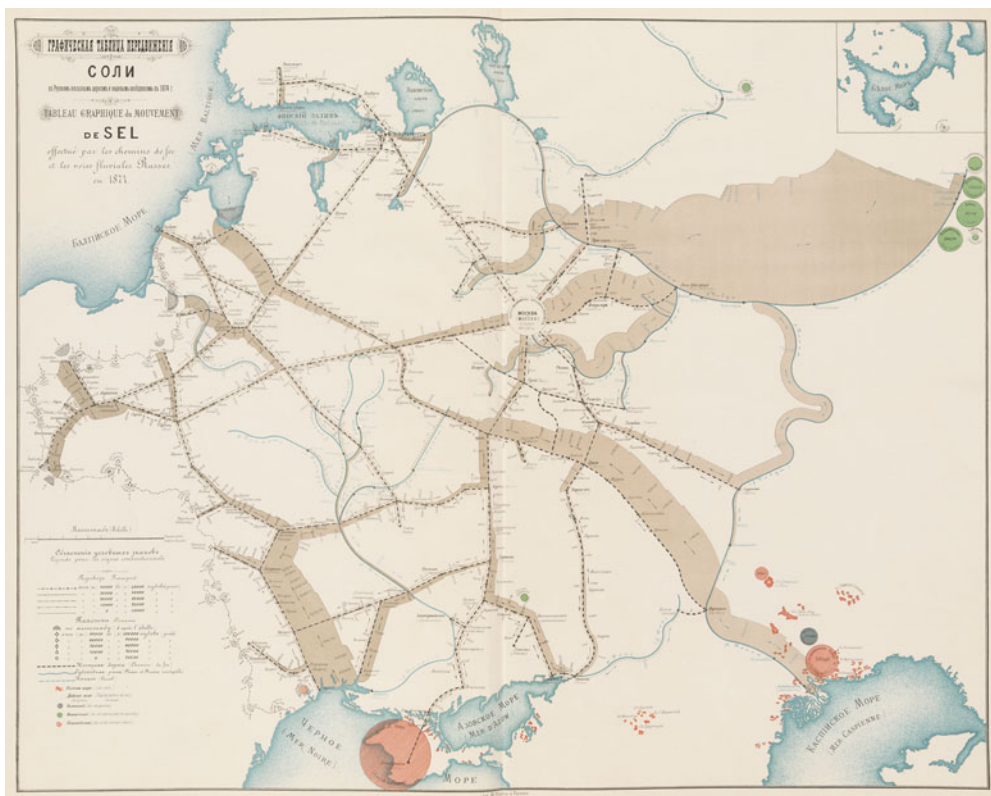


Figure 2. Map of the intra-imperial movement of salt along the empire's rail- and waterways in 1874. Source: Ivan Bliokh, *Vizanie zheleznikh dorog na ekonomicheskoe sostoianie Rossii. Graficheskie izobrazheniia* (St Petersburg, 1877), figure 24. Courtesy of the Cartography Department of Warsaw University Library.

A recent volume on interurban exchanges, however, specifically asks how modernization processes were enacted in “multi-directional ways via horizontal connections between administrations, institutions and experts.”⁷⁵ The archives of municipal authorities are replete with stories of horizontal entanglements to further this approach. A survey of just one file of the Kiev (Kyiv) City Council from 1911–12 reveals the expansive spatial horizons of intra-imperial urban entanglements. As expected, the major regional center corresponded with less prominent cities around it: nearby Khar’kov (Kharkiv), Poltava, Mariupol’ (Mariupil’), and another center of the western region, Vil’na (Vilnius).⁷⁶ At the same time, the file’s network of correspondence stretched much farther: authorities in Vologda, Tambov, Arkhangelsk, Tsaritsyn, Kaluga, Tiflis (Tbilisi), Smolensk, and Nakhichevan (Nakhchivan) sent requests to their colleagues in Kiev about matters as

⁷⁵ Eszter Gantner, Heidi Hein-Kircher, and Oliver Hochadel, “Introduction: Searching for Best Practices in Interurban Networks,” in Gantner, Hein-Kircher, and Hochadel, eds., *Interurban Knowledge Exchange*, 11. Of particular relevance for this article is Igor Lyman’s and Victoria Konstantinova’s chapter on how officials in Berdiansk looked to their colleagues along the coasts of the Black Sea and Sea of Azov—especially Odessa—when casting about for models to modernize the port: Lyman and Konstantinova, “In Search of Best Practices Within the Confiner of the Russian Empire: The Port City of Berdyansk,” in Gantner, Hein-Kircher, and Hochadel, eds., *Interurban Knowledge Exchange*, 50–74.

