

## The “Feast” in Medieval Russia: On the Question of Its Specific Historical Features<sup>\*</sup>

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The feasible question about feast, more precisely, about the role of festive culture as a part of everyday and “official” culture of medieval Russia, was actively debated in Soviet literature in the 1970s-1980s. In the review of the book by Dmitrii S. Likhachev and Alexandr M. Panchenko *Smekhovoi mir Drevnei Rusi* (The world of laughter in Old Rus’) (Leningrad, 1976), in which the authors examined the “festive” constituent part in Old Russian writing and culture through the glass of M. M. Bakhtin’s ideas about carnival culture of the Western European Middle Ages and Renaissance, Iurii M. Lotman and Boris A. Uspenskii expressed the idea that the phenomenon of laughter in medieval Russia crucially differed from the renewing carnival laughter of Renaissance Europe.<sup>1</sup> The “laughter” of Ivan the Terrible sounded simultaneously with Rabelais’ laughter, but the orgy of *oprichnina* had a function which contradicted to that of Renaissance carnival, its mission was to divide, not to unite. The “festive” actions of *oprichniki* included, of course, some “popular” features, such as mummery (“mashkary”), participation of *skomorokhi* etc., but it was the theater *for* one actor; the “feast” was celebrated not on the carnival square, but in the Alexandrova Sloboda. Nevertheless, quite naturally, it did not prevent Ivan the Terrible from accusing his opponents of being *skomorokhi* – “pipe’s tribe”; he ordered to bring Novgorod’s archbishop to Moscow sitting on a mare back to front with a bagpipe in his hands. Another “archetypal” act of Ivan the Terrible seems also to be appropriate for a *skomorokh*: the refusal of the tsar’s title and passing it to Simeon Bekbulatovich, Khan of Kasimov, reminds on the traditional substitu-

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<sup>\*</sup> Originally published as ‘Праздник’ в средневековой Руси; к проблеме исторической специфики,” *Одиссей. Человек в истории* 2005, 81-88. Translated by Elena Glushko.

<sup>1</sup> Iu. M. Lotman, B. A. Uspenskii. “Novye aspekty izucheniia literatury Drevnei Rusi” (New approaches towards research on the Old Russian literature), *Voprosy literatury* 1977, no. 3. Some later events and changes which had occurred in the Soviet culturology, in particular, created an incorrect, from my point of view, impression that the problem posed by Lotman and Uspensky had been actually “forgotten” (see I. Z. Serman. “Priroda smekha po Likhachevu” [The nature of laughter according to Likhachev], *Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoi literatury* 54 [2003], 16). The aim of the present article is to draw once again attention to specific historical features of the Old Russian “festive culture.”

tion of the king with a slave or about appointment of mock king during saturnalias or other traditional annual feasts as described in Frazer's well-known compendium *The Golden Bough*.<sup>2</sup> However, the similarity is rather superficial: not the tradition and time of an annual feast, but the political games of the Moscow tyrant determined the symbolic act of Ivan the Terrible.

In the book about the culture of laughter in Old Rus' the problem of origin – what was the cultural pattern for quasicarnival actions of the tsar – was not yet clearly posed. The new edition, which appeared in 1984 under the title *Laughter in the Old Rus'*, included a part written by Natal'ia V. Ponyrko, which was dedicated to the “popular” laughter of *sviatki*<sup>3</sup> and *maslenitsa*<sup>4</sup> and which was supposed to support Dmitrii S. Likhachev's idea about popular origins of festive plays that “did not have any audience, only participants.”<sup>5</sup> In the studies dealing with annual “feasts,”<sup>6</sup> the view that all such festivities as *sviatki* with Christmas carols, *maslenitsa*, *rusalii*<sup>7</sup>, the night before the Ivan Kupala Day<sup>8</sup> etc. had pagan, pre-Christian origins, long ago became a commonplace.<sup>9</sup> However, Natal'ia V. Ponyrko herself concluded that “popular customs of *sviatki* were to a considerable extent the results of development or travesty of ecclesiastical customs.”<sup>10</sup> If to connect their origins with medieval Russian “popular culture,” which includes the tradition of *skomorokhi*, is possible at all, then only with its not very well examined part which derived from Byzantine culture.

