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**CHINESE SCHOLARS' STUDIES  
ON RUSSIAN HISTORY (862–1800) SINCE 2000<sup>1</sup>**

This study summarizes Chinese scholars' research on Russian political, economic, and cultural history (862–1800) since 2000. It presents a comparative review concerning Kievan Rus', Muscovite Russia and the Russian Empire. Chinese scholars have deepened their study into various themes and shifted from using a Soviet-influenced historiographical paradigm to a retrospective study of Russian historical and cultural traditions based on a wider contextual understanding of its civilization. Primary shortcomings inhibiting further and deeper study include a shortage of researchers, lack of primary archival documents, and a lack of global perspective on medieval or early modern Russian history.

*Keywords: Kievan Rus'; Muscovite Russia; Russian Empire; Chinese Historiography*

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Russia is the largest of China's neighboring countries, and the primary superpower closely associated with Chinese history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Chinese scholars have constantly focused on the history of Russia (then the Soviet Union). Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Chinese scholars have explored not only the causes of the Soviet Union's "rise and fall as a superpower",<sup>2</sup> but also paid greater attention to widening the aperture through which they view the deep causes and underlying drives of Russia's macro-historical development. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with the increase in the number of master's and doctoral programs on Russian history in China, the expansion of postgraduate programs and the establishment of relevant academic platforms, China has expanded the number of research teams related to the study of Russian history (Russia before 1917).<sup>3</sup>

Following the initial thrust of exploration into Russian history by scholars such as Chengmu Sun (孙成木) (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), Zuxi Liu (刘祖熙) (Peking University), Yue Wang (王钺) and Jian Li (李建) (Lanzhou University) and Huan Zhu (朱寰) (Northeast Normal University) in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, master's and doctoral graduates majoring in Russian history (represented by Hai Yao (姚海) of Suzhou University of Science and Technology, Wei'an Cao (曹维安) of Shaanxi Normal University, Guangxiang Zhang (张广翔) of Jilin University, Jianhua Zhang (张建华) of Beijing Normal University, and Ailin Luo (罗爱林) of Central China Normal University, Pei Yu (于沛) and Xiaoju Wang (王晓菊) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Guiju Dai (戴桂菊) of Beijing Foreign Studies University, and Shiguo Zhao (赵士国) of Hunan Normal University, etc.) have grown up into the second

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2 Among the fruitful studies on the history of the Soviet Union in Chinese academia, the most representative one, *The Rise and Fall of a Superpower: A Thematic Study of Soviet History (1917-1991)* is edited by ZHIHUA SHEN (沈志华), (Beijing: Social Science Academic Press, 2014).

3 Chinese scholars call the history of Kievan Rus' up to 1917 Russian history, and the February Revolution of 1917 up to 1991 Soviet history. Master's and doctoral students choose whether to do research on Russian history or on Soviet history according to their interests. In order to integrate the scholars of these two branches of Russian history research, the authors of this paper agree with Professor Jianhua Zhang's initiative to unite Russian history and Soviet history under the term "Russian history". However, the increase in the number of scholars mentioned in this paper is only a longitudinal comparison of the Russian history major itself. Compared to other national histories (such as American history, British history and Japanese history), the number and quality of Russian history research teams is still seriously inadequate. See JIANHUA ZHANG, "Reflections on the Last 30 Years of Russian History Research in the Chinese Academy", *Theory Journal*, no. 1 (2009): 107-111. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1002-3909.2009.01.025>

generation of scholars in this regard; their students becoming the third generation of researchers. There are also scholars at Taiwan universities and institutes doing research on Russian history, and Yunyi He (贺允宜), Renheng Chen (陈仁姮), Xuefang Zhou (周雪舫) and Xinyi Guo (郭欣宜) are representatives of this group. Broadly, Chinese scholars have been more involved in the study of Imperial Russian history and less in the study of Russian history from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In view of the fact that there are already overviews on Chinese scholars' research on Russian history (including Soviet history) in general,<sup>4</sup> this paper focuses on research findings on Russian history (862–1800) by Chinese scholars from the last 20 years.

According to the statistics, no fewer than 60 monographs and 210 theses have been completed by Chinese scholars on pre-19<sup>th</sup>-century Russian history in the last two decades. The major databases consulted for the literature review include: China National Knowledge Infrastructure (<https://www.cnki.net>), Duxiu (<http://www.duxiu.com>), Taiwan Academic Literature Database (<http://www.airitilibrary.cn>), and Synergy of Metadata Resources in Taiwan (SMRT) (<https://metadata.ncl.edu.tw>). Works published in English or Russian by Chinese scholars are not included in this review.

## GENERAL STUDIES

### ON 9<sup>TH</sup>- TO 18<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY RUSSIAN HISTORY

Chinese scholars' study of Russian history from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries cannot be separated either from a macroscopic understanding of the periodization of Russian history and the characteristics of Russian civilization, or from a holistic exploration of Russian political, economic and cultural history.

#### **The Periodization of Russian History**

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the *Compendium of Russian History*, co-edited by Chengmu Sun, Zuxi Liu and Jian Li, listed the 9<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup>

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4 JIANHUA ZHANG, "A Review of and Reflection on the Study of Russian History in China (1878–2015)", *RussianStudiesHu*, no. 1 (2021): 194–220. <https://doi.org/10.38210/RUSTUDH.2021.3.11>; ГУАНСЯН ЧЖАН, «Изучение истории России в Китае в XX в», *Российская история*, Выпуск 4 (2019): 165–177. <https://doi.org/10.31857/S086956870005923-6>

century and the 19<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as time boundaries for the division of its first and second volumes.<sup>5</sup> In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, inspired by works (through Chinese translation) such as Klyuchevsky's *A Course in Russian History*, Ryazanovsky's *History of Russia* and Plekhanov's *History of Russian Social Thought*, Chinese scholars have begun to diversify how they periodize Russian history. Focused on the relocation of political centers, Wei'an Cao divided Russian history into the Kievan Rus' period (9<sup>th</sup> to the early 13<sup>th</sup> century), the Muscovite Russia period (early 13<sup>th</sup> to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century) and the Russian Empire period (18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century) in his monograph *New Perspectives in Russian History*.<sup>6</sup> Based on the evolution of Russian autocracy and the development of Russian modernization, Jianhua Zhang's *History of Russia* is divided into "The origins of the nation and the state (8<sup>th</sup> to mid-17<sup>th</sup> century)", "The golden age of autocracy (late 17<sup>th</sup> to late 18<sup>th</sup> century)", "The intellectual enlightenment and cultural education (early to late 19<sup>th</sup> century)", "The difficulties of initiation of modernization (early 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century)" and "The collapse of autocracy (1905–1917)".<sup>7</sup> Utilizing a "rise and fall of empire" approach, Zhou Xuefang's *Russian History: The Enigmatic Country* is divided into "The early years of Russia (862–1682)", "The expansion of the Russian Empire (1682–1855)" and "The decline of the Russian Empire (1855–1917)". The same periodization also appears in Yunyi He's *History of Russia*.<sup>8</sup>

What these seemingly disparate timeframes have in common is the view of 9<sup>th</sup>- to 17<sup>th</sup>-century Russia as a pre-modern traditional society, and the 18<sup>th</sup> century as a period of transition from medieval to early modern Russia. As Wei'an Cao emphasized in his works, "Russian history of the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, namely from the establishment of Kievan Rus' to the formation of a unified centralized Muscovite Russia, is roughly contemporaneous with the Middle Ages of Western Europe. During this period Russia retained more of the original cultural and political traditions of Rus' that had not been altered by Peter I's compelling westernizing reforms." *The History of*

5 CHENGMU SUN, ZUXI LIU and JIAN LI (eds.), *Compendium of Russian History* (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1986).

6 WEI'AN CAO, XIANGHONG GUO (郭响宏), *New Perspectives in Russian History: From Kievan Rus' and Muscovite Russia to Imperial Russia* (Beijing: Science Press, 2016).

7 JIANHUA ZHANG, *Russian History* (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2014).

8 XUEFANG ZHOU, *Russian History: The Enigmatic Country* (Taipei: Sanmin Books, 2015); YUNYI HE, *Russian History* (Taipei: Sanmin Books, 2004).

*Medieval Russia*, compiled by Wei'an Cao (forthcoming), covers the history of Russia in this period.<sup>9</sup>

### Slavic Culture and Russian Civilization

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Chinese scholars have paid more attention to the historical view of civilizations, in addition to adhering to historical materialism. *Slavic Civilization*, co-authored by Pei Yu (于沛), Dai Guiju and Rui Li (李锐), is the only work by Chinese scholars to date that focuses on Slavic civilization as a whole.<sup>10</sup> *Pluralism and Conflict: The Road to Civilization in Russian Central and Eastern Europe* by Zuxi Liu and Xiaozhong Zhu (朱晓中) covers the history of more than 20 countries in Eastern, Central and South-Eastern Europe (including the Balkans – the European parts of Greece and Turkey are not included). Zuxi Liu, a leading Chinese expert on the histories of Eastern Europe and Russia in China, focuses on medieval Christian culture in the Slavic countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and has done research on the origins and names of the Slavs as well as the establishment and the Christianization of the Slavic countries. He analyzes the characteristics of Russian civilization, pointing out that Orthodoxy is the spiritual pillar, while autocracy is the political core of Russian civilization.<sup>11</sup> Longshan Ma (马龙闪) and Guiju Dai provide an overview of the “mixedness” of the Eastern and Western characteristics in Russian civilization.<sup>12</sup> Shaolei Feng has taken the study of Russian civilization as an example and proposed the concept of “the intersection of eastern and western civilization”.<sup>13</sup> Qineng Chen

9 WEI'AN CAO, “A Few Controversial Issues in the Study of Russian Medieval History”, *Chinese Social Sciences Today*, 30 June 2020.

