HIST 216. History of Russia to 1801

Instructor: Marina Soroka
Fall 2012
Tuesday/Thursday 2:35-3:55
Redmus Auditory
Office hours: Wednesday 11-12 A.M. or by appointment

The course aims to encourage students to familiarise themselves with the key events in Russia’s early history and to consider how this state achieved its reputation of one of the great survivors among the world’s major empires. It broadens their understanding by first considering key factors - such as the geographical setting, religion and demography - and then looking at particular events and figures in more detail.

Format

The lectures will take a chronological approach in order to help students develop their understanding of such topics as: the reasons for the emergence of absolute rule in the early Russian state; the impact of the Orthodox religion on the Russian society; the origins and nature of the imperial state.

Lectures will introduce topics and provide a broad framework of the course. Conferences will pursue some topics in greater depth. Written work will allow choice within the full range of topics and themes.

Conferences will be based on secondary reading and on the study of primary documentation generated during the period. This will foster the skills necessary to critical evaluation of primary sources. Written work will allow students to demonstrate this in clear and cogent written form.

Required readings for the course are:


Or an identical one-volume edition.

The books available at the university library will be placed on reserve, even if they are not at the moment the outline is being prepared.

Assignments

(35%) An exercise in historical detection. You will be given a choice of one primary document out of three to research and analyze how much it can tell you about the time, the events and the people it refers to; the author of the document, the circumstances of its creation; the significance of its ideas and its historical value.

Because of the nature of the assignment you do not need a thesis statement, but the analysis has to have reference notes and a bibliography (Chicago style). The paper will be evaluated for the depth of analysis, choice of secondary sources and clarity of style.

The purpose is to train you in accurate reading, in interpreting others’ ideas, in testing one preference over another and in setting a document within a historical context.

You are invited to use any reputable secondary sources that you need, except general textbooks. The minimum is five (5) sources. The paper is due on 6 November, at the conference. The late penalty is 2 points/day. No paper will be accepted after 13 November.

(40%) The final exam will consist of an essay question (20%) and identifications (20%). The essay questions and the identifications will be based on both the lectures and the assigned readings.

(25%) Attendance and performance during conferences will be evaluated: the greater your contribution to the success of a conference, the higher the grade.

Outcomes:

Students who complete the course will have acquired a basic knowledge of the history of Russia up to the Enlightenment; they will have begun to develop empathetic understanding of the Russian society; they will have laid a basis for the development of skills for the critical evaluation of primary sources

Lecture Schedule

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<th>Lecture Topic</th>
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Week 2
11.9.12 The Rus and the Slavs. Kiev Rus
13.9.12 Kiev Rus, Christianization Rias&St 3,4 Riha 1:1

Week 3
18.9.12 Conference 1. Review and discussion of lectures and readings.

The nature and the people of early Rus. How much does the geographic setting determine national identity? What is an identity? Which factors in Russia’s environment were/are persistent? Rurik, his enemies, his allies. The significance of conversion to Greek Orthodox faith – for the rulers and for the people. What do you know or can guess about the life of early Slavs and Rus? (their mindset, social and political organization)

20.9.12 Kiev, Rise and Decline ` Rias&St 5-6 Riha 1:2

Week 4
25.9.12 The Mongols
27.9.12 North-west: Lord Novgorod the Great Rias&St 9,10
Moscow “gathers Russia” Rias&St 11, Riha 1:6

Week 5
2.10.12 Ivan III “The Tsar of All Russia” Rias &St, 12,13.
4.10.12 Ivan IV becomes “Ivan the Terrible” Rias&St 15, Riha 1:7,1:8

Week 6
9.10.1 Conference 2: From Ghengiz Khan to Ivan the Terrible

Did the Mongols easily defeat the princes of Rus because of their strength or because of the Rus rulers’ weakness? What changes happened in Rus during the Mongol rule? How did the Mongol empire evolve? Can we weigh the economic advantages (protection of trade routes) and administrative innovation (census) offered by the Mongols against the losses that Rus suffered?
Did Ivan III and Ivan IV pursue the same goals in and out of Russia? Which one was more successful? Who benefited from Ivan IV’s policies? How did the conquests of new territories affect (if at all) the life of Russian people (the elites, the serfs, the merchants). Sudebnik of 1497: what does it tell you about Russian society?

11.10.12 The Time of Trouble: crisis and recovery Rias&St 16, 17.

Week 7

16.10.12 The Romanov tsars. the Great Schism Rias & St 17 (pp.167-8),19, Riha 1:11
18.10.12 State and Society in the 17th century Rias& St 18, Riha 1:13

Week 8

23.10.12 Conference 3. Muscovy’s time of trial

What is “a crisis”. How many kinds of crises could Russia boast of in the 17th century? What events led to the occupation of nearly all European Russia by her Western neighbours? What hindered the attempts at organizing a resistance? How were the crises overcome? Why is the Schism important to the history of Russia?

