



РЕЦЕНЗИИ

**The Making of the Eastern Vikings: Rus' and
Varangians in the Middle Ages
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Abstract: The volume is edited by Prof. Sverrir Jakobsson, Dr Thorir Jónsson Hraundal and a PhD candidate Daria Segal from the University of Reykjavík. The list of the participants is quite diverse (from renowned scholars to recent university graduates) and, as a result, the quality of the papers is immensely varied. The intended aim of the collection is to contribute to what the editors believe is a “much-needed paradigm shift in the study of the eastern Vikings, with a renewed focus on their multiple and hybrid identities”. The editors argue that historiography on the “eastern Vikings”, as they label them, is vast but invariably focused on actual historical events, while their goal is to concentrate on the narrators of the medieval accounts of the Rus' and the Varangians, the literary contexts, and the aetiology of these narratives, thus situating the debate on the Rus' and the Varangians in a new context. The book consists of an introduction, eleven chapters, a list of references, and a terminology index where the term *Rus'* is missing, either by oversight or because of the challenges of defining it unambiguously. Of the eleven chapters, eight are source studies, while three are written in a slightly different vein and are primarily orientated towards historiography. The papers, as they appear in the book, are devoted to: 1) a gender reading of tenth-century Islamic geographical sources about the Rus' (T. M. Upham); 2) the Varangians in medieval Ara-

bic sources of the ninth to eleventh centuries (Thorir Jónsson Hraundal); 3) the initial stage (ninth century) of relations between Byzantium and the Rus' (M. White); 4) the Western images of Scandinavians and the Rus' in the period between 800 and 1250 (R. Fenster); 5) criticism of John Lind's concept of "Varangian Christianity" as practised by Scandinavians along the way "from the Varangians to the Greeks" (I. Garipzanov); 6) the Varangians in the chronicle writing of medieval Rus' (D. Segal); 7) the treasures of Haraldr Sigurðarson, the king of Norway from 1046 to 1066, acquired by him in Rus' and Byzantium (F. Androshchuk); 8) the Norwegian missionary king of the late tenth century Óláfr Tryggvason and the role in the baptism of Rus' ascribed to him by sagas (K. J. Richter); 9) saga narratives on the visits of the Scandinavians to Constantinople which predate the sources by several centuries (Sverrir Jakobsson); 10) a re-evaluation of the 1954 work of Sigfús Blöndal on the Varangian guard in Constantinople and its 1978 English translation and reworking (R. Scheel); 11) Kievan Rus' in Ukrainian historiography (Valur Gunnarsson). The volume produces an entirely mosaic impression and is not always logically organised from the point of view of chronology. Nevertheless, the collection is interesting for the issues raised in it and its unconventional approaches and interpretations. However, many of these papers demonstrate an insufficient acquaintance of the authors with the Russophone scholarly literature, without which it is impossible to investigate the chosen topic comprehensively.

Key words: the Rus', the Varangians, Vikings, Rus', Byzantium, Byzantine sources, Arabic sources, Russian chronicles, Icelandic sagas

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Формирование восточных викингов: русь и варяги в средние века / Под ред. Сверрира Якобссона, Торира Йоунссона Храундаля и Дарьи Сегал (Средневековые идентичности: социокультурные пространства; 12). Тюрнхаут: Брепольс, 2023. 236 стр. 8 цв. илл., 2 таблицы. ISBN 978-2-503-60671-2. eISBN 978-2-503-60672-9

Аннотация: Рецензируемая коллективная монография, как я понимаю, является результатом трехлетнего исследовательского проекта «Легенды восточных викингов», поддержанного Исландским исследовательским советом и выполнявшегося на базе Университета Рейкьявика в 2019–2021 гг. (см.: <https://via.hi.is/>). Редакторами ее выступили профессор Сверрир Якобссон, доктор Торир Йоунссон Храундаль и работающая над диссертацией Дарья Сегал. Состав участников – достаточно разнородный (от известных ученых до недавних выпускников университета), и, как следствие этого, статьи сильно разнятся по качеству. Декларируемой целью сборника является вклад в совершенно необходимый, по мнению редакторов, «сдвиг парадигмы в изучении восточных викингов, с возобновленным вниманием к их множественным и гибридным идентичностям». Как полагают редакторы, «важным фактором в любом изображении руси и варягов является определение того, показаны ли они как “другие” (например, в арабских, латинских и греческих источниках) или как часть прошлого, которая вносит вклад в настоящее (например, в древнескандинавских или восточнославянских источниках)». Книга состоит из введения, одиннадцати глав, списка цитируемой литературы и терминологического указателя, в котором отсутствует термин «русь/русы/Русь» – то ли по случайной оплошности, то ли по причине трудности его однозначного определения. Редакторы этого коллективного труда утверждают, что историография темы огромна, но она всегда концентрировалась на реальных событи-