⁷⁶ Derzhavnyi Arkhiv mista Kyieva (State Archive of the City of Kyiv, hereafter DAK), fond (collection, hereafter f.) 163, opys (inventory, hereafter op.) 39, sprava (file, hereafter s.) 493 (Perepiska), 13, 122, 129, 251.

diverse as the construction of telegraph and telephone poles (Tiflis), conducting a population census (Smolensk), or employment of chimney sweepers (Kaluga).⁷⁷ Similarly, in 1900, the newspaper of the Odessa City Governorate reported multiple requests arriving to the Odessa City Council from Kiev, Chernigov (Chernihiv), Khar'kov, Poltava, Tiflis, Voronezh, and Ufa municipal authorities about street lightning, market trade, charity, external ladders on multistoried buildings, a municipal bakery, a laundry, and a disinfection chamber.⁷⁸ In addition to contacting each other directly, another way of gathering information was via disseminating a survey, as, for instance, Tambov's Council did in 1912 about municipal employees' salaries.⁷⁹ These issues could also be discussed in-person and in a more formal setting during the first conventions on municipal affairs that took place in Odessa (1910), St. Petersburg (1912), and Kiev (1913). As Lev Velikhov remarked about the convention in Odessa, the event was valuable not because of the presentations but precisely as a forum for people with similar interests to share experiences.⁸⁰

Paying attention to intra-imperial connections helps not only to invert assumptions about vertical structures of power based on the “center-periphery” model but also complicates, if not deconstructs or demolishes them. As Ballantyne put it, such emphasis “reinforces the multiple positions that any given colony, city, community or archive might occupy”: subalterns in one situation might appear to be “sub-subaltern centers” or “knots” in different situations.⁸¹ Thus, contrary to what might be expected, capitals were not always the benchmarks of urban development to be emulated. For instance, the journal *Gorodskoe Delo*, specializing in urban affairs, often criticized St. Petersburg as one of the worst run cities of the empire and was instead full of praise for municipal developments taking place in Riga and Iur'ev (Tartu).⁸²

Intra-imperial entanglements could be not only beneficial but also “harmful” and “dark”: not all connections were equally benevolent for all parties involved.⁸³ With the advent of railways, the army could be more easily sent to conquer new territories or

⁷⁷ DAK, f. 163, op. 39, s. 493, 217, 253. Further research is required to understand the outcome of these interactions, such as what the municipal authorities learnt from each other's experience and to what extent they could actually act on this new knowledge.

⁷⁸ *Vedomosti Odesskogo Gradonachal'stva* 27, February 4, 1900, 3; *Vedomosti Odesskogo Gradonachal'stva* 67, March 22, 1900, 2; *Vedomosti Odesskogo Gradonachal'stva* 70, March 28, 1900, 2; *Vedomosti Odesskogo Gradonachal'stva* 240, November 7, 1900, 3.

⁷⁹ “Polozhenie gorodskikh sluzhashchikh,” *Gorodskoe Delo* 13–14 (1912): 884.

⁸⁰ Lev Velikhov, “Smes',” *Gorodskoe Delo* 19 (1910): 1348. Velikhov highlighted the example of the mayor of Kishinev who met the sanitation engineer Griboedov at the convention and invited him as “an excellent specialist in this area” to return with him to Bessarabia to give recommendations for the design of the local sewer system.

⁸¹ Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race*, 15.

⁸² For example, in 1909, *Gorodskoe Delo* quoted the opinion of an audit commission, which argued that “it is impossible to single out even one part of the municipal affairs...that could be considered to have been dealt with satisfactorily”: Mikhail Fedorov, “Finansovoe polozhenie Peterburga,” *Gorodskoe Delo* 1 (1909): 11. On the dismal state of St. Petersburg's municipal affairs, see James Bater, “Between Old and New: St. Petersburg in the Late Imperial Era,” in Hamm, ed., *The City in Late Imperial Russia*, 72. For praise of Iur'ev and Riga, see Arnol'd Gassel'blat, “Razvitie nebol'shogo goroda (korrespondentsiia iz Iur'eva),” *Gorodskoe Delo* 19 (1909): 1002–5; Dmitrii Protopopov, “Po okrainam. 3. Riga,” *Gorodskoe Delo* 18 (1910): 1221–28.

