

COMPANION TO RUSSIAN STUDIES 3

---

AN INTRODUCTION TO  
**RUSSIAN ART AND  
ARCHITECTURE**

EDITED BY

**ROBERT AUTY**

LATE PROFESSOR OF COMPARATIVE SLAVONIC PHILOLOGY  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

AND

**DIMITRI OBOLENSKY**

PROFESSOR OF RUSSIAN AND BALKAN HISTORY  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

WITH THE EDITORIAL ASSISTANCE OF  
**ANTHONY KINGSFORD**

WITH CHAPTERS BY

**ROBIN MILNER-GULLAND & JOHN BOWLT**

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE

LONDON · NEW YORK · NEW ROCHELLE

MELBOURNE · SYDNEY

COMPANION TO RUSSIAN STUDIES 3

---

AN INTRODUCTION TO  
**RUSSIAN ART AND  
ARCHITECTURE**

EDITED BY  
**ROBERT AUTY**  
LATE PROFESSOR OF COMPARATIVE SLAVONIC PHILOLOGY  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD  
AND  
**DIMITRI OBOLENSKY**  
PROFESSOR OF RUSSIAN AND BALKAN HISTORY  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD  
WITH THE EDITORIAL ASSISTANCE OF  
**ANTHONY KINGSFORD**

WITH CHAPTERS BY  
**ROBIN MILNER-GULLAND & JOHN BOWLT**

**CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS**  
**CAMBRIDGE**  
**LONDON · NEW YORK · NEW ROCHELLE**  
**MELBOURNE · SYDNEY**

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge  
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP  
32 East 57th Street, New York, NY 10022, USA  
296 Beaconsfield Parade, Middle Park, Melbourne 3206, Australia

© Cambridge University Press 1980

First published 1980

Set, printed and bound in Great Britain by  
Fakenham Press Limited, Fakenham, Norfolk

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data*

Main entry under title:

An introduction to Russian art and architecture.

(Companion to Russian studies; v. 3)

Includes bibliographies and index.

1. Art, Russian. 2. Architecture – Russia.

I. Auty, Robert. II. Obolensky, Dimitri, 1918–.

III. Kingsford, Anthony. IV. Series.

N6981.I57 709'.47 75–10691

ISBN 0 521 20895 5

## ILLUSTRATIONS

*Note.* The architectural plans and elevations, save where otherwise noted, are based on those in S. V. Bezsonov *et al.*, *Istoriya russkoy arkhitektury* (Moscow, 1951, 1956). The dating of architectural monuments has caused continual difficulties, often with unexplained divergences between recognized authorities. The date of a building's inception, however, is generally more firmly established than that of its completion, and in most cases it is only the former (usually more significant from the point of view of the history of style, in any case) that has been indicated here. Page number precedes description in the following list.

8 Constantinople, Kilise Cami (eleventh or twelfth century): ground-plan of Byzantine cross-in-square church, with narthex and later exonarthex (after A. I. Nekrasov).  
8 Pereyaslavl'-Zalesskiy, Transfiguration Cathedral (1152): ground-plan of Russian cross-in-square church, single dome, no narthex.  
9 Chernigov, Transfiguration Cathedral (c. 1036): ground-plan.  
10 Kiev, St Sophia (1037): reconstruction of east façade and ground-plan (eleventh-century structure shaded).  
12 Kiev, St Sophia (1037): apse with mosaic of the Virgin and Communion of the Apostles; seventeenth-century icon-screen. (*Courtesy Novosti Press Agency, London [Novosti]*)  
13 Kiev, mosaics from St Michael: head of an apostle (early twelfth century).  
13 Kiev, staircase tower of St Sophia: fresco of a musician (eleventh or twelfth century). (*Courtesy Novosti*)  
14 Novgorod, Cathedral of St George in Yur'yev Monastery (1119): reconstruction with original roofline.  
14 Kiev, Dormition Cathedral in the Pechersky Monastery (1073): ground-plan.  
17 'Ustyug Annunciation' icon (twelfth century): detail. (*Courtesy Novosti*)  
18 Chernigov, Church of St Paraskeva-Pyatnitsa (c. 1200): reconstruction of east façade.  
19 Polotsk, Cathedral of Yefrosin'yev Monastery (1150s): reconstruction of west façade.  
19 Smolensk, Cathedral of Michael the Archangel, or Svirskaya Church (1191): reconstruction.  
20 Novgorod, Church of the Saviour, Nereditsa (1198): south façade.