ях (исследователи пытались понять, что было в действительности), а повествователям, литературному контексту и мотивации написания соответствующих источников уделялось мало внимания. Здесь же исследовательский акцент смещен на свидетелей событий и на культурную память. Редакторы считают необходимым пересмотреть отдельные элементы грандиозного нарратива о руси и варягах, который сложился за два с лишним века изучения вопроса, введения в оборот источников, накопления археологических и нумизматических данных. Из одиннадцати статей сборника восемь имеют источниковедческий характер, а три написаны несколько в ином ключе и ориентированы в первую очередь на историографию. Обращаясь к теории культурной памяти Яна Ассмана, участники этого тома нередко оперируют термином «группа» (по Ассману, память, культура и группа, т.е. общество, неразрывно связаны друг с другом), который зачастую уводит их от реальной истории и камуфлирует трудности в определении того, кем в социальном плане являлись русы и варяги. Статьи (по порядку их следования в книге) посвящены: 1) гендерному прочтению исламских географических источников X в. о русах (Т. М. Апхэм); 2) варягам средневековых арабских источников IX–XI вв. (Торир Йоунссон Храундаль); 3) начальному этапу (IX в.) взаимоотношений Византии и русов (М. Уайт); 4) западным образам скандинавов и русов (*sic!* – не «Руси») на отрезке времени с 800 по 1250 г. (Р. Фенстер); 5) критике постулируемого Дж. Линдом «варяжского христианства» на «пути из варяг в греки» (И. Гарипзанов); 6) варягам древнерусских летописей (Д. Сегал); 7) приобретенному на Руси и в Византии богатству норвежского конунга середины XI в. Харальда Сурового Правителя (Ф. Андрощук); 8) норвежскому конунгу-миссионеру конца X в. Олаву Трюггвасону и приписываемой ему сагами роли в крещении Руси (К. Я. Рихтер); 9) повествованиям саг о визитах скандинавов в Константинополь за несколько столетий до записи этих источников (Сверрир Якобссон); 10) переоценке работы Сигфуса Блэндаля 1954 г. и ее английского перевода-переработки 1978 г. о варяжской дружине в Константинополе (Р. Шеель); 11) Киевской Руси в украинской историографии (Валур Гуннарссон). Картина получается вполне мозаичная и не всегда логично выстроенная с точки зрения хронологии. Тем не менее сборник интересен по поднимаемым в нем вопросам, по нетрадиционности подходов и трактовок. Однако при всем том, что я отдаю должное исследователям, взявшим на себя труд по-новому (иначе, чем в предшествующей историографии) осветить проблему руси и варягов на востоке, я во многих из этих статей вижу недостаточное знакомство их авторов с современной русскоязычной научной литературой, без которой, как мне представляется, писать такой труд нельзя. Сборник в целом можно охарактеризовать при помощи названия одной из входящих в него статей – «The West on the North in the East» (*букв.*: «запад о севере на востоке», а по сути – представления западной историографии о скандинавах в Восточной Европе).

Ключевые слова: русь, варяги, викинги, Древняя Русь, Византия, византийские источники, арабские источники, русские летописи, исландские саги

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This volume of essays is dedicated to studying eastern Vikings, namely the Rus' and the Varangians. It contains an introduction, eleven chapters, a list of works cited, and an index of terms where *the Rus'* is missing for some obscure reason. As the editors of this volume rightly state in the introduction, the term *Vikings* in both public and academic discourse has become a denomination for Scandinavians in general, including warriors, merchants, and peaceful travelers. As for the eastern Vikings, they are referred to exclusively as the *Rus'* (Gr. οἱ Ῥῶς; Lat. *Rhos*, *Ruzzi*, *Rugi*; Arab. *al-Rūs*, *al-Rūsiyya*; OR *русь*) and the *Varangians* (Gr. βάρανγοι, Arab. *warank*, ON *Væringi*, OR *варяг*) in the sources. These terms are not synonymous and were used with different meanings at different times, the borderline being the eleventh century, when the (socio)ethnonym *the Rus'* turned into the polytonym *Rus'*, a name for the state of Vladimir Svyatoslavich and his descendants, whereas the Scandinavians in the east became the *Varangians*. Four types of sources are analysed in the volume: Byzantine historical works from the mid-tenth to the early thirteenth century; works of Arab historians and geographers of the ninth to eleventh centuries; Russian chronicles (from the early twelfth century); and Icelandic kings' and family sagas written in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Of the eleven chapters in the collection, eight are source studies, and three are written slightly differently and are focused primarily on historiography. The editors believe that within the framework of the binary opposition between Self and Other that enables us to evaluate how different cultures defined themselves through comparison with other cultures, in the first two groups of sources the Rus' and the Varangians are strangers, while in the third and fourth ones they belong, to some degree, to the Self, but only as part of a legendary and bygone past. The volume is interesting because of the issues raised in it and the unconventional approaches and interpretations; for this, I pay tribute to the scholars who have taken the trouble to shed light on the problem of the Rus' and the Varangians in a new way, different from the previous historiography. However, in many of these chapters I see the insufficient familiarity of their authors with Russo-phone historiography, which, in my opinion, is impossible to ignore in investigations of this particular topic. Correspondingly, the book as a whole might be characterised by the title of one of its chapters, "The West on the North in the East". In what follows, I will point out some of the most noticeable drawbacks.

