

Hungarian and International Russian Studies in a Modern Academic Journal: Overview and Trends* **

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Russian studies have a decade-long tradition in Hungary. As part of a professional renewal following the change of the regime, new forums were established, including the Eötvös Lóránd University Russian Studies Institute, which later became a centre, and then was replaced by the Centre for the Research and Methodology of Russian Studies. In the meantime, Russian studies workshops were launched at other universities in Pécs, Szeged, Eger, Szombathely, and Debrecen. Research in Russian studies covers a broad spectrum in Hungary both in terms of time and topics, applying a multidisciplinary approach to Russian history and culture. The *Russian Studies Hu* periodical has undertaken to provide this multi-layered cultural and academic community with a medium and, along with it, a unique opportunity to present their most recent research findings in Russian studies. Representing a broad scholarly perspective, the periodical also promotes cooperation with international researchers studying Russian history and culture. The composition of the editorial board and the content of the issues published so far reflects this approach, with recognised international historians among the authors whose works have been published in the journal between 2019 and 2022. The issues of *Russian Studies Hu* provide an overview of the trends in modern Russian studies (after 2000). The periodical covers a wide range of historical genres and views and is strongly connected to historiographical approaches. This is especially true of the issues published after 2021, which we will pay particular attention to in our study.

Keywords: Russian studies, historiography, academic journal, Eötvös Lóránd University

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Венгерские исследования в области русистики основаны на традициях в несколько десятилетий. Частью профессионального обновления, следовавшего за сменой политической системы, явились такие новые научные форумы, как Институт русистики, а затем Центр русистики Университета имени Лоранда Этвёша; теперь в качестве их интеллектуального наследника функционирует Исследовательский и методологический центр русистики. В других университетах в городах Печ, Сегед, Эгер, Сомбатхей организовались профессиональные мастерские; примеры продолжения русских исследований можно найти и в Дебрецене. Венгерские исследования в области русистики как во времени, так и в плане тематики покрывают чрезмерно широкий спектр, подходя при этом к вопросам русских истории и культуры методами междисциплинарных исследований. Журнал *Russian Studies Hu* взялся объединить эту многогранную интеллектуально-научную среду, чем открыл уникальную возможность для презентации результатов новейших исследований в области русистики. В то же время подход редакции журнала намного шире: помимо венгерской, он продвигает также и сотрудничество с представителями международной русистики. Данная концепция усиливается и составом редакционной коллегии журнала, и профилем его вышедших номеров. В томах, вышедших в период 2019–2022 гг., кроме венгерских исследователей, можно найти статьи известных зарубежных историков. Обзор журнала позволяет выявить комплексную картину исследовательских трендов в области русистики XXI в., поскольку этот журнал не только привержен идее разнообразия исторических жанров в презентации материала, но и внимательно относится к методикам изучения и разнообразию историографических традиций.

Ключевые слова: венгерская русистика, историческая наука, историография, Университет имени Лоранда Этвёша, научный журнал

For the purposes of our analysis, we applied a thematizing methodology. Accordingly, we will present the articles published in *Russian Studies Hu* sorted by historiographical approaches. We will also describe the research trends that have been reflected in Hungarian and international historiography in the last two decades regarding the history of Russia. It should be noted that when compiling this study, we had to apply a selection process based on the above criteria, for, due to length constraints, it was impossible to comprehensively present all studies published in the periodical between 2019 and 2022.¹ In this study, we will discuss the issues of *Russian Studies Hu* divided into two sections. First, we will analyse the issues published in 2019 and 2020, which are rather varied in terms of topics and methodologies. In the second section, we will examine three issues that make up a series and were published in 2021 and 2022.

In the issues of the *Russian Studies Hu* published in 2019–2020, popular and pioneering genres of modern historiography are represented by *memory*

¹ Five issues of the periodical have been published over four years, containing 50 studies and four reviews.

politics, micro-history, and oral history. Among the most significant works we have to mention in Hungarian and International Russian Studies are Tamás Krausz's essays on the intertwining of historiography and memory politics [Краусз] and the relationship between Lenin and global historiography. In the latter, the author analyses how modern historiography relates to Lenin's works in light of the change of narrative that took place following the change of regime in Eastern Europe. With his theoretical works and specific view of history, Lenin directly influenced the study of history and its methodology [Krausz].

