BOOK REVIEWS

«*Mesta pamiati*» *Rusi kontsa XV – serediny XVIII v.*, ed. A.V. Doronin, Moscow: Politicheskaja entsiklopedija, 2019. 518 p. (*Post-Drevniaia Rus': u istokov natsii Novogo vremeni*). ISBN 978-5-8243-2351-1

At the initiative of the German Historical Institute in Moscow and the Gerda Henkel Foundation, an international scientific research project started in 2015 called 'East Slavs in the Search for New Supra-Regional Identities (Late 15th to Mid-18th Centuries) in the Context of the Birth of Contemporary European Nations'. In an article that appeared in 2017, the project leader and coordinator Andrej Doronin formulated the main objectives of the project, and identified a fundamental question: 'is it possible [...] in the context of the late 15th to the 18th century, to talk about the start of an East Slavic modern national self-awareness?'¹ Four international scientific conferences were held in order to answer this question, with academics from Belarus, Canada, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Ukraine participating. Three collections of articles based on these conferences have already seen the light of day, with a collective monograph due out soon.

The beginning of modern national self-awareness was analysed in article anthologies within the framework of the East Slavic (dis)unity discourse.² Scientists attempted to determine its beginnings, by critically evaluating historic narratives about *rus'*, and by reconstructing *rus'ian* sites of memory.³ Doronin understands modern East Slavic national self-awareness within the framework of the ethno-symbolism nationalism paradigm; therefore, he sees it as a dynamic idea, constructed in early

¹ A.V. Doronin, 'Vostochnye slaviane v poiskakh nadregional'nykh identichnostei (konets XV – seredina XVIII v.) v kontekste zarozhdeniia modernykh natsii v Evrope. Ideia proekta', *Drevniaia Rus' posle Drevnei Rusi: diskurs vostochnoslavianskogo (ne)edinstva*, ed. A.V. Doronin (Moscow, 2017), p. 13.

² *Drevniaia Rus' posle Drevnei Rusi: diskurs vostochnoslavianskogo (ne)edinstva*, ed. A.V. Doronin (Moscow, 2017).

³ *Narrativy rusi kontsa XV – serediny XVIII v.: v poiskakh svoei istorii*, ed. A.V. Doronin (Moscow, 2017); «*Mesta pamiati*» *Rusi kontsa XV – serediny XVIII v.*, ed. A.V. Doronin (Moscow, 2019).

modern times by local ethno-cultural communities, based on historical memory, inhabited territory, language, traditions, and a system of moral norms.⁴ It appears that by following Anthony D. Smith,⁵ one of the theorists of this paradigm, he 'discovers' an ethnic community (from the French word *ethnie*) unifying Eastern Slavs: *rus'*.⁶ Doronin suggests using the term *rusia* as a generalising ethnonym relating to the *Rus'* region and the institutions that functioned there (such as faith, the Church, language, dynasties, etc.).⁷ According to the project leader and the editor of the anthology, this kind of ethnonym semantics should allow us to distinguish it from the meaning behind the contemporary (modern) term *ruskii*. On the other hand, the authors of the texts were free to use terms identifying and stemming from *rus'* that are commonly accepted in their national historiographies (such as *Rus'-Ukraina*; *ruskii*; *rus'kii*; even *litvinskaia natsiia*; *litvin*; *rus' litovskaia* and others).⁸

In this review, I would like to discuss a cross-section of sites of memory from the perspective of research being conducted in Lithuania. The sites of memory concept recommended by Pierre Nora has been alive in the collective memory research discourse for over a decade; however, according to Doronin, it has not received proper attention in national East European historiography.⁹ Perhaps this is why some of the

⁴A.V. Doronin, 'Vostochnye slaviane v poiskakh nadregional'nykh identichnostei (konets XV – seredina XVIII v.) v kontekste zarozhdeniia modernykh natsii v Evrope. Ideia proekta', pp. 22–23.