The collection opens with two orientalist chapters. The first of them, "Rus' Women in Islamicate Geography? Approaching a Study of Gender" written by Tonicha M. Upham is dedicated to Arabic, Persian, and Turkish-

language sources on the world of the Rus'. The author shows a distinct preference for outlining existing scholarly studies and pointing out their shortcomings rather than studying the sources themselves. Of the shortcomings concerning the Arabic geographical material listed by Upham, her reasoning about the “optional” knowledge of the Arabic language and the utilisation of these sources “as secondary supports to other forms of historical and archaeological material” (p. 22) seems fair. Noting recent works by Thorir Jónsson Hraundal, James Montgomery, and Nizar Hermes, who have taken, as she writes, “an important step” in the right direction, Upham ignores (as well as the aforementioned scholars) the works of Russian orientalists Tatjana M. Kalinina and Irina G. Konovalova who work with original texts (cf. Калинина, Коновалова 2009; Коновалова 2013). However, one cannot but agree with the author that “there is vast potential for work which takes Islamicate sources in new and exciting directions” (p. 33).

The chapter by Thorir Jónsson Hraundal is entitled “Varangians in Arabic Sources”. Thorir Hraundal believes that the constant traffic of merchants and merchandise between the north and south in the ninth and tenth centuries played an important role in the genesis of geographical ideas and even exaggerated geographical dimensions; a good illustration is the representation of routes in “The Book of Curiosities”, “where Europe is portrayed as an island, and the Baltic merges with the Don and the Black Sea in one large body of water” (p. 38). It must be pointed out that there are many indications of connection by water between the north and south of Europe in Arab geocartography of the ninth and tenth centuries. These authors had learned ideas about the Tanais, and their picture of the world had been formed on the basis of ancient geography and cosmography, which is described, in particular, by my colleagues in our book (Джаксон, Калинина, Коновалова, Подосинов 2007. С. 49–55, 101–35). Al-Biruni was the first to use the term *warank* in 1029 and his employment of this term without any further comments indicates its widespread use, although his predecessors, Ibn Hawqal and Muqaddasi, make no mention of it. The use of the term by the Byzantine authors Skylitzes and Kekaumenos is attested in the 1030s, only a few years later than by al-Biruni, so the latter could have acquired it from Byzantine sources. However, there is no indication in the Arabic sources that in the tenth century the representatives of the imperial guard were called *warank*. Thorir Hraundal raises a question whether a similar phenomenon could have existed at the court of the Khazar *khaqan* in Itil and does not exclude the possibility that the East-faring Northmen served as guards or mercenaries at the Khazar court, as they did in Byzantium. He notes that Ibn Khurradadhbih, Ibn Rustah, Istakhri, al-Mas‘udi demonstrate “a special bond between the Rus’ and the Khazars” (p. 42), which he examines

in the context of Byzantine rule and diplomacy in the region. He agrees with Jonathan Shephard (1970), who bases his conclusions on a famous entry s. a. 839 in the *Annales Bertiniani* about the embassy sent by Emperor Theophilus to Louis the Pious in Ingelheim bringing with them some of the *Rhos* people (they turned out to be the *Sueones* and their rex who had sent them to Theophilus was called *chacanus*, or *kaghan*) and states that Byzantium at that time was ready to use the Northmen as its allies against the Muslims. Thorir Hraundal claims that *chacanus* could have been a title “for a ruler of a group of Northmen, located somewhere either side of the Baltic”, or it could have referred to a real *kaghan* of the time, the *kaghan* of the Khazars. He also asserts, following Peter Golden (1982), that the Rus’ kaghanate had emerged as “a vassal kaghanate of the Khazars” (p. 44). However, he does not take into account the fact that the *Annales Bertiniani* is not the only testimony of the title *kaghan* being applied to the Russian princes. There are several cases in the Russian sources that *kaghan* is the title of a prince of Old Rus’ up to the last quarter of the eleventh century (see Мельникова 2010a. С. 142–147).

