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UK AND NORTH AMERICAN RUSIANA, 2000–2020¹

The twenty-first century has seen a remarkable increase in scholarship dealing with Rus² by scholars from the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. This brief historiography details some significant trends in that scholarship including ties with Byzantium, integration with medieval Europe, ecclesiastical and philological issues, and more. In so doing, it attempts to summarize the current state of the field of Russian studies in the Anglophone scholarship of the first two decades of the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Rus', Kievan Russia, Ukraine, medieval Europe, Mongols, Byzantium, historiography

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2 The medieval polity was known as Rus' (Русь), with the apostrophe (or prime, in some cases) standing in for the soft sign that does not exist in English. Some scholars, Simon Franklin, for example, choose to leave off the apostrophe to make “Rus” more widely accessible and decrease misunderstandings with the possessive use of the apostrophe.

Richard Hellie once told me a story about how, when he began his graduate training at the University of Chicago in the middle of the twentieth century, he read voraciously to catch up on all that had been published on Rus' and Muscovy. Back then, he could generally read most of what was written each year, as it came out. The point of the story, however, is that half a century later, this would have been impossible for me to do. The volume of scholarly production had increased meteorically in the second half of the twentieth century, and not only had so much already been written, there was also so much being written at the time. This, to say the least, was a disheartening conversation.

Despite that conversation, or perhaps because of it, I have tried to keep track of what was being published and who was publishing on my own topic of Rus', while letting Muscovy and (following graduate school) Soviet history publications largely pass me by. I was pleasantly surprised to find how much work has been done on Rus' in North America and the UK in the last twenty years. The attached bibliography will be, I suspect and hope, of great interest to many scholars. I know that during the process of assembling it, I have been continually surprised to discover what I had not seen and read, as well as happy to know that so many people have produced scholarship on Rus' and are continuing to do so as we move farther into the twenty-first century. The historiography essay which precedes the bibliography will be relatively short but will deal with some of the trends in the scholarship on Rus' in the last twenty years. It will, hopefully, provide the reader a minimal guide to what is in the bibliography, as well as (perhaps) suggesting research trends for the future.

UK

It is easiest to start with the UK Rusiana of the last twenty years as, despite the august Oxbridge traditions of work on medieval Rus', this is a slightly smaller grouping of scholars, and thus scholarship, than that in North America. The excellent scholarly output of the listed UK scholars is largely unified by one phenomenon and that is the focus on the relationship between Byzantium (the medieval Roman Empire) and Rus'. Perhaps because of the ongoing influence of Dimitri Obolensky, who taught both Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard (two of the main contributors to this list), and these scholars' own students such as Monica White, the field of Russian studies in England has largely been one that continues the theme

of the Byzantine Commonwealth. This is most clearly seen in the work of Jonathan Shepard, who has continued to act as a surrogate for Obolensky and his idea. He has published multiple articles on the commonwealth idea, updating and revising it, as well as a whole series of Byzantine-focused books and articles (such as the acclaimed *Cambridge History of Byzantium*) which are not included here. Monica White, a student of Simon Franklin's, has also continued this "Byzantium and Rus'" focus in her own work – notably in her monograph *Military Saints in Byzantium and Rus, 900-1200*. This work begins in Byzantium with the increasing relevance of the cults of military saints for the Macedonian dynasty and then transfers those ideas to the kingdom of Rus'. Shepard and White combine for an edited volume reinforcing the famed "route from the Varangians to the Greeks" in *Byzantium and the Viking World*. While Simon Franklin has largely moved into Russian history, at the beginning of the period under review he published his collected works on Rus' as *Byzantium – Rus – Russia: Studies in the Translation of Christian Culture*. This volume has some of his greatest hits from the twentieth century, and it is useful to have them all collected here in one place. Here too, though, we can also see the clear link to Byzantium, demonstrated by the other UK scholars of Rus'.