25.10.12 Peter I: early years Rias&St 20 (pp197-210) Riha 2:18,19

Week 9

30.10.12 Petrine Reforms. The empire Rias&St 20 (pp.210-20)
1.11.12 The Era of Palace Coup: Catherine I, Peter II Rias & St 21, Riha 2:43

Week 10

6.11.12 Conference 4. Peter the Great and his successors
Do you agree with the words: “Rus advanced from the East towards the West, and the West placed the German suburb as its ambassador, on Russia’s path... The German suburb is a step towards Petersburg, like Vladimir was a step towards Moscow.” (Sergei M. Soloviov)

Which of Peter’s reforms were a continuation of the policies of his father or of Ivan IV (in short, Muscovite ideas) and which ones were his original ideas? Which ones were planned and which ones were forced on him by circumstances? Did post-1725 palace coups era revert any of Peter’s policies? Why/why not? Do you think that Peter’s policies, as some historians say, destroyed Russian identity and national cohesion?

8.11.12 Empresses Anna and Elisabeth. Rias&St, 21

Week 11
13.11.12 The Age of Catherine the Great: the Enlightenment Rias& St 22 (pp.235-45), Riha 2:22
15.11.12 The Age of Catherine the Great: The empire advances Rias&St 22 (pp.245-53)

Week 12
20.11.12 Conference 5. The Female Rule in Russia
Why were women chosen to rule the empire in the age of wars? Do you agree that accidents and trifling circumstances often changed the course of Russian history in the 18th century? How did Russian nobility assert its will in an autocratic empire? What ways of protest did serfs have? Which groups of Russian society gained/lost under Catherine II? Who were her adversaries? Can you compare her to Peter the Great? Why? Why not?
22.11.12 Paul I: medieval knighthood against the Enlightenment Rias&St 22 (253-55), Rias& St 23

Week 13
27.11.12 The coming of age of Russian culture Rias& St 24
29.11.12 Summing up.
Week 14


What are the persistent factors determining Russia’s evolution in the period covered by the course?

What external events shaped Russia’s history? Who were the best/worst rulers Russia had? (What is a good/bad autocratic ruler?) What social classes composed Russian society in the 14th, 16th and 18th century? How did Russia’s empire expand? (dates and directions, please)

Who were Russia’s traditional rivals? How did the Orthodox church acquire and lose its power?

Which of the rulers did the most for Russia’s enlightenment? For Russian peasants?

Why did Russians begin to resent Westerners in the late 18th century? (think of the gentry, of the peasantry, intellectuals, merchants).

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).”

“In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded”.

“In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.”
I, wretched man that I am, named Vasilii at my baptism by my pious and glorious grandsire Iaroslav, but commonly known by my Russian name Vladimir, and surnamed Monomakh by my beloved father and mother and for the sake of Christian people, for I was many times saved from all distress through his mercy and through the prayers of my father.

As I sat upon my sledge, I meditated in my heart and praised God, who has led me, a sinner, even to this day. Let not my sons or anyone else which happens to read this brief discourse laugh at its contents. But rather let anyone of my sons who takes my words to heart and is not disposed to laziness conduct himself according to my counsel. First, for the sake of God and your own souls, retain the fear of God in your hearts, and give alms generously for such liberality is the root of all good. If this document displeases anyone let him not be angry, but rather let him believe that, in my old age, I talked nonsense as I sat upon my sledge. For emissaries from my kinsmen met me on the Volga with the message, "Join with us quickly, that we may expel the sons of Rostislav, and seize their possessions. If you do not join us, we shall act for our own advantage, and you may conduct yourself as you deem best." I replied, "At the risk of your wrath, I cannot go with you or break my oath."

When I had dismissed the emissaries, in my sorrow I took up the Psalter, when I opened it this passage struck my eye: "Why art thou cast down, soul? Why dost thou disquiet me?" etc. (Ps. xliii, 5.) I collected these precious words and arranged them in order and copied them. If the last passage does not please you, then accept the first. "Why art thou sorrowful, soul? Why dost thou disquiet me? Hope in God, for I will confess to him

It was thus that Basil, after gathering together young men who were pure in heart and untainted in body, inculcated in them a brief and a meek conversation and the word of God in right measure. He taught them to eat and to drink without unseemly noise; to be silent in the presence of the aged; to listen with profit to the wise; to humble themselves before their elders; to live in charity with their equals and their inferiors; to speak without guile, to understand much; not to be immoderate in their language, nor to insult others in their conversation; not to laugh excessively; to respect the aged; to refrain from converse with shameless women; to cast their eyes downward and their souls upward; and to walk and not to leap. He taught them to respect all established authorities which are honoured of all men. If one of you can render a service to another, let him expect his recompense from God, and he shall thus enjoy eternal blessing. Oh sovereign Mother of God! Take away pride and presumption from my poor heart, lest I be exalted in this empty life by the vanity of this world. Let the faithful learn to strive with pious effort. According to the word of the Gospel, learn to govern your eyes, to curb your tongue, to moderate your temper, to
subdue your body, to restrain your wrath; and to cherish pure thoughts, exerting yourself in good works for the Lord's sake. When robbed, avenge not; when hated or persecuted, endure; when affronted, pray. Destroy sin, render justice to the orphan, protect the widow. "Come let us reason together, saith the Lord; if your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow. (Is. i, 18.)