10 PEI YU, GUIJU DAI and RUI LI, *Slavic Civilization* (Beijing: China Social Science Press, 2001).

11 ZUXI LIU (ed.), XIAOZHONG ZHU (associate ed.), *Pluralism and Conflict: The Road to Civilization in Russian Central and Eastern Europe* (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2011); ZUXI LIU, “Ruminations on Medieval Slavic Culture”, *World History*, no. 5 (2001): 60–67. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1002-011X.2001.05.007>; ZUXI LIU, “On Russian Civilization”, *Russian Central Asian & East European Studies*, no. 4 (2005): 69–76. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1671-8461.2005.04.012>

12 LONGSHAN MA, “On the Characteristics of Russian Civilization”, *Historiography Bimonthly*, no. 3 (2000): 101–109; GUIJU DAI, “Russian Civilization with Hybridist Overtones”, *Guangming Daily*, 11 June 2014. <https://doi.org/10.28273/n.cnki.ngmrb.2014.007133>

13 SHAOLEI FENG (冯绍雷), “The Intersection of Eastern and Western Civilizations: a research paradigm for Russian Studies”, *Russian Studies*, no. 6 (2012): 12–38.

(陈启能), et al. provide an overview of the concept of civilization and the historical view of civilization in contemporary Russian historiography.<sup>14</sup>

The Western/Eastern features of Russian civilization is a focal point that Chinese scholars are apt to explore. Xiaohong Bai (白晓红) has presented the debate on the Western/Eastern features of Russian historical development from the Norman and anti-Norman theory to the dispute between Slavophiles and Westernizers.<sup>15</sup> Xuefang Zhou has introduced the debate between Russian and German scholars on “Does Russia belong to Europe?”<sup>16</sup> Lin Jinghua (林精华) et al. examined the causes and attributes of Russia’s national character, national identity and nationalism.<sup>17</sup>

### Russian Political Culture and Autocracy

Zuxi Liu compared the differences between the Russian and the Polish political cultures, pointing out that the two opposing political systems—the Russian Tsarist autocracy and the Polish aristocratic democracy, generated different political and cultural relations between the two Slavic

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- 14 QINENG CHEN, TEJIN CAO (曹特金), “Conception of Civilization in Contemporary Russia”, *Taiwan Journal of East Asian Civilization Studies*, Vol. 6, no. 2 (2009): 227–246. [https://doi.org/10.6163/tjeas.2009.6\(2\)227](https://doi.org/10.6163/tjeas.2009.6(2)227); TEJIN CAO, “Research on Russian Civilization by Russian Scholars in Recent Years”, *Journal of Historiography*, no. 3 (2008): 1–6; ZHENYING ZHAO (赵振英), “Review of the Civilizational Approach in Russian Historiography”, *Historiography Bimonthly*, no. 1 (2006): 96–105. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1004-0013.2006.01.013>; YUQI Guo (国玉奇), “Studies on Russian History: from a Morphological to a Civilizational Historical View”, *Journal of Russian Literature*, no. 11 (2010): 171–180. <https://doi.org/10.29994/EGYWSB.201004.0016>; JIANHUA ZHANG, “From a History of Culture to a Science of Culture: a Renaissance of the View of History of Civilization or a Reconstruction? Comments on the Phenomena of Learning Focus in Russia”, *Study & Exploration*, no. 2 (2007): 219–227. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1002-462X.2007.02.050>
- 15 XIAOHONG BAI, “Eastness and Westness in Russia’s Historical Development”, *Academic Journal of Russian Studies*, no. 6 (2020): 113–124. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.2095-1094.2020.06.006>; XIAOHONG BAI, “The Evolution of the ‘Russian Idea’”, *Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies*, no.1 (2005): 58–65.
- 16 XUEFANG ZHOU, “Does Russia belong to Europe? An Introduction to Three Articles by Two Professors”, *Fu Jen Journal of History*, no. 15 (2004): 315–347. <https://doi.org/10.29439/FJHJ.200407.0002>
- 17 JINGHUA LIN, “Ethnicity, National State and National Identity: A Study on the Issues in the History of Russian Civilization”, *Social Science Front Bimonthly*, no. 6 (2003): 145–151; JIANHUA ZHANG, “The Formation of the Russian State and Nationalism”, *Journal of Beijing Normal University*, no. 2 (2001): 90–96. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1002-0209.2001.02.013>; HUIXIN JIN (靳会新), “Historical and Cultural Factors in the Formation of Russian National Character”, *Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies*, no. 1 (2011): 53–61.

peoples.<sup>18</sup> Remaining in the framework of historical materialism, Zhenying Zhao's monograph *The History of the Russian Political System* provided a systematic and comprehensive account of the history of the Russian political system for over a thousand years starting from the foundation of the ancient Rus'.<sup>19</sup> In his work entitled *An Examination of Ancient Autocracies*, Keyao Ma (马克垚) compares Russian autocracy with that of Rome, the countries of Western Europe and ancient China.<sup>20</sup> A work by Peiyong Deng (邓沛勇) et al. also explores the political history and political culture of Russia.<sup>21</sup>

As an authoritative scholar on Russian political history and Russian medieval history, Wei'an Cao's monograph *New Perspectives in Russian History: Basic Issues in the Development of Russian History* is a remarkable achievement in the study of Russian history by Chinese scholars. The book takes autocracy, the Orthodox Church, rural communes and serfdom as entry points for the study of Russian history, and deals with many important issues from ancient Rus' up to 1917, breaking through the cognitive limits imposed by Soviet historiography in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>22</sup> The collected papers in *New Perspectives in Russian History: From Kievan Rus' and Muscovite Russia to Imperial Russia* bring together Cao's research and that of his students on the origins of ancient Rus', the Zemsky Sobor, autocracy, the formation of the Russian aristocracy, Russian bureaucracy and the bureaucratic class and other issues. This research provides new insights into the details of Russian history.<sup>23</sup> Houqin Zhou (周厚琴)'s monograph, *The Origins of Russian Autocracy: From City State to Empire* focuses on the transformation of the political system, breaking with paradigms of Western terminology such as "early feudal monarchy",

18 ZUXI LIU, "A Comparative Study of Political Culture in Russia and Poland", *Collected Papers of History Studies*, no. 1 (2014): 84–93.

19 ZHENYING ZHAO, *A History of the Russian Political System* (Dalian: Liaoning Normal University Press, 2000).

20 KEYAO MA, *An Investigation of an Ancient Autocratic System* (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2017).

21 PEIYONG DENG, *Russian Political History from 1700 to 1917* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2020); XIAOLI GUO (郭小丽), "Totem of Royal Power: A Tentative Analysis of Russian Political Cultural Tradition", *Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies*, no. 6 (2006): 19–23. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1671-8461.2006.06.003>; CHAO WANG (王超), "The Source of Russian Political Culture", *The Northern Forum*, no. 6 (2017): 90–95.

22 WEI'AN CAO, *New Perspectives in Russian History: Basic Issues in the Development of Russian History* (Beijing: China Social Science Press, 2002).

23 WEI'AN CAO, XIANGHONG GUO, *New Perspectives in Russian History: From Kievan Rus' and Muscovite Russia to Imperial Russia* (Beijing: Science Press, 2016).

“hierarchical representative monarchy” and “absolute monarchy”. It is an exploration of the origin, prototype and formation of autocracy as a historical phenomenon exclusive to Russia in the long history preceding the 18<sup>th</sup> century. She argues that Russian autocracy originated with Ivan III as a result of the combination of the political traditions of the Golden Horde, the religious heritage of Byzantium, the geography of northeastern Rus’, and the personalities and choices of Moscow princes.<sup>24</sup> The paper co-authored by Wei’an Cao and Houqin Zhou further explains the historical transmutation of the concept of “autocracy” and its influence on the construction of the Russian state system.<sup>25</sup>

Haoqi Zhang (张昊琦) is dedicated to the history of Russian political thought. His work, *Russian Imperial Thoughts*, analyses Russia’s imperial ideologies, issues such as geographical insecurity, nationalism and power politics in Russia.<sup>26</sup> He has also authored related essays on the study of Russian statism, isolationism and nationalism.<sup>27</sup>

### Economic-Social History of Russia

Guangxiang Zhang is a leading figure in the study of Russian economic and social history and has broken new ground for the study of Russian history in China. He has been productive on issues such as the beginning and specificities of modernization, agricultural and industrial modernization, the rural commune, urbanization and hierarchical-class structures, etc. The Center for Northeast Asian Studies, Jilin University, which he leads, is a key research institute of Russian history in China. His team has made great efforts to translate the relevant achievements of Russian scholars, such as Mironov’s *A Social History of Russia* and *A History of Life in the*

24 HOUQIN ZHOU, *The Origins of Russian Autocracy: From City State to Empire* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2020).

25 HOUQIN ZHOU, “The Historical Evolution of the Concept of ‘Autocracy’ and Russian State Institution Building”, *Journal of Shaanxi Normal University*, no. 5 (2020): 110–123. <https://doi.org/10.15983/j.cnki.sxss.2020.0954>; WEI’AN CAO, HOUQIN ZHOU, “The Evolution of Russian Political Institutions: From Kievan Rus’ and Muscovite Russia to Imperial Russia”, *Journal of Shaanxi Normal University*, no. 1 (2014): 152–161.

26 HAOQI ZHANG, *A Preliminary Exploration of Russian Imperial Thought* (Beijing: Intellectual Property Press, 2012).

27 HAOQI ZHANG, “The Historic Structure of Russia’s ‘Statehood’”, *Russian Studies*, no. 2 (2019): 33–66; HAOQI ZHANG, “Succession: The Myth of Russian Politics”, *Academic Journal of Russian Studies*, no. 3 (2020): 43–68. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.2095-1094.2020.03.00>; HAOQI ZHANG, “Russian Isolationism: Ideology and Historical Mentality”, *Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies*, no. 1 (2016): 36–52.



