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## **Social Portrait of Honorary Members and Doctors of the Kharkiv Imperial University (1804–1917)**

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### **Abstract**

The article reconstructs the social portrait of honorary members and doctors of the Kharkiv Imperial University in 1804–1917 (from its foundation till the Russian Empire collapse). The research is based on rare sources.

All honorary members and doctors were analyzed from the social, national, occupational and other perspectives. We verified 255 persons with honorary university titles. In some cases, no important biography features resulted in the incomplete problem reflection. However, it did not prevent us from summarizing obvious trends in the imperial and Ukrainian higher education.

In particular, the rate of honorary title conferment differs in various periods: the lowest amount for the 1870s and the 1910s, the highest amount for the university first years and the 1850s.

Most honorary members and doctors of the Kharkiv Imperial University came from nobles, clergies and petits bourgeois. Sometimes, peasants were represented as well.

Ethnically, most members and doctors were Russians or foreigners. Ukrainians covered under a quarter of them.

In general, the honorary staff of the Kharkiv Imperial University reflected main development trends of the imperial higher education.

**Keywords:** higher education, honorary members, honorary doctors, educational policy, educational reform, educational access, ethnic disparities, sustainable development in education, education policy, education reform.

### **1. Introduction**

Recently, the Kharkiv University has celebrated its 200th anniversary. The institution has been facing many events since its foundation: rise and fall, development and stagnation. However,

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the university shows a unique resilience between generations. The term “university community” is not abstraction as well. The affiliation feeling unites many people actually. Regardless of external conditions, the symbolic university capital has been growing for years because new members contribute to its history. That makes the entire university strong.

Among the golden university names, we should mention honorary members and doctors (some of them are known worldwide). The most important thing was enlightenment and unity of researchers and artists. The institutional motto on the coat of arms is “Cognoscere. Docere. Erudire” (in English: “Cognize. Teach. Enlighten”).

The Kharkiv University originality consists in its emergence within Ukrainian and Russian cultures. Historical facts disprove the second-grade relevance of Slobozhanshchyna as a Ukrainian region. It was mutual interaction that led to huge development of Slavic cultures (including the Ukrainian one).

In particular, Ivan Ryzhskiy (the first university rector) succeeded in Russian philology: his books “Introduction to Linguistics” and “Oratory Experience” were used for study at all Russian universities. In 1841-1848, there was another rector – Petro Hulak-Artemovskiy (a famous Ukrainian poet). He brought up many Ukrainian writers. Izmail Sreznievskiy (a professor) was the first to publish *Natalka Poltavka* and other works in the literary miscellany “Ukrainskyy Zbirnyk”. He insisted that Ukrainians are a separate Slavic nation with its own language. Marin Drinov (a professor) compiled the first Bulgarian spelling rules and became the Bulgarian Education Minister. Besides, it was the Kharkiv University where the first Ukrainian lecture was delivered in the Russian Empire.

## **2. Materials and methods**

To prepare the manuscript, we analyzed many sources that reconstruct the Kharkiv University evolution within the imperial and Ukrainian contexts. We compared the All-Imperial University Charters as of 1804, 1835, 1863 and 1884 ([Tablica ustavov, 1901](#)) and that of the Kharkiv University to define roles of its members and doctors in higher education as well as Ukrainian and Russian Empire bureaucracy.

In our study, there were reference books, encyclopedias, rare sources, etc. In some cases, we could not find out relevant biography details of the honorary staff of the Kharkiv University. For some persons, there were superficial data on honorary affiliation, which could not be proven by documents. All sources allowed studying the honorary staff of the Kharkiv Imperial University from the law, social, rank, organizational and other perspectives. Finally, we got the social honorary portrait.

The research methodological base comprises such principles as objectivity, historicism and verification of sources. They are realized via general scientific and special historical methods of research:

- historical analysis (to search and work through necessary information);
- classification (to arrange sources);
- interpretation (to produce the research semantic field);
- comparison (to contrast regulations for honorary title conferment at the Kharkiv Imperial University).

Moreover, we applied methods of historical and logical analysis to solve the study issues via the principles of objectivity, unambiguousness, coherence, and causality. To arrange and differentiate the research data in terms of historical chronology, we used the structural-systemic method.

## **3. Discussion**

The social portrait of honorary members and doctors of the Kharkiv Imperial University attracts a deep interest to consider factors of higher education development in Ukraine. There are many sources on activities of the Kharkiv Imperial University. However, the social portrait of its members and doctors still needs reconsidering.

Studies devoted to university and rector anniversaries lack for a complex analysis of honorary members and doctors at the Kharkiv Imperial University. They only partially provide approaches to research of higher education history.

Most anniversary sources reveal the above-mentioned problem superficially (HGU, 1955; HGU, 1980; Bakirov, Duhopel'nikov, 2004). In this paper, we are going to analyze the Kharkiv Imperial University history within its honorary staff statistics.

