SIMON FRANKLIN AND JONATHAN SHEPARD, *The Emergence of Rus 750–1200* (New York and London: Longman Press, 1996), 371 pp. + xxii + maps, genealogies, index.

In this long-anticipated addition to the Longman History of Russia series, Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard have written the first volume of the medieval time period traditionally referred to as Kievan Rus′.[8] At this time, the proto-nation's center was in Kiev, but the authors are quick to point out in their introduction that Kiev does not imply Ukrainian, nor does it imply Russian in the sense that we know these terms for the modern era. Rus′ was an area that evolved into the nucleus of both Ukrainian and Russian national claims, yet in the earliest period was entirely unique. As such, there have been few sources in English that satisfactorily deal with the Kievan era in a comprehensive manner; Franklin and Shepard also claim that there are few which deal with the subject in Russian or Ukrainian. Their goal, then, is to provide a general "fresh synthesis" that encompasses the scope of all the specialized types of history produced in the last few decades.

For the most part, they are successful. This book is, in a series marked by uneven entries, a good synthesis which pays attention to details frequently lost in other more narrowly focused studies. For example, their discussion of the official conversion of Rus′ to Orthodox Christianity under the reign of Grand Prince Vladimir in 988 considers it in terms of its economic, political, cultural, and socio-hierarchical benefits. In other monographs, by contrast, one might find a scarce mention of the facts, or an overreliance on the connection with Constantinople's church. The authors also incorporate a wealth of other disciplinary material, in particular archeological findings for the analysis of a period which is notable for having primary material only at earliest in the eleventh century, with the first church chronicle appearing in 1118. Franklin and Shepard therefore utilize the physical evidence of the culture of Rus′ to discuss its birth and evolution in a detailed, empirically based survey.

There is a comprehensive and holistic examination of the conversion of Rus′ to Orthodoxy, which Franklin and Shepard cover from the perspective of cultural infiltration of Byzantine influences, emphasizing as well the sociopolitical ramifications of accepting

[8]The authors state they use the term Rus rather than the familiar form of Rus′ because they have adopted a simplified transliteration system, with diacritics omitted.

Christianity from the East rather than from the West. Always construed as the basis of Vladimir's later sainthood, his acceptance of Christianity is balanced with the portrayal of the pragmatic application of a religion that served sociocultural purposes at home as well as diplomatic, military, and economic purposes across the Black Sea. The close alliance with the Byzantine Empire was valued at the elite and mercantile level, but as the authors point out, the developing and emerging state of Rus′ was active on the international level, and the necessity of a factor of commonality among his own people as well as with those Vladimir encountered outside of Rus′ is not to be overlooked.

Close attention is also given to the so-called "Golden era" of Kievan Rus′ under Jaroslav the Wise (r. 1019–1054), who ostensibly created the structure of the state in its prime before internecine strife and factionalism of patrimonial ownership developed among his descendants in the second half of the 11th century, leading to an irrevocable split in the fabric of unity—if one can accept that this federation of principalities was ever truly unified. The traditional portrait of Jaroslav has been one of a wise and saintly ruler who established Christianity more firmly in the land of Rus′ and linked it most strongly with the internal structure of the church, helping to build the many churches and schools, importing culture from Constantinople, compiling the *Pravda Russkaja* (the first book of laws in Rus′), and laying down in writing the much-contested system of succession, which more than anything else led to the later years of dysfunction and civil warfare, which resulted in fragmentation of the state.