21 Vladimir, Dormition Cathedral (1158, enlarged 1189): (*left*) west façade and (*right*) ground-plan (original church shaded).  
22 Vladimir, Cathedral of St Demetrius (1194): detail of carving.  
23 Church of the Intercession on the Nerl' (1165): reconstruction of north façade (after B. Ogn'yov).  
25 Church of the Intercession on the Nerl', near Vladimir (1165). (*Photo by R. Milner-Gulland [R.M.-G.]*)  
25 Bogolyubovo palace-complex, near Vladimir (1158): reconstruction.  
26 'Virgin of Vladimir' icon (early twelfth century). (*Courtesy Novosti*)  
27 Suzdal' Cathedral, fresco of unidentified saint (early thirteenth century). (*Photo R.M.-G.*)  
27 Church of the Saviour, Nereditsa, near Novgorod: head of a prophet, fresco (1199). (*Photo R. M.-G.*)  
30 Novgorod, St Nicholas on the Lipna (1292): west façade.  
31 Church of Volotovo, near Novgorod (1352): schematic reconstruction (after A. I. Nekrasov).  
31 Novgorod, Church of the Transfiguration on Elijah Street (Spas na Il'ine) (1374).  
33 Zvenigorod, Dormition Cathedral (c. 1399): reconstruction of north façade.  
33 Zagorsk, Trinity Cathedral of St Sergius Monastery (1422). (*Courtesy Novosti*)  
36 Theophanes the Greek, 'Old Testament Trinity' fresco, Church of the Transfiguration on Elijah Street, Novgorod (1378).  
38 Moscow, Annunciation Cathedral in the Kremlin (1484, central tiers of iconostasis 1405). (*Courtesy Architectural Museum, Moscow*)  
40 Andrey Rublyov, angel from the 'Last

## ILLUSTRATIONS

- Judgement' fresco (1408), Vladimir, Dormition Cathedral. (*Courtesy Novosti*)
- 40 Archangel Michael icon from Zvenigorod, attributed to A. Rublyov (early fifteenth century). (*Courtesy Tret'yakov Gallery, Moscow* [TG])
- 41 Andrey Rublyov, icon of the 'Old Testament Trinity' (1410s or 1420s). (*Courtesy TG*)
- 44 Novgorod, icon of the 'Old Testament Trinity' (fifteenth century). (*Courtesy Novosti*)
- 45 Icon of the Archangel Michael, Moscow school (early fifteenth century). (*Courtesy Novosti*)
- 45 Zagorsk, Trinity Monastery of St Sergius, icon of 'The Women at the Tomb' (mid-fifteenth century). (*Photo R.M.-G.*)
- 46 Carved stone cross from Borovichi (early fourteenth century): detail.
- 46 Angel, from the Khitrovo Gospel, circle of Andrey Rublyov (late fourteenth or early fifteenth century). (*Courtesy Novosti*)
- 48 Yur'yev-Pol'sky, Vladimir region, St George's Cathedral (1230, rebuilt by V. Yermolin for Ivan III, 1471). (*Courtesy Novosti*)
- 49 Moscow Kremlin, Dormition Cathedral (1475): south façade.
- 50 Moscow Kremlin, interior of Dormition Cathedral. (*Courtesy Novosti*)
- 51 Moscow Kremlin, Archangel Cathedral, by A. Novi (1505). (*Courtesy Novosti*)
- 52 Church at Yurkino, Moscow province (early sixteenth century): reconstruction of south façade.
- 53 Kolomenskoye, Church of the Ascension (1532): (*left*) east façade and (*right*) ground-plan.
- 54 Kolomenskoye, Church of the Ascension (1532). (*Photo R.M.-G.*)
- 54 D'yakovo, near Moscow, Church of St John the Baptist (probably 1547): west façade.
- 55 Moscow, Church of the Intercession ('St Basil's', 1555): (*left*) plan at first-floor level and (*right*) west façade.
- 56 Moscow, Red Square. *Left to right*: Church of the Intercession or 'St Basil's' (Barma and Postnik, 1555); Spassky Tower (Christopher Galloway, 1625 – upper parts); Kremlin walls (Ruffo, Solario *et al.*, 1485 onwards); Lenin Mausoleum (A. V. Shchusev, 1929); former Senate building (M. F. Kazakov, 1776). (*Photo R.M.-G.*)