The chapter written by Monica White, “The Byzantine ‘Charm Defensive’ and the Rus’”, is devoted to the initial stage of the relationship between Byzantium and the Rus’ reflected in Byzantine sources after the mid-ninth century. The origins, goals and behavior of the Rus’ differed significantly from those of the empire’s longtime opponents, which required a reorientation of the diplomatic approach. Diligently trying to avoid problematic and controversial areas, the author defines the object of her research rather vaguely: “The term Rus’ here refers to people primarily of Scandinavian origin who were active in eastern Europe and Byzantium”. Thus, Monica White at once gives the term *Rus’* an ethnic meaning, emphasising that “the term Rus’ and its variants did not, in any case, refer at this time to a place” (p. 48). She believes that she can bypass the protracted and non-consensus debate regarding the location of the Rus’ kaghanate (of the *Annales Bertiniani* s. a. 839) by asserting that “the name(s) given by the Rus’ to their base(s) of operations in the ninth century are unknown, and the nature and location of a possible Rus’ power centre is disputed”. She herself uses the term “*Rus’ homeland*” in a broad sense to refer to what is now north-western Russia, where they are known to have had permanent settlements in the ninth century” (p. 48). However, this wording clearly shows her to be a supporter of the point of view (formulated, in particular, by K. Zuckerman in 2000, who she refers to) that the Rus’ kaghanate (aka *Rus’ homeland* in her terminology) was located in today’s north-western Russia. I would like to note that the most authoritative and well-founded opinion today is that “the name *Rhos*... denotes members of a squad of the ruler who bore the title *chacanus* and maintained ties with Byzantium”, and that *chacanus* “is most naturally corre-

lated with the head of the Khazar state, and the *Rhos-Sueones* should be considered as members of the Khazar embassy to Byzantium” (Мельникова, Петрухин 1989; Мельникова 2010б). Monica White uses all the available evidence for Byzantine–Russian relations in the ninth century (archaeological, numismatic, written Byzantine and Arabic) and demonstrates that these sources, although not numerous, reveal the early patterns of these relations, which laid the foundation for their further development. She reasonably believes that the main factor was geography since the centre/centres of Rus’ power were separated from Byzantium by vast expanses of wilderness, which were extremely difficult to overcome. The main idea of her work is that the Rus’ invasions had little in common with the invasions of the traditional enemies of Byzantium (say, the Bulgarians or the Abbasids); neither their goal nor their reason coincided, although they did not differ much from Viking attacks in other places. The Byzantines managed to find an alternative way to deal with the Rus’: “they launched something of a *charm defensive*, cooperating with the Rus’ and welcoming some individuals into elite circles” (pp. 53–4). Here, I must say, I agree with Aleksey S. Shchhavelev (Щавелев 2012) that the Ingers, who Monica White has in mind in this case, were indeed the descendants of Gothic tribes but not the Scandinavians.

Latin sources are discussed in the chapter “The West on the North in the East: Western Images of the Norse and the Rus’, 800–1250” by Ryan Fenster, which is a summary of his MA thesis. The abstract of his chapter claims that in preceding scholarship little attention has been paid to contemporary Latin sources in examining the Norse presence in Eastern Europe. I find it difficult to agree with this statement, as the author completely disregards Russophone historiography. Perhaps this neglect could be pardonable in an MA thesis, but for publication in an academic volume on this particular topic the knowledge of Russian scholarship is vitally important. The minimum I can recommend to start with is: Назаренко 1993. Ryan Fenster refers to seven Latin sources written between about 800 and 1250 and selects from them “examples which were thought likely to mention both the Norse and the Rus’ in the same text”, and then “subjects them to quantitative and qualitative data analysis” (pp. 64, 63). I am not sure whether quantitative analysis is of great help in this context. Ryan Fenster’s statement that the three late sources contain 1454 out of 1797 keywords and the most frequent of them are the designations of Denmark and the Danes is absolutely obvious in the light of where, by whom and about what these three chronicles were written. It remains unclear whether the length of the works under discussion is considered in these calculations and whether it is possible to compare one fragment from *Annales Bertiniani* with *Gesta Danorum* by Saxo Grammaticus in 16 books. It seems that the author does not distinguish between the ethno-

nym *the Rus'* and the polytonym *Rus'*, although in the period from 800 to 1250, crucial changes occurred in the historical situation and, accordingly, in the use of the term *Rus'*. Ryan Fenster's overall conclusion about "a matching pattern of attitudes" (p. 75) of the authors of these seven chronicles to the Norse and the *Rus'* follows, rather, from the *a priori* judgement of the author, rather than from a thoroughly carried out analysis.

