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<[http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=H-EarlySlavic&month=1306&week=b&msg=8YKyTzont9IU0T2kndilYg&user=&pw=>](http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=H-EarlySlavic&month=1306&week=b&msg=8YKyTzont9IU0T2kndilYg&user=&pw=)

T[at'iana] N[ikolaevna] Dzhakson. *Islandskie korolevskie sagi o Vostochnoi Evrope. Teksty, perevod, kommentarii*. Izd. 2-e, v odnoi knige, ispravlennoe i dopolnennoe. (Drevneishie istochniki po istorii Vostochnoi Evropy). Moskva: Universitet Dmitriia Pozharskogo; Russkii Fond Sodeistviia Obrazovaniiu i Nauke, 2012. 779 pp. ISBN 978-5-91244-072-4.

Tat'iana Nikolaevna Dzhakson (who romanizes her name as Jackson) is one of the most distinguished Russian specialists on medieval Scandinavian literature. The list of her publications in Russian occupies some four pages in the bibliography here, with the better part of another page of titles in English. She has now been publishing on these important sources for the history of Eastern Europe for nearly four decades. Her three earlier volumes (*Islandskie korolevskie sagi o Vostochnoi Evrope [s drevneishikh vremen do 1000 g.]* [1993];... *[pervaia tret' XI v.]* [1994]; ...*[seredina XI-seredina XIII v.]* [2000]), brought together here and substantially updated, were the first really serious efforts in Russia to publish a proper annotated edition of all the parts of these texts relating to the history of Eastern Europe and explore in detail their significance as historical sources, even though they had long been drawn upon by earlier historians. The new volume will be essential for anyone studying the early history of Rus.

This edition includes texts from 16 different sagas, in the first instance those relating the histories of the Norwegian kings. As the author stresses, there are differing schemes of classification, and the dividing lines amongst the saga texts are often not sharply defined. This is not, in any event, a compendium of *all* the medieval Scandinavian literary sources relating to Eastern Europe. For others, see in this series G. V. Glazyrina's volumes on Islandic Viking sagas and on the Saga of Ingvar the Far Traveler, and E. A. Mel'nikova's volumes on geographical works and on runic inscriptions. Volume 5 of the valuable anthology *Drevniaia Rus' v svete zarubezhnykh istochnikov* (M. 2009) is devoted to the Scandinavian sources and includes these text translations by Glazyrina, Mel'nikova and Jackson, as well as their translations of other saga texts and skaldic poetry.

For the most part, the saga texts were first put in written form in Icelandic in a Christian milieu in Iceland. The main concerns of the composers of the original texts was not Eastern Europe; so the Scandinavian activities there were incidental to other material. This then has dictated the structure of the current edition, which includes only selected portions of the larger saga texts (each saga gets a separate chapter), even though Jackson has been careful to consider the larger context of each excerpt. Where there are several recensions of a saga, all the different versions are included, ordered by the approximate chronology in which the texts appeared. The chapters contain a general introduction, the text in the original language

(based on the most authoritative edition), Jackson's own translation into Russian, and then extensive commentaries on the various motifs and other aspects of the contents. Fifteen appendices include excerpts from either Latin versions of some of the Norwegian royal sagas (the translations from Latin are by A. V. Podosinov) or from texts whose focus may be other than the Norwegian kings.

The book's apparatus includes a genealogy of the descendants of Harald Fair Hair, a chronological table of the rulers of Norway from the 9th through 12th centuries, a valuable "Ethno-geographical guide" for the key place names in Eastern Europe that figure in the texts, a long bibliography and indexes of personal and ethno-geographical names. Since the author has mined all the relevant texts and secondary literature in languages other than Russian, the volume can serve as a guide for those who wish to read more on the medieval Scandinavian texts.

Lastly I would say a word about the series *Drevneishie istochniki po istorii Vostochnoi Evropy* (prior to 1993, *Drevneishie istochniki po istorii narodov SSSR*). Along with the associated monograph series, *Drevneishie gosudarstva Vostochnoi Evropy [ex: na territorii SSSR]: Materialy i issledovaniia*, the series is the most important legacy of its founder V. T. Pashuto. Initially based in the Institute of Russian History of the Academy of Sciences, after a contentious decision by its director in 2000, the operation found a new home in the Institute of World (General) History of the Academy. To date the text series numbers 27 volumes. If time permits, I will write some review notes for H-EarlySlavic on the most recent volume in the monograph series.

Since Jackson's volume leads us to Iceland, I thought it would be appropriate to add some notes here about another book I have gone through recently, which can be read for pleasure, if not for any scholarly rigor. Its focus is not Eastern Europe. It is Nancy Marie Brown, *The Far Traveler: Voyages of a Viking Woman* (Orlando etc.: Harcourt, 2007). This is popular history by a professional writer. It tells the story of Gudrid, an Icelandic woman who figures in cryptic and contradictory ways in the Saga of Eirik the Red and the Saga of the Greenlanders. Gudrid indeed seems to have been in Greenland, probably also in North America, and there is a remote possibility she went on a pilgrimage to Rome toward the end of her life. The author has done a lot of homework for this, reading in the scholarly literature on sagas and Icelandic history, consulting the experts, visiting the Viking sites in Greenland and at L'Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland, and participating in an archaeological excavation at the site which may or may not have been Gudrid's farm in Iceland. Academic professionals may wish to yell at the author for the way she fleshes out a picture built on hypothesis, guesses and no little romanticized wishful thinking. I found the book engrossing though, for its intelligent digressions on the nature of evidence (for example, the problems in interpreting the sagas and the processes and techniques of archaeology), and for the questions it raises about how one might try to write serious history in a way that would have broad popular appeal when there are few solid sources available. Brown succeeds very well, I think, in evoking a picture of what Viking life might have been like.

My enthusiasms here are related, I confess, to the recent opportunity I had (thanks to an Icelandic Air special) to spend a week in Iceland, an

experience I can recommend to all of you. For the benefit of those who might be interested, I have put together an annotated pdf with some pictures, a few of them of historical interest <http://faculty.washington.edu/dwaugh/rus/IcelandinApril2013.pdf>. I apologize for the large file size, which will take a while to load. Once you open it in your Adobe reader, for best viewing, select "view>full screen mode" and then left click to advance the pictures. I will probably remove the pdf from my pages in a few weeks, to free up space. Perhaps the pictures will encourage you to visit there too, where, apart from the spectacular natural beauty, there is much of interest for those who study the Scandinavian role in medieval Eastern Europe.