*Imperial Russian Era*, as well as more than 30 works of the *Russian History Translation Series*, including *Russian Autocracy and Merchants: 1720s to the Early 1760s*, *A History of the Russian Peasantry* and *A History of Russian Taxation*, the last two of which deal with the economic and social history of Russia before the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His PhD students (over 30 in total) are all engaged in research and teaching Russian history at Chinese universities and research institutions.<sup>28</sup> While most of these young scholars have studied the economic history of 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century Russia, some of them have dealt with the history of 9<sup>th</sup>- to 18<sup>th</sup>-century Russia; to name two examples: Peiyong Deng's work *A History of the Russian Economy* deals with the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Russian economy, and Cuihong Yang (杨翠红) focuses on the history of Russian foreign trade.<sup>29</sup>

### Russian Religion and Culture

The Orthodox Church has had a wide impact on the politics, economy, culture and history of Russia and Eastern European countries. Chinese scholars have paid enormous attention to the study of Orthodox Christianity and have achieved fruitful results. *A History of Russian Religions* by Feng Yue (乐峰) is the first comprehensive study by a Chinese scholar of Russian religions, providing a comprehensive and systematic account of the history and current situation of the many religions that have influenced the development of Russian society.<sup>30</sup> Fenglin Xu (徐凤林)'s *A History of Orthodox Iconography* is the first work on Orthodox iconography written by a Chinese scholar.<sup>31</sup> Cuihong Yang's works, *A Study of the Relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and State Power (from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century)* and *A Study of the Russian Orthodox Church and the State: Focusing on the 18<sup>th</sup> Century* summarized the characteristics of the relationship between the church and the state in five periods of Russian history, exploring the main factors influencing the relationship between

28 JIAYING ZHOU (周嘉滢), "Professor Guangxiang Zhang and the Chinese Study of Russian History", *Social Science Front*, no. 12 (2014): 242–247.

29 PEIYONG DENG, *A History of the Russian Economy* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2020); CUIHONG YANG, "The Developing Process of Russia's Foreign Trade", *Northeast Asia Forum*, no. 2 (2002): 45–47. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1003-7411.2002.02.012>

30 FENG YUE (ed.), *A History of Russian Religions*, (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2008).

31 FENGLIN XU, *A History of Orthodox Iconography* (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2012).

the church and the state.<sup>32</sup> One of the chapters of Guiju Dai's book *The Reformation of the Russian Orthodox Church (1861–1917)* reviewed the historical legacy of the Church from the acceptance of Christianity by Rus' to Peter I's Church reform, while some of her papers published elsewhere illustrated the relationship between Orthodoxy and diplomacy and Peter I's Reformation.<sup>33</sup> Shiguo Zhao's essay, *Mysticism in Russian History*, discussed how mysticism, a phenomenon in traditional Russian culture, actually hindered the progress of Russian society.<sup>34</sup> Liping Lei (雷丽平) specializes in Russian peasants' Orthodox faith and the evolution of the religious economy of the Orthodox Church.<sup>35</sup> Cuihong Yang and Guangxiang Zhang's research focuses on the cultural functions of monasteries.<sup>36</sup> Other scholars have also published papers on topics related to the Orthodox Church, Holy Fools, and Messianic consciousness, etc.<sup>37</sup>

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- 32 CUIHONG YANG, *A Study of the Relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and State Power (9<sup>th</sup> – late 18<sup>th</sup> centuries)* (Changchun: Jilin University Press, 2011); CUIHONG YANG, *A Study of the Russian Orthodox Church and the State: Focusing on the 18<sup>th</sup> Century* (Changchun: Jilin University Press, 2014).
- 33 GUIJU DAI, *The Reformation of the Russian Orthodox Church (1861–1917)* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2002); GUIJU DAI, "The Diplomatic Function of the Russian Orthodox Church", *World Religious Cultures*, no. 2 (2014): 45–49. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1007-6255.2014.02.008>; GUIJU DAI, "Religion and Modernization in Russia", *Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies*, no. 3 (2002): 14–20. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1671-8461.2002.03.003>; GUIJU DAI, "An Overview of Orthodox Doctrinal Theology", *Philosophy of Religion* 29 (2003): 129–141. [https://doi.org/10.6309/JORP.200309\(29\).0010](https://doi.org/10.6309/JORP.200309(29).0010)
- 34 SHIGUO ZHAO, "Mysticism in Russian History", *World History*, no. 3 (2002): 63–73. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1002-011X.2002.03.008>
- 35 LIPING LEI, "A Preliminary Study of Russian Peasants' Orthodox Faith in History", *World History*, no. 6 (2005): 56–65. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1002-011X.2005.06.006>; LIPING LEI, "The Evolution of the Religious Economy of the Russian Orthodox Church Before the October Revolution (988–1917)", *Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies*, no. 5 (2013): 75–81.
- 36 CUIHONG YANG, "On the Origin and Development of the Monastery in Rus'", *Collected Papers of History Studies*, no. 4 (2019): 99–106; CUIHONG YANG, "Medieval Monasteries and Russian Culture", *The Northern Forum*, no. 4 (2011): 87–90. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1000-3541.2011.04.021>; GUANGXIANG ZHANG, "The Cultural Function of Monasteries in Russia", *Jilin University Journal Social Sciences Edition*, no. 6 (2013): 100–110.
- 37 BAICHUN ZHANG (张百春), "The Russian Orthodox Church's Road to Independence", *Russian Literature & Arts*, no. 1 (2006): 43–48. <https://doi.org/10.16238/j.cnki.rla.2006.01.010>; XIAOHUA ZHAO (赵小华), "An Overview of the Development of the Russian Orthodox Church's Canonization History", *Russian Studies*, no. 6 (2013): 79–110; XINYI GUO, "The Beauty of the Murky: Exploring the Standard Paradigm of Russian Orthodox Iconography", *Danjiang Journal of Humanities and Society*, 46, June (2011): 107–136. <https://doi.org/10.29718/TJHSS.201106.0005>; SHUAI WANG (王帅), "An Analysis of the Veneration of Holy Foolishness in the Russian Orthodox Church", *Studies in World Religions*, no. 5 (2018): 131–140; XIAOLI GUO (郭小丽), JINGXUAN SUN (孙静萱), "The Structure

There are many monographs by Chinese scholars on the history of Russian culture. Hai Yao's *Russian Culture* is the most notable monograph on this topic. His book is divided into seven chapters: "The Eastern Slavs and the Varangians", "Rus' and Byzantium", "The Mongol Conquest and the Orientalization of Rus'", "Facing West (Reform and Enlightenment)", "The Choice of Developmental Path under the Influence of Western Culture", "Society and Culture in the Age of Reform", and "Cultural Conflicts at the Turn of the Century". In it, the author presents the main features of Russian culture in different historical periods, emphasizing that Russia's unique geographical conditions and history have created a diversity of components of Russian cultural origin.<sup>38</sup> Mingbin Li (李明滨)'s *A History of Russian Culture* provides a comprehensive and systematic overview of the history of Russian spirituality and culture covering social history, education, literature, art, scientific and technological achievements, and social trends.<sup>39</sup> Guangxuan Ren (任光宣)'s *A History of Russian Art and Fifteen Lectures on Russian Culture* deals with the historical development of several major Russian arts (architecture, painting, music and sculpture) from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>40</sup> Daqiu Zhu (朱达秋) and Li Zhou (周力)'s *On Russian Culture* deals with the deep structure and characteristics of Russian culture and Russian autocracy as a cultural phenomenon. Peter the Great's Reformation and the Enlightenment are also reviewed and reconceived.<sup>41</sup> There are also works focusing on the history of Russian architecture, arts and education.

### Russian Geopolitics and Diplomacy

Russia's special geographical position, stretching as it does from the West to the East, or across the continents of Europe and Asia, has made Russian geopolitics and diplomacy of great interest to scholars. *Russian Civilization and Diplomacy*, edited by Hai Yao is a masterpiece of recent years. This book, co-authored by several scholars, analyses the historical

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of Russian Messianic Consciousness and its Fluxes", *Russian Studies*, no. 2 (2009): 116–126.

38 HAI YAO, *A History of Russian Culture* (Shanghai: Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Press, 2005).

39 MINGBIN LI, *A History of Russian Culture* (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2013).

40 GUANGXUAN REN, *A History of Russian Art* (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2000); GUANGXUAN REN, *Fifteen Lectures on Russian Culture* (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2007).

41 DAQIU ZHU, LI ZHOU, *On Russian Culture* (Chongqing: Chongqing Publishing House, 2004).

process of Russia under the influence of spatial conditions, cultural traits, national spirit, the Orthodox Church, imperial institutions and other factors. Shaping the unique style and tradition of Russian diplomacy, all these factors played an important role in the development of the Russian state and had a significant impact on international relations and the world situation.<sup>42</sup> *A History of Russian Diplomacy (1700–1917)*, by Peiyong Deng and Huiyin Sun (孙慧颖), charts the origins, development, heyday and decline of Russian diplomacy in three periods (i.e., Kievan Rus', the Moscow Principality and the Russian Empire) and two dimensions—diplomatic relations with Western and Eastern countries.<sup>43</sup> Qi Lan (蓝琪)'s *On the Relations of the Countries of Central Asia and Russia in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries* discusses two main topics, namely, the creation, formation and development of the Central Asian khanates and the course of Russian history, as well as the course of peace and conflict, exchange and contest between Russia and the Central Asian khanates.<sup>44</sup> Xin Wang (王新)'s essay collection, *Russia and Europe: A Perspective on the History of International Relations*, deals with Russia's international relations in the 9<sup>th</sup> through 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and Russia's relations with Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Maritime strategy too, was an important element of Russian geopolitics and diplomacy.<sup>45</sup> *A Study of Russia's Maritime Strategy* by Huizhong Xiao (肖辉忠) and Dongtao Han (韩冬涛), and another book of the same title by Yanhua Ye (叶艳华) focus on the trajectory of Russia's maritime strategy and systematically describe Russia's Black Sea, Arctic, Pacific and Baltic strategies.<sup>46</sup>

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42 HAI YAO (ed.), *Russian Civilization and Diplomacy* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2016).

43 PEIYONG DENG, HUIYING SUN, *A History of Russian Diplomacy (1700–1917)* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2021).

44 QI LAN, *A Discussion of the Relations Between the Countries of Central Asia and Russia in the 16<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Lanzhou University Press, 2012); QI LAN, "On the Relations of the Countries of Central Asia and Russia in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries", *World History*, no. 1 (2008): 70–78.

45 XIN WANG, *Russia and Europe: A Perspective on the History of International Relations* (Beijing: Beijing Normal University Publishing Group, 2014).

46 HUIZHONG XIAO, DONGTAO HAN, *A Study on Russian Maritime Strategy* (Beijing: Current Affairs Press, 2016); YANHUA YE, *A Study of Russian Maritime Strategy: From Tsarist Russia to the Soviet Period* (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2021).

