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Edited by Maureen Perrie

Excerpt

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I

Introduction

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This first volume of the three-volume *Cambridge History of Russia* deals with the period before the reign of Peter the Great. The concept of the 'pre-Petrine' period has a profound resonance in Russian intellectual and cultural history. Although Russia had not been entirely immune from Western influences before Peter's reign, the speed and scale of Europeanisation increased greatly from the beginning of the eighteenth century. This process was deeply divisive, and its significance and effects were debated in the nineteenth century by 'Westerniser' intellectuals, who favoured modernisation, and their 'Slavophile' opponents, who idealised the Muscovite past. In the post-Soviet period, as Russians attempt to reconstruct their national identity after the experience of seven decades of state socialism, aspects of this debate have been revived. The pre-Petrine period has come to be seen in some neo-Slavophile circles as the repository of indigenous Russian values, uncontaminated by the Western influences which were to lead eventually to the disastrous Communist experiment. For many contemporary Westernisers, by contrast, the origins of the Stalinist dictatorship lay not so much in the dogmas of Marxism as in old Muscovite traditions of autocracy and despotism. Such views, which have found an echo in much Western journalistic commentary and in some popular English-language histories of Russia, tend to be based on outdated and ill-informed studies. The present volume, which brings together the most recent interpretations of serious scholars in order to provide an authoritative and reliable new account of pre-Petrine Russia, is designed to advance the knowledge and understanding of the period in the anglophone world.

The scope of the volume: what and where
is pre-Petrine Russia?

Defining the space to be covered in a history of pre-Petrine Russia poses a particular problem in the post-Soviet period, when the legacy of early ('Kievan')

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Rus' is claimed by the newly independent Ukrainian and Belarusian states as well as by the Russian Federation. Instead of projecting present-day political and ethnic/national identities into the past, I have chosen to use the dynastic-political criteria which operated in the period itself: thus, the volume focuses on the territories ruled by the Rurikid dynasty (the descendants of the semi-legendary figure of Rurik the Viking) from the tenth to the sixteenth centuries, and by their successors the Romanovs in the seventeenth. The south-western lands of Rus' are largely excluded from consideration in the period when they formed part of Poland-Lithuania (medieval Novgorod is, however, included). This approach acknowledges the existence of a degree of political continuity between early Rus' and Muscovy, without rejecting the claims of present-day Ukraine and Belarus (or the other post-Soviet states) to national histories of their own which are separate and distinct from that of Russia.

Since 'Russia' throughout this period has been identified as that territory which was ruled by the Rurikid grand princes and tsars to 1598, and by their successors thereafter, it occupies a shifting space with constantly changing boundaries. Many of the south-western lands of early Rus' were incorporated into Poland-Lithuania from the fourteenth century, and were annexed by Muscovy only from the mid-seventeenth. By this time the Muscovite state had expanded far beyond the boundaries of the principalities of the north-east that it had absorbed before the reign of Ivan IV. The conquest of the Tatar khanates of Kazan' and Astrakhan', in the 1550s, opened the way to expansion beyond the Volga, into the North Caucasus and Siberia. Expansion westward proved to be more difficult, however, and important cities such as Smolensk and (more briefly) Novgorod were lost as a result of the 'Time of Troubles' of the early seventeenth century.

The geographical space within these shifting and expanding boundaries both shaped, and was shaped by, the institutions of pre-Petrine Russia. The trade routes along the river systems between the Baltic Sea in the north and the Black and Caspian Seas to the south were important for the development of early Rus'. The soils of the forest zones of the north-east afforded low yields for agriculture, and although arable farming was supplemented by produce from the forests and rivers, Russia's rulers in the Muscovite period faced the problems of marshalling scarce resources. Territorial expansion southwards into the forest-steppe and steppe provided access to potentially more productive resources and profitable trade routes; but the great distances involved, together with poor means of communication, posed major challenges for political control and administrative integration.

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The organisation and structure of the volume

Striking the appropriate balance between thematic and chronological organisation is a perennial problem for historians. A purely thematic structure would have posed particular problems for a volume such as this, which spans a period of several centuries. My preference has been for a primarily chronological approach, in the hope that this will provide a coherent narrative framework for the non-specialist reader who uses the volume as a work of reference. Within this framework, a number of thematic chapters have been commissioned, which are proportionally more prominent for the later centuries.