NORTH AMERICA

In North America there are several strands of scholarship upon which we might focus, though I will expand only upon two main ones. The first has to do with material culture and a focus upon archaeology and artifacts, while the second engages Rus' with the wider medieval world. While there is certainly some overlap in these fields, they will be presented separately, though with some noting of connections. Notice will also be paid to the work being done in other areas, even if those themes are not discussed at greater length.

Thomas Noonan, who died early in this century, was a prolific scholar working largely on coins and material found in eastern Europe which connected it to the Islamic world. Though he has only two single-authored articles in this bibliography, it is more than appropriate to begin with him, as not only was his work incredibly influential, his focus was also continued by his students. Additionally, there are a good many articles included in this bibliography from the volumes of *Festschriften* published in his honor. Noonan's work, as noted briefly, connected Rus' with the Islamic world

of Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Middle East by demonstrating the flow of dirhams and other coins through Rus', the influence of such trade in setting up towns and trading centers, and the subsequent reach of that trade all the way to Scandinavia. His work helped to flesh out the theories of much earlier Slavists on why the Varangians first began exploring in eastern Europe. His archaeological work was continued by two of his students, who are themselves well represented in this bibliography. The first is Roman Kovalev, who is a practicing archaeologist and edits a journal which allows him both ample material and a place to publish it. Kovalev has continued Noonan's work with dirhams and other coins to expand our understanding of what was going on in the trading networks in eastern Europe. Though coins are his main focus, including Rusian ones, he has also written about tally sticks, furs, and other topics in his endeavor to spread more knowledge of the archaeological history of Rus' into North American scholarship. Another student of Noonan's is Heidi Sherman, who has moved away from coins and published a great deal on Novgorod, emporia, and specifically on flax and flax production. Her work fills a lacuna in Anglophone scholarship on such work in regard to Rus' even while it fits in with a large and growing movement to discuss textiles and textile workers (traditionally women) in medieval Europe as a whole. Beyond her scholarly publications, dealt with in the bibliography, Sherman has also done enormous work in hands-on experimental archaeology, including the construction and maintenance of a Viking longhouse. This is an underappreciated scholarly endeavor and one that will have a lasting impact both for her students and also for the public face of medieval history and especially Scandinavian and Rusian medieval history. In this same vein, we cannot leave out the archaeological work of Renata Holod and her team, inclusive of art historian Warren Woodfin, who have been excavating and analyzing a kurgan on the steppe north of the Black Sea for some years. There are multiple publications in this bibliography about their efforts, as well as the importance of their findings for studies of Rus' in the larger world.

The second theme to focus on in North American Rusiana in the past two decades is the increasing trend of scholarly works demonstrating connections between Rus' and the rest of medieval Europe. My own work is a large part of that, laying a foundation with *Reimagining Europe: Kievan Rus' in the Medieval World*, which challenged the traditional place of Rus' as part of the Byzantine Commonwealth and instead demonstrated the manifold ties Rus' had with the rest of medieval Europe. Those ties were examined in more detail in subsequent articles and monographs, including a focus on