If one were to cite a weakness in their treatment, it would be an assumption on the part of the authors of considerable preexisting expertise with the subject material. For example, a good portion of the first section of the book is devoted to the discussion of the Scandinavian impact on the settlement and foundation of Rus′—an aspect that has been considered fundamental to and hotly debated in Russian historiography for many years under the auspices of the "Norman theory." Briefly defined, it is the consideration of whether or not, or to what extent, Rus′ was founded by Scandinavians and subsequently gave rise to the Russian state and culture, or whether the Kievan state was founded by Slavic people. The theory developed over 200 years ago, starting with two 18th-century German historians who argued in favor of the Scandinavians. Their argument was based largely on *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, written some 250

years after the fact, which tells us that the various Slavic tribes invited the northern "Varangian Russes" to come rule them according to law and protect them from raids by rival tribes extracting tribute. The Riurikid dynasty came to the northern lands of the territory around Novgorod, and brought with them the name of the proto-state: Rus′. Nicholas Riasanovsky, whose textbook *The History of Russia* has long been the standard by which Russian history is taught in this country, strongly disagrees with the theory, as is the tendency with historians in the Eurasian or Russian tradition. In his estimation, the Norman theory fails to consider the Slavic state, or at minimum the confederation of South Slavic tribes, that preexisted the Scandinavians in the southern regions including the trade route from Kiev along the Dnieper to the Black Sea.

Franklin and Shepard pick up this argument without more than a passing mention in a sentence and incomplete footnote (p. 28, n. 26) in the midst of considering the physical evidence showing that the basis of the territory was economically rooted and attracted a variety of people along the north-south trade route—"The road from the Varangians to the Greeks," as it is traditionally called. They argue that there was a heavy Scandinavian element in the Novgorod area, but at the root of the whole problem is the question of what exactly constitutes Rus′? Again, this is the principal factor in the historiographical debate, and is worthy of more than the passing mention they give partway through a protracted evaluation of physical findings in archeology, and the exposition of literature from other cultures which visited and otherwise observed the Rus′ territory in the 8th and 9th centuries (most notably Arabic and Byzantine). Ultimately, the authors conclude that Rus′ is worthy of consideration both as a geographic territory and as a sociocultural identity or phenomenon (as, indeed, Riasanovsky also did), and that the northern territory was heavily influenced in the late 9th century by Scandinavian traders who initially carried the social identity of the Rus′, along with pockets of Finno-Ugrians, while the southern territory from the regions of the mid-Dnieper to the Black Sea had a more multicultural variety of ethnic influences not limited to the Slavs. Slowly, however, the Rus′ came from the north to gain a foothold along the Dniepr in the wake of disorganization of the Khazar tribes, aspiring to trade across the Black Sea. Kiev proved to be a natural fortress in the mid-Dnieper region. With infiltration came assimilation and the development of the unique culture that evolved to become Rus′, later Kievan Rus′.

The system of ascension is another area that is strongly debated among Russianists, and is again given short shrift by the authors in terms of historiography although their discussion proves insightful. Franklin and Shepard correctly begin further back than 1054 to discuss the struggle for succession, although many authors have observed the legendary and epic struggle between Jaroslav and his brother Svjatopolk "the Damned." Here they wisely back up even further to examine Vladimir's seizure of power from his own brother Jaropolk in 980, in contradiction to the supposed system of ascension by virtue of seniority—a model proposed by the esteemed Russian historian S. M. Solov'ev, in which the oldest male of all collective family members succeeded to the most prestigious principality, Kiev. Vladimir, an illegitimate son, served first as a prince of Novgorod, and after his father's death was not the most senior candidate for the princedom of Kiev; this went instead to his brother Jaropolk. Eventually he seized Kiev from Jaropolk, instituted a policy of unification by means of religion for a common bond, and followed what appears to be custom in establishing various principalities for his sons. Vladimir's sons in turn had their own struggle for succession, and Jaroslav was thus hardly the first of any of the Grand Princes of Kiev to be followed by a struggle for succession—he was just the first to be credited with a system of succession which fell apart and led to civil war, though such an argument is negated by the previous three rulers' tumultuous ascensions.

Historiographic issues aside, Franklin and Shepard have written an excellent monograph that gives an intensive, detailed examination of a variety of sources in a number of genres in order to solidify the history for a time period that is marked by a lack of concrete, traditional historical evidence. In a field subject to contentious arguments outside the realm of historiography, most notably national interest and bragging rights of genesis, Franklin and Shepard have succeeded in producing an interesting and informative history that sheds a balanced light on a land and culture that cannot be strictly limited to "Ukrainian" history.

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