The period covered by this first volume of the three-volume set begins at the origins of Rus', about AD 900 (the *Primary Chronicle* dates the activity of Riurik to the ninth century). The volume ends around 1689 – a choice of date which may require some explanation. After the death of Tsar Fedor Alekseevich in 1682 his sister, Tsarevna Sophia, acted as regent for her two younger brothers, the co-tsars Ivan and Peter. Ivan, the elder tsar and Sophia's full brother, was mentally incompetent, and although he lived until 1696, the year 1689, when Sophia was overthrown as regent, is conventionally regarded as the beginning of independent rule by her half-brother, Peter (subsequently to be known as 'the Great'). The year 1689 may therefore be considered to mark the end of the 'pre-Petrine' era, and the start of the transition to the St Petersburg or imperial period of Russian history. This latter period, which was to last until 1917, comprises the subject-matter of the second volume of the *Cambridge History of Russia*.

I have divided pre-Petrine Russia into three main sub-periods: (1) early Rus' and the rise of Muscovy (c.900–1462); (2) the expansion, consolidation and crisis of Muscovy (1462–1613); and (3) the early Romanov tsardom (1613–89). Just as political-dynastic criteria have been applied in order to define the territorial scope of the volume, its chronological subdivision, too, employs dynastic criteria. Thus the accession of Grand Prince Ivan III in 1462 has been chosen as the watershed between the first two sub-periods (rather than the 'stand on the River Ugra' in 1480, for example – which is sometimes regarded as marking the end of Mongol overlordship). Rather more arbitrarily, I have chosen as the starting point of the third sub-period the election of the first Romanov tsar in 1613, rather than the end of the old (Riurikid) dynasty in 1598, which was followed by the upheaval of the 'Time of Troubles' (c.1603–13).

The later centuries have been dealt with in the greatest detail, in conformity with the broader allocation of space within the three-volume *Cambridge History of Russia* (which allows one volume each for the tenth to seventeenth centuries;

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the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; and the twentieth century). Thus in this volume the 'short' seventeenth century has been allocated roughly the same amount of space as the 'long' sixteenth, and each of these has rather more space than the entire pre-1462 period.

The volume begins with two prefatory chapters. This Introduction sets the agenda by outlining the main themes of the volume; it also deals with some historiographical issues. It is followed by a contextualising 'historical geography' chapter, exploring the natural environment within which pre-Petrine Russia evolved, and its implications for economic, social and political development.

The main body of the text is divided into three Parts, corresponding to the sub-periods identified above. In Part I the principle of subdivision is chronological, with the exception of Chapter 8, which covers the history of medieval Novgorod across the entire period (and slightly beyond), from its origins to its annexation by Moscow. In Part II (the 'long' sixteenth century), four predominantly political-historical chapters, organised on a chronological basis, are supplemented by six thematic chapters dealing with aspects of the period as a whole. In the third and final Part (the 'short' seventeenth century) a purely thematic organisation has been adopted, in view of the degree of political continuity within the period.

The sub-period covered in Part I is the longest in duration and the most territorially diverse, encompassing early ('Kievan') Rus' as well as the north-eastern principalities during the period of Mongol suzerainty. The primarily chronological division of the Part into chapters follows the same political-dynastic criteria as the broader subdivision of the volume. Thus Chapter 3 covers the period to the death of Vladimir Sviatoslavich (1015), Chapter 4 ends with the death of Vladimir Monomakh (1125) and Chapter 5 with that of Mikhail of Chernigov in 1246, the year in which Iaroslav of Vladimir also died. Chapter 6 is devoted to the reigns of the princes of Vladimir and Moscow to the death of Ivan II in 1359; and Chapter 7 concludes with the death of Vasiliï II in 1462. In terms of alternative approaches to periodisation, Chapters 3–5 roughly correlate with the Kievan or pre-Mongol period of the history of Rus', while Chapters 6–7 deal with the centuries of Mongol suzerainty (sometimes described as the 'apanage period' or the 'period of feudal fragmentation').

In Part II the subdivision into the four 'chronological' chapters is again political-dynastic. The first of these (Chapter 9) covers the reigns of Grand Princes Ivan III (1462–1505) and Vasiliï III (1505–33) – a period which witnessed the process sometimes known as the 'gathering of the lands of Rus' (the territorial expansion of Moscow to include the other north-eastern principalities).