Iakov N. Lubarskii noticed the similarity between “carnival” actions of Ivan the Terrible (and Peter the Great) and the characteristic of the Byzantine emperor Michael III (856-867) given in the tenth century by Constantine Porphyrogenitus.<sup>11</sup> He said that Michael, like a mime, after visiting a bath-house organised mock dinners; imitating the Supper of Christ himself, he dressed his table-companions, wicked “satyrs”, in chasubles, he called their leader a patriarch,

<sup>2</sup> J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (1<sup>st</sup> edition, 2 vols, London, 1890; reprint of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 8 vols., Basingstoke, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> The Christmas season - twelve days from December 25 until January 7 (*translator's note*).

<sup>4</sup> The week before Lent (*translator's note*).

<sup>5</sup> D. S. Likhachev, A. M. Panchenko, N. V. Ponyrko, *Smekh v drevnei Rusi* (The laughter in Old Rus') (Leningrad, 1984), 6.

<sup>6</sup> The term “feast” needs to be put into quotation marks, because in Medieval Russia it actually meant not so much the period of release from everyday labour, but rather the period when certain types of activities were strictly prohibited on certain days, which created a lot of problems for peasants' households. See S. M. Tolstaia, “Prazdnik” (The Feast), *Slavianskie drevnosti* 3 (1984).

<sup>7</sup> The week after the Feast of Holy Trinity (*translator's note*).

<sup>8</sup> That is, of the feast of John the Baptist (June 24) (*translator's note*).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, one of the latest studies: A. S. Kotliarchuk. *Prazdnichnaia kul'tura v gorodakh Rossii i Belorussii XVII veka* (Festive Culture in the cities of Russia and Belorussia in the 17<sup>th</sup> century), St. Petersburg, 2001.

<sup>10</sup> Likhachev, Panchenko, Ponyrko, 156.

<sup>11</sup> Ia. N. Lubarskii, “Tsar-mim” (The Tsar-mime), *Vizantia i Rus'*, ed. by G. K. Vagner (Moscow, 1989). Compare: S. A. Ivanov, *Vizantiiskoe iurodstvo* (The Byzantine Holy Foolishness) (Moscow, 1984), 80-82.

and eleven others – metropolitans, he ordered to play to church hymns on ciphers, he mocked Patriarch Ignatius himself, sending towards him one of his mummers, an “indigenous pagan,” etc.<sup>12</sup> One can certainly consider these passages as an etiquette description of “anti-behaviour,” composed by Michael’s political opponent (see a similar accusation of participation in “devil’s feast” – pagan *brumalias* – brought against emperor-iconoclast Constantine Copronymos), but one should also remember that later on Russian autocrats (Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great) acted in the same sacrilegious way, and their “anti-behaviour” cannot be simply ascribed to the conventions of literary etiquette.

In Byzantium, though, an act of parody with a different function had also occurred: in Constantinople in the year 600 a mime imitated Emperor Mavricius wearing a garland of garlic and sitting on a donkey, while his street retinue sang a song mocking private life of the emperor. Vladislav P. Darkevich found a parallel with this episode in the Russian festive life: he quoted a famous petition, which one of Tver’s landowners, Nikita Pushkin submitted to the tsar in the year 1666. Pushkin reported that on *maslenitsa* his peasants chose among themselves two kings, walked under their leadership through villages and “made a commotion with flags, and drums, and a gun.” In front of the procession varenets and sheaf of straw on a pole were carried; both of them are traditional elements of *maslenitsa*. This *maslenitsa* mummery was certainly supposed to imitate royal ceremonials of the seventeenth century; popular culture in general leans towards imitation of aristocratic examples – one can recall a “prince” (a bridegroom), a “princess” (a bride) and boyars of traditional Russian wedding. Nevertheless, the grave (and quite “historical” for the seventeenth century in Russia) reaction of authorities on such a report is characteristic enough: the mummers were accused of “imposture,” fingers on right hands of “kings” were chopped off, other participants together with their families were exiled to Siberia.<sup>13</sup>

It is obvious that the way how this tradition to elect “the king of Saturnalias” etc., tradition which was coming from the Byzantine Empire, moreover, from antiquity, was adopted in Russia, contradicts in its essence completely to the “carnival” popular culture of Renaissance Europe (which developed the same tradition) as understood by Bakhtin. In Russia it was not the lowest social strata which derided and debased higher officials; on the contrary, it was upper classes who showed their predominance and even omnipotence (as was justly pointed out by Lotman and Uspenskii, as well as by Likhachev), when they al-

<sup>12</sup> *Prodolzhatel' Feofana. Zhizneopisania visantijskikh tsarei* (The Continuator of Theophanus. The Biographies of Byzantine Emperors), ed. by Ia. N. Lubarskii (St. Petersburg, 1992), 86-87, 104-105.