## Russian Historiography

Chinese scholars working on Russian history have built a strong command of the research dynamics of Russian historiography. Longshan Ma, et al. pay close attention to the transformation of contemporary Russian historiography within their works.<sup>47</sup> Shuang Liu (刘爽)'s *Studies on Contemporary Russian Historiography* is the latest publication by a Chinese scholar on contemporary Russian historiography, although the section on Russian historiography from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries is only briefly discussed.<sup>48</sup> Cuihong Yang, writing on pre-nineteenth-century Russian historiography, divides Russian historiography into two stages, with Peter the Great's reforms as a boundary: the first one is traditional Russian chronicle historiography that was heavily influenced by Byzantine and other Eastern factors; the other is a modernized approach that relied on Western historiography.<sup>49</sup> There is a lack of specialized monographs on the tradition and history of Russian historiography, themes that are only partially mentioned in works such as *A History of Western Historiography* and *A History of Foreign Historiography*.

## THEMATIC STUDIES ON KIEVAN RUS', MUSCOVITE RUSSIA AND THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE

In order to present the themes of research on early Russian history (862–1800) by Chinese scholars in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this paper arranges the results

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47 LONGSHAN MA, "The Boom of Imperial History Studies and the School of Imperial History Writing in Russian: The Transformation of Russian Historiography", *History Research and Teaching*, no. 2 (2018): 63–70. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1006-5636.2018.02.009>; LONGSHAN MA, "The Development of Russian Historiography and its Characteristics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", *Journal of Historiography*, no. 3 (2014): 7–17; JIANHUA ZHANG, "'Memorial Historiography' and 'Public Historiography': the Dynamics of Russian Historiography in 2013". *Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies*, no. 3 (2014): 87–92; GUIJU DAI, "Russian Historiography of the Last Decade", *Historiography Bimonthly*, no. 3 (2001): 134–144; SHUANG LIU, "Contemporary Russian Historiography in the Social Transformation", *Chinese Social Sciences Today*, 2019-06-18(007).

48 SHUANG LIU, *Studies in Contemporary Russian Historiography* (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2020).

49 CUIHONG YANG, "On the Positive Influences of the Orthodox Church upon Russian Historiography", *The Northern Forum*, no. 3 (2020): 126–134. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1000-3541.2020.03.015>; CUIHONG YANG, "Russia's Chronicle Tradition and the Modernization of Historiography", *Collected Papers of History Studies*, no. 1 (2013): 59–60.

achieved in each theme into three periods: Kievan Rus', Muscovite Russia and Imperial Russia.

### Kievan Rus' (9<sup>th</sup> to the Early 13<sup>th</sup> Century)

#### (I) CHRONOLOGIES AND HISTORICAL TEXTS

Since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Wang Yue translated and annotated the *Primary Chronicle*<sup>50</sup>, three translations and editions by Huan Zhu and Dunwei Hu (胡敦伟), Songting Wang (王松亭) and Chen Renheng have been published on the Chinese mainland and Taiwan respectively.<sup>51</sup> Chen has also written an article discussing the significance of the *Chronicle of the Bygone Years* in the compilation of the general history of Russia.<sup>52</sup> In his work *A Study of the Russian "Tale of Bygone Years"*, Siqian Shi (史思谦) analyzed the chronological text in three dimensions: literature, religion and ideology, further examining the fundamental roles of these dimensions in the intellectual development of the Russian nation as a whole.<sup>53</sup>

Following Yue Wang's translation and annotation of *Rus' Justice* (Russkaya Pravda),<sup>54</sup> Haijun Wang (王海军) studied *Rus' Justice* from the perspective of jurisprudential history. His work, *A Study of Rus' Justice*, takes the historical document *Rus' Justice* as its main object and focuses on the relevant legal issues of its time, including the formation of the document, the power and operating mechanism of the Rus' state, social classes and their evolution, crime and punishment, marriage and family succession, property law, and the judicial and litigation systems. His book

50 YUE WANG, *A Translation and Annotation of "The Primary Chronicle"* (Lanzhou: Gansu Ethnic Publishing House, 1994).

51 HUAN ZHU, DUNWEI HU (tr., ed.), *The Primary Chronicle: The First Chronicle of Ancient Rus'* (Beijing: Commercial Press, 2017); SONGTING WANG (translated and annotated), *The Tale of Bygone Years: An Ancient Russian-Chinese Comparison* (Beijing: Commercial Press, 2010); RENHENG CHEN (translated and annotated), *The Primary Chronicle: A Translation and Annotation of "Laurent's Chronicle"* (Taipei: Lianjing Publishing Co. Ltd, 2016).

52 RENHENG CHEN, "The Significance of *The Primary Chronicle* in Editing the General History of Modern Russia", *NTU Journal of History* 43, no. 1 (2009): 151–186. <https://doi.org/10.6253/ntuhistory.2009.43.04>

53 SIQIAN SHI, *A Study of the Russian "Tale of Bygone Years"* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2020); For related papers see SIQIAN SHI, "On the Image Construction of the Ancient Russian Empire in the 'Tale of Bygone Years'", *Russian Studies*, no. 5 (2016): 3–20; LI MA (马骊), "An Intensive Study on the *Tale about the Calling of the Varangians* in Old Russian Annals", *Journal of Northeast Normal University*, no. 2 (2013): 62–67.

54 YUE WANG, *A Translation and Annotation of Rus' Justice* (Lanzhou: Lanzhou University Press, 1987).

*A Study of Civil and Commercial Law in Ancient Rus': A Focus on the Era of 'Rus' Justice'* is based on the civil and commercial legal systems of ancient Rus' and provides a comprehensive interpretation in the context of the social, economic and political environment of its time.<sup>55</sup>

## (II) SLAVIC ETHNIC ORIGINS

The ethnogenesis of the Slavs is a meta issue in both Eastern and Western Slavic studies. Dan Wang (王丹)'s research presents a comprehensive analysis of the various theories on the origin of the Slavs from Russian linguistics, ethnography, and archaeology.<sup>56</sup> Houqin Zhou and Wei'an Cao have reviewed the research results of various disciplines on this issue in Central and Eastern Europe, pointing out that there are many arguments surrounding when and where the Slavs originated, and that a more in-depth, comprehensive interdisciplinary study would contribute to the exploration of Slavic origin.<sup>57</sup>

## (III) ANCIENT RUSSIAN CIVILIZATION AND THE FORMATION OF THE STATE OF RUS'

While Wei'an Cao has long been interested in the study of Ancient Rus', he and his students have further devoted themselves to exploring the origins of the ancient Rus' state. Cao provides an overview of the debates between the "Norman theory" and the "anti-Norman theory" in Russian historiography.<sup>58</sup> Jia Qi (齐嘉) and Wei'an Cao discuss the origins of the name "Rus'" and the formation of the ancient Rus' state. On the one hand, they emphasize the fundamental role of the Eastern Slavs in the formation of the Rus' state, and on the other, they point out that the ancient Rus' state was not established until opportunities for extensive international trade emerged with the Byzantine Empire and underlined the external impetus from the Varangians.<sup>59</sup> Houqin Zhou and Wei'an Cao provide an overview of the "city-state theory" of ancient Rus' civilization in Russian historiography

55 HAIJUN WANG, *A Study of Rus' Justice* (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2014); HAIJUN WANG, *A Study of Civil and Commercial Law in Ancient Rus': A Focus on the Era of Rus' Justice* (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 2014).

56 DAN WANG, "An Analysis of the Inference of Slavic Origin", *Journal of World Peoples Studies*, no. 5 (2001): 35–44. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1006-8287.2001.05.005>

57 HOUQIN ZHOU, WEI'AN CAO, "Multidisciplinary Research and Dilemmas of Slavic Ethnic Origin", *Chinese Social Sciences Today*, 2020-01-21(004).

58 WEI'AN CAO, "The Debate in Russian Historiography on the Origins of the Ancient State of Rus'", *World History*, no. 1 (2008): 115–128.

59 JIA QI, WEI'AN CAO, "The Origin of the Name Rus' and the Formation of the Ancient State of Rus'", *Historical Research*, no. 3 (2012): 111–125.

in recent years.<sup>60</sup> In Jia Qi's work *The Origins of the Ancient State of Rus'*, which is based on the research findings of Russian and Anglo-American scholars on the "Varangian problem" and "the origins of the ancient Rus' state", Qi adopts the study of the overall environment of the Rus' region as his main perspective while illustrating the universality and uniqueness of the formation of the ancient Rus' state based on a general theory of state origins.<sup>61</sup> *A Study of the Issues of Ancient Rus'* by Lianqing Sun (孙连庆) and Xiaohui Zhou (周晓辉), is guided by Marxist theory of ancient ethnic formation and uses this lens to examine the ethnic composition, ethnic distribution, and ethnic culture of ancient Rus'.<sup>62</sup>

#### (IV) KIEVAN RUS' POLITICS, ECONOMY, CULTURE AND DIPLOMACY

Chinese scholars have not done much research on Kievan Rus', with only a few dissertations published. Chunlei Guo (国春雷) explores the controversy over the day of the Baptism of Rus' and examines the wars and diplomacy of Kievan Rus', especially its relations with Byzantium.<sup>63</sup> Hai Yao assesses the diplomacy of Alexander Nevsky.<sup>64</sup> Cuihong Yang and Lianqing Sun discuss the foreign trade of Kievan Rus' and the trade route from the Varangians and the Greeks.<sup>65</sup> Jia Qi and Houqin Zhou examine the *veche* in the political life of Kievan Rus'. Xiaobo Wang (王小波) discusses the origins of the Kievan legal system.<sup>66</sup>

60 HOUQIN ZHOU, WEI'AN CAO, "The Study of Ancient Russian Civilization in Recent Russian Historiography", *World History*, no. 4 (2012): 98–110.

61 JIA QI, *The Origins of the Ancient State of Rus'* (Xi'an: Shaanxi People's Publishing House, 2018); JIA QI, "Preliminary Research on the Russian Khaganate", *Journal of Jiangsu Normal University*, no. 3 (2015): 66–71.

62 XIAOHUI ZHOU, LIANQING SUN, *A Study of the Issues Surrounding Ancient Rus'* (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2015).

63 CHUNLEI GUO, "The Debate on the Day of the Baptism of Rus'", *World History*, no. 2 (2010): 120–128; CHUNLEI GUO, "An Analysis of the Diplomacy of Kievan Rus'", *Russian Studies*, no. 4 (2010): 84–97; CHUNLEI GUO, "A New Theory of the Causes of the Battle Between Kievan Rus' and Byzantine Kherson", *Collected Papers of History Studies*, no. 4 (2010): 80–86.