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Chapter 10 is devoted to the reign of Ivan IV ('the Terrible'), who oversaw the formation of what Soviet historians described as 'the centralised multinational state' (the administrative integration of the Tatar khanates of Kazan' and Astrakhan', conquered in the 1550s) as well as the Livonian war (1558–83) and the reign of terror associated with the creation of the *oprichnina* (1565–72). Chapter 11 deals not only with the reign of Tsar Fedor Ivanovich (1584–98), whose death marked the end of the Rurikid dynasty, but also with that of his successor, Boris Godunov (1598–1605). The Time of Troubles, here defined chronologically as spanning the period from 1603 (the appearance of the First False Dmitrii in Poland-Lithuania) to Michael Romanov's election as tsar in 1613, is the subject of Chapter 18, which is placed at the end of the Part in order to provide a 'bridge' to Part III.

Topics to which thematic chapters are devoted in both Parts II and III are: the rural and urban economy and society (Chapters 12, 13, 23, 25); Russian relations with non-Christians and non-Russians (Chapters 14 and 22); the Orthodox Church (Chapters 15 and 27); and the law (Chapters 16 and 24). Part II also includes a chapter on political ideas and rituals (Chapter 17), while Part III has chapters on popular revolts (Chapter 26) and on cultural and intellectual life (Chapter 28). Three 'core' political themes addressed in the 'chronological' chapters of Part II (Chapters 9–11 and 18) are dealt with separately in Part III: central government and its institutions (Chapter 19); local government and administration (Chapter 20); and foreign relations, territorial expansion and warfare (Chapter 21). Most of these topics are of course also dealt with (albeit more briefly) in the 'chronological' chapters of Part I.

Themes of pre-Petrine history

In addition to the issues which are addressed in the 'thematic' chapters in Parts II and III, a number of general topics are traced throughout the volume, in both the 'chronological' and 'thematic' chapters. It may be helpful to the reader if I outline these themes briefly here, and signpost the chapters in which they are discussed.

The external environment and its impact

The first set of themes relates to the fact that pre-Petrine Russia in general, and Muscovy in particular, was a rapidly expanding state which almost continuously acquired territory and population at the expense of its neighbours, so that the external enemies of one century often became part of the internal 'nationalities problem' of the next. The Russian rulers had to adopt a range

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of strategies in order to acquire, incorporate and defend their new territories, and military requirements profoundly influenced the development of state and society.

Over the period, Russia's rulers faced a succession of enemies who threatened their lands. As demonstrated in Part I, the princes of Rus' had to do battle with many nomadic steppe peoples before the Mongols invaded in the thirteenth century. Muscovy's position within the Eurasian land mass gave rise to the danger of simultaneous warfare in the south and the west, and presented the diplomatic challenge of avoiding war on two fronts: the Russians' main adversaries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the Livonian knights, Poland-Lithuania and Sweden in the west, and the Crimean Tatars and Ottoman Turks in the south. The wars conducted by the Muscovite rulers in the sixteenth century are described in Part II in Chapters 9–11, 14 and 18; while Chapter 21 in Part III is devoted to foreign relations and warfare in the seventeenth century. Moscow's territorial expansion through its annexation of the other principalities of north-eastern Russia is described in Chapters 7 and 9; Chapter 14 covers the conquest of Kazan', Astrakhan' and Siberia in the sixteenth century; and Chapter 21 pays particular attention to the important period in which the Ukrainian lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were annexed by Muscovy in the seventeenth.

The Slavic inhabitants of early Rus' had to coexist with the non-Slav nomads of the steppes; and from the sixteenth century, with the conquest of the Tatar khanates of Kazan' and Astrakhan' and subsequent expansion into Siberia, Muscovy acquired an increasingly multinational (multi-ethnic) character. Michael Khodarkovsky's chapters in Parts II and III consider the ways in which the Russian rulers incorporated non-Russians (most of whom before the sixteenth century were also non-Christians) into their realm.

Russian territorial expansion did not always involve the annexation of lands with an existing settled population. From the late sixteenth century, Muscovy acquired an open steppe frontier to the south and east, which gave rise to processes of colonisation both 'from above' (state-sponsored settlement) and 'from below' (spontaneous peasant migration). These processes are outlined in Chapter 2, while Chapters 11 and 18 in Part II describe the building of defensive lines of new towns in the south, the growth of the cossack hosts and their relationship with the state both before and during the Time of Troubles. Moscow's relations with the Don and Zaporozhian cossacks in the seventeenth century, and the fortification of the south-west frontier, are described in Chapter 21 of Part III.