⁸³ This point was stressed at two recent conferences: the Max Weber Foundation Conference on “Harmful Entanglements,” in *Connections: A Journal for Historians and Area Specialists* (last modified October 5, 2024), at <https://www.connections.clio-online.net/event/id/event-144033> (accessed May 22, 2025), and “Dark Networks: Imaginaries of Shady Connections and the Global Underworld from the Nineteenth Century to the Present,” in *H-Soz-Kult* (last modified October 17, 2024), at <http://www.hsozkult.de/event/id/event-150749> (accessed May 22, 2025).

suppress uprisings against imperial rule.⁸⁴ Christian missionaries played a key role in colonialism, while the spatial container of the empire facilitated the spread of criminal and human trafficking networks.⁸⁵ Famously, soon after the tariff border between the Kingdom of Poland and the rest of the empire was abolished in 1851 and high import fees on finished products by non-imperial manufacturers were introduced in 1877, Polish cotton mills started pushing Moscow textile producers out of markets in the European and Far Eastern parts of the empire.⁸⁶ Municipalities could share knowledge when it came to urban policies, but viewed one another as competitors in economic matters. Thus, rivalries emerged between Baltic Sea port cities such as Riga, Revel', Vindava (Ventspils), and Libava (Liepāja), which competed to persuade St. Petersburg to deepen their port or connect them—rather than their neighbors—by railway to the heartlands of the empire.⁸⁷

Moreover, existing entanglements could sometimes be explicitly denied and rejected. Occasionally, conscious decoupling was used as a strategy to resist further integration into the empire and maintain autonomy over certain spheres. For example, when discussing municipal politics, late nineteenth-century Polish newspapers only referred to west European cities as relevant models and downplayed the rest of the empire as a way to deny the Kingdom's belonging to it.⁸⁸ In another instance, following the 1893 official renaming of Dorpat into Iur'ev, many inhabitants avoided using the new city name as a push-back against the attempt by the imperial authorities to deepen the integration of the Baltic provinces into the empire. In this way, they sought to remain disentangled from a Russian-language "graphosphere" and assert their belonging to a German cultural space.⁸⁹

Taken together, the picture that could emerge from further studies of horizontal entanglements has the potential to significantly supplement the focus on knowledge-transfer by way of career mobility among high-ranking administrative elites. The abovementioned examples reveal how intra-imperial threads were integral to the everyday fabric of the empire. On the one hand, though many of these examples may seem "humdrum," horizontal threads could have a more direct impact on many inhabitants' daily lives than grand matters of state or international relations.⁹⁰ On the other hand, in time these seemingly trivial intra-imperial flows and circulations could add up to "a series of increments, each of

⁸⁴ Frit'of Ben'iamin Shenk, *Poezd v sovremennost'. Mobil'nost' i sotsial'noe prostranstvo Rossii v vek zheleznykh dorog* (Moscow, 2016), 65–72; Alexander Morrison, *The Russian Conquest of Central Asia: A Study in Imperial Expansion, 1814–1914* (Cambridge, Eng., 2021), 46.

⁸⁵ Aileen E. Friesen, *Colonizing Russia's Promised Land: Orthodoxy and Community on the Siberian Steppe* (Toronto, 2020); Philippa Hetherington, "Victims of the Social Temperament: Prostitution, Migration and the Traffic in Women from Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union, 1885–1935" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2014).

⁸⁶ Andrzej Jezierski, *Handel zagraniczny Królestwa Polskiego, 1815–1914* (Warszawa, 1967), 74, 107; Naimark, *The History of the "Proletariat,"* 14–15.

⁸⁷ In 1856, Libava merchants petitioned the Minister of Ways of Communications to connect their port with the Neman River at Iurburg (Jurbarkas); RGIA, f. 207, op. 1, d. 108 (Ob ustroistve zheleznoi dorogi); for the petition, see 20–26ob. For the 1857 counter-petition by Vindava merchants, see RGIA, f. 207, op. 5, d. 905 (O dostavlennoi pros'be); for the petition, see 3–14. Similarly, traffic developments around Nikolaev (Mykolaiv) were closely and anxiously followed in Odessa for fear of diverting grain trade from one Black Sea port to another. See, for instance, an editorial in *Vedomosti Odesskogo Gradonachal'stva* 120, June 1, 1900, 1–2.