<sup>13</sup> See V. P. Darkevich. *Narodnaia kul'tura srednevekov'ia* (Medieval Popular Culture), (Moscow, 1988), 164; B. A. Uspenskii, “Tsar i samozvanets: samozvanchestvo v Rossii kak kulturno-istoricheskii fenomen” (The Tsar and the Impostor: Imposture in Russia as a cultural and historical phenomenon), *Khudozhestvennyi iazyk srednevekov'ia*, ed. by V. A. Karpushin (Moscow, 1982), 208-209.

lowed themselves masquerade of *oprichnina*, but put a stop to every attempt of popular “carnivalising” from below.

The above mentioned ritual debasement of Pimen, archbishop of Novgorod, by Ivan the Terrible was of no less importance; the Byzantine model for that is also evident – there it was usurpers and rebels who were put back to front on donkeys. The appearance of this ritual in Russia is, however, a bit problematic. The point is that at the first time it is described in all details in connection with massacre of heretics – Judaisers in 1490. Another archbishop of Novgorod, Gennadii (who could not imagine the fate of his successor) ordered to set them on horses back to front, put on them peaked caps of birch bark with inscription “this is devil’s army” (се сатанино воинство) and they were to look “to the West” observing prepared for them hell torments. Iakov S. Luria, who studied the movement of Judaisers, cautiously suggested that the director of this play, Gennadii, could follow not his own “vindictive inventiveness” but a Spanish pattern,<sup>14</sup> the more so as the archbishop himself referred to this pattern, that is, the Spanish king’s method of extirpation of heresies. According to Likhachev, however, Gennadii arranged public exposure of heretics in a quite “Old Russian” way.<sup>15</sup> Clearly, Luria is right: by using material that came to hand (birch bark etc.), Gennadii imitated the inquisition ritual, which was, actually, also intended against Judaisers, that is, Jews forced to baptism, but secretly remaining faithful to Judaism. That makes one ponder on the way how not only Byzantine, but also alien “Latin” traditions were adopted in the medieval Russian “official” culture.

In connection with this transmission one should mention a central figure of medieval Russian festivities – *skomorokh*, which is usually considered to be a historical predecessor of “carnavalesque plays” (including one in which archbishop Pimen was forced to participate): quite a few monographs were dedicated to *skomorokhi*, but they still remain enigmatic figures. First of all, the origin of the word itself is not certain – it is obviously not Slavic, but Greek, Western European and even Arabic etymologies are unreliable.<sup>16</sup> *Skomorokhi* are first mentioned in the Russian Primary Chronicle in the year 1068: “By these and other similar customs the devil deceives us, and he alienated us from God by all manner of craft, through trumpets and clowns (*skomorokhi*), through harps and pagan festivals (*rusalii*). For we behold the playgrounds worn bare by the footsteps of a great multitude, who jostle each other while they make a spectacle of a thing invented by the devil. The churches still stand; but when the

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<sup>14</sup> N. A. Kazakova, Ia. S. Lur’ie. *Antifeodal’nye ereticheskie dvizhenia na Rusi XIV- nachala XVI veka* (Antifeodal heretic movements in Russia in the 14<sup>th</sup>-beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries) (Moscow-Leningrad, 1955), 130.

<sup>15</sup> Likhachev, Panchenko, Ponyrko, 16.

<sup>16</sup> M. A. Fasmer, *Etimologicheskii slovar’ russkogo iazyka* (The Etymological Dictionary of Russian Language) 3 (Moscow, 1987), 648-649.

hour of prayer has come, few worshippers are found in the church...”<sup>17</sup> This characteristic of popular “festive” culture, given by a monk-chronicler, was many times repeated in ecclesiastical sermons and rules, including *Stoglav* (1551), composed at the time of Ivan the Terrible: “Also the rule sixty-two (of the general council - *Author’s note*) on calends and brumalias, as they are called in Hellenic and Greek language, which are the first days of each month ... refuses and prohibits making great and splendid feasts, playing games according to Hellenic custom, the same with women’s dances in public, because they are shameful and lead many people to laughter and lechery; and also for men and boys, they should not decorate themselves with woman’s clothes... and for women, they should not put on man’s clothes... The same about inappropriate clothes, and songs, and dancers, and *skomorokhi*; one should not perform their goat’s shouting and recitation. For when they are trampling grapes, or when they are pouring wine into vessels, or when they are drinking from drinks, they make unwise clamour and shouting, according to an ancient custom, they call Hellenic apparitions, the Hellenic god Dionysos, the teacher of drunkenness...”<sup>18</sup>

