When we turn to contemporary histories of Russian philosophy from Russia, we see that in regards to content, they do not differ substantially from a good portion of their nineteenth- and twentieth-century predecessors. In histories from the 2000s, we again find a frequent focus on the religious tradition, with only a few histories addressing university philosophy in any substantial way. However, what sets the contemporary writing of the history of Russian philosophy apart is an astonishing increase in volume. This chapter addresses the historical boom in Russian philosophy, which began in the late 1980s/early 1990s and peaked in the 2000s. I argue that histories from this period are consistent with many structural and methodological traditions of the genre but that the sheer volume of opinions in the 2000s has led to a fragmentation of the discipline in the 2010s, both within Russian philosophy and among its external critics.

The boom in the historiography of Russian philosophy was one of the most robust facets of the broader “return” to Russian religious philosophy during the immediate post-Soviet period, during which previously censored classics resurfaced in the late 1980s and early 1990s. One of the earliest histories was *Russian Philosophy: Paths of Development* (*Russkaia filosofiia: puti razvitiiia*, 1989), published by Andrei Sukhov, head of the Department of the History of Russian Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy between 1982 and 1992. The year 1990 saw the publication of Mikhail Gromov and Nikita Kozlov’s *Russian Philosophical Thought from the X–XVII Centuries* (*Russkaia filosofskaiia mysli’ X–XVII vekov*, 1990). In 1994, Vasilii Vanchugov published *Sketch of the History of “Original Russian” Philosophy* (*Ocherk istorii filosofii “Samobytno-russkoi”*), and Aleksandr Zamaleev published *Lectures on the History of Russian Philosophy: the XI to the beginning of the XX Centuries* (*Lektsii po irf:
XI–nachalo XXvv.), which would come out in several more editions over the next decade. In 1995, Sukhov published another study of Russian philosophy’s “distinguishing features,” entitled Russian Philosophy. Particularities, Traditions, Historical Fates (Russkaia filosofiia: osobennosti, traditsii, istoricheskie sud’by). The following year brought the publication of Sergei Levitskii’s Sketches on the History of Russian Philosophy (Ocherki po istorii russkoi filosofii, 1996), which the author (1908–1983), a student of Nikolai Losskii, had written a decade earlier while living and teaching in the United States. In 1998, Avraam Novikov published History of Russian Philosophy (Irf). As we saw with independent philosophy journals of the 1990s, histories from this decade emphasized above all an urgent need to build the discipline of Russian philosophy back up again (vossozdat’) on Russian territory and return previously censored ideas into circulation as quickly as possible in accordance with the new freedom afforded by the era.1

In the 2000s, the publication of histories of Russian philosophy continued to increase. Histories from this decade were not as occupied in building the discipline up – in introducing readers to names that had been absent from the printed page for decades – as they were in offering individualized interpretations of Russia’s philosophical legacy. Although the structure and content of these histories are consistent with the historical conventions of the genre, their interpretations are often highly idiosyncratic. For instance, it is not uncommon for novelists, poets, icon painters, and filmmakers to be named Russia’s great philosophers. At the same time, histories from the 2000s continue to compare Russia’s philosophical history to Western thought while simultaneously labeling the Russian tradition as distinct, thereby legitimizing philosophy in Russia according to a broader tradition while at the same time highlighting its supposed uniqueness from the West.

Before turning to a closer look at histories of Russian philosophy in the 2000s, I place the tradition culturally and politically within the contentious first decade of the twenty-first century. The decade of the “zeros” (nulevye), as these years are called in Russian, is a mythologized era bookended by two historic social and political events: Vladimir Putin’s inauguration as president in 2000 and the beginning of political unrest in Russia’s capital during the heat waves of summer 2010.

Zeros and ones

Following the political and financial chaos of the 1990s, Vladimir Putin’s inauguration as president of the Russian Federation on 31