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Andrei Timofeevich Bolotov (1738–1833) is one of the most prominent cultural figures of modern Russia. Referring to him as “a man of the 18th century” may seem too vague, so he has frequently been referred to as an “encyclopaedist” of Russia. Though it is important to confirm whether such a title was appropriate, it can safely be said that Bolotov had comprehended and mastered the massive learning and intellect of contemporary Western Europe and successfully transplanted such knowledge to Russia.

The aim of this paper is to describe the historiography of the Russian and Western studies on A.T. Bolotov, and to illustrate that those studies reflect the intellectual interests of the scholars of the time as well as the spirit of the times. In this paper the focus is on Bolotov’s famous colossal “Autobiography”, one of the most valuable memoirs for reconstruction of the socio-cultural history of Russia, and we trace the history of the publication of the text and related studies. Furthermore, we show the current state of the field with new research findings and discuss future directions and possibilities for Bolotov research.