Gyula Szvák published a thought-provoking study on the relationship between history policy and historical memory, and their appearance in Hungarian and Russian history, in which he also defined a new research direction [Szvák, 2019]. The author's other work is an exciting micro-historical case study, which reflects on the situation and ordeal of the Russian history of science following the disintegration of the Soviet Union through presenting a failed internal discussion about a doctoral thesis submitted at the University of St Petersburg in 1993 [Szvák, 2020]. Bálint Mezei's study describes the life of a micro-community of Soviet soldiers of Hungarian origin from the Transcarpathian region during the military intervention in Afghanistan. The author presents findings of a piece of research conducted between 2010 and 2013. Researchers involved in the project collected information on the multinational features of the Soviet army, on war memory, and on the lives of young Hungarian soldiers after the war through interviews conducted with veterans, combining the genres of oral history, community research, and collective memory [Мезеи].

Memoire and autobiography represent another major research direction. Based on the memoir of Joseph Edward Davies, the US ambassador to the Soviet Union between 1936 and 1938, Tibor Frank outlines the situation in the country in a critical period that may be best characterised by the widespread use of show trials. As he was easy to influence, Davies saw and presented the other side of the Soviet regime. In this case, the source study is especially exciting because, in addition to the description of the contemporary relationship between the US and the SU, it also sheds light on how a biased person was able to provide an overall picture that affected cooperation between the two countries in the Second World War in the long run [Франк]. Igor Tyumentsev and Alexander Kleitman analysed a memoir with insight into the era of the Great Terror and described the actions of Stalin's regime against Hungarian communists [Тюменцев, Клейтман]. The two studies more or less cover the same period, but they use completely different approaches and aspects.

Róbert Hermann and Charles Halperin focus on issues related to *processing sources and methodology.* Hermann's study introduces an exciting and telling example of historical constructs. He analyses a motif that often comes up in relation to the meeting between Franz Joseph I of Austria and Nicholas I of Russia in Warsaw in 1849, proving that there is no trace of it either in historical sources or international literature. The author discusses

the issues of misinterpreting historical events and accepting information automatically, simply based on the prestige of the source [Херманн]. Charles Halperin also brought up important theoretical problems. He raised questions relevant to research into Ivan IV and discussed potential research tendencies [Halperin, 2020].

Studying the relationship between history and visual culture has become an increasingly dominant line of research. *Historical iconography* belongs to this area, and is represented by Endre Sashalmi's study on Alexander III. This seeks to clarify the contradiction between the reserved nature of the tsar's public appearances and his growing "visibility". The author also introduces the tools that promoted and distributed the image of the tsar among the people, including iconographies, the so-called 'lubki' controlled by central censorship, coronation coins, and the funeral ceremony. He also describes how these tools fuelled Russian nationalism [Sashalmi].

From 2021, a line focusing on historiography appeared in the periodical that shed light on modern approaches to particular periods in uniform sections. Even though written in different styles, the studies published in 2021 and 2022 are fully consistent in two things, namely the historiographical overview of the period in question and their focus on modern historiography. The latter is illustrated by the fact that most of the articles about the historiography of Russian history focus on works produced in the last two decades (2000–2020). Thus, *Russian Studies Hu* launched a unique series leading us through the great periods of Russian history. Three thematic issues have been published so far. They deal with Kievan Rus (2021/2), Muscovy (2021/1), and eighteenth-century Russia (2022/1).

To follow a chronological and thematic order, first let us consider briefly the 2021/2 issue, which concentrates on the period of Kievan Rus. The historiographical studies can be grouped by the regions they investigate: Anglo-Saxon, Western European, and Central and Eastern European historiography. The first larger block includes essays by Christian Raffensperger and Pierre Gonneau. In his overview, Raffensperger describes the findings of UK, US, and Canadian researchers, and the current tendencies in the study of Kievan Rus. The author highlights the differences between UK and North American research attitudes. US and Canadian researchers have investigated early Russian history from an archaeological point of view, and the relationship between Rus and Medieval Europe. By contrast, in the last two decades UK historians have focused mainly on the relationships between Byzantium and Rus [Raffensperger]. French historiography represents an approach similar to that observed in the UK, dominated by studies about Byzantium. However, as Pierre Gonneau points out, in France currently there are no institutional programmes that specifically study the period of Rus. And in the case of early Russian history, cultural and religious history, linguistic issues, and source publications dominate rather than the history of politics [Gonneau, 2021b].

