

**PIERRE GONNEAU**

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**French and French-Speaking Contributions to the Historiography of Rus (862-1462)<sup>1</sup>**

There is no special chair on Rus in France. In History faculties, most of the Russia specialists work on the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian Empire, Soviet and post-Soviet Russia. Thus, French and French-speaking research on the Historiography of Rus is often associated with research on modern Russia or Byzantine studies. The main topics are source editions and critical approaches to sources; the Tatar yoke; Church and religion; the arts and culture of Medieval Rus.

*Keywords: Kievan Rus; Russian Church; Mongols and Russia; Tatar Yoke; Russian icons; Archeology of Russia; Crimea; Russian medieval art; Russian medieval architecture; princess Olga; De cerimoniis*

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École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE) has a chair in Russian history and linguistics which has been held by André Vaillant (1932-1966), Jacques Lépissier (1967-1971) and Vladimir Vodoff (1972-2001) and is currently held by Pierre Gonneau. A prosopographic dictionary of EPHE gives detailed information on its teachers from the foundation of the School in 1868 till today. <https://prosopo.ephe.psl.eu/> Although it has courses in modern history, EPHE's main focus is on prehistoric, antique and medieval studies. The *Livret-annuaire* of EPHE's Section des Sciences historiques et philologiques is now available online. It gives yearly reports of every directeur d'études for years 2008 on <https://journals.openedition.org/ashp/> For archives (1872-2007) <https://www.persee.fr/collection/ephe>

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### **Source Editions, Translations and Linguistics**

An exhaustive bibliography of western-language translations of Old Russian and Muscovite sources was compiled in 1998 and partially updated in 2016. A long-awaited French translation of the *Tale of the Bygone Years* (the first since 1884!) was published by Jean-Pierre Arrignon. Michel Mervaud, a specialist on 18<sup>th</sup>-century Russia, edited and translated Gottlieb Bayer's seminal essay (in Latin) on the origins of Russia, written at the beginning of the famous scientific quarrel setting "Normanists" against anti-Normanists. Although the author maintains a well-balanced position, he has often been vilified as the first Normanist. Much work was devoted by French Byzantinists to a new edition and complete study of the *De cerimoniis*, the precious Byzantine treaty written ca. 959 under the supervision of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus. This treaty includes the tale of the reception of Olga, *archontissa* of the Rhôs, in Constantinople, which was an important step towards the baptism of Rus in 988 by prince Vladimir, grandson of Olga. The date of this visit (in 946 or 957) is still a matter of discussion (among others between M. Featherstone and C. Zuckerman).

At EPHE, a new experimental platform called Multipal is being developed to help students and young researchers in mastering paleography and the editing of medieval sources. Four Old-Russian documents are available on this site.

The series *Monumenta Palaeographica Medii Aevi*, aims to publish samples of every type of written document known in Medieval Europe. Volumes on Latin, Greek and Jewish documents have already been issued. The first volume of the new *Series Rossica* is in the making. It will publish the oldest Old-Russian charters kept in the archive of the municipality of Riga, from the year 1191/1192 to 1341. Photographs of each document, transcriptions with French translations, historical, diplomatic, and paleographic comments are provided, taking into account all the historiography of the question in Russia and the Soviet Union, in Baltic countries and in the West.

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## **Archaeology**

Michel Kazanski and Constantin Zuckerman devoted great attention to the archaeology of the Goths and Slavs at the time of the Great Migrations and to the study of material culture in Rus’ and Crimea. Caen, one of the historical capitals of Normandy and a major research center in archaeology, celebrated the millennium of 911 with a Franco-Russian exhibition commemorating the “other Normandy”. As we know from the *Tale of the Bygone Years*, in 911, while Normandy was given as a duchy to Rollo, a Northman, by Charles the Simple, king of Francia, Oleg, Varangian prince of Kiev, signed a treaty with Byzantium, thus consolidating permanent commercial relations that opened the way to the conversion of Rus to orthodoxy in 988.

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### **Kievan Rus And Its Foreign Relations**

Presses universitaires de France has recently completed the publication of a 3-volume comprehensive history of Russia in the spirit of the *Longman History of Russia*, giving an up-to-date picture of the state of research. *Des Rhôs à la Russie* was published in 2012 and translated into Russian. Each of the three volumes gives an international bibliography, a chronological study of the facts and thematic chapters on the main problems debated between historians. Constantin Zuckerman covers the field of early Kievan Rus culture in its relations

with the Byzantine empire. Crimea is one of their points of contact. The date of the princess Olga's famous trip to Constantinople (946 or 957) is still disputed, as his article and the one written by Michael Featherstone show. Vladimir Vodoff's annual reports on his seminar on Old Russian history and philology have been assembled in *Autour du Moyen-âge russe*. Florent Mouchard has published a study on the Smolensk land that describes its political, economic and cultural roles in Kievan Rus. This is less a "regional study", than a different focus, in the spirit of Father Martin Dimnik's two books, *The Dynasty of Chernigov* (Toronto, 1994 and New-York-Cambridge, 2003). Marie Favereau recently established herself as the new specialist on the Golden Horde, especially studying the period of its supposed decline.

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### **Religion, the Russian Church, Culture and the Arts**

The bulk of French research on Rus address the questions of religion, culture, and the arts (most often religious culture and the arts). A major exhibition of Russian medieval and early modern art was held at the Louvre museum in Paris in 2010. For the first time in Western Europe, and even in Russia, it collected together 400 masterpieces from the major museums of Russia, and also some very famous pieces held in the West: the St-Bertin Annals, with the first mention of the Rhos (s.a. 839); the Hebrew document sent from Kiev to the Cairo Genizah (ca. 930 AD); the so-called Gertrude Psalter (10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> c.), once possession of the wife of Prince Iziaslav of Kiev, kept now in Cividale; and the Reims Gospel (11<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> c.), supposed to have been brought to France by Anna Iaroslavna. The catalogue of this exhibition is a kind of anthology of Russian arts before Peter the Great. M. Featherstone, V. Geronimi, O. Medvedkova, and V. Traimond made other important contributions. P. Gonneau studied the interaction between texts and images in Russian medieval tradition, mostly in the field of hagiography and historiography (the chronicles). É. Teiro wrote a major study of the development of the Russian metropolitan

see. It is completed by K. Vetochnikov's at present unpublished dissertation on the diplomatics of the Russian Church.

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