- 57 New Jerusalem, Moscow province, Ascension Cathedral (1656, dome reconstructed in 1750s): cross-section.
- 58 Moscow, Church of the Intercession in Rubtsovo (1619): cross-section.
- 58 Moscow, Church of St Nicholas on the Ordynka (1647). (*Photo R.M.-G.*)
- 59 Fili, near Moscow, Church of the Intercession (c. 1693): south façade.
- 60 Church at Dubrovitsy, near Podol'sk (1690–1704). (*Courtesy Architectural Museum, Moscow*)
- 60 Una, Church of St Clement (1501).
- 61 Church of St Lazarus from the Muromsky Monastery, now at Kizhi (late fourteenth century): cross-section.
- 61 Moscow, Novodevichy Convent: gatehouse church (1680s). (*Photo R.M.-G.*)
- 62 Pskov, the Lapin House (seventeenth century): cross-section.
- 63 Moscow, Krutitsky Residence (Krutitskoye Podvor'ye), by O. Startsev (late seventeenth century).
- 64 Ipat'yev, Monastery, Yaroslavl', seventeenth-century domestic buildings. (*Photo R.M.-G.*)
- 64 Church of the Transfiguration from Kotlyat'yev, now at Suzdal' (1754). (*Photo R.M.-G.*)
- 64 Kolomenskoye, wooden palace (1667, now destroyed): reconstruction of south-east façade.
- 66 Nazary Istomin, icon of the 'Old Testament Trinity' (1627). (*Courtesy Novosti*)
- 66 Nikifor Savin, icon of St John the Baptist (early seventeenth century). (*Courtesy TG*)
- 66 Nikita Pavlovets, icon of 'Virgin of the Enclosed Garden' (c. 1670). (*Courtesy Royal Academy of Arts*)
- 67 Lubok (folk woodcut): 'How the Mice buried the Cat', an allegory on the death of Peter I (1730s). (*Courtesy Novosti*)
- 68 Zagorsk, Trinity Monastery, 'Apparition of Our Lady to Sergius of Radonezh': embroidered altar cloth (sixteenth century). (*Courtesy Novosti*)
- 69 V. Yermolin, 'St George', painted stone sculpture (late fifteenth century). (*Photo R.M.-G.*)
- 69 Moscow Kremlin, domes of the Church of the 'Saviour behind the Golden Screen', with ceramic decoration (seventeenth century).
- 75 'Christ in Captivity', sculpture in painted wood (eighteenth century). (*Courtesy Vologda Regional Studies Museum*)
- 75 St Petersburg, Cathedral of SS Peter and Paul (D. Trezzini, 1712): ground-plan.
- 75 St Petersburg, Cathedral of Smol'ny Convent (V. V. Rastrelli, 1746): ground-plan.
- 77 Moscow, 'Men'shikov Tower', Church of the Archangel Gabriel (I. P. Zarudny, 1705). (*Courtesy Architectural Museum, Moscow*)
- 78 St Petersburg, Kunstkamera (J. Mattarnovi *et al.*, 1718): reconstruction of façade.
- 78 St Petersburg Fortress and Cathedral of SS Peter and Paul (D. Trezzini, 1712) viewed across the River Neva. (*Photo R.M.-G.*)
- 79 St Petersburg, 'model houses' designed by Trezzini (1714): (*top*) for humble, (*middle*) for well-to-do and (*him*) for wealthy inhabitants.
- 80 Peterhof, The Great Palace (1714, enlarged by Rastrelli 1745) and park (sculpture by Kozlovsky *et al.*); from an early nineteenth-century watercolour (in the collection of Mr G. Talbot). (*Courtesy Payne-Jenkins, Photographers*)
- 81 St Petersburg, the 'Twelve Colleges' (Trezzini, 1721): fragment of façade.
- 82 St Petersburg, Bridge of Nevsky Prospekt over the River Moyka; corner of Stroganov Palace (Rastrelli, 1753). (*Photo R.M.-G.*)
- 82 St Petersburg, Winter Palace (Rastrelli, 1754). *Foreground*: Alexander Column (Montferrand, 1834). (*Courtesy Architectural Museum, Moscow*)
- 83 Moscow, Apraksin House (1766). (*Courtesy Architectural Museum, Moscow*)

