

## **SEEMSG Meeting, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2004**

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**Language, Truth and (Il)logic: Dalimil and Classical Historiography**

Considering the so-called Dalimil chronicle of 1314, the earliest Czech rhymed chronicle in existence, the author examines its history through manuscript and printed versions and translations into German. She discusses the reasons (notably its strongly anti-German attitudes) for its having been suspected of being a forgery in the 19th century, and the convincing factors supporting its authenticity. She suggests that, as in the case of Václav Hájek z Libočan's *Kronika česká* (1541), it is inappropriate to attempt to judge this type of material by the standards applied by Gelasius Dobner in his 18th-century edition of the *Kronika*, and that the methods and approach of Dalimil have more in common with ancient historians, including Livy, Tacitus and Thucydides, in such matters as concepts of historical truth, partiality, and the inclusion of speeches and digressions than with their modern counterparts. She also notes Dalimil's close attention to the Czech-German cultural division in terms of the political significance of language and its implications for subsequent developments in this area, and the need for caution in judging Dalimil by present-day ideas of historical truth, concluding that whatever the veracity of his account, it is more profitable to consider his significance as a chronicler of 14th-century *mentalités*.

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**Travelling in the *byliny***

When studying the *byliny*, an element that emerged as stable and permanent among other realities was the figure of the hero. After some attempts at making a typological classification of the *byliny* heroes, it became clear that one of the most defining elements of the hero was the trip. Leaving aside other types of similar compositions, I focused on the heroic *byliny*, in order to study travelling as a multi-purpose and multi-faceted element of the figure of the hero.

Having established the high proportion of trips in the heroic epos, a first analysis focused on the importance of travelling as a literary element in the compositional structure of the poems, acting both as plot (main trip) and motif (secondary or vehicular trip). In order to do so, poems were firstly divided into episodes according to their plots. Thus, travelling can constitute the main plot when the poem contains only one episode and a motif and a plot when the poem contains more than one episode, where the trip is the setting or the trigger of the main action.

A second analysis focused on how the trips of the hero formed an essential feature of his character, analysing the causes, the purposes of the heroes and the aims of the trips. The most important criteria for this analysis was how the causes and the

purposes of the trips describe the point of view of the hero, as a literary character, and what they could tell us about the ethos of the different heroes. Crossing all these data, as well as the results that these trips had for the heroes, whether they achieved their purposes or not, we were able to obtain a typology of heroes in terms of how, as literary characters, they face their challenges. As a result of this second analysis, it was interesting to see in which ways the destiny of the hero is linked to the destiny of his homeland and how different types of heroes, with different reactions before a challenge or danger, present a far-from-monolithic bylina hero. The trip, therefore, acts as a metaphor of the will and destiny of the hero, enabling him to find on his trips what he seeks, glory in the battlefield, help from his comrades or a bride

A final third part consisted in a typology of trips, attending to whether they are campaign, commercial or bride-taking trips. This third part of the analysis established the main contents of the heroic bylina and, by extension, the main compositional topics of the poems. In this analysis, it was also taken into account whether the travelling episode analysed conformed a plot or a motif, resulting in the fact that there are types of trips which are always a motif (vehicular) and never form the main plot. This is very interesting in terms of compositional techniques and the selection of motifs made by the singers. The types of trips particular to each hero were also established, enabling us to differentiate between the types of trips assigned to major and minor heroes.

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**Grzegorz Rostkowski**

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**Patron Saints of Kievan Princes (from Olga's Baptism to ca. 1180)**

This paper outlines the basic contents of the first chapter of my Ph.D. thesis entitled “Patron Saints of the Ducal Family of Rurikovich (from Olga’s Baptism to the Demise of Yaropolk II Vladimirovich in 1139)”. The Ph.D. thesis will include an introduction, about seven chapters and a closing section with conclusions and annexes. The sources materials for the area under discussion include Rus’ chronicles, synodikones, seals (for comparison also Byzantine and Bulgarian seals), paterikons, hand-written records in various books and so-called “melkaia plastika”.

I believe the condition of research on patron saints of members of the Rurikovich house proves there is a need for a holistic, systematic study of the problem and should comprise comparative material from Byzantium, Bulgaria and other countries, for instance Hungary. The past few years have seen a growing interest in the issue of patron saints of Rurikovich dynasty. In this context, for example, studies of Andrzej Poppe, Fiodor Borisovich Uspenskij (and his wife A.F. Litvina) and O.V. Loseva should be mentioned.

I understand that the focus of my Ph.D. thesis is broad and challenging and must include diverse and scattered source material. At the same time I am aware that studies on patron saints of members of respective lines of Rurikovich dynasty must take account of the fact that certain names occur in different lines, not only in one.

Moreover, attention needs to be given to some very interesting examples of names of churches and monasteries and names of settlements and locations in Rus'. These should be compared with examples from Byzantium and other countries.

This paper tells about patron saints of the Kievan princes from the baptism of Olga to the demise of Yaropolk II Vladimirovich in 1139. The opening time frame raises no doubts, except for a sparkling discussion that already produced abundant literature on the dating of Olga's stays in Constantinople and her baptism. Anyway, while the significance of accepting Christianity by Princess Olga is indisputable in this context, the dating of the event remains of lesser importance. The year 1139 is an important date because it is the year of the decease of Yaropolk II Vladimirovich . After his demise the political disintegration of Kievan Rus' (noticeable during his reign, after the death of his brother Mstislav I Harald Theodore in 1132) became an irreversible fact. I want to underline it is not my intent to deliver a comprehensive presentation of the area under discussion with this paper. I wish to give an outline of the issue, which ought to be explored, highlighting chosen examples relating to patron saints of Kievan princes.

This paper concerns patron saints of the Kievan princes: Olga-Helena, Vladimir I-Basil, Svyatopolk (Okaianyy)-possibly Peter, Yaroslav (the Wise)-George, Izyaslav-Dimitri, Svyatoslav-Nicholas, Vsevolod-Andrew, Svyatopolk II-Michael, Vladimir II Monomakh-Basil, Mstislav-Harald-Theodore, Yaropolk II-possibly John. However, a complex study of the subject sould include the spouses of Kievan princes and at least some of their offspring. This Ph.D. thesis chapter in its full and final form will comprise all types of sources and give details of the rules of name-giving upon baptism in the Rurikovich family.