The dayspring of fasting shall shine forth, and likewise the light of repentance. Let us purify ourselves, my brethren, from every corporal and spiritual blemish, and, as we call upon our Creator, let us say, "Glory to thee, lover of mankind!" In truth, my children, understand how merciful, yea, how supremely merciful is God, the lover of mankind. Being of human stock, we, are so sinful and mortal that, when anyone does us evil, we desire to destroy and to shed his blood speedily. But our Lord, the ruler of life and death, suffers our sins to be higher than our heads, and yet he loves us all our lives as a father loves his son whom he chastens and then summons once more to embrace.

Thus our Lord has promised us the victory over our enemies through three means of conquering and overcoming them: repentance, tears, and almsgiving. My children, the commandment of God to conquer your sins by these three means is not severe. But I implore you for God's sake, be not lazy, nor forget these three means. For they are not difficult of attainment. Not through solitude nor an ascetic life, nor by such fasting as other good men endure, but through easy efforts may you thus obtain the mercy of God....

As you read these words, my sons, praise God who has shown us his mercy and admonished you through the medium of my poor wit. Give heed to me, and accept a half of my instruction if you are not disposed to adopt it all. When God softens your hearts, shed tears for your sins, and pray, "As thou hast taken pity upon the adulteress, the robber and the publican, have pity also upon us sinners," and utter these words both in the church and before you retire to rest. If it is in any way possible, fail not one single night to kneel to the ground three times, in the case that you cannot do so more often. Forget not nor be remiss in this observance, for by his nightly worship and hymn man conquers the devil, and by this means expiates what sins he has committed during the day. When you are riding forth upon your horse, if you have no special subject of conversation with a companion and cannot utter some other prayer, then exclaim without ceasing, "Kyrie eleison!" within yourselves. This is the best prayer of all, and infinitely better than thinking evil thoughts. Above all things, forget not the poor, but support them to the extent of your means. Give to the orphan, protect the widow, and permit the mighty to destroy no man. Take not the life of the just or the unjust, nor permit him to be killed. Destroy no Christian soul even though he be guilty of murder.

When you speak either good or evil, swear not by the name of God, nor cross yourselves, for that is unnecessary. Whenever you kiss the Cross to confirm an oath made to your brethren or to any other man, first test your heart as to whether you can abide by your word, then kiss the Cross, and after once having given your oath, abide by it, lest you destroy your souls by its violation. Receive with affection the blessing of bishops, priests, and priors, and shun them not, but rather, according to your means, love and help them, that you may receive from them their intercession in the presence of God. Above all things, admit no pride in your hearts and minds, but say, "We are but mortal; today we live and tomorrow we shall be in the grave. All that thou hast given us
is not ours, but thine, and thou hast but lent it to us for a few days." Hoard not the treasures of earth, for therein lies great sin. Honour the ancient as your father, and the youth as your brother.

Be not lax in the discipline of your homes, but rather attend to all matters yourselves. Rely not upon your steward or your servant, lest they who visit ridicule your house or your table. When you set out to war, be not inactive, depend not upon your captains, nor waste your time in drinking, eating or sleeping. Set the sentries yourselves, and take your rest only after you have posted them at night at every important point about your troops; take your rest, but arise early. Do not put off your accoutrements without a quick glance about you, for a man may thus perish suddenly through his carelessness. Guard against lying, drunkenness and vice, for therein perish soul and body. When journeying anywhere by road through your domain, do not permit your followers or another's company to visit violence upon the villages or upon the dwellings, lest men revile you. Wherever you go, as often as you halt, give the beggar to eat and to drink. Furthermore, honour the stranger, if not with a gift, at least with food and drink, whencesoever he comes to you, be he simple, or noble, or an emissary. For travellers give a man a universal reputation as generous or niggardly.

Visit the sick, and accompany the dead, for we are all but mortal. Pass no man without a greeting; give him a kindly word. Love your wives, but grant them no power over you. This is the end of all things: to hold the fear of God above all else. If you forget all my admonition, read this counsel frequently. Then I shall be without disgrace, and you shall profit thereby.

Forget not what useful knowledge you possess, and acquire that with which you are not acquainted, even as my father, though he remained at home in his own country, still understood five languages. For by this means honour is acquired in other lands. Laziness is the mother of all evil; what a man knows, he forgets, and what he does not know he does not learn. In the practice of good works, you cannot neglect any item of good conduct.

First of all, go to church; let not the rising sun find you in your bed. For this was my father's habit, and it is likewise the custom of all good and perfect men. After rendering praise to God at matins, as you look upon the rising sun, refer praise to God with gladness once again, saying, "Thou hast lightened my eyes, oh Christ my God, thou hast given me thy bright light. Grant me increase, oh Lord, in the years to come, so that, as I repent my sins and order my life righteously, I may thus continue to praise God." Then sit and deliberate with your retainers, or render justice to the people, or ride out for hunting or for pleasure, or else lie down to sleep. Sleep is established by God for noonday repose, since birds and beasts and men then rest from labours.