⁸⁸ Wiktor Marzec, "The Spatial Imaginations and Solidarities of Polish Socialists at the Verge of Revolution 1905–1915" (paper presented at the conference "Conceptualizing the Borderlands of the Russian Empire," University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu, December 15, 2023).

⁸⁹ Catherine Gibson, "Lawful Naming and Toponymic Resistance: The Contested Authority of the 1893 Dorpat-to-Iur'ev Renaming Law," *Urban History* (forthcoming). On the concept of the "graphosphere," see Simon Franklin, *The Russian Graphosphere, 1450–1850* (Cambridge, Eng., 2019), 102–42.

⁹⁰ Theodore Porter, "Revenge of the Humdrum: Bureaucracy as Profession and as a Site of Science," *Journal for the History of Knowledge* 1, no. 1 (December 2020): 1–5.

which prepares the way for the next,” and thus could have contributed to the resilience or attrition of the empire during times of crisis.⁹¹

Conclusions: Challenges and Prospects

In this article, we have outlined an emerging approach for an entangled spatial history of the Romanov empire, which we suggest conceptualizing as a network of horizontal threads. Alongside center-periphery, transnational, transimperial, and global connections, we argue that intra-imperial entanglements constitute another important dimension of the empire's past. Historians of other empires have already discussed the need to shift scholarly focus away from a hub-and-spoke model towards a web, “networking society,” or “cooperative empire.” Some empirical studies on the Romanov empire have taken steps in a similar direction, yet this article has consolidated these findings into a bigger picture, demonstrated the potential insights still to be gained on the basis of primary sources, and sought to frame this research direction in a more analytical perspective.

That being said, it is important to stress that the approach that we have delineated has clear challenges and limits. First, shifting the focus to intra-imperial entanglements does not entail shunning the role of the center. An important question to be tackled by historians amidst the recent calls to decolonize and decenter the history of the empire is the extent to which the “center” is needed to understand “peripheries.” There is a strong argument to be made that the histories of “peripheries” cannot be divorced from the “center,” as it risks negating key political, economic, and cultural power dynamics at stake and downplaying the violence often employed for the upkeep of the empire. Our suggestion for the future is to explore ways of combining both vertical and horizontal axes into an integrated frame of analysis.

Second, when speaking about entanglements, historians should be wary of the risk of being left with “the vague feeling that everything is related to everything else.”⁹² The examples we have presented primarily pertain to the empire's western borderlands, which raises questions about whether all regions of the empire were equally entangled, where connections emerged or failed to take hold, which hierarchies of power were in place, and when these entanglements emerged. Calibrating our gaze to these differences allows us to ask new questions about the workings of imperial life, such as how entanglements worked unevenly across different spheres of activity and in different periods of time, exposing the empire's successes and failures in building an imperial “imagined community.”⁹³

Third, another word of caution concerns how histories of entanglement are ripe for being interpreted through the lens of current politics by multiple parties. Intra-imperial entanglements were heavily utilized by Soviet-era historiography, which saw these interconnections through the ideological lens of the notion of “friendship of the peoples” or in terms of class solidarity between different oppressed peoples of the empire.⁹⁴ Today, we face another danger of the political misuse of entangled histories, this time by proponents of resurrecting the empire seeking to legitimize the historical precedence of their visions.

⁹¹ Amos H. Hawley, “The Presidential Address: Cumulative Change in Theory and in History,” *American Sociological Review* 43, no. 6 (December 1978): 787.

⁹² Monica Juneja and Margrit Pernau, “Lost in Translation? Transcending Boundaries in Comparative History,” in Heinz Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, eds., *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives* (New York, 2009), 118.

⁹³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 2016).

⁹⁴ Isakov, *Skvoz' gody i rasstoiania*. The concept of “friendship of the Soviet peoples” and the notions of solidarity and colonialism underpinning it were recently discussed during a symposium in Berlin: Prater Galerie, “What Remains of the ‘Friendship Between Peoples?’” (last modified January 6, 2024), at <https://pratergalerie.de/en/prater-galerie/event/was-bleibt-von-der-voelkerfreundschaft/> (accessed May 23, 2025).