Central and Eastern European historiography represents a different approach. Scholars in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland focus on the

investigation of the political and dynasty connections of Kievan Rus with the Central European region, in particular with the German territories, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Teutonic Order. Another important factor in relation to historical research is economic cooperation with the Hanseatic League. Also, many studies have been produced lately in key areas like the history of law, religion, and towns [Kersken]. János Makai summed up the most recent findings of Hungarian historiography. From the late 1990s, Márta Font, Gyula Szvák, Endre Sashalmi, and Tímea Bótor created gap-filling works. Emil Niederhauser's study on Eastern European historiography laid down the foundations of research with a historiographical approach [Макай].

Vadim Aristov has discussed current issues in Ukrainian historiography on Kievan Rus. In addition to analysing Ukrainian studies published between 2000 and 2020, the author also investigates the Ukrainian and Russian contexts that resulted in conflicting interpretations of the findings [Аристов]. Another Ukrainian historiographical analysis was written by Stanislav Kelembet, who provides an overview of Ukrainian research related to the situation of the southern areas of Kievan Rus in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, focusing on a highly complex period when certain areas of Rus were controlled by the Kingdom of Poland, the Kingdom of Hungary, and Lithuania [Келембет].

In addition to his account of the findings of Polish historiography, Andrej Jusupović's study represents a new approach by writing honestly about the problems related to researching Rus, including the difficulties of educating new researchers and the necessity of acquiring language skills and learning methodologies. As these factors are crucial to the study of early and late medieval Russian history, continuing important basic research like Andrzej Poppe's work is a huge challenge for young Polish historians [Jusupović].

In the Eastern European section, three studies represent the modern Russian historiography. Dmitri Borovkov investigates the historiography of social and political development in tenth- and eleventh-century Russia and issues related to written historical sources [Боровков]. Vitali Politov provides a modern analysis of the history of Rus during the Mongol-Tatar yoke. He presents studies related to the topic published in the twenty-first century through the publications of four historian workshops in Moscow, St Petersburg, Kazan, and an independent, so-called regional school. The author describes how post-Marxist historiography tried to find its way and what approaches it used in terms of methodology, exploring important issues like periodization, different views on the expression "yoke", the extent of dependency on the Golden Horde, and the analysis of the image of Mongol Tatars among Russian people [Политов]. Vladimir Petrukhin interprets the newest findings and research directions related to sources and chronicles of early Russian history [Петрухин].

Moving ahead in time, the 2021/1 issue of the periodical focuses on the history of Muscovy, applying a historiographical structure similar to the one used with Kievan Rus. Again, the historical works of Anglo-Saxon

and Western European authors are overviewed, and Central and Eastern European research trends are described. However, the historiographical viewing angle is wider in this case. In this issue, focus is shifted from America and Europe to research carried out in the Far East, especially in China [Zhang]. This trend continues in the issues published in 2022.

In their studies, Charles Halperin and Pierre Gonneau discuss American and French approaches to the history of early modern Russia. Halperin describes major issues regarding research into Muscovy in a highly problem-oriented manner, pointing out that there is no consensus among American researchers regarding key areas, like the issue of periodization [Halperin, 2021]. Gonneau deals with other processes in his writing. He believes that research directions in the early modern period should be interpreted in combination with other disciplines, not only within the science of history, referring to, for example, the close connection between historical, philological, and cultural approaches [Gonneau, 2021a].

