

From: dwaugh@u.washington.edu [mailto:dwaugh@u.washington.edu]

Author's Subject: Chechulin, Russkaia provintsii; Chentsova, Ikona Iverskoi Bogomateri

Date Written: Thu, 26 May 2011 11:57:19 +0100

Date Posted: Fri, 26 May 2011 06:57:19 -0400

<<http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=h-earlyslavic&month=1105&week=d&msg=BxBOYa3IWz1668xyqTFoXQ&user=&pw=>>

The first of these has just become available; so I have not seen it. I always admired Chechulin's work; this could be quite interesting even after so many years since it was written (but previously not published). I had heard rumors about it several years ago.

623140. Chechulin N.D. *Russkaia provintsii vo vtoroi polovine XVIII veka. /Publikatsiia i vstup. st. P.L. Vakhtinoi, O.S. Ostroi; ukaz. N.M. Balatskoi. - Sankt-Peterburg: RNB, 2010. - 836 s. Tir. 1000. Kniga izvestnogo istorika Nikolaia Dmitrievicha Chechulina (1836-1927), osnovannaia na bogateishem fakticheskom materiale, posviashchena raznym storonam zhizni rossiiskoi provintsii vtoroi poloviny XVIII v. Publikuemaia rukopis', nad kotoroi avtor rabotal v pervye porevoliutsionnye gody, dolgoe vremia schitalas' utrachennoi. (1.175 kg.) ISBN 978-5-8192-0380-4 Price from Kozmenko in Moscow: 65.00 /43.35 /50.00*

I have just finished reading rapidly through the following, which, I suspect might pass some of you by, since the somewhat narrow sounding title belies the breadth of its content. I apologize to those who are already more familiar with the author's work than I am. The book touches on many different important subjects for Muscovite history in the 17th century.

The book is:

Vera Georgievna Chentsova, *Ikona Iverskoi Bogomateri (Ocherki istorii otnoshenii grecheskoi tserkvi s Rossiei v seredine XVII v. po dokumentam RGADA)*. Moskva: Indrik, 2010. ISBN 978-5-91674-102-5.

Given the somewhat complex organization of the material and the density of detail, it is not an easy read unless one is (as I am not) already quite familiar both with details of Muscovite relations with the Orthodox East in the period and more broadly with details of the international relations in Eastern Europe. She starts with an apparently simple task of analyzing two Greek documents pertaining to the copying of and arrival in Moscow of the icon of the Iverion Monastery Bogomater' "Portaitissa," in order to write a new history of how this icon came to Moscow and became one of the most revered palladia of the Russian army. For much of the book though, the icon and its history recede into the background. We are treated to a close examination of relations with and among the Greek Orthodox clerics, especially those based in Moldavia, who were busily engaged in forging documents and very active players in a range of foreign-policy related initiatives involving Muscovy, Moldavia, Ukraine, and Poland (and, for that matter, squabbling amongst themselves). There are important

connections here with the onset of the war between the Ottoman Empire and Venice over Crete.

One may wish to rephrase somewhat the old warning about Greeks who come bearing gifts, adding to that "and asking for alms." Many of them, of course, stayed on, as is well known; the degree to which they were involved in trying to influence foreign policy in Muscovy is striking. She readily admits that some of her conclusions are speculative, but it all should certainly stimulate additional inquiry.

An important part of the argumentation here is based on careful paleographic analysis of the documents in the *Grecheskie dela* (handwriting, watermarks and seals) and comparison of them with Greek manuscripts in repositories outside Russia. This demonstrates that a good many of them must be grouped as coming from single scriptoria, most probably in Moldavia (even if ostensibly some were written either on Mt. Athos or by one or another of the Eastern Patriarchs). There are plenty of illustrations of manuscripts, details of signatures, seals, but no illustrations of the watermarks (those may be in an article of Chentsova's I have not yet seen). If you have always wondered why some of us think scribal hands and watermarks are important, you may be persuaded to re-consider the matter, even if it would take some expertise to evaluate her judgments on these matters.

The bibliography is a widely ranging one that includes studies and sources in several languages. The author has published a good many substantial articles relating to the subject over the last decade, as well as a collection of documents (in 2004) from the *Grecheskie dela*.

The book should interest those studying relics, iconography (there were a lot of other icons coming in with the Greeks from the Danubian principalities; the connections with Cretan school iconography probably are important), church reform (and thus the origins of the Schism), the Muscovite decision to support Khmel'nitskii, and much more. Interspersed throughout the book are translations of a good many of the important documents in the *Grecheskie dela* which pertain to the period of the 1640s and 1650s. There is a helpful chronology, good indexes a long summary in French.

I would hope someone who has serious expertise on her subject will give the book a proper review.