I now narrate to you, my sons, the fatigue I have endured on journeys and hunts for fifty-three years. First I rode to Rostov through the Viatichians, whither my father had sent me while he himself went to Kursk. (1073) Second, to Smolensk with Stavko the son of Skordiata; he then went to Brest with Iziaslav, and sent me to Smolensk. From Smolensk, I rode on to Vladimir. In that same winter, my brethren sent me to Brest to the place which they had burned, and there I watched their city. Then I went to my father in Pereiaslavl, and after Easter, from Pereiaslavl to Vladimir to make peace with the Poles at Suteiska. Thence back to Vladimir again in the summer. Then Sviatoslav sent me to Poland; after going beyond Glogau to the Czech forest, I travelled four months in that country. (1076) In this year, my oldest child was born in Novgorod.
Thence I went to Turov, in the spring to Pereiaslavl again, and then back to Turov. Sviatoslav then died, and I again went to Smolensk, and thence during the same winter to Novgorod, and in the spring to help Gleb. In the summer, I went with my father to Polotsk, and during the second winter before Polotsk the city was burned. He then went to Novgorod, while I, supported by Polovtsians, marched against Odresk, carrying on constant warfare, and thence travelled to Chernigov. (1077) Then, on my return from Smolensk, I rejoined my father in Chernigov a second time.

Then Oleg came from Vladimir, and I invited him to dinner with my father at the Red Palace in Chernigov, and I gave my father three hundred grivnas of gold. Upon leaving Smolensk, I fought my way through the Polovtsian forces, and arrived at Pereiaslavl, where I found my father newly arrived from a raid. Then I rode with my father and Iziaslav to Chernigov to fight with Boris, and we conquered Boris and Oleg. (1078) Then we went to Pereiaslavl, and remained in Obrov. Vseslav at that juncture fired Smolensk. I set forth with men from Chernigov and two horses, but we did not catch Vseslav at Smolensk. On this pursuit of Vseslav, I burned the countryside and ravaged as far as Lukaml and Logozhsk, then attacked Driutesk, and returned to Chernigov.

In the winter of that year, the Polovtsians devastated the whole of Starodub. I marched with men of Chernigov against the Polovtsians. At the Desna, we seized the princes Asaduk and Sauk, and killed their followers. The next day, behind Novgorod, we scattered the powerful force of Belkatgin, and took their swords and all their booty. We then went for two winters among the Viatichians to attack Khodota and his son. The first winter, I went to Korden, and then to Mikulen in pursuit of the sons of Iziaslav, whom we did not catch. In that spring we joined with Iaropolk at Brody.

The following summer, we chased the Polovtsians beyond the Khorol, after they had captured Goroshin. During the autumn, in company with men of Chernigov, as well as Polovtsians and Chiteeviches, we captured the city and left in it neither slaves nor cattle. (1084) In that winter, we went to Brody to join Iaropolk, and concluded an important pact of friendship. In that winter, my father set me up to rule in Pereiaslavl, and we crossed the Supoi.

While we were on our way to the town of Priluk, we suddenly encountered the Polovtsian chieftains with eight thousand men. We were ready and willing to fight with them, but we had sent our equipment ahead with the baggage train and we therefore entered the town. They thus captured alive only Semtsia and a few peasants. Our men, on the other hand, killed or captured a large number of them. They did not even dare to lead away their mounts, and during the night fled to the Sula. On the following day, which was Sunday, we arrived at Bela Vezha. With the aid of God and of the Holy Virgin, our troops killed nine hundred Polovtsians, and captured the two princes Asin and Sakza, the brothers of Bagubars, and only two men of their force escaped. We then pursued the Polovtsians to Sviatoslavl, thence to Torcheshk, and still further to Iuriev. (1086) Then again, on the east bank of the Dnepr, we once more defeated the Polovtsians at Krasnoe. In company with Rostislav, we subsequently captured their camp at Varin. I then went to Vladimir and set up Iaropolk as prince, but he soon died.

1093 After the death of my father, Sviatopolk and I together fought until evening with the Polovtsians at the Sula in the vicinity of Khalep, and then made peace with Tugortkan and other
Polovtsian chiefs. We took from Gleb's followers all their troops. (1094) Oleg subsequently attacked me in Chernigov with Polovtsian support; my troops fought with him for eight days by the small entrenchment and would not let him inside the outworks. I took pity on the souls of our Christian subjects, and upon the burned villages and monasteries, and said, "It is not for the pagans to boast." I therefore gave my kinsman my father's place, and myself retired to my father's domain of Pereiaslavl. We left Chernigov on the day of St. Boris, and rode through the Polovtsians in a company of not more than a hundred together with the women and children. The Polovtsians showed their teeth at us, as they stood like wolves at the fords and in the hills. But God and St. Boris did not deliver us up to them as their prey, so that we arrived at Pereiaslavl unscathed.

I remained in Pereiaslavl three summers and winters with my retainers, and endured great distress through war and famine. We attacked the Polovtsians behind Rimov, and God stood by us, so that we defeated them and took many captives. We overthrew the troops of Itlar, and after marching beyond Goltav, we captured their camp. We now attacked Oleg at Starodub, because he had made common cause with the Polovtsians. In pursuit of Boniak, we advanced to the Bug and later beyond the Ros in company with Sviatoslav. (1095) After reaching Smolensk, we became reconciled with David.