It is clear that all these actions do not have any connection with medieval Russian traditions as such. The source of these prohibitions is the same for Western and Eastern, Greek and Latin Christianity, namely, the decision of the Sixth general council held in Constantinople in 680. The word *skomorokh* is actually the translation of the Greek word “mime.” It is no less clear that those prohibitions were not observed neither in Byzantium, nor in Russia: for example, secular motifs in frescoes of St. Sophia’s cathedral in Kiev (11<sup>th</sup> century) mirroring the everyday life of an emperor (here a prince), that is, the racecourse, the fight of a knight with a mummer, bear hunt and musicians (sometimes without any special grounds called *skomorokhi*), evidence the perseverance of ancient traditions, which were the subject to denunciation by church authorities. These scenes were, of course, marginal, they decorated the stairs leading to the

<sup>17</sup> “Но сими дьявол лстить и другими нравы, всячьскими лестьми пребавляя ны от Бога, трубами и скоморохы, гуслими и русальи. Видим бо игрища утолочена, и людей много множество на них, яко упихати начнуть друг друга, позоры деюще от беса замышленого дела, а церкви стоять.” Translation in: *The Russian Primary Chronicle. Laurentian Text*. Tr. and ed. by Samuel Hazzard Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor. (Cambridge, MA, 1953), 147-148.

<sup>18</sup> “Тоже правило шестьдесят второе, коленды и витай-врумалия, Эллинским и Греческим языком глаголется, еже есть первые дние коеждого месяца... празнование велие и торжественное сотворяюще, играния многая содевашея по Эллинскому обычаю... Отмечает и запрещает, сие же и женская в народех плясания, яко срамна суща, и на смех и на блуд воставляюще многих, такожде и мужем и отроком, женским одеянием не украшатися... ни женам в мужеские одеяния облачатися... Також неподобных одеяний и песней, и плясцов и скоморохов; и всякого козлогласования и баснословия их не творити. Егда же вино топчут, или егда вино в сосуды преливают, или кое питие испивают, гласования и вопли творят неразумнии, по древнему обычаю, Эллинския прелести, Эллинскаго бога Диониса, пьянству учителя призывают...” *Stoglav* (The Hundred Chapters), ed. by M. B. Danilushkin (St. Petersburg, 1997), chapter 93.

gallery designed for a prince's family; however, precisely this outside space created the special "extra-ecclesiastical" culture, which is sometimes perceived by our contemporaries (after Boris A. Rybakov etc.), following the example of medieval Russian writers, as "pagan". In medieval Russia this extra-ecclesiastical culture was that of princes and kings (unlike in Byzantium, which preserved in its everyday life ancient traditions), but it also set a pattern for popular performances. The transmission of this pattern is described precisely in connection with *skomorokhi*, who were permitted to participate in the church play about three children in the oven (*Peshchnoe deistvo*). Giles Fletcher (1591) testified that disguised "chaldeans" were allowed to run about the town during the *sviatki* and "make much good sport for the honour of the Bishop's pageant."<sup>19</sup>

Scholars tend to liken the tradition of *sviatki* to European carnivalesque festivals by underlining the tolerance of officials towards those activities.<sup>20</sup> But it was actually not more than tolerance: according to Adam Olearius, "during their escapades the Chaldeans were considered pagans, and impure. It was even thought that if they should die during these days they would be damned. Therefore, on the Day of the Three Saintly Kings, a day of great general consecration, they all were baptised anew, to cleanse them of their godless impurity and to join them once again to the church."<sup>21</sup>

*Skomorokhi*, as well as every participant of the mummary, should have cleansed themselves of their sins on the Day of Baptism in an ice-hole.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, it is said in the "Pandects" of Nikon of the Black Mountain, well-known in medieval Russia: "We equally want to prohibit for the faithful the so-called calends and votas and *rusalia*<sup>23</sup> and the feast celebrated on the (first – *Author's note*) day of March, and also the dances of town's women as shameful and very dangerous and disgusting; this council unfrocks all those who participate in such games, if they are clerics, and excommunicates them, if they are commoners."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Giles Fletcher, *Of the Russe Commonwealth* (Cambridge:MA, 1966), 105.