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The requirements of military defence had important implications for Russia's internal political, economic and social development. The military retainers of the princes of Kievan Rus' also acted as his political advisers. The obligation of noble landowners to provide military service to the state laid the basis of the Muscovite political system, as Donald Ostrowski explains in Chapter 9 and, as the frontier moved further south into the steppe, the military servitors' demands for control of peasant labour on their estates led to the legal imposition of serfdom in the mid-seventeenth century (see Chapter 23). The military reforms of the seventeenth century which were necessitated by competition with the 'new formation' regiments of Poland-Lithuania and Sweden are described in Chapter 21; and it may have been the requirements of military efficiency, as Marshall Poe suggests in Chapter 19, that led to the political reforms of Tsar Alexis's reign which involved the promotion of 'new men'.

Internal developments

The main focus of this volume is on the development of the Russian state and society, and much attention is paid to political, economic and social issues, including the law, the Orthodox Church and intellectual and cultural life. Political history provides the main organising framework of the volume, and issues of dynastic succession and political legitimacy constitute a major theme of the 'chronological' chapters in Parts I and II as well as of the 'thematic' political chapters in Part III.

In both early Rus' and Muscovy the political legitimacy of rulers was derived from succession systems whose ambiguities often gave rise to conflicts and civil wars. The complex combination of vertical and lateral (or collateral) principles of succession which operated in Kievan Rus' were modified by regional allocations of territory within the dynasty and sometimes by naked power struggles. The legitimacy of the succession was often challenged, whether in relation to the title of grand prince of Kiev or later to that of grand prince of Vladimir. After the Mongol invasion the principles of succession to the grand-princely throne of Vladimir initially continued to operate on a similar basis to those to the Kievan throne. In the fourteenth century, however, as Janet Martin explains (Chapters 6, 7), the descendants of Daniil Aleksandrovich of Moscow acquired the title of grand prince with the support of the Mongol khans, although Daniil himself had not served as grand prince, and the descendants of his cousin Mikhail of Tver' had a stronger claim on the basis of the traditional criterion that 'a prince sits on the throne of his father'. After a series of dynastic wars, the Daniilovich branch of the Riurikid dynasty retained their hold on the grand-princely title against rivals with apparently stronger claims.

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They owed their victory largely to the backing of the khans, and also to support from the leaders of the Orthodox Church.

In fifteenth-century Muscovy there was a shift from collateral to linear (vertical) succession, but this change too was not unchallenged; after the death of Vasili I in 1425, for example, the late grand prince's younger brother Iurii contested the succession of his son, Vasili II. From the mid-sixteenth century, when the Muscovite rulers boosted their status by adopting the title of 'tsar' (khan, emperor), the ritual of coronation provided an additional source of legitimation, through the sacralisation of the ruler: the tsars were 'divinely crowned' and later also 'divinely anointed'. Semi-legendary tales tracing the ancestry of the dynasty back not only to early Rus', but even to ancient Rome, also served to promote the status of the dynasty. Subsequently, when it suited their purpose the Muscovite rulers also claimed to be the legitimate successors of the Mongol khans.

The end of the Riurikid dynasty in 1598 created a major crisis of political legitimacy. The introduction of the elective principle contributed to the upheaval of the Time of Troubles, when the accession of Tsars Boris Godunov and Vasili Shuiskii was challenged by a series of pretenders (royal impostors) claiming to be scions of the old dynasty. The election of Michael Romanov by an Assembly of the Land in 1613 restored stability, although the new dynasty still found it necessary to supplement its elective legitimacy by emphasising continuity with the Riurikids (Michael was the great-nephew of Anastasiia Romanovna, the first wife of Ivan IV), and claiming that the young Romanov tsar was chosen by God. Fears of new pretenders continued to preoccupy the Romanov rulers throughout the seventeenth century, when rituals and ceremonies were developed further in order to buttress the legitimacy of the dynasty.

In addition to these central issues of political legitimacy, the 'chronological' chapters in Parts I and II examine the relationships of the grand princes and tsars with their elite servitors and advisers. They consider the nature and extent of formal and informal constraints on the power of the ruler, including the role of the prince's *druzhina* (retinue) in Kievan Rus', the *veche* (city assembly) in medieval Novgorod, and the 'boyar дума (council)' and the *zemskii sobor* (Assembly of the Land) in Muscovy. These themes, together with transformations in the composition of the 'ruling elite', are discussed in more detail in Marshall Poe's chapter (19) in Part III, on central government and its institutions in the seventeenth century.