We set out a second time from Voronitza. At this juncture, the Torks and Chiteeviches came from among the Polovtsians to attack us, so that we advanced against them to the Sula. We then returned again to Rostov for the winter, and three winters later I returned to Smolensk. Thence I went to Rostov.

A second time, Sviatopolk and I pursued Boniak, but the nomads escaped and we did not catch them. Thereupon we again followed Boniak beyond the Ros, yet did not overtake him. During the winter, I travelled to Smolensk, but left there on Easter Day. George's mother passed away. In the summer, I went to Pereiaslavl, and assembled my kinsmen together. Boniak with his entire force of Polovtsians approached Kosniatin, and we sallied forth from Pereiaslavl to meet them as far as the Sula. By God's help, we were able to make peace with Aiepa, and after receiving his daughter as hostage, we proceeded to Smolensk. Thence we journeyed to Rostov. On departing thence, I again attacked the Polovtsians under Urusoba in company with Sviatopolk, and God aided us. Then I again attacked Boniak at Lubno, and God again vouchsafed us his aid. In company with Sviatopolk, I set out once more upon a campaign. With Sviatopolk and David, I later went as far as the Don, and God granted us his aid.

Aiepa and Boniak had approached Vyrev with the intention of capturing it. I advanced to meet them as far as Romny with Oleg and my sons. When the nomads learned of our coming, they fled. Then we marched to attack Gleb at Smolensk, because he had captured our retainers. (1116) God aided us, and we accomplished our purpose. Thereupon we marched to attack Iaroslav son of Sviatopolk at Vladimir, since we were no longer disposed to endure his malice. (1117) On one occasion, I rode at full speed in one day from Chernigov to join my father in Kiev. Among all my campaigns, there are eighty-three long ones, and I do not count the minor adventures.

I concluded nineteen peace treaties with the Polovtsians with or without my father's aid, and dispensed much of my cattle and my garments. I freed from their captivity the best Polovtsian
princes, including two brothers of Sharukan, three brothers of Bagubars, four brothers of Ovchin, and one hundred of their foremost leaders. Of other chieftains whom God delivered alive into my hands, I took captive, killed, and had cast into the river Slavlia Koxus and his son, Aklan, Burchevich, Azgului prince of Tarev, and fifteen other young chieftains, and at the same time not less than two hundred of the leading prisoners were likewise killed, and cast into the same river.

I devoted much energy to hunting as long as I reigned in Chernigov and made excursions from that city. Until the present year, in fact, I without difficulty used all my strength in hunting, not to mention other hunting expeditions around Turov, since I had been accustomed to chase every sort of game while in my father's company.

At Chernigov, I even bound wild horses with my bare hands or captured ten or twenty live horses with the lasso, and besides that, while riding along the Ros, I caught these same wild horses barehanded. Two bisons tossed me and my horse on their horns, a stag once gored me, one elk stamped upon me, while another gored me, a boar once tore my sword from my thigh, a bear on one occasion bit my kneecap, and another wild beast jumped on my flank and threw my horse with me. But God preserved me unharmed.

I often fell from my horse, fractured my skull twice, and in my youth injured my arms and legs when I did not reck of my life or spare my head. In war and at the hunt, by night and by day, in heat and in cold, I did whatever my servant had to do, and gave myself no rest. Without relying on lieutenants or messengers, I did whatever was necessary; I looked to every disposition in my household. At the hunt, I posted the hunters, and I looked after the stables, the falcons, and the hawks. I did not allow the mighty to distress the common peasant or the poverty-stricken widow, and interested myself in the church administration and service.

Let not my sons or whoever else reads this document criticise me. I do not commend my own boldness, but I praise God and glorify his memory because he guarded me, a sinful and a wretched man, for so many years in these dangerous vicissitudes, and did not make me inactive or useless for all the necessary works of man. As you read this screed, prepare yourselves for all good works, and glorify God among his saints. Without fear of death, of war, or of wild beasts, do a man's work, my sons, as God sets it before you If I suffered no ill from war, from wild beasts, from flood, or from falling from my horse, then surely no one can harm you and destroy you, unless that too be destined of God. But if death comes from God, then neither father, nor mother, nor brethren can hinder it, and though it is prudent to be constantly upon one's guard, the protection of God is fairer than the protection of man.