Old Russian sources are studied in the chapter "*Variagi, Nemtsy, Svei, and Urmane: Scandinavians in the Chronicle Writings of Medieval Rus'*" by Daria Segal. The author focuses on the term *Varangians* in the Old *Rus'* chronicles and in the Old Norse-Icelandic corpus, which refers to different groups of Scandinavians. While in the first case, it is an exonym for Scandinavians, or more precisely, for those of them who reside/stay in the territory of Old *Rus'*, in the second case, it is a designation of people serving in Constantinople, which Elena A. Melnikova analysed in her works published decades ago (Мельникова 1998). Understandably, Daria Segal is compelled to focus her attention on the term *Rus'*. She emphasises its changing character. In her opinion, it first appears in the undated part of the *Povest' vremennykh let (Primary Chronicle)* as an *ethnonym*; it functions as a *politonym* in translations of Greek sources referring to the events of the ninth to tenth centuries; at the end of the eleventh and in the twelfth century it is more often used as a *choronym* (it would be more accurate to say a *politonym* – "the state called *Rus'*") and at the beginning of the thirteenth century it acts as an adjective to describe princes (although Russian princes already appear in Russian-Byzantine treaties of the tenth century). Daria Segal refers to the texts of the *First Novgorod Chronicle*, the Laurentian and Hypatian Codices. She is quite familiar with the scholarly literature in Russian that is necessary for this study. She attempts to look at the terms in the chronicles that could have been used to designate different groups of Scandinavians and, employing statistics and discourse analysis, to check if the chroniclers' attitudes change through their narratives. Source material demonstrates that the collective term *variagi* is not substituted by terms for other groups of Scandinavians, namely the *nemtsy*, *svei*, and *urmane*. As for the Varangians, their history in Russian chronicles is as follows: at first, they are introduced, and their location is specified; somewhat further in the text, they become, to a large extent, responsible for the genesis of the elite group; finally, they "contribute to the legitimation of a status quo for the ruling dynasty" (p. 103); here, in her opinion, assimilation gives way to dissimilation, and the chronicler loses interest in the Varangians as a group after 1036, when Yaroslav, according to the *Primary Chronicle*, "бысть самовластець Русьстѣй земли" (assumed the entire sovereignty). Daria Segal finds an explanation for the disappearance of the Varangians from the pages of the chronicle for almost a century. Accord-

ing to her commentary, the events of 1036 were a turning point for them: “despite the previous narrative where *variagi* indeed are considered as a part of ‘us’, the *variagi* of the eleventh century were not a settled group, but rather were considered a mercenary force, ‘the other’” (p. 104).

The editors state in the Introduction that “an important element of Rus’ and Varangian history is the portrayal of the Rus’ and Varangians in Old Norse-Icelandic narrative sources, which have been neglected in recent years” (p. 14). At a minimum, this statement does not apply to Russian historiography. The editors include three chapters whose authors refer to Old Norse-Icelandic sources. For reasons of chronology, I would have changed their order, starting with the one that focuses on the sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason.

The chapter by Kjartan J. Richter “Stories of Nordic Missionaries on the Eastern Way” is devoted primarily to the Norwegian king of the late tenth century Óláfr Tryggvason. It opens (like all chapters of the collection) with an abstract that immediately surprises the readers with the statement that “Óláfr Tryggvason... according to the sagas... served at the imperial court in Constantinople” (p. 121). No less mysterious is the statement from the Introduction that in the stories about Óláfr Tryggvason, who has received the title of “missionary king” of Iceland, it is said that he “was responsible for bringing Christianity to Rus’ on behalf of the emperor of Constantinople” (p. 18). As far as I know, nothing of the kind is mentioned in any of the redactions of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*: in a dream, Óláfr hears a voice that tells him “to sail to Grece”; he did this; “there he met excellent and devote teachers who taught him the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was now instructed in the faith that had previously been commended to him in his dream”. There he received *prima signatio* from “one excellent bishop”; and this same bishop (Páll, according to *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*) went after Óláfr to Rus’ to preach the holy faith (The saga of Olaf Tryggvason 2000. P. 54), while the emperor was not involved in this. The author convincingly demonstrates that there was not much source material available to Oddr Snorrason and emphasises a point with which one cannot but agree that the saga of Oddr Snorrason “was an attempt to make Óláfr the national saint of Iceland” (p. 127). However, this idea is by no means new: Lars Lönnroth suggested it back in the 1960s (Lönnroth 1963; 1965. P. 17) and Theodor M. Andersson agreed with him (Andersson 1985. P. 226) that the celebration of Óláfr Tryggvason by monks Oddr and Gunnlaugr was generated in large part by the Icelandic national interest in promoting their own missionary king, equal in importance to the Norwegian missionary king Óláfr Haraldsson. The fact that Óláfr Tryggvason acts as a mediator in the Christianization of Old Rus’, without a doubt, serves to enhance his glory as a preacher and truly makes