<sup>20</sup> Likhachev, Panchenko, Ponyrko, *passim*.

<sup>21</sup> *The travels of Olearius in seventeenth-century Russia*, tr. and ed. by Samuel H. Baron (Stanford, California, 1967), 242.

<sup>22</sup> Kotliarchuk, 154-156.

<sup>23</sup> The Greek original describes *brumalias* – the feast of Dionysos-Bromios. Kormchaya (1284) keeps the term, attaching the following comment: "Let all the faithful reject sacrifices and *brumalias* and *kalendas* and dances, which are to the honour of gods. ... *Calendas* are the first days of months, and on those days Greeks had the custom to make sacrifices and offerings, and *brumalia*, and those are Greek feasts, for Bromios established them." (Да отвержена боудуть от верных жития вота и вроумалия и каланьди и плясання, иже на поч(с)ть б(о)м... Каланди соуть первии в м(с)ци днье, в них же обычаи бе и елином творити жертвы и вота же, и вроумалия, и елиньстии бехоу праз(д)ници, Вроум бо порекл есть.) See: *Slovar' drevnerusskogo iazyka* (The Dictionary of Old Russian Language) I, ed. by R. I. Avanesov (Moscow, 1988), 499.

<sup>24</sup> Сице рекомы каланды и рекомыя воты и рекомая роусалия и еже в [первый] день марта месяца творимое тържество по единому же кждо от верных жития отъяти хошем, нь и еще и жен градных плясания яко бещьстных и многоу пагоубоу и пакость творити могоущих, сии собор всех сих, неже подобная игры творящая, и

Not only clerics and commoners were in danger of excommunication. “clowns” or even “fools of God” (*joculatores Domini*), as Franciscans called themselves, the *Parodia sacra*, the participation of church officials in “devil’s” plays, the singing of canons on the mock funeral of dummies, – all this was out of question.<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, such kind of performances (of course, without any clerics) was quite widespread in Russia in the middle of the seventeenth century, and those were already not simply traditional calendar plays, whose pagan origin ecclesiastical authorities continued to underline. In the petition to Alexei I Mikhailovich (1651) an icon-painter of Viaz’ma reported that during the *sviatki* in Viaz’ma “diverse and disgusting plays... where they name saints, and imitate monasteries, and name archpresbyter and cellarer, and abbots” occurred.<sup>26</sup> This *sviatki* custom actually reminds on *Parodia sacra*, and one can find parallels to it among the texts from the second half of the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries, such as “The Service to a Tavern” (“Sluzhba kabaku”) (especially because the “Service” was widely known among lower clergy). Dmitrii S. Likhachev has shown that “The Service,” where the tavern is depicted as a church, parodied not the church as an institution, but rather liturgical and didactic texts.<sup>27</sup> In any case, in the eighteenth century “The Service” was also perceived as a sacrilege and a blasphemy, which should be subject to a trial.<sup>28</sup> Only in the last third of the eighteenth century, at the time of Catherine II, the Synod refuted Tikhon Zadonskii’s statement about illegality of *maslenitsa*’s popular celebration by reference to the law of “regular state” (регулярное государство): “the last week before Lent is set free from all work, including penal servitude.”<sup>29</sup>

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оубо аще клирицы суть, сих измещеть, простыца же отлоучает.” К. А. Maksimovich. *Pandekty Nikolaia Chudotvortsa* (The Pandects of Nicholas the Miracle worker) (Moscow, 1998), 133. Compare with preachings against *rusalia* and plays of *skomorokhi* in: A. N. Veselovskii. *Razyskaniia v oblasti russkogo dukhovnogo stikha* (The Research on the Field of Russian religious verses) (St. Petersburg, 1889) 11-17, 278 sqq. Characteristically enough, according to the decree of the Polish king Jan III, issued in 1695, in Pinsk and Turov non-participation in *koliadki* was officially punished, because it was the bishop himself who gathered gifts. See: Kotliarchuk, 192.

<sup>25</sup> Compare: A. Ia. Gurevich, “Prazdnik, kalendarnyi obriad i obychai v stranakh zarubezhnoi Evropy” (Feast, Annual Ritual and Custom in European Countries), *Sovetskaia etnografiia* 1985, 3.