Source: The Russian Primary Chronicle
2) THE LIFE, ACTS, AND MIRACLES OF OUR REVERED AND HOLY FATHER ABBOT SERGIUS

VIII. ST. SERGIUS AND RUSSIA

A rumour spread that Khan Mamai was raising a large army as a punishment for our sins and that with all his heathen Tatar hordes he would invade Russian soil. Very great fear prevailed among the people at this report. The puissant and reigning prince, who held the sceptre of all Russia, great Dmitrii having a great faith in the saint, came to ask him if he counselled him to go against the heathen. The saint, bestowing on him his blessing, and strengthened by prayer, said to him: "It behoveth you, Lord, to have a care for the lives of the flock committed to you by God. Go forth against the heathen; and upheld by the strong arm of God, conquer; and return to your country sound in health, and glorify God with loud praise." The grand duke replied, "If indeed God assist me, Father, I will build a monastery to the Immaculate Mother of God." And with the saint's blessing he hurriedly went on his way. Assembling all his armies, he marched against the heathen Tatars; but, seeing the multitudes of them, he began to doubt; and many of his followers, not knowing what to do, were overwhelmed with fear. Of a sudden, a courier from the saint arrived, in all haste, with the message. "Be in no doubt, Lord; go forward with faith and confront the enemy's ferocity; and fear not, for God will be on your side." Forthwith, the Grand Duke Dmitrii and all his armies, were filled with a spirit of temerity; and went into battle against the pagans. They fought; many fell; but God was with them, and helped the great and invincible Dmitrii, who vanquished the ungodly Tatars. In that same hour the saint was engaged with his brethren before God in prayer for victory over the pagans. Within an hour of the final defeat of the ungodly, the saint, who was a seer, announced to the brotherhood what had happened, the victory, the courage of the Grand Duke Dmitrii, and the names, too, of those who had died at the hands of the pagans; and he made intercession for them to all-merciful God. The Grand Duke Dmitrii returned to his country with great joy in his heart, and hastened to visit holy, venerable Sergius. Rendering thanks for the prayers of the saint and of the brotherhood, he gave a rich offering to the monastery and, in fulfilment of his vow, expressed his wish to build at once the monastery of the Immaculate Mother of God. After searching for a favourable place, venerable Sergius fixed upon one by the banks of the river Dubenka, and with the consent of the grand duke a church to the Assumption of our Blessed Virgin Mother of God was consecrated by St. Sergius. As abbot, the saint appointed one of his followers, Sabbas by name, a man of exceeding great virtue. A community was formed, and many brethren joined it. Once again the Grand Duke Dmitrii entreated St. Sergius to come to Kolomna, to consecrate a site for the building of a monastery to be dedicated to the Holy Epiphany. It was the saint's custom to go everywhere on foot. Obedient to the grand duke, he went to Kolomna, consecrated the site, and a church was erected and, at the grand duke's request, he sent him one of his disciples for the founding of the monastery, a priest-monk, Gregory, a devout man and of great virtue. In time a stone church was
built, which is standing to this day. Another time the illustrious Prince Vladimir begged St. Sergius, likewise, to come to his part of the country, to the town of Serpukhov, and consecrate a place by the river Nar, and dedicate a church to the Conception of the Immaculate Mother of God. Once again the saint obeyed the request. This god-fearing prince also begged him to send one of his disciples, Afanasii by name. Although the saint found it hard to grant this request, love prevailed, and he consented. Afanasii being a man of rare virtue, exceedingly learned in Holy Scriptures—many valuable writings by his hand bear witness to him to the present day—the saint loved him dearly. To him the saint entrusted the founding of the monastery, and the forming of the community. Aided by the prayers of the saint, the monastery was built, wonderful and beautiful, and named "On the Height." But why pursue further the saint's planting of ecclesiastical fruit? It is well known how many monasteries were founded by God's own chosen servant. And, offspring of his offspring, burning bright as stars, they are everywhere radiating a serene and wondrous life, and a blessing to all. The Metropolitan Aleksei, being old, and seeing his weakness increasing, sent for St. Sergius. While they conversed, the metropolitan asked to have the cross with the "paramand" adorned with gold and precious stones brought to him, to give it to the saint; but he, bowing low in great humility, refused it, saying, "Forgive me, Lord, I have worn no gold ornaments since childhood, wherefore all the more do I wish in old age to continue in poverty." The bishop insisted, and said I know, beloved, that thou art fulfilling a vow, but be obedient, and take this which we offer thee with a benediction." Further, he said to the saint: "Dost know why I sent for thee? I desire, while I yet live, to find a man able to feed Christ's flock. I have doubted of them all; thee alone have I chosen as worthy. I know with all certainty that, from the puissant prince to the lowliest of his people, thou art the one they want." On hearing this the saint was deeply grieved, regarding honour for himself as a thing of naught, and he pleaded with the bishop: "Forgive me, Lord, but this of which you speak is beyond my powers, and you never will find it in me. What am I but a sinner, and the least of men?" The bishop quoted many sayings from Holy Scriptures, but the saint, unyielding in his humility, said, "Gracious Lord, if you do not wish to drive away my poverty from your Holiness, speak no more about my poor self, nor permit anyone else, for no one can make me otherwise." The bishop, understanding that the saint would not yield, allowed him to return to his monastery. Before long the Metropolitan Aleksei left this life, in the year 1378 (6885); and once more the princes implored the saint to accept the rank of bishop; but, firm as adamant, he would in no way consent. Then a certain archimandrite, Michael, was raised to the bishopric; but this man, with great presumption, not only invested himself with the episcopal robes but also proceeded to plot against the saint, in the belief that the venerable Sergius would put a check on his audacity, wishing to occupy the episcopal throne himself. Blessed Sergius, hearing of Michael's threats against him, remarked to his disciples that Michael, vaunting himself of his sacred appointment, would not obtain his wish, for, overcome by pride, he would not reach the imperial city. The saint's prophecy was fulfilled. On his way by boat to Constantinople—Michael fell ill and died. Thereupon everyone regarded St. Sergius as one of the prophets.