## ILLUSTRATIONS

- 84 *Parsuna* (portrait icon) of Tsar Fyodor (seventeenth century). (*Courtesy Russian State Museum [RSM]*)
- 84 I. Vishnyakov, 'Sarah Fermor' (1750s). (*Courtesy RSM*)
- 86 C.-B. Rastrelli, monument to Peter I, with part of 'Engineers' Castle' (Palace of St Michael) by V. I. Bazhenov. (*Courtesy Novosti*)
- 86 C.-B. Rastrelli, 'Peter I', in bronze (1723). (*Courtesy Novosti*)
- 89 Kuskovo, near Moscow, 'Hermitage' (K. I. Blank, mid-eighteenth century). (*Photo R.M.-G.*)
- 90 Tsaritsyno, near Moscow, 'Gothic' buildings by V. I. Bazhenov (1775): reconstruction.
- 91 Moscow, Pashkov House (attributed to V. I. Bazhenov, 1784). (*Courtesy Architectural Museum, Moscow*)
- 92 Moscow, Senate building in the Kremlin by M. F. Kazakov (1776). (*Courtesy Architectural Museum, Moscow*)
- 93 Moscow, Gubin House by M. F. Kazakov (1780s).
- 94 Tsarskoye Selo (Pushkin) 'Cameron Gallery' of the Great Palace (1783). (*Photo R.M.-G.*)
- 94 Pavlovsk, near St Petersburg, the palace (1782): reconstruction of original plan by C. Cameron.
- 96 Moscow, Kropotkin Street, showing house of Dolgorukov family (M. F. Kazakov, 1790) and Academy of Arts (early nineteenth century). (*Courtesy Architectural Museum, Moscow*)
- 97 St Petersburg, Admiralty main entrance (A. D. Zakharov, 1806); spire by I. Korobov (1732).
- 97 Moscow, Victualling Stores by V. P. Stasov (1832).
- 98 St Petersburg, Colonnade of Kazan' Cathedral (Voronikhin, 1801). (*Photo R.M.-G.*)
- 99 Moscow, Gagarin House on Novinsky Boulevard, central part of façade (O. I. Bove, 1817, destroyed by bombing 1941). (*Courtesy Novosti*)
- 99 St Petersburg, General Staff building, arch by K. Rossi (1819).
- 100 Moscow, Kuz'minki estate (D. Zhilyardi, 1820s). (*Courtesy Architectural Museum, Moscow*)
- 101 D. G. Levitsky, 'Catherine II' (1783). (*Courtesy RSM*)
- 101 F. S. Rokotov, 'A. P. Struyskaya' (1772). (*Courtesy Novosti*)
- 102 V. L. Borovikovskiy, 'M. I. Lopukhina' (1797) (*Courtesy Novosti*)
- 102 O. A. Kiprensky, 'Alexander Pushkin' (1827). (*Courtesy Novosti*)
- 103 F. Ya. Alekseyev, 'Stock Exchange', St Petersburg (1810). (*Courtesy Photo Studies Ltd, London*)
- 104 A. G. Venetsianov, 'Threshing-floor' (1821). (*Courtesy RSM*)
- 104 K. P. Bryullov, 'The Last Day of Pompeii' (1833). (*Courtesy Novosti*)
- 105 P. A. Fedotov, 'Officer and Orderly' (c. 1850). (*Courtesy RSM*)
- 107 F. I. Shubin, 'Emperor Paul', marble (1797). (*Courtesy RSM*)
- 108 *Foreground: Monument to Peter the Great: the 'Bronze Horseman'* (E.-M. Falconet, completed 1782), overlooking present-day Leningrad, towards Vasil'yev Island and 'Petersburg side' across the Bol'shaya Neva. *Left to right* (principal buildings only): end of 'Twelve Colleges' (D. Trezzini, 1721); Academy of Sciences (G. Quarenghi, 1783); Kunstkamera (J. Mattarnovi and M. Zemtsov, 1718); Rostral Column (T. de Thomon, 1805); Cathedral of SS Peter and Paul (D. Trezzini, 1712). (*Courtesy Novosti*)
- 113 Vasily Perov, 'Easter Procession in the Country' (1861); 71.5 × 89 cm. (*Courtesy TG*)
- 114 Il'ya Repin, 'Portrait of the Composer Modest Musorgsky' (1881); 69 × 57 cm. (*Courtesy TG*)
- 117 Yelena Polenova, illustration to *The Fire-bird*. (Reproduced from the journal *Iskusstvo i khudozhestvennaya promyshlennost'* (St Petersburg 1899, no. 13, facing p. 36)
- 119 Mikhail Vrubel', 'Demon Downcast' (1902); 139 × 387 cm. (*Courtesy TG*)
- 120 Lev Bakst, 'Portrait of the Writer Andrey Bely' (c. 1906); coloured chalks on paper. (*Courtesy Ashmolean Museum, Oxford*)
- 120 Alexandre Benois, 'Décor for Armide's Garden'. For *Le Pavillon d'Armide*, ballet produced by Sergey Diaghilev, Paris (1909); watercolour and collage; 45 × 63 cm. (*Courtesy Mr & Mrs N. Lobanov, New York City*)
- 122 Viktor Borisov-Musatov, 'Gobelin' (1901); tempera, 103 × 142.2 cm. (*Courtesy TG*)
- 123 Nikolay Sapunov, cover to the catalogue of the 'Blue Rose' exhibition (March/April 1907). (*Private collection, Moscow*)
- 125 Pavel Kuznetsov, 'The Blue Fountain' (1905); tempera, 127 × 131 cm. (*Courtesy TG*)
- 127 Mikhail Larionov, 'Spring' (1912); 85 × 67 cm. (*Private collection, Paris*)
- 127 Natal'ya Goncharova, 'The Carriers' (1910); 129.5 × 101 cm. (*Private collection, Paris*)
- 130 Mikhail Larionov, 'Rayonist Sausage and Mackerel' (1912); 46.5 × 61.5 cm. (*Private collection, Paris*)
- 131 Aleksandr Shevchenko, 'Rayonism' (1913); watercolour and gouache, 10 × 8 cm. (*Collection of Mr Ya. Rubinstein, Moscow*)
- 132 Pavel Filonov, 'West and East' (1912-13); 40 × 45.5 cm. (*Courtesy R.S.M.*)
- 133 Ivan Klyun, 'Landscape Running Past' (1913); oil, wood, 62 × 79 cm. (*Courtesy TG*)
- 134 Kazimir Malevich, 'Eight Red Rectangles' (1915); 57.5 × 48.5 cm. (*Courtesy Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam*)
- 136 Ivan Puni (Jean Pougny), 'Suprematist Sculpture' (1915); various painted materials, height 73 cm, length 40 cm, depth 8 cm. (*Courtesy Mr & Mrs H. Berninger, Zurich*)
- 138 Moscow, Verkhniye Torgovyye Ryady (now GUM) (A.N. Pomerantsev, 1889-93).
- 139 St Petersburg, Church of the Resurrection (A. A. Parland, 1882-1907).
- 141 Moscow, Yaroslav' Station (F. O. Shekhtel', 1903-4).