At the same time, in the context of present-day political solidarities among various regions of the former empire, which were strengthened in the wake of Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea and full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, we must also be careful to avoid projecting an overly romanticized or teleological view of connections and cooperation onto the past.⁹⁵

Bearing these caveats in mind, focusing on horizontal entanglements can still be generative for opening several future directions in histories of the Romanov empire. The various examples of horizontal threads outlined in this article can help us challenge the image of fragmented heterogeneity with which the history of the empire has long been coded and enable us to see the empire in a fresh light, namely also as a political and spatial container that facilitated the emergence of entanglements between geographically disparate regions and across ethnolinguistic and religious differences, often construed today by historians as separate. Further research is needed to examine whether connections were increasing and whether we can see these connections as a hallmark of modern society.

Another fruitful line of inquiry would be to explore the extent to which the "center" cultivated or, conversely, was apprehensive towards the emergence of "periphery-periphery" connections. For instance, in the Ottoman case Karen Barkey has argued that the "center" was eager to entrench a hub-and-spoke system whereby "strong vertical relations from locality to center developed, but left local groups and communities relatively weak and unconnected ... encouraged a diffuse social disorganization and consequently hindered the development of autonomous corporate entities throughout the empire."⁹⁶ An important question requiring an answer is whether Romanov rulers were equally concerned about the development of horizontal links and considered them perilous, or were more indifferent and less interventionist in preventing them.

Finally, paying concerted attention to intra-imperial entanglements is particularly pertinent today from a practical perspective when the central archives of the empire are inaccessible to many historians taking an ethical stance not to continue to do research in or collaborate with colleagues in Russia while it wages a full-scale war against Ukraine. True, as already noted by Mikhail Dolbilov in 2008, scholars cannot move between the archives of various imperial "peripheries" with the same relative ease as the empire's bureaucrats.⁹⁷ Linguistic and disciplinary barriers have additionally hindered the development of comparative and boundary-crossing perspectives on the empire's history. Despite a plethora of annual area studies conferences, there has historically been "little cross fertilization" between regional sub-fields.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, horizontal connections between various imperial "peripheries" could be studied through truly collaborative projects, whose results would not be limited to side-by-side presentations, articles, or book chapters of case studies from different "peripheries," but would instead link different archives to bridge area studies subfields.⁹⁹ Moreover, the increasing availability of digitized periodical and archival collections in different former territories of the empire offers exciting opportunities for scholars

⁹⁵ On contemporary political solidarities between the Baltic states and Ukraine, for instance, see Dovilė Budrytė, "A Decolonising Moment of Sorts: The Baltic States' Vicarious Identification with Ukraine and Related Domestic and Foreign Policy Developments," *Central European Journal of International Security Studies* 17, no. 4 (December 2023): 82–105.

⁹⁶ Barkey, *Empire of Difference*, 93–94. This argument is further elaborated in Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca, 1996).

⁹⁷ Mikhail Dolbilov, "Zapadnye ukrainy Rossiiskoi imperii" i problema sravnitel'nogo izucheniia okrain," *Ab Imperio* 4 (2008): 393.

⁹⁸ James Meyer, "For the Russianist in Istanbul and the Ottomanist in Russia: A Guide to the Archives of Eurasia," *Ab Imperio* 4 (2008): 281.

⁹⁹ Historians of the Romanov empire could draw inspiration from collaborative working methods in other fields: Afro-Asian Networks Research Collective, "Manifesto: Networks of Decolonization in Asia and Africa," *Radical History Review*, no. 131 (May 2018): 176–82; Thomas Davies, Daniel Laqua, Maria Framke, Anne-Isabelle

to embark on innovative research projects to recover the empire's horizontal threads and give them the full attention they deserve.

Catherine Gibson is Associate Professor of East European Studies at the Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies at the University of Tartu. She is the author of *Geographies of Nationhood: Cartography, Science, and Society in the Russian Imperial Baltic* (OUP, 2022), as well as articles in *Past & Present*, *Journal of Social History*, and *Modern European History*. She is currently embarking on a new project on intra-imperial charitable solidarities.

Anton Kotenko is a research fellow at the Department of East European History at the Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf. He is the author of *The Promise of Ukraine: A Conceptual History of Nineteenth-Century Nationalism* (forthcoming with OUP), and articles in *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, *Russian Review*, and *Urban History*. He is currently working on the history of zoological gardens in the Romanov empire.

Richard, Patricia Oliart, Kate Skinner, Pilar Requejo de Lamo, Robert Kramm, Charlotte Alston, and Matthew Hurst, "Rethinking Transnational Activism through Regional Perspectives: Reflections, Literatures and Cases," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 2 (December 2024): 317–43.