IX. THE LAST MIRACLES AND THE PASSING AWAY OF ST. SERGIUS

One day the blessed father was praying, as was his wont, before the image of the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. Having sung the "Magnificat" of the Blessed Virgin, he sat down to rest a while, saying to his disciple, Micah, "Son, be calm and be bold, for a wonderful and fearful event is about to happen." Instantly a voice was heard, "The Blessed Virgin is coming." Hearing this
the saint hurried from his cell into the corridor. A dazzling radiance shone upon the saint, brighter than the sun, and he beheld the Blessed Virgin, with the two Apostles Peter and John, in ineffable glory. Unable to bear so resplendent a vision, the saint fell to the ground. The Blessed Virgin, touching the saint with her hand, said: "Be not afraid, mine own elect, I have come to visit thee. Thy prayers for thy disciples for whom thou prayest, and for thy monastery, have been heard. Be not troubled; from henceforth it will flourish, not only during thy lifetime but when thou goest to the Lord, I will be with thy monastery, supplying its needs lavishly, providing for it, protecting it." Having thus spoken, she vanished. The saint, in ecstasy, stood in trembling awe and wonder. Returning slowly to his senses, he saw his disciple, terror-struck, lying on the ground, whereupon he raised him up; but the other flung himself down at the feet of the elder, saying, "Tell me, Father, for Gods sake what miraculous vision was this? For my spirit almost loosed its bonds with the flesh from so resplendent a vision." The saint, so filled with ecstasy that his face glowed therewith, was unable to answer other than a few words, "Wait a white, son, for I, too, am trembling with awe and wonder at this miraculous vision." They continued in silent adoration until, finally, the saint said to his disciple, "Son, call hither Isaac and Simon." When these two came, he recounted to them all that had happened, how he had beheld the Blessed Virgin with the Apostles, and what a wonderful promise she had given him. Hearing this their hearts were filled with indescribable joy, and they all sang the "Magnificat," and glorified God. All night long the saint remained in meditation on this ineffable vision. After a while, a Greek bishop came from Constantinople to Moscow, but, although he had heard a great deal about the saint, his doubt about him prevailed, for, he reasoned, "How can such a light have appeared in this savage land, more especially in these latter days?" He therefore resolved to go to the monastery and see the saint. When he drew near to the monastery, fear entered his soul, and as soon as he entered the monastery and beheld the saint, blindness fell upon him. The venerable Sergius took him by the hand and led him to his cell. The bishop, with tears, confessed his doubts to the saint, and prayed for the recovery of his sight. The gentle lover of humility touched his blinded pupils, and, as it were, scales fell from his eyes, and instantly he recovered his sight. The bishop proclaimed to all that the saint was indeed a man of God and that in God's mercy he himself had been deemed worthy to behold a celestial man and an earthly angel. A moneylender, living near the saint's monastery, and who, like the strong in all ages, oppressed the poor, ill-treated a certain poor orphan, and, moreover, carried off his pig which was being fattened, and without paying for it had it killed. The ill-used orphan went to the saint in great distress and, weeping, begged for help. The saint, moved by compassion, sent for the offender, convicted him of wrongdoing, and said, "My son, do you believe that God is a judge of the righteous and of sinners; a father to widows and orphans; that he is quick to avenge and that it is a fearful thing to come under the wrath of God?" Having reproached him—and told him he must pay what he owed to the orphan, he added, "Above all, do not oppress the poor." The man, overcome by fear, promised to amend and to pay the orphan, then returned to his own house. Little by little the effect of the saint's rebuke grew faint, and he decided not to pay his debt to the orphan. And, thinking it over in his mind, he went as usual into his larder, where he found the pig half devoured and swarming with maggots, although it was midwinter. He was stricken with fear, and without delay paid the debt; and ordered the pig to be thrown to the dogs and birds to eat, but they would not touch it and clear the usurer of his offence. Now, again, one day, the saint was reciting the divine liturgy with one of his disciples, venerable Simon, the ecclesiarch, of whom we have already spoken, when a wonderful vision was vouchsafed to Simon. While the saint was saying the liturgy, Simon saw a flame pass along the altar, illuminating it and surrounding the
holy table; as the saint was about to partake of the Blessed Sacrament the glorious flame coiled itself and entered the sacred chalice; and the saint thus received Communion. Simon, who saw this, trembled with fear. The saint, when he moved away from the altar, understood that Simon had been deemed worthy of this miraculous vision, and telling him to approach, asked, "Son, why are you fearful?" The other replied, "Master, I beheld a miraculous vision: the grace of the Holy Spirit operating with you." The saint forbade him to speak of it: "Tell no one of this which you have seen, until the Lord calls me away from this life." The saint lived a number of years, continually chastening himself with fasting, and working unceasingly. He performed many unfathomable miracles, and reached an advanced age, never failing from his place at divine service; the older his body grew, the stronger grew his fervour, in no way weakened by age. He became aware of his approaching end six months before, and assembling the brotherhood he appointed his dearest disciple to take his place, one perfect in all virtue, following his master in all things, small of stature, but in mind a 'continual blossoming, whose name was Nikon. The saint exhorted him to guide Christ's flock with patient care and justice. The great ascetic soon began to lose strength and in September was taken seriously ill. Seeing his end, he again assembled his flock and delivered a final exhortation. He made them promise to be steadfast in orthodoxy and to preserve amity among men; to keep pure in body and soul; to love truth; to avoid all evil and carnal lusts; to be moderate in food and drink; above all, to be clothed with humility; not to forget love of their neighbour; to avoid controversy, and on no account to set value on honour and praise in this life, but rather to await reward from God for the joys of heaven and eternal blessings. Having instructed them in many things, he concluded, "I am, by God's will, about to leave you, and I commit you to Almighty God and the Immaculate Virgin, Mother of God, that they may be to you a refuge and rock of defence against the snares of your enemies." his soul was about to leave his body, he partook of the sacred Body and Blood, supported in the arms of his disciples raising his hands to heaven, with a prayer on his lips, he surrendered his pure, holy soul to the Lord, in the year 1393 (6900), September 25th, probably at the age of seventy-eight. After his death an ineffable sweet odour flowed from the saint's body. The entire brotherhood gathered around him and, weeping and sobbing, laid on its bier the body of him who in life had been so noble and unresting, and accompanied him with psalms and funeral orisons. The saint's face, unlike that of other dead, glowed with the life of the living, or as one of God's angels, witnessing to the purity of his soul, and God's reward for all his labours. His body was laid to rest within the monastery of his own creation. Many were the miracles that took place at his death and after, and still are taking place, giving strength to weaker members of the community, deliverance from the crafts and wiles of evil spirits, and sight to the blind. The saint had no wish during his life for renown, neither in death, but by God's Almighty Power he was glorified. Angels were present at his passing into the heavens, opening for him the gates of paradise and leading him toward the longed-for blessings, into the peace of the righteous, the ever-looked-for glory of the Blessed Trinity.