64 HAI YAO, "Between East and West: Nevsky's Diplomacy and its Evaluation", *Russian Studies*, no. 4 (2010): 98–109.

65 CUIHONG YANG, GUANGXIANG ZHANG, "The Role of the Kievan Rus' Orthodox Church in Foreign Relations (12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries)", *Northeast Asia Forum*, no. 6 (2007): 113–116. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1003-7411.2007.06.022>; LIANQING SUN, "On the Waterway Trade of Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages", *The Northern Forum*, no. 5 (2010): 75–78. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1000-3541.2010.05.017>

66 JIA QI, HOUQIN ZHOU, "On the Veche of Kievan Rus'", *Journal of Jiangsu Normal University*, no. 6 (2016): 70–75; XIAOBO WANG, "A Preliminary Exploration of the Origins of the Russian Legal System", *Russian Studies*, no. 4 (2008): 46–50.



## Muscovite Russia (From the Early 13<sup>th</sup> to the Late 17<sup>th</sup> Century)

### (I) THE MONGOL (GOLDEN HORDE) RULE OVER RUS' AND ITS INFLUENCE

The almost 250-year Mongol rule over Rus', a period of transition from Kievan Rus' to Muscovite Russia, is a topic of great interest to Chinese scholars. Songxia Sun (孙嵩霞) has reviewed the new tendency in Russian historiography to move from the "Tatar-Mongol Yoke" to the "Russia attached to the Golden Horde" system, and has argued that the major political impact of the Mongols on Rus' was the decline of democratic elements in Kievan Rus' and the formation of an autocracy in Muscovite Russia.<sup>67</sup> Xunming Chen (陈训明) has pointed out that the influence of Mongol rule on the formation of Russian autocracy includes elements of Chinese culture. Honggang Liang (梁红刚) examines the taxation system of the period.<sup>68</sup> Ruixue Su (粟瑞雪) presents the Savitzky, a Eurasianist account of the impact of Mongol rule over Rus'.<sup>69</sup> Qiudi Huang (黄秋迪) looks at both medieval chroniclers' writings on the "Tatar yoke" and the influence of the Golden Horde on Russian culture.<sup>70</sup> Cuihong Yang and Chunlei Guo focus on the impact of Mongol rule on the development of Orthodox Christianity in Russia.<sup>71</sup>

### (II) THE TSARS OF MUSCOVITE RUSSIA AND THEIR RULE

The political rule of the tsars from Ivan III to the early Romanov dynasty was an important stage in the establishment of a unified Muscovite Russia and

67 SONGXIA SUN, "A New Evaluation of Mongol Rule in Russian History", *Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies*, no. 3 (2016): 143–154; SONGXIA SUN, "From the Falling of Democracy to the Rise of Autocracy: The Impact of Mongolia on Ancient Russia between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries", *Journal of Shandong University*, no. 2 (2016): 148–154.

68 XUNMING CHEN, "Russian Nobility and Mongol Vassals", *Russian Studies*, no. 4 (2007): 85–90; HONGGANG LIANG, "The Taxation System of the Russian State in the Period of the Golden Horde", *Journal of Northeast Asia Studies*, no. 5 (2019): 113–123.

69 RUIXUE SU, "The Eurasianism Perspective: Savitsky on Mongol-Tatar Rule and its Impact on Russian History", *Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies*, no. 3 (2010): 84–89.

70 QIUDI HUANG, "The Influence of Mongolian Culture on Russian Culture Under the Golden Horde", *Siberian Studies*, no. 2 (2006): 87–90. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1008-0961.2006.02.019>; QIUDI HUANG, "Characteristics of Russian Culture Under Mongolian Rule", *Siberian Studies*, no. 6 (2004): 52–57. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1008-0961.2004.06.014>

71 CUIHONG YANG, "Changes in State-Church Relations in the Early Period of Mongolia's Rule Over Rus'", *Social Science Front*, no. 5 (2007): 128–131; CUIHONG YANG, "Changes in State-Church Relations in the Late Period of Mongolia's Rule Over Rus'", *Collected Papers of History Studies*, no. 6 (2011): 91–96; CHUNLEI GUO, "Reasons for the Russian Orthodox Church's Refusal to Consolidate with the Catholic Church During the Mongol Invasion", *Journal of Inner Mongolia University*, no. 3 (2010): 108–113. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1000-5218.2010.03.019>

the formation of autocracy. The most popular Muscovite Russian tsar was Ivan IV. Scholars have authored several versions of Ivan IV's biographies and explored in depth the successes and failures of his reign.<sup>72</sup> Dan Li (李丹) has made a comprehensive study of Ivan IV's administrative, financial, judicial, and ecclesiastical reforms.<sup>73</sup> Wei'an Cao and Junfeng Zhang (张军凤) explore the causes and consequences of the Oprichnina imposed by Ivan IV, while Wenfei Liu (刘文飞) and Xueye Liu (刘雪野) focus on Ivan IV's "exodus" and Kurbsky's "flight" and their political disputes.<sup>74</sup> Yanfeng Tang (唐艳凤) and Chuanyu Zhu (朱川豫) examine Anglo-Russian relations during the reign of Ivan IV.<sup>75</sup> Compared to Ivan IV, Chinese scholars examine the rule of other tsars of Muscovite Russia with less frequency. Yanshan Xu (徐彦山) discusses Ivan III's administrative reforms and the formation of a unified, centralized, Muscovite Russia. Xuefang Zhou compares Godunov in history

72 YUNSHENG SONG (宋韵声) (ed.), *Ivan the Terrible* (Shenyang: Liaoning People's Publishing House, 2002); DEYING KANG (康德英) (ed.), *Biographies of the World's Most Famous Men: The Bloody Tyrant Ivan the Terrible and the Outstanding Tsar Peter the Great* (Beijing: China Drama Publishing House, 2005).

73 DAN LI, "On the Administrative Reform of Ivan IV of Russia", *Journal of Inner Mongolia University*, no. 6 (2007): 18–22. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1000-5218.2007.06.003>; DAN LI, "Ivan IV's Judicatory Reform and a Preliminary Exploration of the 1550 Corpus Juris", *Journal of Inner Mongolia University*, no. 1 (2007): 59–63. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1000-5218.2007.01.012>; DAN LI, "Research on the Military System and Finance and Tax Reform in the Reign of Ivan IV", *Journal of Inner Mongolia Normal University*, no. 1 (2008): 135–138. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1001-7623.2008.01.028>; DAN LI, "The Motives of Ivan IV's Reform: From the Intensification of Russian Class Contradictions in the First Half of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century to the Peresvitov", *Journal of Inner Mongolia Agricultural University*, no. 2 (2009): 231–233. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1009-4458.2009.02.089>; DAN LI, "The Russian Church and the Hundred-Chapter Meeting under Ivan IV", *Journal of Inner Mongolia Agricultural University*, no. 4 (2007): 315–317. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1009-4458.2007.04.120>

74 WEI'AN CAO, JUNFENG ZHANG, "Another Discussion of the Causes and Consequences of the Oprichnina Imposed by Ivan IV", *Journal of Suzhou University of Science and Technology*, no. 3 (2016): 91–100; WENFEI LIU, "The Controversy of Correspondence between Ivan IV and Kurbsky", *Russian Literature & Arts*, no. 1 (2007): 85–89; XUEYE LIU, XIAOJU WANG, "Political Rivalry in the Moscow Principality: Studied Through the Case of the Flight of Ivan IV", *Historiography Research in Anhui*, no. 3 (2020): 120–128. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1005-605X.2020.03.013>; XUEYE LIU, "An Analysis of the Reasons and Significance of Kurbsky's flight from Lithuania", *Siberian Studies*, no. 2 (2020): 38–46. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1008-0961.2020.02.005>

75 YANFENG TANG, CHUANGYU ZHU, "An Exploration of the History of Anglo-Russian Relations under Ivan IV", *Guizhou Social Sciences*, no. 2 (2017): 78–84.

and in literature. Guoju Liu (刘国菊) and Liying Wang (王丽影) comment on the reign of Alexei I.<sup>76</sup>

The Zemsky Sobor was a special political institution of Muscovite Russia. Wei'an Cao and Huifang Xie (谢慧芳) study its rise and fall in the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, pointing out that its origins and role are different from that of the English parliament or the French Estates-General.<sup>77</sup> Wei'an Cao, Jianjun Shi (师建军) and Zhonggui Liu (刘忠桂) examine the Zemsky Sobor and the Russian tradition of local autonomous government.<sup>78</sup>

Today, interpretation of the Time of Troubles and the peasant movements has gradually moved away from the influence of class struggle theory in Soviet historiography. Houqin Zhou introduces the latest achievements of contemporary Russian historiography in her study of the Time of Troubles and lists new trends in the study of this period in Russian historiography, placing it in the long time span of the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and analyzing the reasons why Russia still chose the path of "autocracy" despite the new political opportunities towards a "hierarchical representative monarchy" in the Time of Troubles.<sup>79</sup>

### (III) THE OLD BELIEVERS

The religious schism of the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century is key to the study of the relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and political power. Xiaohua Zhao (赵小华) discusses the controversy between the ascetics and the Josephites at the very end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>80</sup> Yan Jin (金雁) focuses on the origins of the religious schism

76 YANSHAN XU, "The Administrative System and Reform Under the Formation of a Unified Russian State", *History Teaching*, no. 8 (2008): 39–41; GUOJU LIU, LIYING WANG, "Aleksey Mikhailovich and Tsarist Russia", *Journal of North University of China*, no. 4 (2018): 91–97. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1673-1646.2018.04.017>; XUEFANG ZHOU, "Fact and Fiction: Godunov in History and Literature", *Fu Ren Journal of History* 22 (2009): 149–195. <https://doi.org/10.29439/FJHJ.200901.0005>

77 WEI'AN CAO, HUIFANG XIE, "On the Russian Zemsky Sobor", *World History*, no. 5 (2010): 23–32.

78 WEI'AN CAO, JIANJUN SHI, "Local Autonomous Government Prior to the Great Reform in Russia", *Journal of Shaanxi Normal University*, no. 5 (2010): 81–90; ZHONGGUI LIU, "An Analysis of Zemsky Sobor in Feudal Russia", *Northeast Asia Forum*, no. 3 (2004): 84–88. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1003-7411.2004.03.020>

79 HOUQIN ZHOU, "The New Trend of Smuta Studies in Contemporary Russian Historiography", *Historiography Quarterly*, no. 2 (2020): 125–138; HOUQIN ZHOU, "Political Opportunities and the Choices of Russia in the Time of Troubles", *Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies*, no. 3 (2016): 123–142.

