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The Research Potential of the Epistolary Heritage of Professor B. S. Abalikhin: 1959–93

Abstract

The article reveals the importance of epistolary sources for cognition of the phenomenon of personality, study of the experience of individual people, peculiarities of the personal perception

of certain historical processes. On the example of his considerable epistolary heritage, the authors reveal the research potential of the private correspondence of the Volgograd professor, "Honored Scientist of the RSFSR" B.S. Abalikhin. The documents have been introduced into scientific use for the first time. The authors were students of B.S. Abalikhin, having entered the Historical and Philological Faculty of the Volgograd State Pedagogical Institute in 1978. S.V. Solovyova moved from student research to a PhD thesis under his guidance. Personal fond no. R–2808 "Boris Sergeyevich Abalikhin—Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor" in the State Archive of the Volgograd Region (GAVO) consists of 192 storage units, including 937 documents dating from 1935 to 1995. The personal provenance fond is composed by six groups of documents. The first one includes scientific works and creative materials of the scientist, devoted mainly to the Patriotic War of 1812 and the Great Patriotic War of 1941–45. Many are preserved in handwritten form with autograph of the author. The second group contains documents of autobiographical nature, including characteristics-recommendations, autobiography; the third one is materials of scientific and organizational, pedagogical, social, and other activities (plans of scientific and methodological work, reviews, contracts with publishers, work reports, etc.); the fourth group is personal correspondence with various reporters; the fifth one consists of photos of B. S. Abalikhin with students, graduates, relatives, and colleagues; the sixth group contains materials of official activities (certificates, invitations to conferences, lists of scientific papers, notes from the newspaper "Teacher," etc.). The letters permit to trace the evolution of the historian's scientific interests, to characterize his ways of searching for historical information, to identify his main scientific associates and opponents, to assess difficulties on the thorny path of the researcher, to characterize B. S. Abalikhin as a person, teacher, husband, father. The authors make a conclusion about importance of private correspondence for presentation of scientific and historical biography of the scientist, for reconstruction of his research laboratory.

Keywords

Personal provenance sources, business and private letters, epistolary sources, research, historical information, subjectivity, recipient.

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