3) Mikhail Lomonosov to I.I.Shuvalov
26 July 1753, St. Petersburg

You can take it as a miracle that I am writing to Your Excellency, for dead people do not write. I still do not know, or at least I am still unsure whether I am dead or alive. I realize that Professor Richmann was killed by thunder under the very same circumstances that I was experiencing at that very same moment.

As I looked at the electrical machine placed outside, I did not see any sign of electrical power. But while dinner was being served, I saw sparks of electricity coming out of the wire, and then my wife came over, and others, and myself and all the others present kept touching the suspended rod, because I wanted to have witnesses that sparks could change colouring, a fact which the late professor disputed. Suddenly, there was a thunderbolt at the very time when I had my hand next to the iron rod, and sparks were crackling. Everybody shied away from me, and my wife pleaded with me to step back. Curiosity held me there for two or three minutes longer, until I was told that soup would get cold, and besides, the electrical power was almost gone.

I did not spend more than a few minutes at the table, when the servant of the late Richmann opened the door, crying and suffocating, and frightened. I thought someone had assaulted him on the way to my place. But he could barely articulate: the professor has been killed by thunder. As quickly as I could, I ran to his place and saw him dead. His poor widow and his mother were as white as he was. I was so shaken by my own brush with death, by his pale corpse, by the memory of our friendship and collaboration, by the tears of his wife and children, that I was unable to speak coherently to any of the great multitude of people who assembled at his house. I could only keep staring at the face of the man with whom an hour before I had met to discuss our coming public presentation.

The first bolt, from the rod suspended on a thread, hit him on the head, where you can see a cherry-red spot on his forehead, and then the thunder’s electrical power passed through his body to the boards. One of his feet and the toes are blue, his shoe is torn, not burnt.

We attempted to revive his blood circulation, because he was still warm. But his head is damaged and there is no hope.

Therefore, by his own terrible experience he confirmed that it is possible to deflect the electrical power of thunder, but the iron rod should be erected in an empty spot, where thunder may strike as much as it likes.

And yet, G. Richmann died a noble death, while he was doing his professional duty. His memory will never die; but his poor widow, his mother-in-law, his five-year old son who showed good promise, and his two daughters, one of two years and the other of six months of age, are weeping for him and for their own misfortune. For that reason, Your Excellency, as a true patron and lover of science, take them into your generous protection! Grant a pension to the unfortunate widow of our best professor, so that she could educate her son, the little Richmann, to be as dedicated to scholarship as his father was. His salary was 860 rubles. Merciful Count! Petition [the Empress] for a lifetime pension for the poor widow and her children! Our Lord will reward you for this kindness, and I will be more grateful to you for this than for anything you may have done for myself. Besides, in order not to let this accident be used as an argument against developing sciences, I humbly request you to remain favourably disposed to science and to

Your Excellency’s humble, weeping servant