<sup>26</sup> “...Игрища разные и мерзкие... на коих святых нарицают, и монастыри делают, и архимарита, и келаря, и старцов нарицают.” Darkevich, 167.

<sup>27</sup> Likhachev, Panchenko, Ponyrko, 20.

<sup>28</sup> E. B. Smilianskaia, *Volshebnyi. Bogochul’niki. Eretiki* (Magicians. Sacrilegers. Heretics.) (Moscow, 2003), 225 sqq. I. Z. Serman supposes that the motif of “tavern” had certain historical basis, namely, the state monopoly on alcohol, which was introduced in the seventeenth century and led to mass drunkenness. In any case, the parody reflexion was connected with the real cultural situation, it was not limited only to popular rituals.

<sup>29</sup> “...Последняя сырная неделя дни учинены от всяких и каторжных работ свободными.” N. N. Pokrovskii. “Dokumenty XVIII veka ob otnoshenii sinoda k

Practically all scholars agreed that the appearance of such parodies was due to the fact that in the seventeenth century the medieval Russian, or better simply Russian culture, already separated from medieval moralistic traditions, was influenced by “Western Russian” and through it by Polish, “Latin” culture. Not without reason, mummary and especially masks were associated in Russian culture with the way “how they usually do evil things in Latin countries” (Nomokanon, Moscow, 1639); and *skomorokhi*, who were ordered to entertain “German ambassadors,” also appear to be dressed in “Latin” vestments (it is worth mentioning that Belorussian *skomorokhi* were of special importance).<sup>30</sup> Not without reason, the zealous Old Believer Archpriest Avvakum lamented a Christian, who “will on Sunday come to a church to pray to God and to sanctify his deeds: but there is nothing to listen to – they sing in Latin and dance as *skomorokhi*!”<sup>31</sup>

For an Old Believer the church reform was associated with alien, “Latin” faith and with sacrilegious performances of *skomorokhi*. At the same time Ivan the Terrible sought for symbolic forms for *oprichnina* among the “outside” traditions, including “Latin” ones, in particular Polish, that is, the one from which his interest in costumes and masks has clearly derived.<sup>32</sup> Peter the Great used

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narodnym kalendarnym obriadam” (Seventeenth-century documents about the attitude of Synod towards popular annual rituals), *Sovetskaia etnografia* 1981, no. 5, 96-108.

<sup>30</sup> Kotliarchuk, 30-33, 193. Quite naturally, “alien faith” of *skomorokhi* presumed wearing of alien dress; compare with “Saracen by origin in the dress of *skomorokh*” mentioned in a Prologue of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. See *Slovar’ russkogo iazyka XI-XVII vekov* (The Dictionary of Russian Language, 11<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries) 24, ed. by L. Yu. Astakhina et al. (Moscow, 1999), 226.

<sup>31</sup> “...В день воскресной прибежит в церковь помолити Бога и труды своя освятити: ано и послушать нечево – по латыне поют, плясавицы скоморошьи!” *Zhitie propopora Avvakuma im samim napisannoe i drugie ego sochinenia* (The Life of Protopop Avvakum Written by Him and Other of His Works), (Moscow, 1960), 140.

<sup>32</sup> Andrei Kurbskii described in his *History of the Grand Prince of Moscow* the famous scene, when the tsar, who was drinking heavily, put on a mask, began dancing with the *skomorokhi* and wanted to place the mask on the face of Mikhail Repnin, who reproached “the Christian tsar” for the unpious behaviour (*Biblioteka literatury Drevnei Rusi* [The Library of Medieval Russian Literature] 11, ed. by D. S. Likhachev et al. [St. Petersburg, 2001], 414). Kurbskii did not hesitate to criticise the Polish king as well, saying that he preferred “colourful masks” to state tasks (*Ibid*, 380). One thinks here about Vasilii O. Kliuchevskii’s characteristic of the “bearers of Western influence” on Russia: “Between old Muscovite Russia and Western Europe, Poland was situated: the Slavic, however, Catholic country. Ecclesiastical proximity and geographic closeness associated it with Romano-Germanic Europe, and early and rapid development of feudal law connected with the political freedom of upper classes made Polish nobility the pure and perceptive ground for Western education; but specific features of the land and the national character provided special local colour for the borrowed culture. Limited to the one social strata of exclusive predominance in the state, this culture brought up joyful and vivid, but narrow and loose world perception. And this Poland was the first to exert spiritual influence of the Western Europe on Russia.” See V. O. Kliuchevskii. *Sochinenia v 9 tomakh* (Works in nine volumes) (Moscow, 1988) 3, 258-259.



even broader these European patterns, which in the seventeenth century became almost the part of the tradition.