⁵Nothing specific can be said about how the formulated research model relates to works by nationalism theorists, as Doronin himself discusses it only briefly. Reference is made only to the research by Dieter Langewiesche. Ibidem, pp. 22–23; D. Langewiesche, 'Nation, Imperium und Kriegserfahrungen', *Kriegserfahrungen – Krieg und Gesellschaft in der Neuzeit: Neue Horizonte der Forschung*, ed. G. Schild, A. Schilling (Paderborn, 2009), pp. 213–230; Idem, *Nation, Nationalismus, Nationalstaat: in Deutschland und Europa* (München, 2000). For more about A.D. Smith's theory, see: A.D. Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach* (London, New York, 2009).

⁶A.V. Doronin, 'Vvedenie k sborniku', *Narrativy rusi kontsa XV – serediny XVIII v.: v poiskakh svoei istorii*, pp. 5–6.

⁷The description of this ethnic community is somewhat different to that offered by Smith, who described an ethnic community as a community of people identified and defined by the people themselves, whose members share a common ancestry myth, shared memories, and one or several elements of a shared culture, including a connection to a specific territory and a feeling of solidarity, at least among its upper strata. A. D. Smith, *Ethno-symbolism and nationalism*, p. 27.

⁸A.V. Doronin, 'Vvedenie k sborniku', «*Mesta pamiati*» *Rusi kontsa XV – serediny XVIII v.*, p. 6.

⁹Ibidem, p. 13.

conference participants understood the title 'The Topography of East Slavic "Sites of Memory" in the Late 15th to the Mid-18th Centuries' (*Topografiia vostochnoslavianskikh „mest pamiati” kon. XV – ser. XVIII v.*) in a literal sense, relating issues discussed at the conference to specific objects on a geographical map. On one hand, in order to avoid this misunderstanding in the future, the project leader was forced to reject the 'topography' metaphor in the title of the anthology of articles. On the other, he uses the collection of articles itself to encourage future discussions on the theme of *rus'* sites of memory, rather than offering step-by-step directions for future research, or summarising any sort of intermediate contribution to the topic.¹⁰

The anthology of articles begins with the deliberations of Ludwik Steindorff, where the author raises the question of whether Nora's sites of memory concept can be applied to studying early modern times. Steindorff offers an answer to this question, based on a description of metonymy by the literature theorist Boris Tomashevsky.¹¹ The rest of the articles are not grouped into separate thematic, problematic or chronological blocs, so it is not always clear why particular events, phenomena, figures or concepts are analysed as *rus'* sites of memory. Regardless of this fact, the broad spectrum of themes and issues should be viewed as a strong feature of this anthology. Apart from the things that became *rus'* sites of memory, the collection also analyses sites of memory that never successfully eventuated. Aleksei Sirenov discusses the failed cult of Prince St Vladimir as the baptiser of northeast Rus', Jelena Rusina analyses a work about the Battle of Orsha that praised the victor of the battle, Konstanty Ostrogski, while Doronin presents the myth of Meshech as the ancestor of the Russians. The anthology also looks at ethnic, linguistic and religious links between Ruthenians and Lithuanians in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Vasilij Voronin, Oleg Dzeronovich, Artūras Dubonis; Gennady Saganovich); *rus'* relations between Orthodoxy and the Greek Catholic Church (Jelena Romanenko, Tatiana Oparina, Mikhail Dmitrijev, Vitalij Tkachiuk); *rus'* centres of culture and power (Jaroslav Zatyliuk, Vasilij Ulianovsky, Petr Stefanovich); the emergence of the Cossack state (Andrej Bovgir, Tatjana Tairova); and several other topics. Despite the fact that some of the co-authors of this collection of articles also refer

¹⁰ Ibidem, pp. 12–13.

¹¹ According to Steindorff, a site of memory is a metonym for the whole. In order for a site of memory to appear and be recognised as such, three factors are necessary: what is remembered, what determines the appearance of the site of memory, and those who acknowledge a particular site of memory. For more information, see: B.V. Tomaševskij, *Teoriia literatury. Poetika*, izd. 4-e (Moscow-Leningrad, 1928), p. 39.

to the insights of other theorists apart from the already-mentioned Nora (such as the collective memory approach formulated by Maurice Halbwachs, and rethought by Jan and Aleida Assmann), no attempts are made to discover or establish links with other research on sites of memory being conducted in Central Eastern Europe.