For reconstructing the social portrait of honorary members and doctors at the Kharkiv Imperial University, it is relevant to use reference sources on its graduates, professors, researchers and other famous persons with honorary titles (Biograficheskij slovar'..., 1884; Biograficheskij slovar'..., 1855; Biograficheskij slovar'..., 1904; Biograficheskij slovar'..., 1869–1894; Russkij biograficheskij..., 1896–1913; Bogdashina i dr., 2012; Biograficheskij slovar'..., 2019; Shilov, 2001).

Besides, we pay attention to Kharkiv University bulletins (Har'kovskij sbornik..., 1887–1900; Zapiski..., 1874–1917) and faculty history essays (Fiziko-matematicheskij..., 1908; Yuridicheskij..., 1908; Istoriko-filologicheskij..., 1908).

Some problem aspects are studied within general trends of the Russian Empire and Ukrainian higher education as a bureaucratic and academic corporation (Andreev, Posohov, 2012; Lebid, 2022; Lebid, Lobko, 2022; Lebid, Shevchenko, 2021; Siropolko, 2001; Degtyarev, Polyakova, 2020; Degtyarev, Polyakova, Stepanova, 2020). In these works, scientists analyze the Russian Empire bureaucracy, social-cultural influence of universities and local intellectuals, law and other problems of higher education.

Separately, we consider biographies of the honorary staff at the Kharkiv Imperial University. Here, we deal with their research, teaching, administrative, military and other activities (Bagalej, 1905; Korf, 1861; Vovk, 2016).

We include memoirs and obituaries on the honorary staff at the Kharkiv Imperial University. These valuable materials mention rectors and their contribution to the university development. Also, the honorary staff works are applicable: here, we can find both research and biography data.

#### **4. Results**

The honorary title conferment at the Kharkiv Imperial University dates back to its foundation. Article 40 of the 1804 University Charter is called “The Honorary Staff”. It defines honorary members as “Russian or foreign people who became famous for their research and academic achievements” (Tablica ustavov, 1901).

The Charter states that each faculty should invite honorary members “to establish relations with academic institutions” (Tablica ustavov, 1901). Four corresponding members are selected to communicate with the university and spread reports on its activities. For such a work, they get 200 rubles annually as remuneration (Tablica ustavov, 1901). This norm was partially followed. For example, I.Ye. Betskyi was indeed paid at the end of the 1850s.

In the 1835 University Charter, the honorary article was replaced with a mention of their assignment by the education minister. Honorary titles were conferred on those persons who supported university development initiatives. Consequently, both well-known researchers and politicians became honorary members. The Article 43 fragment: “To select honorary members, the Board should mind their residence: it is local individuals whom the university can benefit more from” (Tablica ustavov, 1901).

The selected honorary members were assigned by the education minister after consent of academic district trustees. Herewith, not all people previously recommended by the University Academic Board became honorary members. The honorary diplomas emerged in 1807 (Tablica ustavov, 1901). Honorary members might visit the Board and vote (Tablica ustavov, 1901).

The 1863 University Charter recorded: “Universities may freely confer higher titles on researchers for their achievements” (Tablica ustavov, 1901: §113). Besides, “with a trustee consent, universities may confer diplomaed honorary titles on researchers for their achievements” (§118). The 1884 Charter regulated the doctoral degree conferment (Tablica ustavov, 1901: §27.2.5; 30.3.10). The university right to select honorary members remained as well (Tablica ustavov, 1901: §30.3.1; §144).

In 1864, universities and the Education Ministry started debating the issue who should be regarded as “a famous scientist” with respective privileges. Then, procedures of the honorary title conferment were settled: an offer required preliminary approving from at least four universities of the Russian Empire.

There was a certain conferment confusion in future as well. In particular, the degree was an honorary title rather than “a specific science rank” (especially, at the beginning of the

20th century). Obviously, this fact was regarded by both title awarders and awardees. Consequently, biographies mentioned the conferred title among honorary achievements.

The Kharkiv University started selection of honorary doctors in the 1890s. In 1805–1916, there were above 200 honorary members and doctors (we defined 255 persons). Among them, you can see M.M. Beketov, S.P. Botkin, M.S. Hrushevskiy, A.I. Mendeliev, M.M. Kovalevskiy, M.I. Pyrohov, P.P. Semenov-Tian-Shanskyi (scientists); I.I. Mechnykov, K. Golgi (Nobel prize laureates); L.M. Tolstoi, M.Ye. Saltykov-Shchedrin, I.Ya. Franko (writers). During the World War I, Mykola Mykolaiovych (as a prince and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Armed Forces) became an honorary member. On the contrary, two German researchers were deprived of their titles.

We produced the portrait of honorary members and doctors at the Kharkiv Imperial University via their social, ethnical and occupational origin. Besides, we analyzed the chronological order of honorary title conferment for the whole history of the Kharkiv University (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Honorary members and doctors of the Kharkiv Imperial University (1804–1917)

Years	1800s	1810s	1820s	1830s	1840s	1850s	1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900s	1910s
Amount of persons	18	38	13	13	13	55	27	4	11	9	19	6

For Table 1, we state the following things. Firstly, it was 226 of 255 (88.6%) honorary members for whom we could clarify the exact year of title conferment. Secondly, the conferment rates vary in different periods.