In German-speaking areas, Eastern European historical research and Slavic studies have a strong institutional background, which has strongly contributed to the expansion and high productivity of Russian studies. The situation report of Ludwig Steindorff reflects on German, Austrian, and Swiss research work into the history of Muscovy, pointing out the important role of universities and research centres like the *Leibniz-Institut für Ost- und Südosteuropaforschung* in Regensburg and the *Osteuropa-Institute* in Berlin. The historical studies produced in the 2000s are basically in line with the trends already mentioned in connection with Rus and the Middle Ages. Regarding the international relations of the Russian state in the early modern period, the analysis of the reception of envoys and so-called symbolic communication is a new and promising line, along with the discussion of the emergence of national and regional identity [Steindorff].

Hungarian researchers interested in the early modern history of Russia have carried out a broad range of studies in recent decades. Gábor Gyóni points out that leading researchers dealing with the history of Russia have successfully prepared a new generation of historians. In the meantime, Russian studies centres have been established in Hungary that, as regional schools, provide an institutional framework for Russian historical research. The main topics in this period include the establishment of the Grand Duchy of Moscow, the relationship between the state and the Church, the analysis of contemporary works on the theory of the state, the process of conquering Siberia, and the issue of the Ukrainian region [Дѣѣни].

The Grand Duchy of Moscow, is, of course, an integral part of early modern Russian historical works as well. Research into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is summarised by Vyacheslav Kozliakov and Andrei Pavlov in their two-volume study. One of their most significant conclusions is that the Russian study of history that started to change after the collapse of the Soviet Union became gradually detached from the Marxist view of social classes. Instead of dependent social groups, other segments of Russian society came to the fore, such as the social and political role

of the nobility and the relationship between the state and different social strata. In past decades, research into the history of churches, which have been pushed into the background, has also gained momentum [Козляков, Павлов, 2021a; Козляков, Павлов, 2021b].

The third part of the historiographical overview of the great periods of Russian history focuses on the eighteenth century. In addition to the usual regional sections, Latin America and the Far East appear in the periodical. Martín Baña describes the research areas of Argentine, Chilean, Mexican, and Spanish historians, focusing not just on eighteenth century, but also on Russian history in its entirety. The author highlights that although Russian studies do not belong to mainstream Spanish-language historiography, the need to understand global history and research into international relations validate the study of Russian history [Baña]. The review of Chinese research work also covers a broad period. These articles pay great attention to the history of Russia, reflecting intense work in the areas of Russian political culture, economic and social history, geopolitics, and diplomacy [Zhou, Cao]. A similar trend can be observed in Japan, where the change of regime in Russia opened up a completely new era in the study of Russian history, with special focus on the eighteenth century. The study of how the Russian Empire became a great power requires the investigation of political history, the history of governance and social history, and the study of foreign trade relations. Since the early 2000s, the Japanese Society for Eighteenth-Century Russian Studies has provided institutional background for historians, linguists, and philologists studying the era in question [Tanaka].

Based on research findings from the US in the 2000s, Gary Marker introduces new areas that approach Russian history in an innovative way [Marker], while Lubica Harbuľová, Patrik Dinnyés, and Adam Danilczyk discuss the developments in Russian studies in Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland. New generations have given new impetus to Russian studies in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, with the dominance of thematic studies [Харбулова]. In his historiographical writings, Patrik Dinnyés reviews the work of researchers like Gyula Szvák, Sándor Gebei, Endre Sashalmi, László V. Molnár, Erzsébet Bodnár, Szergej Filippov, and Beáta Varga, who represent Russian studies centres operating in Budapest, Pécs, Szeged, Eger, and Debrecen. He is also interested in researchers whose primary focus has not been on the period in questions, but whose work is connected to eighteenth-century research, like György Bebesi and Katalin Schrek [Диннеш]. Research carried out in Poland over the past twenty years has resulted in studies about the history of Polish-Russian relations, the effect of Russian political influence in the Eastern European region, and the period of the partitioning of the Rzeczpospolita [Данильчик].

The historiographical approach that appears in the 2021–2022 issues can be considered unique because these issues practically provide a comprehensive picture of how twenty-first century historians are thinking about one thousand years of Russian history, thus representing the main directions of Russian studies within world history. In conclusion, we believe

that with its modern and contemporary approach and its embeddedness in the Hungarian and international academic world, *Russian Studies Hu* provides researchers dealing with Russian studies with a high-quality, innovative environment for publications.

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