The sites of memory approach started being developed in Lithuania in the early 21st century. Alvydas Nikžentaitis used this research approach to discuss the image of Lithuania's rulers Jogaila and Vytautas.¹² Darius Staliūnas analysed the legacy of the 1863–1864 uprising in the Russian Empire that took place in the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.¹³ Darius Baronas and Dangiras Mačiulis deconstructed the history of the siege of Pilėnai Castle in Lithuania in 1336, and later legends surrounding the siege.¹⁴ In their study on the Battle of Grünwald (in Lithuanian *Žalgiris*, German *Tannenberg*, Polish *Grunwald*, Russian *Griunval'd*, Belarusian *Grunvald/Dubrouna*), Dangiras Mačiulis, Rimvydas Petrauskas and Darius Staliūnas revealed the significance of the memory of this battle in the context of the formation of modern Polish, Lithuanian and Belarusian nationalism (19th and 20th centuries), and the position the battle has acquired in Imperial Russian and Soviet ideology.¹⁵ Regardless of the fact that this research is not limited to a narrow issue in Lithuanian history, the period analysed concentrates on modern rather than early modern times.

The research studies mentioned are not the only ones presenting this theoretical approach. Scientists from Belarus, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine who have studied phenomena in the history and traditions of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania have also incorporated *rus'* into their sites of memory research.¹⁶ One of the minds behind this project, Alfredas Bumblauskas, who has revived the relevance of the ULB concept raised by Jerzy Giedroyc (Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus)¹⁷ and its impact

¹² A. Nikžentaitis, *Vytauto ir Jogailos įvaizdis Lietuvos ir Lenkijos visuomenėse* (Vilnius, 2002).

¹³ D. Staliūnas, *Savas ar svetimas paveldas? 1863–1864 m. sukilimas kaip lietuvių atminties vieta* (Vilnius, 2008).

¹⁴ D. Baronas, D. Mačiulis, *Pilėnai ir Margiris: istorija ir legenda* (Vilnius, 2010).

¹⁵ D. Mačiulis, R. Petrauskas, D. Staliūnas, *Kas laimėjo Žalgirio mūšį? Istorinio paveldo dalybos Vidurio ir Rytų Europoje* (Vilnius, 2012).

¹⁶ More information: *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštijos istorijos ir tradicijos fenomenai: tautų atminties vietos*, ed. A. Bumblauskas, G. Potašenko (Vilnius, 2013).

¹⁷ For more information, see: A. Bumblauskas, 'Aktualieji ir istoriniai Europos regionai: Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštija, ULB, Vidurio Rytų Europa', *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštijos tradicija ir tautiniai naratyvai* (Vilnius, 2009), pp. 17–37.

on today's national identities and mutual relations, also raised the issue of the 'third' member of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: Rus', Ruthenians and Kiev.¹⁸ Partly as an attempt to try to solve this problem, he and Mangirdas Bumblauskas suggest a list of sites of memory relating to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.¹⁹ In it, we can find, apart from other things, phenomena representing Ruthenian writing in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: the Lithuanian Chronicles, the Lithuanian Metrica, and the Lithuanian Statutes; Francysk Skaryna (Franciscus Skorina), the first printer in Vilnius and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and a translator of the Bible into Ruthenian; Duke Konstanty Ostrogski, the victor of the Battle of Orsha against Muscovite forces, and the founder of Orthodox Vilnius; and many others. Meanwhile, Igor Marzaliuk, Boris Cherkas, Valery Stepankov and Mirosław Nagielski conducted a cross-section analysis of Cossack culture as a site of memory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, where it is shown not only as being in conflict in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth against Lithuania and Poland, but also as one of its inseparable parts.²⁰

The sites of memory approach is not new in Lithuanian historiography; it has been developed for a number of decades already. Research not limited solely to narrow Lithuania-related issues has appeared within its orbit. Lithuanian researchers have made sites of memory research in the context of the Central Eastern Europe region relevant, and have looked at local, regional and supra-regional East Slavic identities from early modern times. We might soon see whether this research is assessed and reconsidered.

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¹⁸ A. Bumblauskas, 'Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštija – tautų atminties vieta: nuo istoriografinio mandagumo prie Septynknygės idėjos', *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštijos istorijos ir tradicijos fenomenai: tautų atminties vietos*, p. 28.

¹⁹ Ibidem, pp. 261–304.

²⁰ Ibidem, pp. 109–170.