English Summaries for Feature Articles.

Кравцова Е.С. Обручение с Бедностью? Францисканцы, публичная власть и фискальная политика. С. 1-12.

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While the official ideology of the Franciscan order has always been the cult of poverty, it is already in the 13th century that the order had become actively involved into state tax collection, as money for crusades were needed. Apparently, these activities would attract criticisms, like that from Matthew of Paris who described Franciscan friars as avarice-driven shape-shifters. To take part in what so clearly contradicted the ideal of poverty, Franciscans must have worked out some special notions allowing them to do so.

The paper presents an analysis of three official vita of St. Francis that had one after another appeared in the course of the 13th century, with specific attention to the vocabulary of the Latin text, the use of finance-related terms and of rhetoric of each vita. The first two texts were composed by Thomas of Celano, the third belongs to Bonaventure. While the first Celano text is moderately anti-monetary, using financial metaphors for spiritual wealth, the second one is militantly anti-monetary, calling money stercus (“dung”), venenum (“venom”) etc. Kravtsova argues that the second text is a reaction against the growing involvement of Franciscans in financial matters, and that the third life, by Bonaventure, is aimed at reconciling theory with practice: while it retains most of the anti-monetary rhetoric of the second Celano text, it also leaves some loopholes allowing Franciscans to deal with money.

Keywords: 13th century; Bonaventure; commonplace; fiscal policy; Francis of Assisi; Franciscan order; hagiography; Medieval economy; Medieval ideology; sainthood; Thomas of Celano
While the fact that *The Travels of Marco Polo* contain some information on Russia is well-known by Russians, all extant Russian editions of the book are based on the Ramusio version where the chapter on Russia is brief. The longer Z version discovered in late 1920s, which has extra information on Russian traditions, has been typically overlooked (perhaps for the reason that it has never been translated into Russian as of presently).

Among other additional details, this version has a description of Russian feasts held collectively on special occasions. A juxtaposition of Polo’s record and evidence from both Russian historical sources and ethnography allows one to suggest that Polo describes the well-attested custom of *bratchina* (‘brotherhood feast’) that was one of the important instruments of social interaction in Old Rus. Polo refers to the feasts as to being prepared and held collectively on special occasions and having a kind of ‘president’ who would see to it that everyone behaved properly. This fits into what is known of *bratchinas* – there indeed was a president (*starosta pirovoy*).

Even more strikingly, the description of feasts uses the Slavonic word *straviza*, the term for the ritual of drinking to someone’s health, which is still not totally out of use in modern Russian. The ritual of *straviza* (a modern English transliteration would be *zdravitsa*) used to be part of *bratchina*, and the word itself is attested in other Western travel diaries.

Indeed, the question whether the description of Russian feasting practices belonged to the original Polo text or was added later by someone else, cannot be solved conclusively. Even if written by Polo himself, the account might well have been based on hearsay rather than on actual witnessing, since he likely had not visited Russia personally. However, this does not diminish the value of the evidence dating back to at least the 15th century, given that data on social practices of non-aristocratic Russians of that time is scarce.

*Keywords:* beer; brewing; feast; feasting practices; Marco Polo; Old Rus; toasting


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In the late history of the Novgorod Republic, the city commune apparently adopted the title of gospodin Veliky Novgorod (‘Lord Novgorod the Great’) or even gospodin gosudar’ Veliky Novgorod (‘Lord [and] Sovereign Novgorod the Great’). Using the titles normally applied to individual persons (such as monarchs) for the city as a whole is highly uncommon and must have had special reasons.

Nesin traces the emergence of the title gospodin and suggests that it evolved from common forms of addressing the Novgorodian posadnik (burgomaster) and archbishop who would be naturally addressed as ‘lords’ and who were the highest authorities of the city. The title would be then extended to the whole city in order to emphasise that it was the community and not this or that specific individual who had the sovereignty and the power of decision-making. By the 1470s, this point was further clarified by introducing the nomination gosudar’. These innovation seem to have been linked with the growing political pressure from Moscow whose Grand Duke Ivan III sought to put an end to Novgorod’s independence (which he finally did in 1478).

Keywords: charter; city commune; communities; forms of address; Novgorod the Great; Novgorod Republic; Old Rus; title
The (in)famous episode of public beard-cutting performed by Peter I on his boyars in 1698 has paradoxically received little scholarly attention, its meaning being taken for granted. Apparently, long beards were a tradition officially approved by Church in the pre-Petrine Russia, who discouraged men from shaving (though there is at least some evidence that not all male Russians would conform and that in some contexts, such as military, beardlessness could be perceived positively). Peter’s legal prescriptions that aristocrats should shave off their beards are also well documented. Thus, Peter’s ‘debearding’ act has been seen by default as an emblem of progress forced upon the resistant conservative aristocracy – epitomizing the struggle of the ‘new’ against the ‘old’.

What has been overlooked, however, is who exactly suffered the beard-shearing ritual. The boyars whose beards were cut off first and whose names are documented, were not Peter’s opponents at all, but rather his closest companions, Shein and Romodanovsky. One has to look for some other meaning behind Peter’s actions.

The author suggests that beard-shearing was intended as a sort of initiation into European culture, and that it could have been indirectly modelled after the rite of circumcision which Peter actually observed in Amsterdam (of which documentary evidence survives), while associations with the monastic tonsure were also evoked.

Keywords: 18th century; beard; circumcision; initiation rite; Peter I

The corpus of texts known under the umbrella term ‘Irish sagas’ has a long and controversial history of academic research; opinions what an ‘Irish saga’ is widely vary. In her article, Tatiana Mikhailova point out that, for understanding what exactly, say, Táin Bó Cúailnge is, one should clarify what we mean by ‘epic’, ‘folklore’, ‘literary work’ or ‘authorship’. These notions have been often used axiomatically, without giving a thought how actual textual practices of the Middle Ages fit into them. Thus, orality has been typically equated with folklore, yet the key definitive trait of folklore is assumed to be its anonymous nature, while Old Irish oral tradition had indeed a very clear notion of authorship.

Keywords: epic; Irish sagas; orality; Táin Bó Cúailnge