It is hardly possible to associate these innovations of Russian rulers with popular festive culture; on the contrary, one can rather say that popular culture imitated these new forms.

MEDIUM AEVUM  
QUOTIDIANUM

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KREMS 2006

HERAUSGEGEBEN  
VON GERHARD JARITZ

GEDRUCKT MIT UNTERSTÜTZUNG DER KULTURABTEILUNG  
DES AMTES DER NIEDERÖSTERREICHISCHEN LANDESREGIERUNG

**niederösterreich kultur**

Titelgraphik: Stephan J. Tramèr  
Copy editor: Judith Rasson

Herausgeber: Medium Aevum Quotidianum. Gesellschaft zur Erforschung der materiellen Kultur des Mittelalters, Körnermarkt 13, 3500 Krems, Österreich. Für den Inhalt verantwortlich zeichnen die Autoren, ohne deren ausdrückliche Zustimmung jeglicher Nachdruck, auch in Auszügen, nicht gestattet ist. – Druck: Grafisches Zentrum an der Technischen Universität Wien, Wiedner Hauptstraße 8-10, 1040 Wien.

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## Vorwort

Der vorliegende schmale Band von *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* konzentriert sich, wie angekündigt, auf zwei Studien aus der russischen Forschung, die sich der Untersuchung mittelalterlicher Festkultur widmen. Wieder ist die Möglichkeit dieser Veröffentlichung unserer Kooperation mit den Herausgebern der am Institut für Universalgeschichte der Russischen Akademie der Wissenschaften erscheinenden Jahresschrift *Одиссей. Человек в истории*, und dabei im Besonderen mit Frau Professor Svetlana Luchitskaya, zu verdanken. Der Band des Jahres 2005 setzte sich zentral mit dem Thema „Fest: Zeit und Raum“ auseinander, und die zwei hier vorliegenden Beiträge stellen die Übersetzungen von für unser Forschungsfeld relevanten Forschungsansätzen dar.

Die Vereinbarung zur Publikation der zwei Aufsätze geschah zu einem Zeitpunkt, als Professor Aron Ja. Gurevich, der auch als leitender Redakteur von *Одиссей* fungierte, noch unter uns weilte. Herr Gurevich, einer der weltweit bedeutendsten Repräsentanten einer Geschichte mittelalterlicher Kultur und Mentalität ist im August 2006 seinem Leiden erlegen. Seine Methoden und Forschungen haben international die heutigen kulturhistorischen Fragestellungen und Ansätze entscheidend beeinflusst und geprägt. Dafür sind wir ihm sehr dankbar.

Die für das Jahr 2007 vorgesehenen Hefte und Sonderbände von *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* werden sich einerseits wieder neuen Untersuchungen zu Alltag und Sachkultur des Mittelalters widmen, welche im nächsten Jahr bei den wichtigen internationalen Mittelalter-Kongressen von Kalamazoo und Leeds präsentiert werden. Ein Sonderband wird sich mit dem Aussagegehalt von Testamenten für eine Geschichte der materiellen Kultur im kleinstädtischen Raum des Spätmittelalters beschäftigen. Darüber hinaus wird wiederum ein Schwerpunkt auf die Funktion, Perzeption, Repräsentation und Symbolik von Tieren in der mittelalterlichen Gesellschaft gelegt werden. Gerade diese Fragestellungen finden sich augenblicklich häufig in der internationalen kultur- und alltagsgeschichtlichen Forschung und werden auch in einigen länder- und fächerübergreifenden Forschungsprojekten kontextualisierend und mit komparativen Methoden analysiert.

Wieder möchten wir allen Mitgliedern und Freunden von *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* für das fortgesetzte Interesse, für die gute Zusammenarbeit und vielfältige Unterstützung herzlich danken. Wir hoffen, auch im nächsten Jahr und in weiterer Zukunft dazu beitragen zu können, dass die Geschichte von

Alltag und materieller Kultur des Mittelalters mit Hilfe interdisziplinärer Ansätze und im Rahmen verstärkter internationaler Zusammenarbeit eine anerkannte Rolle im Rahmen der kritisch analysierenden historischen Wissenschaften einzunehmen imstande sein wird.

Gerhard Jaritz, Herausgeber