## ILLUSTRATIONS

- 142 Moscow, Myur and Meriliz store (now TsUM) (R. I. Klein, late 1900s).
- 143 Moscow, Villa of Stepan Ryabushinsky (now Gor'ky Museum) (F. O. Shekhtel', 1900-2).
- 147 El Lissitzky, 'Proun Construction 1A' (1919); gouache,  $6 \times 7 \frac{1}{4}$  in. (*Courtesy Grosvenor Gallery, London*)
- 149 Lyubov' Popova, 'Painterly Architectonics' (c. 1918). (*Private collection, Moscow*)
- 150 Aleksandr Rodchenko, 'Construction' (1921); wood. (*Reconstruction in collection of Mr G. Costakis*)
- 151 Kazimir Medunetsky, 'Construction no. 557' (1919); tin, brass and iron, height 45.1 cm, base 17.8 cm. (*Courtesy Yale University Art Gallery*)
- 151 Aleksandra Ekster, costume design for Tairov's production of *Romeo and Juliet* at the Kamernyy Theatre, Moscow (1921); gouache, brush and indian ink,  $48 \times 35$  cm. (*Courtesy McCrory Corporation, New York City*)
- 152 Natan Al'tman, 'Petrokommuna' (1919); oil, enamel on canvas,  $104.5 \times 88.5$  cm. (*Courtesy the artist's family, Leningrad*)
- 152 Aleksandr Drevin, 'Abstraction' (1921);  $42 \times 34$  in. (*Courtesy Yale University Art Gallery*)
- 153 Aleksandr Deineka, 'Defence of Petrograd' (1927);  $218 \times 359$  cm. (*Courtesy Central Museum of the Soviet Army, Moscow; copy in TG*)
- 154 Gustav Klutsis, illustration to V. Mayakovsky's poem 'Vladimir Il'ich Lenin' (1925); photomontage.
- 158 Aleksandr Gerasimov, 'Stalin and Voroshilov in the Kremlin Grounds' (1938);  $300 \times 390$  cm. (*Courtesy TG*)
- 159 Pyotr Konchalovsky, 'Portrait of Meyerhold' (1938). (*Courtesy the artist's family, Moscow*)
- 161 Kukryniksy (M. V. Kupriyanov, P. N. Krylov and N. A. Sokolov), cover to *Krokodil*, 1943, entitled: 'I lost my little ring . . . (and in my ring are 22 divisions)'; gouache, indian ink. (*Courtesy TG*)
- 162 Erik Bulatov, 'Self-portrait' (1968);  $110 \times 110$  cm. (*Courtesy Mme Dina Vierny, Paris*)
- 163 Francisco Infante, 'Beads'. From the series *The Architecture of Artificial Systems in Cosmic Space* (1972). (*Courtesy the artist, Moscow*)
- 165 Vladimir Tatlin, 'Monument to the Third International' (1919-20); line drawing from Il'ya Ehrenburg's 'A vsyo-taki ona vertitsya' ('But Nevertheless It Turns', Berlin, 1922).
- 166 Moscow, Lenin Mausoleum (A. V. Shchusev, 1929-30).
- 167 Moscow, *Izvestiya* building (G. B. Barkhin, 1927).
- 170 Yakov Chernikhov, 'Complex Constructive Composition in an Axonometric Depiction'; illustration from his book *Arkhitekturnyye fantazii* (Architectural Fantasies, Leningrad, 1933).
- 170 Komsomol'skaya Station on the Moscow metro (D. N. Chechulin, 1935).
- 171 Moscow, Hotel Ukraina (A. G. Mordvinov et al., 1956). (*Courtesy Novosti*)
- 172 The New Arbat complex, view of Kalinin Prospekt (Posokhin et al., 1969).

## PREFACE

---

The *Companion to Russian Studies* aims at providing a first orientation for those embarking on the study of Russian civilization, past or present, in its most important aspects. It lays no claim to cover them all. While we hope that it will be of use to university students of Russian language and literature, Russian history, or Soviet affairs, it is equally directed to the general reader interested in these subjects. Each chapter seeks to offer a self-contained introduction to a particular topic; but the editors have not wished to impose a uniform pattern, and each author has been free to approach and present his subject in his own way. Particular care has been taken to provide up-to-date bibliographies, which are intended as a guide to further study. As is the way with collective works of this kind, the *Companion* has been some years in the making. We should like to express our gratitude to the contributors for their forbearance – sometimes sorely tried – in the face of difficulties and delays which have held up the completion of the enterprise. Economic considerations beyond our control have made it necessary to divide the contents of what had originally been planned as a single book into three volumes. The first is mainly concerned with the history of Russia and the Soviet Union; the second with Russian language and literature; the third with art and architecture. However, the three volumes, for which we share the editorial responsibility, should be regarded as complementary parts of a single whole.

