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Author's Subject: a new Zimin commemorative volume

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Istorik v Rossii mezhdū proshlym i budushchim: Stat'i i vospominaniia.
[Pod obshchei redaktsiei V. P. Kozlova.] Moskva: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet, 2012. 754 pp. ISBN 978-5-7281-1303-4.

In Russia, commemorations of distinguished colleagues and mentors never seem to end. Festschriften may appear several times during a scholar's lifetime, usually to mark the round-number birthdays or dates of first scholarly publication. Posthumous memorial "readings" become regular events, and their papers in turn generally are published. The commemoration of the eminent Russian medievalist Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Zimin (1920-1980) illustrates a distinctive twist to this pattern, in that it was impossible for his many admirers in the Soviet Union to honor him properly during his lifetime and for some years afterwards. This was largely due to his skepticism about the generally accepted dating and authorship of the "Igor Tale" (*Slovo o polku Igoreve*), which led to Zimin's being subjected to what the contributors to the volume here are now terming with intended sarcasm a "sudilishche" that took place May 4-6, 1964.

As readers of H-EarlySlavic are undoubtedly aware, I personally have had more than a little involvement in honoring Zimin, by organizing the first Festschrift openly dedicated to him (*Essays in Honor of A. A. Zimin* [Slavica: 1985]), then contributing an introduction to a second Western one, edited by Peter Brown (a special number of *Russian History*, Vol. 25/1-2 [1998]). To a considerable degree, what I wrote in that introduction about how we might best honor him anticipates my thoughts about the latest Zimin Festschrift and need not be repeated here. Also, I had had the distinction of presenting in the opening plenary session of the first "readings" in honor of Zimin at the Historical-Archival Institute in Moscow in 1990, my paper then appearing in the *RH* volume.

The new volume, discussed here, contains presentations from the fifth Zimin readings, held in 2010 to celebrate his 90th birthday, and additional articles which were solicited for that occasion with the encouragement of Zimin's widow, Valentina Grigor'evna. This imposing tome is the largest of the Zimin Festschriften to date, although the length and substance of the contributions in it vary widely. They are too numerous to list or discuss in any detail here.

The material is bookended by two Zimin memorial sections, between which are sections devoted to Russian history, to auxiliary disciplines and source study, and to historiography. The subject matter ranges widely, by no means all of it dealing with the medieval period or subjects that were considered Zimin's specialty. There are some lengthy pieces (e.g., Iu. G. Alekseev, "Mezhkniazheskii soiuz XIV v. kak voennaia sistema"; D. G. Davidenko, "Nekotorye svedeniia po istorii koniushennogo

khaziaistva Moskovskogo Simonova monastyria v XVI-XVII vv."; Iu. M. Eskin, "Restavratsiia mestnichestva po okonchanii Smuty"; E. V. Pchelov, "Dvuglavnyi orel na Rusi do pečati Ivana III 1497 g."). One assumes some of the articles may already have been superseded by more recent publications (e.g., B. N. Floria, "A. L. Ordin-Nashchokin i I. A. Khovanskii. Predystoriia konflikta," which presumably is also covered in Floria's large new book on Ordin-Nashchokin and Muscovite foreign policy). While most of the articles focus on concrete material, a few are more abstract and philosophical about the problems and perspectives in the study of history.

Given my personal interest in Zimin and the context of the Soviet historical profession in which he functioned, my attention so far here has focused on reading the pieces which provide new information about his career and interactions with colleagues. I found to be of particular interest Sigurd Ottovich Shmidt's reminiscences about their first acquaintance while still students, but also his frankness in indicating how in later years they grew apart. In this telling, as in a good many of the other essays here, the controversy over Igor' looms large. We find here correspondence (Zimin's letters to Valerii Sergeevich Mingalev) from the mid-1960s, written in the heat of the orchestrated attack on Zimin, and at least quoted excerpts from archival files of the proceedings at the "sudilishche" in the article by V. Iu. Afiani. Others comment on the events, generally making clear that they disagreed with Zimin's conclusions, but at least seem to have been able in private to debate with him on the subject. There is an interesting piece on Zimin and one of his favorite students, E. I. Mamatova. A. M. Dubrovskii has a long article on Zimin and S. V. Bakhrushin; R. A. Kireeva writes about her work with Zimin in publishing Kliuchevskii's Nachlass, an undertaking which encountered serious obstacles when first broached. There is much, much more here to provide insights into the Soviet historical profession.

Lastly I would note the nice selection of photos provided from the family archive by Valentina Grigor'evna for a project of A. A. Chernobaev to publish volumes of the "Iconography" of historians of Russia. The first of these appeared in 2008; the second, which is to include the Zimin photos, may by now have appeared as well. As the custodian of Zimin's unpublished materials, Valentina Grigor'evna has done much to ensure their posthumous publication. One may still hope she will bless the appearance of such important documents as his extensive correspondence with his long-time closest colleague, Iakov Solomonovich Lur'e. There is so much yet to learn in all this about the historical profession in the Soviet Union in the years covered by Zimin's career.

At very least I am painfully reminded by this valuable volume about how much of what has already appeared has escaped me since the time when I had read virtually everything Zimin had published up to 1980. In one of the few meetings I ever had with him in person, he pointed out the folders containing all his new material on subjects about which he had previously written. He considered it the obligation of a historian never assume he had written the last word on a subject. Zimin would have been disappointed in me, I think, since I cannot claim now to maintain an active file on his work and everything that has been written about him. As we see here, his Russian admirers still do though.