dynastic marriages with *Ties of Kinship: Genealogy and Dynastic Marriage in Kyivan Rus'*. With that volume, I was also able to branch out into digital humanities and showcase the multiple ways that such marital information can be accessed, sorted, and searched for (genealogy.obdurodon.org). A follow-on project included a mapping component as part of the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute's MAPA project, which makes a visual depiction of the marriages available (gis.huri.harvard.edu/rusgen). Though my own work helped to lay the foundation for the most recent attempt at joining Rus' to the rest of medieval Europe, it is not at all the only work being done in that area. Yulia Mikhailova has taken her in-depth knowledge of sources such as the Galician-Volhynian chronicle (demonstrated in multiple articles) and has applied textual and linguistic analysis to a comparison between Rus' and Normandy in her monograph – *Property, Power, and Authority in Rus and Latin Europe, ca. 1000-1236*. In this volume, Mikhailova challenges the idea that Rus' and the medieval West were utterly different places by examining, among other topics, words for towns and castles, what they meant, and why they were so named. She has also looked at “feudo-vassalic” relations and political structures in Latin and Old East Slavic. Her ability to work with primary sources in a variety of languages is key to the acceptance of her ideas by both medievalists (who tend to focus on western Europe) and those working on Rus'. Similarly, Donald Ostrowski has written a recent monograph re-examining Francis Thomson's idea of an “intellectual silence” in Rus', by comparing intellectual activities in Rus', Byzantium, and western Europe. This volume, *Europe, Byzantium, and the “Intellectual Silence” of Rus' Culture*, represents a different way of tying Rus' into the larger medieval European world, via a set of comparative examples that allows scholars to engage with the familiar (western Europe or Byzantium, for example) alongside the unfamiliar (Rus'). Natalia Zajac is another in this group of scholars which is challenging the narrative that Rus' was not part of medieval Europe. In the case of Zajac, she brings a unique focus on material culture into the picture and has published multiple articles on the objects that represented physical ties between Rusians and others, largely women. Such an examination, much like that of Sherman above, helps to tie Russian studies into larger scholarly discourses where Russian studies tends to lag behind the theoretical developments of other fields. Some of Zajac's most noteworthy publications come in collected volumes alongside scholars focused on England, France, and Iberia – thereby solidifying the place of Rus' within Europe.

These two themes do not, in any way, cover the entirety of the publications that are included in this bibliography, instead they merely represent two

larger trends of thought representative of a group of scholars. There are similar such trends that could be noted, if at lesser length.

Within the bibliography one will see that there is a group of North American scholars who are engaging with Russian scholars by publishing in Russian. Fjodor Uspenskij and I have had multiple conversations about this topic and he has lamented to me the reality that North Americans working on Rus' tend to publish in English, and Russians working on Rus' tend to publish in Russian. In this bibliography, you will see that not only are Roman Kovalev and Yulia Mikhailova (already mentioned above) bucking that trend and publishing in Russian, but so are scholars like Gail Lenhoff and, her former student, Sean Griffin.

Not publishing directly in Russian, but deeply engaged in Russian scholarship is Donald Ostrowski, whose textual analyses of the *Povest' vremennykh let* began with his publication of the collation and paradosis of the text, and have continued in the pages of *Ruthenica* and *Palaeoslavica*. Andriy Danylenko has also engaged in analysis of texts and their meanings, especially relating to Greek and Islamic sources. One can also include in this section the debates over the historicity of the *Igor' Tale*, which have produced numerous publications.

At the end of the period under discussion is the advent of the Mongols in Rus' and there are, understandably, a great deal of works that deal with the Mongols in this bibliographic collection. Charles Halperin, who wrote the Muscovite version of this bibliographic entry, is (of course) a frequent author on all topics related to the Mongols. But so is Donald Ostrowski (mentioned earlier) who published his seminal *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-Cultural Influences on the Steppe Frontier, 1304-1589* during this period. Joining them in writing about the Mongols are a variety of other scholars including Gail Lenhoff, Janet Martin, Ann Kleimola and Larry Langer, all of whom have tackled different subjects related to the presence of the Mongols both within Rus' and within Russian historiography.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

As noted throughout, this narrative summary is in no way intended to provide complete coverage of the bibliographic materials appended. There are many different ways to analyze these 200+ publications. But one of the major takeaways that I would like to offer is that there have been 200+

publications on Rus' in the last twenty years – an impressive number! Those of us working in this field often talk about feeling alone, or lonely, while Muscovite and Soviet historians have more publishing opportunities within Russian studies, and western European medievalists and Byzantinists have their own conferences and followings. But this bibliography should stand as a testament to the work that has been done and make us feel that we are not alone, that there are more of us out there working. It should also, though, serve as a warning not to let up on our scholarly production. The humanities are being challenged in North America and the UK, and Rus' is marginal enough without adding to that. Those of us who work on Rus' need to keep working and publishing; and I would suggest tying Rus' into other fields (archaeology, textiles, women's history, medieval Europe, intellectual history, etc.) as a way to demonstrate its continuing relevance, so that in 2040, we will have another 200+ articles to write about and celebrate.

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