80 XIAOHUA ZHAO, "A Study of the Dispute Between the Ascetic Faction and the Josephite Faction in Russian History", *Russian Studies*, no. 1 (2013): 147–164.

in mid-17<sup>th</sup> century Russia.<sup>81</sup> Wei'an Cao and Qinqin Yu (于芹芹) discuss the emergence of the Old Believers and their impact on the development of the Russian capitalist economy.<sup>82</sup> Guiju Dai looks at the reasons why Old Believers became the traditional folk of the Orthodox Christians of Russia.<sup>83</sup> Chunlei Guo corrects Chinese scholars' misunderstandings of the two terms "Popovtsy" and "Bezpovovtsy". He also discusses the relationship between the Old Believers and the Romanov dynasty.<sup>84</sup> Boling Liu (刘博玲) et al. analyze the controversy between the Nikon's Church reforms and the internal thought of the Russian Old Believers.<sup>85</sup>

#### (IV) THE COSSACKS

The Cossacks were an important subject of interest during Muscovite Russia. *Surviving Ukrainian Cossacks: From Autonomy to Integration into Russia*, by Xuefang Zhou regards the formation of the Ukrainian Cossacks as a quest for freedom and equality. The autonomous regions of the Ukrainian Cossacks were once caught between the four powers of Poland, the Grand Principality of Moscow, the Crimean Khanate and the Ottoman Empire, until their autonomy was revoked by Catherine II in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. But in both Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union, Ukraine was the most separatist nation, always striving to establish an independent state.<sup>86</sup>

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- 81 YAN JIN, "The Key to Solving the 'Russian Mystery': the 'Split Movement' in the History of Russian Thought", *The Journal of Humanities*, no. 1 (2010): 20–30; YAN JIN, "Wanderers in a Vast Land: Another Discussion of the 'Schismatic Movement' in Russian History", *Social Sciences Forum*, no. 1 (2011): 4–17.
- 82 WEI'AN CAO, QINQIN YU, "Old Believers and the Development of the Russian Capitalist Economy", *Journal of Shaanxi Normal University*, no. 4 (2012): 113–118.
- 83 GUIJU DAI, "Traditional Folk Orthodox Christians of Russia: Old Believers", *Religious Philosophy* 39 (2007): 1–13. [https://doi.org/10.6309/JORP.200703\\_\(39\).0001](https://doi.org/10.6309/JORP.200703_(39).0001)
- 84 CHUNLEI GUO, "The Old Believers and the Romanov Dynasty", *Academic Journal of Russian Studies*, no. 5 (2020): 122–136.; CHUNLEI GUO, "The Correctness of the Translation of Russian Old Believers", *China Social Sciences Today*, 2018-09-18(004); CHUNLEI GUO, "Why the Russian Old Believers Moved to Bulgaria", *Chinese Social Sciences Today*, 2017-07-31(005).
- 85 BOLING LIU, "Experimental Discussion on the Causes of the Split of the Russian Orthodox Church in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century", *Russian Studies*, no. 3 (2016): 163–183; YAYUE LIU (刘雅悦), "An Analysis of the Eschatological Ideas of Bezpovovtsy in the Russian Old Believers", *Russian Studies*, no. 4 (2017): 82–104.
- 86 XUEFANG ZHOU, *Surviving Ukrainian Cossacks: From Autonomy to Integration into Russia* (Xinzhuang: Fu Jen Catholic University Press, 2006); XUEFANG ZHOU, "On the Emergence of the Cossacks", *Fu Jen Journal of History* 11 (2000): 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.29439/FJHJ.200006.0001>; XUEFANG ZHOU, "The Transformation of Ukrainian Cossacks' Autonomy and Society in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century", *Fu Jen Journal of History* 19 (2007): 221–280. <https://doi.org/10.29439/FJHJ.200707.000>

Sumei Yang (杨素梅)'s work *The History of the Russian Cossacks Explained* is an exhaustive study of the historical development of the Russian Cossacks and their socio-cultural transmutations. It systematically analyzes the role and function of the Cossacks in the historical development of Russia. Taking the typical Don and Ukrainian Cossacks as the main subjects of study, this book presents a historical picture of the Cossacks from their origins to their development, growth, demise, and revival. It also provides an in-depth discussion of the origins of the Cossacks, their social attributes, and the evolution of Russian government policy towards them.<sup>87</sup>

#### (V) RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN RELATIONS

The Russian-Ukrainian relationship is probably one of the most complex and tangled relationships Russia has with other countries. Zhonghai Li (李中海) and Guoju Liu discuss the origins of the terms “Rus” and “Ukraine” respectively.<sup>88</sup> In her book *A Study of Russia-Ukraine Relations after the Dissolution of the Soviet Union*, Lihua Shen (沈莉华) devotes a chapter to the discussion of the historical origins of the Russo-Ukrainian feud and writes several essays on *The Treaty of Pereyaslav*, which is of great importance in Russian-Ukrainian relations.<sup>89</sup> There is also one complete chapter in Qingping Wang (王庆平)'s work *A Study of Russian-Ukrainian Relations* which traces the origins of Russian-Ukrainian relations.<sup>90</sup> Monographs on Ukraine like Yunzhong Zhao (赵云中)'s *Ukraine: Heavy Steps in History*,

87 SUMEI YANG, *Russian Cossack History Explained* (Beijing: Science Press, 2016); SUMEI YANG, “On Russian Scholars’ Claims about Cossack Origins”, *World History*, no. 2 (2012): 118–124; SUMEI YANG, HAN GAO (高寒), “The Historical Evolution of the Russian Government’s Policy Towards the Don Cossacks”, *Russian Studies*, no. 4 (2015): 58–88; SUMEI YANG, “An Analysis of the Origins of the Cossacks and their Social Attributes: from the Perspective of Cossack Studies”, *Russian Studies*, no. 3 (2012): 90–102.

88 ZHONGHAI LI, “A Study of the Historical Title of ‘Rus’”, *Eurasian Humanities Studies*, no. 2 (2020): 31–38; GUOJU LIU, “The Historical Origin of the Name ‘Ukraine’”, *Chinese Social Sciences Today*, 2017-07-11(004).

89 LIHUA SHEN, *A Study of Russia-Ukraine Relations Following the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Harbin: Heilongjiang University Press, 2017); LIHUA SHEN, “An Interpretation of the Historical Feud Between Russia and Ukraine”, *Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies*, no. 1 (2013): 62–69; LIHUA SHEN, “The Historical Causes of East-West Strife in Ukraine”, *Guizhou Social Sciences* 10 (2013): 138–141. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1002-6924.2013.10.027>; LIHUA SHEN, “The Treaty of Pereyaslav and its Legacy”, *The Northern Forum*, no. 6 (2012): 65–70. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1000-3541.2012.06.014>; LIHUA SHEN, “Re-Conceptualization of the Treaty of Pereyaslav”, *Guizhou Social Sciences*, no. 6 (2020): 62–69. <https://doi.org/10.13713/j.cnki.cssci.2020.06.009>

90 QINGPING WANG, *A Study of Russian-Ukrainian Relations* (Harbin: Heilongjiang University Press, 2013).

Chengzong Wang (王称宗)'s *History of Ukraine* and Yi Wen (闻一)'s *Ukraine: Janus in the Smoke of Gunpowder*, deal with Russian-Ukrainian relations in this period.<sup>91</sup> Xuefang Zhou examines the debate over the pursuit of Ukrainian independence, or betrayal, from the standpoints of Mazepa and Peter I, respectively.<sup>92</sup>

#### (VI) RURAL COMMUNES AND SERFDOM

Ailin Luo has long been involved in the study of Russian rural communes and serfdom. His work *A Study of Russian Rural Communes in the Late Feudal Period (1649–1861)* is an important work on this subject. This book reviews the evolution of the Russian rural commune and the types of rural communes in the aforementioned period. It focuses on organizational structure, the taxation system, the land system, social functions and internal social division within the territorial rural communes. It explores the behavioral mechanisms of the rural commune and the reasons for its vitality and offers a tentative analysis of the impact of the rural commune system on the psychology of the Russian peasantry and the development of Russian society.<sup>93</sup> He has also published several papers on the origins, nature and impact of Russia's rural communes.<sup>94</sup>

Based on his in-depth study of Russian rural communes and serfdom, Wei'an Cao further summarized the formation and characteristics of Russian serfdom, pointing out that serfdom was the product of a combination of "serfdom" imposed by feudal lords and "serfdom laws"

91 YUNZHONG ZHAO, *Ukraine: Heavy Steps in History* (Shanghai: East China Normal University Press, 2005); CHENGZONG WANG, *History of Ukraine* (Taipei: Sanmin Book Co, 2006); YI WEN, *Ukraine: Janus in the Smoke of Gunpowder* (Beijing: China CITIC Press, 2016)

92 XUEFANG ZHOU, "The Struggle for Ukrainian Independence: The Views of Mazepa and Peter I", *Fu Jen Journal of History* 17 (2006): 139–187. <https://doi.org/10.29439/FJHJ.200611.0002>

93 AILIN LUO, *A Study of Rural Communes in Late Feudal Russia (1649–1861)* (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2007).

