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## The 2011 volume of Drevneishie gosudarstva

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### The 2011 volume of Drevneishie gosudarstva

*Drevneishie gosudarstva Vostochnoi Evropy. 2011 god. Ustnaia traditsiia v pis'mennom tekste.* Otv. red. G. V. Glazyrina. Moskva: Russkii Fond Sodeistviia Obrazovaniiu i Nauke [ & Universitet Dmitriia Pozharksogo], 2013. 592 pp. ISBN 978-5-91244-107-3.

Readers might join the editors (headed by E. A. Mel'nikova) in taking as the starting point for this volume the very brief essay by S. M. Kashtanov (pp. 218-20). His response to the question posed in his title (“Est' li u medievista ‘ustnye istochniki’?”) is an unequivocal “Net!” in the sense that medieval oral sources come down to us only in written form. Thus, these “oral tales ... [are] not a source for the history of early times, but a form of folk historiography.” In their preface then, apparently construing Kashtanov’s remarks as unduly negative, the editors argue that for much of the early history of northern and eastern Europe (not to mention other areas, depending on what period one is studying), we have no choice but to try to extract from the written records of what may have been “folk historiography” that which may be based on some historical reality or at least allows us to write about the mental world of those responsible for the texts. The focus of this volume then is to address issues of how that might best be done. The next volume in the series (for 2012) is already out and apparently will have a similar focus on the relationship between oral and written text. (I expect to post a note about it at some later date.)

The range of the essays here is broad—a lot on early Scandinavian sources, a lot on early Rus, material on both Western and Byzantine church texts, material on early Greek texts, and essays of some substance on Arabic sources. I can but comment briefly on a few of the articles.

The most abstractly methodological one is by Iu. A. Kleiner, “Ustnaia traditsiia i traditsiia fiksirovannykh tekstov,” in which he engages in a dialogue with Milman Parry and Albert Bates Lord, and to a lesser degree with M. I. Steblin-Kamenskii. At very least this has to sensitize us to the question of how we should try to understand the different traditions which govern the transmission and reception of oral and written texts.

V. A. Arutiunova-Findanian and A. S. Shchhavelev write about the apparent coincidence between the well-known tale of the founding of Kiev in the *Povest' vremennykh let* (PVL) and the Armenian “History of Taron,” a subject that has provoked much scholarly debate. They leave open several possibly interpretations, apparently favoring the idea that there was some common folkloric source, possibly transmitted (via the Alans) to Kiev.

A. B. Van'kova posits that early Byzantine vitae may transmit some aspects of monastic *typika* which were never in fact formally written down. O. V. Gusakova’s essay on the cult of St.

Edmund, King of East Anglia, who was killed by the Vikings in 869, explores the possible relationship between oral tradition and the written *vita*.

For students of early Rus, T. V. Gimon's monograph-length essay "Ian' Vyshatich i ustnye istochniki drevnerusskoi Nachal'noi letopisi" should be of particular interest. He carefully reviews the historiography concerning what PVL contains about Ian', cited as a source of oral information the chronicler wrote down. There are thorny issues here of Ian's genealogy, and a larger question of the source of the Novgorod information in the Chronicle. Gimon concludes, *inter alia*, that *pace* Shakhmatov, there was no Novgorodian chronicle compendium in the hands of the compiler of the Nachal'nyi svod of ca. 1093, and that the entries cited in support of Shakhmatov's view could easily have been transmitted in Kiev orally. As Gimon explains, his article to a considerable degree was written as an extended commentary on and response to one by D. S. Likhachev (in *Istoricheskie zapiski* 17 [1945]) on the oral sources for PVL. Gimon supports many of Likhachev's main points, while disagreeing with some of his observations about the genealogical connections and whether Ian's father had also provided information to the chronicler.

Also of substantial interest for the historian of Rus are the articles by N. F. Kotliar on the Galician tradition in the 12th-century Kievan *svod* (the continuation of PVL) and P. V. Lukin's article discussing whether the pagan "reform" by Prince Vladimir recorded in the chronicle reflects mainly oral or written traditions. There is something here for the Muscovite specialist in L. V. Stoliarova and P. V. Belousov's discussion of Jerome Horsey's account about death of Tsarevich Dmitrii in Uglich in 1591.

For me, some of the most intriguing essays concern the representations of space, real and imagined. Here I would note F. V. Glazyrina's article on the treatment of imaginary landscapes in the "Saga of Eirik the Traveler"; T. N. Dzhakson and A. V. Podosinov's contribution on the name for the Sea of Azov in Scandinavian sources; T. M. Kalinina's discussion of the ethnonym "Burdzhan" in medieval Arabic geographies; and I. G. Konovalova's contribution on the methodology of analyzing data about itineraries recorded in such geographies. All of these authors have published important earlier work on related subjects, with the work by Konovalova and Podosinov of particular interest for questioning common assumptions about early cartography.

Finally (and I emphasize, this does not exhaust the contents of the volume) I note two contributions by E. A. Mel'nikova, the first, her long essay on the Christianity of the Vikings in early Scandinavian oral tradition and in the evidence recorded by contemporaries. Her second contribution here may be deemed trivial: analysis of a recently discovered Runic inscription ("Arinbard carved these runes") on a windowsill in the Cathedral of Haghia Sophia in Istanbul. They were found by Iu. A. Artamonov and A. A. Gippius as they were documenting the Cyrillic graffiti in the church in 2009. For me, as I am about to re-visit Haghia Sophia, which I understand finally is free of the scaffolding in its interior, this is a particularly intriguing bit of news.