We are grateful to all those at the Cambridge University Press who, over the years, have been involved in this project. Above all we wish to record our debt to Mr Anthony Kingsford, whose great experience in book production, unflagging energy, and expert knowledge of many aspects of Russian studies have been of the greatest value at every stage.

R.A.

D.O.

We wish to record our sorrow and sense of loss at the untimely death of Robert Auty on 18 August 1978, when this volume was still in proof.

D.O.

A.L.K.



# TRANSLITERATION TABLE

|   |   | 1    | 2    |
|---|---|------|------|
| А | а | a    | a    |
| Б | б | b    | b    |
| В | в | v    | v    |
| Г | г | g    | g    |
| Д | д | d    | d    |
| Е | е | ye/e | je/e |
| Ё | ё | yo/o | jo/o |
| Ж | ж | zh   | ž    |
| З | з | z    | z    |
| И | и | i    | i    |
| Й | й | y    | j    |
| К | к | k    | k    |
| Л | л | l    | l    |
| М | м | m    | m    |
| Н | н | n    | n    |
| О | о | o    | o    |
| П | п | p    | p    |
| Р | р | r    | r    |
| С | с | s    | s    |
| Т | т | t    | t    |
| У | у | u    | u    |
| Ф | ф | f    | f    |
| Х | х | kh   | ch   |
| Ц | ц | ts   | c    |
| Ч | ч | ch   | č    |
| Ш | ш | sh   | š    |
| Щ | щ | shch | šč   |
|   | ъ | —    | —    |
|   | ы | y    | y    |
|   | ь | '    | '    |
| Э | э | e    | e    |

## TRANSLITERATION TABLE

|              |    |    |
|--------------|----|----|
| Ю ю          | yu | ju |
| Я я          | ya | ja |
| (І і)        | i  | i  |
| <b>(Ѣ ѣ)</b> | ě  | ě  |
| (Ѧ ѧ)        | f  | f  |
| (Ѩ ѩ)        | i  | i  |

The transliteration system given in column 1 is used in all sections of the *Companion* except Volume 2, chapter 1, *The Russian Language*, where the ‘philological’ system given in column 2 is employed. The bracketed letters at the end of the alphabet were discontinued by the spelling reform of 1917–18.

*ye (je)* is written for Cyrillic *e* initially, after vowels, and after *ъ* and *ь*. *o* appears for *ě* after *ж, ч, ш, щ*. In proper names final *-ый, -ий* is simplified to *-y*.

Proper names or titles which have a generally accepted anglicized form are usually given in that form, e.g. Benoit, Chagall, Deineke, Diaghilev, Dimitri, Hermitage, Likhachev, Lissitzky, Meyerhold, Moscow, Peterhof, Sophia.

# CONTENTS

---

*List of illustrations* vii   *Preface* xi   *Transliteration table* xii

## 1

### **Art and Architecture of Old Russia, 988–1700**

ROBIN MILNER-GULLAND

*Reader in Russian Studies, University of Sussex*

#### Introduction 1

Old Russian art: its characteristics, scope and international setting 2

The discovery of Old Russian art 6

Kievan Russia: late tenth to early twelfth centuries 8

Kievan and Vladimir Russia: early twelfth to mid-thirteenth centuries 16

Russia in transition: mid-thirteenth to mid-fifteenth centuries 28

Muscovy: late fifteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century 47

## 2

### **Art and Architecture in the Petersburg Age, 1700–1860**

ROBIN MILNER-GULLAND

#### page 71

The secularization of art 73 Petersburg Baroque 1700s–1760s 76

The age of Neo-Classicism: 1760s to mid-nineteenth century 87

Guide to further reading 109

## 3

### **Art and Architecture in the Age of Revolution, 1860–1917**

JOHN BOWLT

*Associate Professor of Russian, University of Texas at Austin*

Art 112 Architecture 137

## 4

### **Art and Architecture in Soviet Russia, 1917–1972**

JOHN BOWLT

Art 145 Architecture 164 Guide to further reading 173

Index 183

# ART AND ARCHITECTURE OF OLD RUSSIA, 988-1700

---

## Introduction

For almost a millennium, art and architecture have flourished in Russia with a consistency of high achievement unmatched by Russian literature, music or thought, whose notable successes have been won only against a background of erratic and, on the whole, rather tardy development. There is some sense in considering the visual arts the central area, even the pace-setter, of Russian culture through most of its long history: the wordless language of paintings and buildings compensates for the notorious 'intellectual silence' of Old Russia, so often noted by foreigners, and it is able to tell us what is distinctively Russian about such moments of apparently thorough integration with the western cultural system as the mid-eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. In particular Russian architecture – cheerful, modest and down-to-earth, seldom reaching towards grandeur or sublimity – has a quite remarkable record of vigour and inventiveness over the centuries; while Russian painting has had at least two moments (in the early fifteenth century and during the 1910s) when it could be reasonably argued to have led the whole of Europe.