94 AILIN LUO, "On the Terms of Russian Sel'skaia Obshchina (Village Commune)", *Journal of Southwest Minzu University*, no. 9 (2004): 355–359. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1004-3926.2004.09.096>; AILIN LUO, "The Russian Rural Commune and the Tradition of Egalitarianism", *Journal of Guangxi Normal University*, no. 4 (2005): 139–143; AILIN LUO, "The Mir Assembly and Farmer Autonomy", *Journal of Guangxi Normal University*, no. 4 (2007): 99–104. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1001-6597.2007.04.022>; AILIN LUO, "The Russian Rural Commune and Peasants' Military Service", *Journal of Historical Science*, no. 11 (2007): 69–75. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.0583-0214.2007.11.007>; AILIN LUO, "A Probe into the Impact of the Village Community System on Russian Society", *Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies*, no. 4 (2008): 74–80. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1671-8461.2008.04.014>

enacted by the state.<sup>95</sup> Guangxiang Zhang has reviewed the debates among Russian scholars on the history of peasant serfdom in Russia, pointing out that the debates focus on three aspects: (1) whether the serfdom of the peasantry was established through legal or non-legal means, (2) the role of state legislation in strengthening serfdom in the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and (3) the underlying causes of the serfdom of the peasantry.<sup>96</sup> Guimin Xu (许桂敏) provides a detailed analysis of the characteristics of feudal land tenure patterns in Novgorod in the 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>97</sup> Yan Jin provides an overview of developments in Russian scholarship on the history of peasantry, while Xinyi Guo and Xingjie Zhang (张兴洁) examine the status of women in traditional Russian society in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>98</sup>

### Imperial Russia (the 18<sup>th</sup> Century)

Throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, as nations around the globe developed at ever-increasing rates, the reforms introduced by tsars such as Peter I and Catherine II greatly enhanced the Russian Empire's position in the world. Shiguo Zhao and Ziqiang Liu (刘自强) analyze in comparative perspective how Russia, faced with the challenge of the Western European powers in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, leapt to become a world empire alongside Britain and France by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>99</sup>

#### (I) THE TSARS OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE AND THEIR REFORMS

The most notable of the Russian tsars was none other than Peter I. Jianhua Zhang's work, *The Origins of the Red Storm: Peter the Great and His Empire*,

95 WEI'AN CAO, "The Formation and Characteristics of Serfdom in Russia. *Journal of Shaanxi Normal University*, no. 4 (2000): 163–168.

96 GUANGXIANG ZHANG, "The Debate among Russian Scholars on the History of Peasant Serfdom in Russia", *Jilin University Journal Social Sciences Edition*, no. 6 (2014): 143–154.

97 GUIMIN XU, "The Characteristics of the Form of Feudal Landholding of Novgorod in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries", *World History*, no. 3 (2000): 45–49. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1002-011X.2000.03.006>

98 YAN JIN, "A History of Studies of the Russian Peasantry and its Prospects", *Russian Studies*, no. 2 (2002): 88–92. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1009-721X.2002.02.018>; YAN JIN, "The Culture of the Russian Rural Commune and its National Identity", *The Journal of Humanities*, no. 4 (2006): 97–103. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.0447-662X.2006.04.017>; XINYI GUO, XINGJIE ZHANG, "The Status of Women in Traditional Russian Society Based on the 16<sup>th</sup>-Century *Domostroy*", *Russian Journal of Language and Literature*, no. 12 (2010): 117–130. <https://doi.org/10.29994/EGYWSB.201112.0011>

99 SHIGUO ZHAO, ZIQIANG LIU, "Russia in the Developing World of the 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> Centuries: Challenges and Solutions", *Journal of Social Science of Hunan Normal University*, no. 5 (2001): 116–121. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1000-2529.2001.05.024>

is an account of Peter the Great's life with a commentary on the historical legacy of his empire.<sup>100</sup> The book *Peter I's Reforms: Russia's Attempt at Europeanization* by He Wu (吴贺) and *Peter the Great's Reformation*, edited by Jinpeng Chen (陈金鹏), recount the course of Peter I's reforms.<sup>101</sup> Chinese scholars have also written and edited several biographies of Peter I.<sup>102</sup> Research papers are mainly on Peter the Great's reforms.<sup>103</sup>

The first and second chapters of the book *Reform in Modern Russian History* by Tao Huifen (陶惠芬) focus on the reforms of Peter I and Catherine II, discussing the reformative ideas and initiatives of the two tsars and analyzing the class nature, goals, practices, and successes and failures of modern Russian reform.<sup>104</sup> Jianhua Zhang's book, *Imperial Storm: Russia on the Eve of the Great Reform*, focuses on the Russian Empire at its peak (1762–1855), examining the evolution of its internal structure, change in the rulers' philosophy of governance, change in imperial ideology, and the transformation of Russia's national and ethnic image, thus examining the many critical issues and challenges facing the Russian Empire on the eve of the Great Reform. *Imperial Illusions: The Changing Image of the Russian State and the Vision of Others*, also written by Zhang, deals with outside perspectives on the Russian Empire from 1721 to 1917.<sup>105</sup> Shiguo Zhao and Xinsheng Ge (葛新生)'s biographies of the Russian royal family and the tsars are other notable results by Chinese scholars over the past two decades.<sup>106</sup>

100 JIANHUA ZHANG, *The Origins of the Red Storm: Peter the Great and His Empire* (Beijing: China City Press, 2002).

101 HE WU, *Peter I's Reforms: Russia's attempt at Europeanization* (Beijing: Beijing Normal University Press, 2018); JINPENG CHEN (ed.), *Peter the Great's Reformation* (Jinan: Shandong Science and Technology Press, 2017).

102 XIUZHANG ZHANG (张秀章), *A Biography of Peter the Great* (Changchun: Northern Women's and Children's Publishing House, 2000); BANGXUE XU (徐帮学) (ed.), *The Powerful Tsar: Peter the Great* (Changchun: Jilin Education Publishing House, 2010).

103 XUEFANG ZHOU, "Opponents to Peter the Great's Reforms: A Perspective on Religious Belief", *Fu Jen Journal of History* 26 (2011): 39–82. <https://doi.org/10.29439/FJHJ.201103.0002>; LIKE DU (杜立克), "On the 'Europeanization' and 'Authoritarianism' Reforms by Emperor Peter I of Russia", *Journal of Inner Mongolia University*, no. 4 (2009): 75–81.

104 HUIFEN TAO, *Reform in Modern Russian History* (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2007).

105 JIANHUA ZHANG, *Imperial Storm: Russia on the Eve of the Great Reform* (Beijing University Press, 2016); JIANHUA ZHANG, *Imperial Illusions: The Changing Image of the Russian State and the Vision of Others* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2019).

106 SHIGUO ZHAO, KE YANG (杨可), *Biographies of the Russian Tsars* (Changsha: Hunan Normal University Press, 2001); XINSHENG GE, *The Tsars' Ambition: The Russian Royal Family* (Beijing: China Youth Publishing House, 2012).



In addition, there are some research papers examining “enlightened despotism” and reform of women’s education under Catherine II.<sup>107</sup>

## (II) HIERARCHY AND ARISTOCRACY

There has been much debate about when the Russian hierarchy was formed. Guangxiang Zhang provides an overview of the research findings and debates in Russian historiography on the issue of hierarchy and class.<sup>108</sup> Wei’an Cao and Hua Xu (徐华) have discussed the formation, “liberation”, as well as the autonomy of the Russian aristocracy as a social estate (сословное управление) in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>109</sup> Jianhua Zhang points out the political, economic, and cultural privileges enjoyed by the aristocracy as the ruling class in Imperial Russia, which was the birthplace of modern Russian intellectuals and progressive thought.<sup>110</sup>

Zonghua Zhang (张宗华) ’s *Reform and Aristocracy in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Russia* is the only monograph on the study of the Russian aristocracy. In this book and related essays, Zhang systematically examines the origins and development of the Russian aristocracy, 18<sup>th</sup>-century reform (1689–1796), political reform and the aristocracy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and economic reform and the aristocracy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, providing a comprehensive account of social change and a range of issues concerning the emergence and development of the hierarchy of the aristocracy in 18<sup>th</sup> century Russia.<sup>111</sup>

107 JIANHUA ZHANG, “Catherine II’s Strategy of Governance”, *Russian Literature & Arts*, no. 4 (2001): 68–71; YUNLONG WANG (王云龙), “An Analysis of Enlightened Despotism: A Review of Catherine II’s *Guidebook*”, *Collected Papers of History Studies*, no. 4 (2001): 64–70. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.0559-8095.2001.04.010>; CHUANYU ZHU, “A Preliminary Study on Empress Catherine II’s Reform of Women’s Education”, *Russian Studies*, no. 5 (2014): 150–171.

108 GUANGXIANG ZHANG, “A Review of the Research of Russian Historiography on Hierarchy and Class”, *Guizhou Social Sciences*, no. 12 (2015): 56–65.

109 HUA XU, WEI’AN CAO, “The Autonomy of the Russian Aristocracy as a Social Estate in Russian History”, *Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies*, no. 3 (2016): 107–122; HUA XU, WEI’AN CAO, “On the Formation of the Russian Aristocratic Hierarchy and the ‘Freedom and Liberation’ of the Aristocracy”, *Journal of Shaanxi Normal University*, no. 3 (2015): 108–119.

110 JIANHUA ZHANG, “The Origin, Formation, and Political Awakening of the Russian Aristocratic Strata”, *Theory Journal*, no. 6 (2008): 99–104. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1002-3909.2008.06.025>

111 ZONGHUA ZHANG, *Reform and the Aristocracy in 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Russia* (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2013); ZONGHUA ZHANG, “Socio-Psychological Characteristics of the Russian Aristocracy in the Mid- to Late 18<sup>th</sup> Century”, *Journal of Northwest Normal University*, no. 6 (2007): 115–120. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1001-9162.2007.06.024>; ZONGHUA ZHANG, “Features and Effects of the System of Selecting Officials in 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Russia”, *Collected Papers of History Studies*, no. 6 (2009): 77–83.