Initially, the most prominent conferment wave occurred at the Kharkiv University foundation. The reason was lack of academic staff to educate students. Employment and conferred honorary titles provided such people with certain guarantees.

Within this period, honorary title holders were Friedrich von Adelung (a Prussian historian and archeologist), Theodor Bause (a Leipzig lawyer), Friedrich August Freiherr Marschall von Bieberstein (a Württemberg botanist), Christian Gottlob Heyne (a Saxon linguist and translator).

The second conferment wave is the 1850s-1860s when 82 verified persons got honorary titles (mostly in 1854-1855, 1859-1860). It is explained by the Alexander II liberalization: weaker censorship, political amnesty, no military settlements, etc.

Moreover, the 1863 University Charter was approved as the most liberal one in the Russian Empire (Tablica ustavov, 1901). It was one of the Great Reform initiatives by Alexander II.

After the Polish Uprising in 1863, the government policy was more restrictive. It affected conferment rates at the Kharkiv Imperial University (Table 1).

For the portrait of honorary staff, another analysis parameter was the social origin. We verified 161 of 255 persons, or 63 % (Table 2). Here, nobles prevail: via higher education, they tried to keep their social identity. Consequently, most honorary members and doctors of the Kharkiv Imperial University belonged to noble families.

The education sphere combined government and noble interests. For a long time, nobles were the only social bureaucracy creator with management functions. Therefore, education became a traditional value of noble families. Their children had to master this value in higher educational institutions.

Also, there were fears that the generally accessible education for all people would oust nobles from the public service. Via higher education, they protected, saved and cherished their past heritage as well as reminded of own merits. Actually, industrialists and bankers sought for nobility to distinguish themselves from other social ranks.

The ethnical origin of honorary staff at the Kharkiv Imperial University is shown on Table 3. Among 228 verified honorary members, foreigners are 38.5 %, Russians are 42.1 %, Ukrainians are 19.2 %. 0.2 % include other nationalities (e.g. Byelorussians). Such a situation reflects the all-imperial policy to incorporate different nations within a single state.

**Table 2.** Honorary members and doctors of the Kharkiv Imperial University by their social origin (1804–1917)

Social rank	Nobles	Petits bourgeois	Merchants	Military people	Clergies	Landlords	Peasants
<b>Amount of persons</b>	66	32	8	11	34	5	5

**Table 3.** Honorary members and doctors of the Kharkiv Imperial University by their nationalities (1804–1917)

Nationality	Ukrainians	Russians	Foreigners
<b>Amount of persons</b>	44	96	88

The occupational origin of honorary staff at the Kharkiv Imperial University is the most verified – 100 % (Table 4). As mentioned above, there were honorary scientists (S.P. Botkin, M.S. Hrushevskyi, A.I. Mendelieiev), politicians (K.M. Romanov, M.M. Romanov and M.O. Romanov as sons of Russian Emperors; V.P. Kochubei as the Minister for Internal Affairs in 1802-1807), writers and translators (J.W. Goethe, I.Ya. Franko, P.P. Hulak-Artemovskiy), etc.

**Table 4.** Honorary members and doctors of the Kharkiv Imperial University by their occupation (1804–1917)

Occupation	History	Medicine	Science	Law	Economy	Linguistics	Military science and politics	Physics and mathematics	Religion	Culture and arts
<b>Amount of persons</b>	37	34	20	19	10	21	59	32	8	15

The honorary members and doctors of the Kharkiv Imperial University graduated from different institutions: the Kharkiv Imperial University (22); the St. Volodymyr Kyiv Imperial University and the Kyiv Theological Academy (9); the Moscow Imperial University and the Moscow Theological Academy (31); the Kazan Imperial University (4); the Dorpat Imperial University (4); the Saint Petersburg Imperial University, the Saint Petersburg Surgery Academy, the Saint Petersburg Theological Academy (36).

### 5. Conclusion

Therefore, the honorary membership of the Kharkiv Imperial University reflected the main trends of state higher education development. The general social portrait of a typical honorary representative at the Kharkiv Imperial University usually included the following features. A 40 to 50-year-old noble person (foreigner or Russian) who graduated in Europe, Moscow or Saint Petersburg as a researcher or educator. However, there were exceptions (Tables 1, 2, 3, 4).

Unique cases occurred as well. In 1910, O.Ya. Yefimenko (a historian and ethnographer) became the first-ever female honorary doctor. Such a title was also conferred on P.S. Uvarova (a historian, archeologist, public figure, philanthropist) who was born in the Sumy Oblast, Ukraine.

The average honorary staff age at the Kharkiv Imperial University was 54 years. The youngest honorary persons were D.P. Buturlin (19 years: participant of the Patriotic War in 1812, chief of the

Censorship Committee), M.O. Romanov (20 years: son of Alexander II) and Ye.P. Kovalevskiy (29 years: diplomat and traveler).

The oldest honorary persons were P.P. Semenov-Tian-Shanskiy (84 years: geographer and traveler), Alexandre Moreau de Jonnés (83 years: French statistician), M.M. Stasiulevych (80 years: historian and publicist) and J.W. Goethe (78 years: German writer).

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