This long and splendid artistic tradition, for quite understandable historical and geographical reasons, is still inadequately known abroad. This survey is certainly no substitute for the rigorous, detailed, and up-to-date study of Old Russian art which we need in English; what it does aim to do is to tell in concise fashion what happened when, to trace the development of styles and genres, to give an indication of what seems art-historically important and why, and lastly to contradict a few prevalent myths and locate the chief unresolved problems. In the process much has had to be ignored or summarily treated: in particular folk art, the minor and applied arts, and the tradition of architecture in wood get far less attention than they would ideally have deserved. I have tried to bear in mind the reader with a fair general knowledge of art (particularly the potential visitor to Russia) who will not be familiar with the development of Russian art or its chief characteristics at various times; for this reason I have discussed the different branches of art according to a periodization which,

even if unusual in some respects, I believe to be the most helpful for the purpose. Some attempt – necessarily brief – has been made to see Russian art as part of a general pattern of culture, in both a national and a European setting.

Note that where a single date has been given to a building, this refers to the beginning of its construction unless otherwise indicated.

### **Old Russian art: its characteristics, scope and international setting**

The art of Russia before the eighteenth century was broadly (with due qualifications) a ‘medieval’ art. It was functional, having a necessary role to fulfil within a self-sufficient cultural system. It held firmly to tradition, and was exercised through a well-developed set of genres, conventions and symbols. It attended to the universal and eternal rather than to the transient and the accidental. Its practitioners were more concerned to execute a necessary task in the proper manner than to express an individual personality. It was saturated with its society’s religion. It lacked several of the art-forms that we take for granted in secularized, post-Renaissance Europe; it neither knew nor would have had a use for the systematic perspective and illusionistic techniques of post-Renaissance painting. Until almost the end of the seventeenth century, architecture seems to have retained medieval ‘rule of thumb’ methods of construction.

However, this art should not be thought of as unsophisticated or primitively spontaneous. There was a clear distinction between ‘high’ and folk art, even if from time to time the two spheres affected or interpenetrated each other. Nor was it undifferentiated: there were ‘metropolitan’ and ‘provincial’ manners, allowing a variety of intermediate possibilities. It was not mechanical: no two medieval pictures or buildings are identical; it was not depersonalized, as there was scope, if limited, for the exercise of artistic individuality – the names of leading artists (particularly after the fourteenth century) are often known to us, and in many cases we can form an impression of their style. It was not exclusively in the hands of monks or clerics: several important artists were probably laymen (Theophanes, Dionisy). Its aims and methods were not ‘anti-realistic’, at least not in the eyes of its practitioners. It was not ‘unprogressive’, despite the stubborn myth that Byzantine/Orthodox art and architecture are no more than variations on a theme: it shows well-marked evolutionary stages, though the transitions between them are gradual rather than violent. Lastly, it would be wrong to think of it as utterly cut off from our own aesthetic categories and traditions: its principles, ideals and methods are descended, if at one or more remove,

from classical antiquity. Old Russian writers frequently and touchingly speak of beauty in relation to the works of art of their age, and what they admire turns out on the whole to correspond with what we admire.

The adoption of Christianity on the Byzantine model as the Russian state religion in or about 988 meant the 'importing' of an entire cultural system, including a varied and highly-developed art. There is no reason to suppose the soil of Russia was unprepared for this. Though our evidence for the condition of art in pagan Russia is scanty, we can reasonably suppose it flourished, at least on a 'folk' level. Its most impressive material remains are carved idols (popularly known as *kamennyye baby*, stone women). There was certainly a well-developed architecture in wood, and masonry buildings are now known to have existed. In any case, Christianity had been gradually establishing a foothold in Kiev many decades before the official conversion.

Russia joined the Byzantine 'cultural commonwealth' at a favourable moment. A Slavonic sub-community, using its own language for liturgy and literature, already existed within it. Byzantium, at the height of its early medieval vigour, had evolved the 'classic' forms of its art during the previous century or so. Those splendidly flexible and simple architectural forms, the 'cross-domed' and 'cross-in-square' church, had been stabilized as the typical patterns of high-Byzantine ecclesiastical architecture; they, and not the older, alternative form of the basilica, were to establish a domination in Russia unchallenged for over 500 years. The interior walls of such churches were decorated, according to an impressive scheme (of symbolic significance), with glass mosaic or – as soon became normal in Russia – with true fresco. The technique of fresco-painting encouraged a bold and expressive handling of the medium. Small teams of artists, on occasion travelling far afield, would complete the decoration of a church in a single summer if possible, sometimes several years after it had been built. Meanwhile it would be decorated with *icons* (i.e. 'images') – the third great form of Orthodox pictorial art. These often quite large panels (the ancestors of modern 'easel paintings', curious as it may seem) normally consist of one or more wooden boards, with painting in tempera on a fine plaster ground; they carried representations of sacred personages and events, and though not in themselves worshipped, they were venerated as the channel through which worshipper could reach saint and vice versa. The general forms of any given representation were not subject to alteration at whim (going back as several of them supposedly did to St Luke, eyewitness of the scenes he painted). Byzantine icons of high artistic quality – particularly from before the fourteenth century – are very few, and the fortunate preservation of several fine examples would alone have