him the “Apostle of the East” (cf. ДЖАКСОН 2000a). Kjartan Richter believes that “undoubtedly there were conflicting accounts of the Christianization of the Rus’ in circulation”, and the author of *Óláfs saga en mesta* “attempts to believe them all equally”, combining two very different narratives in one text (p. 131): the story of the baptism of Rus’ by Óláfr with the help of a Greek bishop and the statement that, according to the *Imago mundi* by Honorius Augustodunensis, “Rvsci. Polaii. Vngarij” were baptized in the days of Otto III, and that “sumar bækr segia”, that together with Otto there was Óláfr Tryggvason. On this basis, Kjartan Richter rightly emphasises what Sverrir Jakobsson has already written about (Sverrir Jakobsson 2008) that “the author had little or no knowledge of the Great Schism” (p. 131). However, he does not pay attention to the fact that the union of Emperor Otto III and the Norwegian king Óláfr Tryggvason “existed” only within the framework of Old Norse-Icelandic literature: no other source mentions their joined attempt to bring the peoples of the Austrvegr to Christianity. This story was created by the author of *Óláfs saga en mesta* and placed next to four examples from church history proving that God could use unbaptised people to preach Christianity, for Óláfr at the moment in question did not himself have full baptism, but only a *prima signatio* (cf. Fidjestøl 1993. S. 138).

The chapter “In Search of Haraldr harðráði’s Treasures” is written by the well-known archaeologist, a specialist on the Vikings in the east Fedir Androshchuk and is dedicated to the immense wealth of the Norwegian king Haraldr the Harsh Ruler who had spent at least ten years abroad (in Rus’ and Byzantium), which is described in Icelandic sagas. In his chapter, Androshchuk examines both written sources and numismatic and archaeological evidence. At length and in good detail, he retells, in accordance with the sagas, how Haraldr ended up in the Byzantine service, although at times he allows inaccuracies, or puts too much into the meager news of the sagas. With knowledge of the matter – since it is well developed in Russian and Ukrainian archaeology and by him in particular – he writes about Haraldr’s predecessors on the way “from the Varangians to the Greeks”. In parallel to sagas’ data, he turns to the testimony of Kekaumenos. He rightly emphasises that saga information is based on skaldic evidence, and there is practically no real data there. He considers saga stories about the wealth obtained by Haraldr in Africa to be “mythical”, since contemporary Byzantine sources do not mention any Byzantine activity in Africa at that time. Trying to establish the source of Haraldr’s treasures, he notes that the Sicilian campaigns could bring considerable trophies. In addition, he claims, Haraldr’s treasures included gifts that Varangian mercenaries received on various occasions. I am surprised by the freedom with which Androshchuk treats the sagas and research literature. Seemingly based on the saga, and yet contrary to it, since

the saga does not directly say this, he states that Haraldr’s “riches became a serious argument for Prince Iaroslav in choosing a spouse for his daughter Elizabeth” and that “Haraldr gave Iaroslav considerable gifts” (p. 116). This also contradicts the conclusions of scholars who believe that Yaroslav in his foreign policy was focused on Scandinavia in general, and Norway in particular (cf. Melnikova 2007), and did not encroach on the wealth that accidentally fell into his hands. Androshchuk also states that “Magnús gave Haraldr half of Norway, without demanding anything in return, except for the provision of military support” (p. 117). However, neither the saga nor the skald mentions any provision of military support (cf. ДЖАКСОН 2013), so again the author of this chapter reads out of this text what is not described there. His conclusion that a significant part of Haraldr’s treasures was most likely left as a bride gift in Kyiv and the remaining part was given to his potential allies, jarl Sveinn and King Magnús in Denmark, does not follow from the previous discussion. Nevertheless, the final statement that judging by the deterioration of Haraldr’s silver coins it is possible to state a clear lack of his resources already before c. 1060, which may have been the reason that led him to raid England in 1066, is quite interesting. This chapter, unfortunately, is poorly edited: the name of the saga discussed in the chapter is distorted (*Haralds saga Sigurðssonar* instead of *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar*); the name of the main character of the saga is spelt either *Haraldr* or *Harald*; the famous *Icelandic-English Dictionary* is called *Vocabulary*; *þolotasvarf* is rendered as “cleaning the chambers” with a reference to this dictionary without specifying the page number, although R. Cleasby and Gudbrand Vigfusson give another definition: “palace-scouring” (*An Icelandic-English Dictionary* 1957. P. 478); there is an error in the phrase “Rus’, or Garðr as it is named in the Scandinavian runic inscriptions and in skaldic poetry”, since *Garðr* (sing.) is an abbreviation for *Miklagarðr*, and *Rus’* is called *Gardar* (pl.) (see Jackson 2019. C. 65–69). Androshchuk makes several erroneous claims, including that “Iaroslav and Ingigerðr offered Haraldr’s brother Óláfr rulership over Volga Bulgaria” (I was particularly amazed by this assertion because it was stated with a reference to my work in which I demonstrate that Yaroslav and Ingigerðr could not have offered Volga Bulgaria to Óláfr, since it did not belong to Rus’ – see ДЖАКСОН 2000б. С. 86–89, but not 22, as indicated by Androshchuk).