### (III) MODERNIZATION AND PEASANT ISSUES

The confrontation and contradiction between westernized reforms and traditional society is best demonstrated in Russia in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. Previously, Peter I's reforms were often seen as the starting point of Russian modernization, although this view has been revisited. Hai Yao provides an overview of Russian scholarly research on the modernization of Russia.<sup>112</sup> Jianhua Zhang points out that Alexander II's reforms were the true beginning of Russian modernization, a view shared by a growing number of Chinese scholars.<sup>113</sup>

Guangxiang Zhang and his team have long focused on study of the economic and social history of Imperial Russia. They have systematically studied the characteristics of the disintegration of the Russian feudal economy and the origins of capitalism, based on an overview of the research findings of Russian scholars on the formation of a unified Russian market and the transition from a feudal to a capitalist society.<sup>114</sup> Zhang's work *Urbanization in Russia from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* is an important work on the economic and social history of Imperial Russia. It focuses on the process of Russian urbanization and its characteristics in the 18<sup>th</sup> to

112 HAI YAO, "The Research of Russian Scholarship on the Modernization of Russia", *World History*, no. 4 (2014): 7–12.

113 JIANHUA ZHANG, *A Study of Russia's Approach to Modernization* (Beijing: Beijing Normal University Press, 2002).

114 GUANGXIANG ZHANG, "Studies on the Emergence of the Unified Market in Russia", *World History*, no. 3 (2001): 90–101. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1002-011X.2001.03.011>; PEIYONG DENG, "Re-Discussion of the Formation of the Unified Market in Russia: Also of the Characteristics of Russian Economic Development in the Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century", *Economic and Social History Review*, no.1 (2021): 65–82; GUANGXIANG ZHANG, WEIPING DING (丁卫平), "The Commentary of Russian Historiography on the Transition from Feudal to Capitalist Society", *Northeast Asia Forum*, no. 4 (2000): 73–76; GUANGXIANG ZHANG, WENSHAN LIU (刘文山), "Physical Geography Factors and Features of Feudal Economic Development in Russia", *Journal of Northeast Normal University*, no. 6 (2000): 50–55. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1001-6201.2000.06.011>; GUANGXIANG ZHANG, WENSHAN LIU, "Features of the Collapse of the Russian Feudal Economy and the Origin of Capitalism", *Changbai Journal*, no. 5 (2000): 76–80. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1003-5478.2000.05.025>; GUANGXIANG ZHANG, "The Characteristics of the Origin of Agricultural Capitalist Relations in Russia", *Journal of Henan Normal University*, no. 6 (2001): 63–67. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1000-2359.2001.06.017>; GUANGXIANG ZHANG, LUYI FAN (范璐祎), "Water Transport and Economic Development in Europe and Russia from the Second Half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century to the Beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Case Analysis of the Volga-Kama Waterway", *Guizhou Social Sciences*, no. 4 (2012): 100–108. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1002-6924.2012.04.017>; GUANGXIANG ZHANG, YUNQI HUI (回云崎), "Technological Innovations in the Ferrous Metallurgy of the Urals in Russia from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century", *Social Science Front*, no. 3 (2017): 96–102.

19<sup>th</sup> century, including the separation of Russian cities and villages, the transformation of marriage and population reproduction patterns, the demographic process in Russian cities, social structure and social mobility in Russia, the social structure of the Russian urban population, the social mobility of the Russian urban population, the development of the urban economy and the changing structure of civic employment, the industrial and commercial situation and the socio-occupational structure of urban and non-urban centers in Russia, the hierarchical-class structure of Russian cities, and the Russian peasant workforce and the urbanization process. Using a combination of macro and micro studies, Zhang regards urban studies as an entry point to a deepening of the study of modern Russian history in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>115</sup> Xiaohui Zhou, Zhenwen Li (李振文), Honggang Liang and Liping Lei have discussed in depth issues such as European Russian peasant economies, the main forms of exploitation of serfdom and its trends, taxation systems and the economic modernization of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>116</sup>

#### (IV) WESTERNIZATION, EXPANSION AND FOREIGN RELATIONS

The westernization reforms of the Russian Empire are closely linked to and complemented by foreign expansion. He Wu examines the British mathematician and navigator Farquharson, who founded a vocational school in Russia under Peter, I and discusses his important contributions to the development of modern Russian science. She also examines the “soldiers’ wives” and rural military service families in mid-18<sup>th</sup> and mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century Russia to show how tradition and westernization met in the

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115 GUANGXIANG ZHANG, *Studies on Russian Urbanization in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Changchun: Jilin People's Publishing House, 2006); GUANGXIANG ZHANG, “Direct Reasons for Slow Urbanization in Late Feudal Russia”, *World History*, no. 6 (2002): 69–81. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1002-011X.2002.06.008>; GUANGXIANG ZHANG, “The Indirect Reason for the Slow Urbanization in Late Feudal Russia”, *World History*, no. 6 (2003): 85–93. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1002-011X.2003.06.008>

116 XIAOHUI ZHOU, “A Study of Working Peasants in European Russia from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> to mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century”, *History Teaching*, no. 12 (2008): 66–70; ZHENWEN LI, “The Main Forms of Exploitation of Serfdom in Russia and its Trend from the Late 18<sup>th</sup> to the Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century”, *Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies*, no. 2 (2017): 125–139; ZHENWEN LI, “A New Theory on the Intensity of Exploitation of Russian Serfdom from the Late 18<sup>th</sup> to the Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century”, *Journal of Historical Science*, no. 2 (2017): 92–101; HONGGANG LIANG, “A Study on the Reform of the Russian Tax System in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century”, *Jiangnan Tribune*, no. 12 (2019): 93–96; LIPING LEI, “Russia's Historical Traditions and Soviet Modernization”, *Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies*, no. 3 (2004): 68–74. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1671-8461.2004.03.011>

Russian countryside.<sup>117</sup> Shifeng Zhao (赵世锋)'s book *Russian Freemasonry and Modern Political Change in Russia (from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century)*, contains a chapter on freemasonry and Russian politics during the Enlightenment, which sheds light on the impact of the "Masonic Enlightenment" on Russian politics.<sup>118</sup>

Chinese scholars have paid close attention to Russia's colonization of the East and the development of Siberia. Ying Shen (沈影)'s book, *The History of Russian Territorial Expansion*, contains chapters on the boundaries of the Kievan Rus' state, the transformation of the borders of the Grand Principality of Moscow, the establishment of the Russian Empire and the expansion of its territory.<sup>119</sup> One chapter of Xiaoju Wang's work, *Research on Development and Immigration in Eastern Russia*, discusses early migration and development in eastern Russia and discusses Siberian exile during the Tsarist era.<sup>120</sup> Qiao Li (李巧)'s dissertation examines the Russian colonization of Siberia from 1581, when it crossed the Urals, to the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, pointing out that the fur trade was an important driving force behind Russia's continued expansion to the east in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>121</sup>

External expansion deepened Russia's engagement with the West and the world. The book *Russia in the Eyes of Western Europeans in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries* by Chuanyu Zhu et al., introduces the main elements of and views represented in Western Europeans' perceptions of Russia in the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and discusses the impact of these perceptions on both sides, starting from the basis of the formation of Western Europeans' view of Russia, the process of that formation, and the image of Russia in the eyes of Western Europeans.<sup>122</sup> Jianhua Zhang and Xiaowei Pan (潘晓伟)

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117 HE WU, YUAN LANG (琅元), "Henry Farquharson and the Development of Modern Science in Russia", *Historical Research*, no. 3 (2011): 181–188; HE WU, "The Exchange between Tradition and Westernization in Rural Russia: 'Soldiers' wives' and Rural Families of Military Service in Russia from the Mid-18<sup>th</sup> to the Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century", *Journal of Historical Science*, no. 10 (2012): 84–91.

118 SHIFENG ZHAO, *Russian Freemasonry and Modern Political Changes in Russia (18<sup>th</sup> to the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century)* (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2011).

119 YING SHEN, *The History of Russian Territorial Expansion* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2013).

120 XIAOJU WANG, *Research on Development and Immigration in Eastern Russia* (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2003); XIAOJU WANG, "Siberian Exile in the Tsar's Time", *Siberian Studies*, no. 3 (2004): 55–60. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1008-0961.2004.03.013>

121 QIAO LI, "The Fur Trade and the Siberian Colonization Movement in 17<sup>th</sup>-Century Russia", *World History*, no.1 (2021): 50–66.

122 CHUANYU ZHU, et al. *Russia in the Eyes of Western Europeans in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Chengdu: Southwest Jiaotong University Press, 2020); CHUANYU ZHU, "A Study of Western

focus on accounts of Korea in 17<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century Russian literature and present early perceptions of the Russians in Korea.<sup>123</sup> Yuanyuan Xing (邢媛媛) has published several articles on early Japanese-Russian relations, as well as on the perception of Poland by Russians in authority in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>124</sup> Laiyi Zhang (张来仪) has reviewed the history of Russia's interaction with the Islamic world.<sup>125</sup> Yuchun Guo (郭宇春) and Liying Shao (邵丽英) have researched Russian property in Jerusalem and the Russian Jewish question retrospectively.<sup>126</sup>

Sino-Russian relations, an important element of Russia's foreign relations, has been fruitfully researched in China on topics that include early Orthodox missions, the formation of the Sino-Russian border, and early Sino-Russian trade. Most scholars, however, focus on the history of the Qing Dynasty, or look at it through the lens of the history of international relations.

## CONCLUSIONS

The general trend in the study of Russian history in China since 2000 lies in a move away from the influence of Soviet historiography to a greater diversity of theories and approaches. In the study of Russian history from

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Europeans' Outlook on Russia in the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> Centuries", *Journal of World Peoples Studies*, no. 2 (2017): 100–110.

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the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Chinese scholars have paid close attention to developments in Russian historiography. Meanwhile, the historical point of view on civilization has received more attention, especially in the understanding of the Ancient Rus' civilization, the Principality of Moscow and the Russian Empire. Research themes are more varied, focusing not only on the traditional study of Russian political and economic history, but also on more microscopic social and cultural history, as well as the major issues affecting the development of Russian history, such as autocracy, the Orthodox Church, serfdom and rural communes. Research on these topics in China has expanded and deepened. It should be noted, though, that Chinese scholars' focus on early Russian history remains relatively traditional and conventional. There is a lack of research from the perspective of global history, gender history and the history of historiography.

It is difficult for Chinese scholars to use historical materials such as primary and archival documents in the study of early Russian history due to the limited number of researchers familiar with ancient Russian historical texts. More importantly, many scholars are more focused on the study of recent Russian issues, and often only peripherally trace history back to the Russian Empire. Study of Russian history from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century is, therefore, relatively weak. Even in the annual meetings held by the Chinese Research Association of World Ancient and Medieval History and the China Association of Modern World History, scholars on Russian history are rare and hardly seen presenting their research results. Only a few Chinese scholars in the related field choose to write in English or Russian when they publish their academic findings due to their limited language proficiency. And there is even more room for Chinese scholars to participate in international academic exchange. There are many fascinating issues in early Russian history that deserve to be studied and the results of such work often contribute to a deeper understanding of Russia's past, present and future. We would wish more Chinese scholars to devote themselves to the study of early Russian history with their intellect and affection.

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