The shifting balance of responsibility between local and central government is an important theme throughout the volume, and especially in relation

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to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Muscovy. There were major reforms of local government in the mid-sixteenth century, when centrally appointed provincial officials were partially replaced by elected institutions of local self-government. Sergei Bogatyrev argues in Chapter 10 that, while accommodating local identities, these reforms also served the political needs of the state. From the late sixteenth century, and especially in the seventeenth century after the Time of Troubles, as Brian Davies describes in Chapter 20, the functions of the locally elected bodies were progressively replaced by governors appointed by Moscow, as part of a broader pattern of increased state control of the localities. Additional mechanisms were necessary, however, in order to prevent the governors from acquiring too many powers of their own at the expense of the centre.

The absence of legal limitations on the power of the ruler is often regarded as a distinguishing feature of Russian autocracy, but both early Rus' and Muscovy possessed well-developed legal systems. The volume examines the development of the law codes, from the eleventh-century *Russkaia pravda* through the *sudebniki* of 1497 and 1550 to the *Ulozhenie* of 1649. Richard Hellie in his chapter on sixteenth-century law emphasises the function of the law as a means of state centralisation and mobilisation, while Nancy Kollmann draws attention to the diversity which still persisted in the seventeenth.

From the conversion of Vladimir Sviatoslavich in 988 the Orthodox Church was associated with the Riurikid dynasty and provided its princes with legitimacy. Together with the dynasty itself, the Church constituted a major element of continuity between Kievan and Muscovite Rus', with the transfer of the metropolitanate from Kiev to Vladimir and subsequently to Moscow; and the metropolitans played an important role in establishing the legitimacy of the Daniilovich branch of the dynasty as grand princes of Vladimir in the fourteenth century. The role of the Orthodox Church as a unifying factor in the Rus'ian lands, and as a source of national identity, was particularly important when the state was weak, as it was after the Mongol invasion, and during the Time of Troubles. The relationship of Church and state is considered throughout the volume. David Miller's chapter on the sixteenth century devotes particular attention to 'popular' as well as 'official' religious practices, while Robert Crummey's contribution on the seventeenth century explains the origins and consequences of the schism of the 1660s.

Until the seventeenth century, Russian cultural and intellectual life was heavily influenced by the Orthodox Church; from the mid-seventeenth century, however, it is possible to speak of elements of secularisation. Even in the seventeenth century, however, as Lindsey Hughes points out in Chapter 28,

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there was little abstract political thought: ideas about power were still conveyed primarily by non-verbal means, through works of art and architecture, and through rituals and ceremonies of the kind described by Michael Flier in Chapter 17.

Russia remained a predominantly agrarian country well into the twentieth century. In the pre-Petrine period, peasant farming was the basis of the economy, with overlords (both secular and monastic) extracting agricultural surpluses by means which became increasingly coercive in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In Chapters 12 and 23 Richard Hellie – developing some of the themes first raised in Chapter 2 by Denis Shaw – describes the challenges faced by Muscovite peasants in terms of climate and soil, and the effects of these on their diet and housing.

Other economic themes which are addressed in all Parts of the volume include the nature and extent of market relations; the growth of commerce, both domestic and international; and the construction of towns. The development of early Rus' was very much tied up with the trade routes along the river systems which linked the Baltic with the Black Sea ('the route from the Varangians to the Greeks') and the Caspian. Its chief towns were important commercial centres. Novgorod, in particular, derived its great wealth from trade along both the north–south and east–west routes, exporting furs, fish, wax and honey, and importing silver (see Chapter 8). As Janet Martin explains in Chapter 6, trade continued during the period of Mongol suzerainty, when the Rus' principalities acquired access to the Great Silk Route to China.

In the sixteenth century, Muscovy briefly obtained a Baltic port, with the capture of Narva during the Livonian war; the importance of the White Sea trade route, which was developed by the English Muscovy Company from 1553, was recognised when the port of Archangel was constructed in 1583–4. The White Sea route was the most important trade route in the seventeenth century, with its exports increasingly comprising agricultural produce, such as flax and hemp, rather than forest products (see Chapters 13, 25).

The development of towns was largely but not exclusively connected with the growth of trade. As Denis Shaw demonstrates in his chapters in Parts II and III, Muscovite towns were multi-functional: not only were they commercial and manufacturing centres, but they also played important administrative and religious roles. Frontier towns, of course, had a vital military-defensive function. From the perspective of purely commercial development, Russian towns were backward by comparison with their Western European counterparts; but Shaw argues that they played an important role in state-building from the