Sverrir Jakobsson’s chapter “Remembering the Varangians: Cultural Memory and Lost Identities” presents an interesting selection of saga accounts of Scandinavian visits to Constantinople several centuries before the recording of the sagas. This information could have been preserved in the oral tradition in the families of the descendants of the saga characters who had “gained much honor through their stay in Constantinople” (p. 146).

Sverrir is very clearly aware of and very carefully conveys to the reader the change in the eleventh century of a designation for some of the eastern Vikings. A new term, *Varangian*, replaced the term *Rus'*, since this latter “was gaining a new significance with the consolidation of the Kievan state under Volodimer and his successor, Iaroslav (r. 1015–1054). This was a state in which the Scandinavian element was no longer dominant. Thus, a new designation for Scandinavians not connected with the principality of the Rus' was invented” (p. 138). And these Scandinavians began to serve in the imperial forces in Constantinople in the eleventh century. The author works with Old Norse-Icelandic, Byzantine and Arabic sources but leaves aside Old Russian chronicles where there is the term *варяг* (*varyag*), as well as scholarly literature in Russian, at least such works as Мельникова, Петрухин 1994; Мельникова 1998. Sverrir demonstrates that the Varangian motif was popular in the sagas. Through it, the Icelandic literary elite built a connection between the past of the Icelanders and the past of the Roman Empire. This memory was perpetuated, first, by representatives of the leading families from Western Iceland: they emphasised the connection of their ancestors with the Norwegian king Haraldr Sigurðarson, “the archetypical Varangian in Scandinavian cultural memory” (p. 150).

Three chapters of this collection are historiographical. The chapter by Ildar Garipzanov, “The Concept of ‘Varangian Christianity’ Revisited”, is devoted to the examination of the concept of “Varangian Christianity” introduced by the Danish scholar John H. Lind. It should be emphasized that a number of Lind’s works reflect the process of developing this theory (which is why Lind corrects the formulations of earlier ones in later articles), and the final product can be considered an article from 2017, the title of which includes this term. Garipzanov states that his “chapter scrutinizes the six main points of Lind’s argument and questions their validity in regard to his concept of ‘Varangian Christianity’” (p. 77). However, in Lind’s work, these are not focal points of his argument but only some non-trivial topics to which he draws attention. For scholars studying the Scandinavian presence on the way “from the Varangians to the Greeks”/on *Austrvegr*/in Old Rus', Lind’s theory serves as a convenient tool. Taking into account the Scandinavians’ movement along this route both from the north to the south and from the south to the north (from Scandinavia to Byzantium and back) and their presence on this route (on the territory of Old Rus', in particular) enables us to account for some of the situations reflected in the sources referring to the religious life of these regions. These situations should not be perceived as “anomalies” (as Garipzanov does), and the term “Varangian Christianity” does not characterise Christianity itself as something “anomalous” but highlights the role of the “Varangians”, i. e. Scandinavian warriors, traders, etc.

(both those who were baptized in Byzantium and those who were converted to Christianity in the West, in England/Ireland/Scandinavian countries) in the spread of Christianity, which remained uniform in Eastern Europe long after the Great Schism of 1054. Lind himself puts it this way: “when I operate with the term ‘Varangian Christianity’, I do not refer to Christianity as it eventually came to exist in Rus’... but to a mixture of Christian elements that Scandinavians picked up on their way and, perhaps, blended, while travelling between east and west” (Lind 2017. P. 115).

The chapter “Deconstructing *Væringjasaga*: Byzantine and Old Norse Perspectives on the Varangians and on Haraldr Sigurðarson” written by Roland Scheel gives a long-needed assessment of the work without which, since its appearance, not a single study of the Scandinavians’ presence in Byzantium, and their service in the Varangian squad in Constantinople, in particular, has been written. *Væringjasaga* exists in two completely different editions. Both were published after the death of their author, Sigfús Blöndal (1874–1950). The first one, written in Icelandic, was completed by him a few months before his death and published in 1954. The second one, much more widely known, was compiled by Benedikt S. Benedikz, who, as its title suggests, translated, revised and rewrote Sigfús Blöndal’s text (published 1978, last reprinted in 2007). Of course, one cannot agree with Scheel’s statement that “Sigfús Blöndal himself was a pioneer in dealing with the Byzantine sources on the Varangians” (p. 152) – he has ignored the Russian byzantinologist V. G. Vasil’evskiy who was the first in 1874–75 to turn to Icelandic sagas alongside with Byzantine sources on the Varangian-Russian and Varangian-English squads in Constantinople (Васильевский 1874–1875), and also (like Sigfús Blöndal) approached this comparison from the point of view of Byzantine sources. But since Vasil’evskiy’s study was written in Russian, it did not gain fame among saga scholars of its time, in fact it is little mentioned and rarely cited by modern scholars as well (in this book he is referred to only once, his name being spelt with an error). Thus, “in his world” Sigfús Blöndal was indeed a pioneer. However, without the English translation, his book written in Icelandic, would also be known to a much smaller number of scholars. However, the translator did not serve Sigfús Blöndal very well. Initially, the book was aimed at an Icelandic reader familiar with the sagas, so, having set the goal of translating and carefully analysing Byzantine data about the Varangians in comparison with the material of the sagas, he supplied this presentation with detailed footnotes and an exhaustive bibliography, and his manner of presentation made it possible to separate conclusions based on the sources from hypothetical reconstructions. The translator, on the contrary, has significantly changed the text, and primarily the target audience. His translation is addressed to historians familiar with the

Byzantine world, and therefore the text is replete with explanations of saga texts. In addition, the tone of the presentation has changed, so that, as Scheel writes, “hypotheses are turned into facts or distorted”. Dwelling on methodological issues, Roland Scheel notes that Sigfús Blöndal’s assessment of sources is pre-critical: he perceives the information of *konungasögur* and *Íslendingasögur*, as well as Latin chronicles, as reliable. Finally, the basis of Sigfús Blöndal’s constructions is the idea that “Varangians” are meant whenever Byzantine sources from 988 onwards mention the Byzantine squad or elite units, regardless of whether the ethnicity of the warriors is indicated or not. At the same time, he constantly combines fragments of information of different types and different times to build his “Varangian” history. And most importantly, nothing in the Byzantine sources indicates the existence of a “Varangian guard” before the reign of Alexis I Komnenos (1081–1118), but with the advent of the Komnenos era the situation changed dramatically, especially in the twelfth century. The key problem, as Roland Scheel emphasizes, is that the *Væringjasaga* and all the studies that are based on it find Varangians in Byzantine sources where they are not explicitly named, and all this is based solely on the assumption that Scandinavian historiography, the oldest corresponding texts of which were created only in the twelfth century, contains reliable information. Using the example of Haraldr Sigurðarson’s *útfærðar saga*, Scheel demonstrates that the Varangians took an active part in the formation of their own legend. From this follows the logical conclusion that relying on the sagas and Saxo as primary sources and using Byzantine evidence only to fill in the gaps or provide background for the events described in the sagas is completely unacceptable, but this is exactly what has happened in the *Væringjasaga*. It is time, he argues, to deconstruct this myth, but not destroy it, and reconstruct the logic of relevant sources and source corpora separately in order to understand the functioning of their narratives and the factual information they contain. In this case, the “old-fashioned source-criticism” is indispensable (p. 169).

The last chapter written by Valur Gunnarsson, “Origin Stories: The Kievan Rus’ in Ukrainian Historiography”, deviates from the theme specified in the subtitle of the book: *Rus’ and Varangians in the Middle Ages*. The author’s attention is focused not on the Varangians, but on the current political situation, although it is impossible to say that the Varangians are not mentioned at all – in three short paragraphs, not very professionally and without much respect for the source and historiography, a fragment of the *Primary Chronicle* is retold, up to the unification of Novgorod and Kyiv in 882 into a single Old Russian state. The retelling in question ends with a statement that many Ukrainians would agree with it, but only as a description of how Ukraine began. The Icelandic author Valur Gunnarsson tries to demonstrate

different views on medieval Kievan Rus' from the eighteenth century to the present day, based on the classification of points of view on the past of the Ukrainian people as Russophile, Sovietophile, Ukrainophile, and Eastern Slavic proposed by the English political scientist of Ukrainian origin Taras Kuzio. In accordance with the main theme of his chapter formulated in the title, he naturally pays attention to Ukrainian historiography, the Ukrainian view of the origin, formation, and development of Ukraine. However, since this historiography never existed on its own, in isolation from the Soviet/Russian perspective (be it in contradiction, opposition, discussion, dialogue), the picture presented here looks one-sided and biased. Without generally disagreeing with Valur Gunnarsson's final conclusions that "the Kievan Rus' remains integral to both Russian and Ukrainian history" and that "each country therefore seems to have drawn opposite lessons from an origin story both claim as their own" (p. 187), I would, however, consider that this text is out of place in a collection of academic articles.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the authors of this collective monograph have chosen an interesting research perspective, shifting the research emphasis from an attempt to reconstruct real events to witnesses of these events and cultural memory. The choice of sources involved in the research is absolutely accurate. The authors have made an effort to look at fragments related to the Rus' and the Varangians without taking them out of a wider context of the sources, and fully succeeded. The book dedicated to the presence of Scandinavians in the ninth to eleventh centuries in Old Rus' and Byzantium on the whole perfectly demonstrates the current historiographical situation within the framework of this issue. The insufficient acquaintance of the authors with the Russophone scholarly literature, which has been pointed out in my review, is also indicative in this regard.

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