ensured Russia a unique importance for our understanding of medieval Orthodox art. Icons shared with book illuminations (another well-developed Byzantine art, particularly significant for its role in preserving classical-antique models of painting) an easy portability and high prestige; through them the example of 'metropolitan' painting, or for that matter innovations of style and iconography, could be transmitted to all parts of the Orthodox world, counterbalancing centrifugal and provincializing tendencies. The marvellously skilful Byzantine so-called 'minor arts' – low-relief carvings in ivory, silver and gold objects, jewellery, enamels – played something of the same role.

The Byzantine connexion conditioned the nature of Old Russian art, up to and even after the trauma of 1453, when Constantinople fell. It would be wrong to treat Old Russian art as synonymous with Byzantine – each nation of the Orthodox community had its own artistic development, within certain overall limits – but it would be equally wrong to regard it as the branch of a tree, developing out of and away from Byzantium. Old Russia was able, until the fifteenth century, to refresh itself through renewals of contact, not only with Constantinople, but with other Orthodox lands (notably with the South Slavs of Serbia and Bulgaria). Other international contacts – particularly with western Europe in its Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance phases – had effects which, if not purely fortuitous, were nevertheless essentially limited in their cultural significance, few in number and easily definable. With the remoter Christian lands of Transcaucasia, as with the Scandinavian north, few if any artistic contacts can be demonstrated (though some commentators have tried). And oddly enough (in view of geographical propinquity and of the 240 years of subjection to the Tatars), Russia was perhaps less open to cultural influence from the Moslem lands than any country in Europe. The favourite nineteenth-century assumption that Russian art, and culture as a whole, was essentially 'oriental' turns out to be without any historical basis.

Medieval Russia has left a relatively rich artistic heritage: one that, until in the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the achievements of the Florentine Renaissance spread through the west, in no way lagged behind the rest of Europe – and even in its lengthy decline showed moments of inspiration. Yet it is worth reminding ourselves from time to time of some of its achievements which are irreparably lost to us. From before 1600 we have scarcely any surviving secular architecture: of the splendid palaces of the Kievan and Vladimir Grand Princes, with their fine furnishings and extensive frescoes, we know tantalizingly little, even from literary sources. The wooden architecture of the same period, whether popular or sophisticated, has almost all perished: we know only that it must have been highly inventive and adaptable. Old Russian sculpture has survived fragmentarily and probably not representatively. From four decades at

## THE DISCOVERY OF OLD RUSSIAN ART

the beginnings of Russian post-conversion art (996–1036) our knowledge is quite blank.

In modern times, too, war, carelessness and wanton destruction have lost for us some of the greatest buildings and paintings that had been spared by previous ages; but that is another story.

### The discovery of Old Russian art

Before the present century the achievements of Old Russian art and architecture were scarcely appreciated or even properly accessible. Underrated by the Russians themselves (who were conscious of the excessive and stifling duration of their 'medieval' past), known to few foreigners in a position to evaluate them, the numerous buildings and paintings that antedated the westernizing reforms of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were in any case generally deformed by later alterations, accretions and restorations. The materials for a just assessment, or for that matter a history, of Old Russian art were simply not available.

Even had they been so, it may be doubted whether nineteenth-century taste would have reacted understandingly, let alone enthusiastically, to them. Napoleon, having entered<sup>1</sup> Moscow, is reported to have ordered 'that mosque' (meaning the Church of Basil the Blessed in Red Square) to be removed. He was no doubt not alone in thinking Old Russian building uncouth and oriental – though it is neither. Nevertheless, a current of antiquarian interest stemming from the time (and personal initiative) of Catherine the Great ensured the preservation of some buildings and the detailed recording of others, as well as more doubtful projects such as Nicholas I's radical restoration of the St Demetrius Cathedral in Vladimir. When in the 1880s V. Vasnetsov and the 'Abramtsevo colony' built a small church in a pleasant pastiche of Old Russian style, it became evident that such architecture could have real aesthetic significance for sophisticated members of the generation out of which the 'modern movement' sprang. Yet as regards Old Russian painting, knowledge and appreciation were rudimentary even at the end of the nineteenth century. In particular the surviving icons and frescoes from the greatest age of Old Russian pictorial art (the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) were still without exception obscured by grime or overpainting. Andrey Rublyov, whose work is the culmination of that age, had sunk to a figure of legend; it was the cleaning (in 1904) of his famous 'Old Testament Trinity' icon, from the Trinity Monastery of St Sergius, that marked the start of true scholarly investigation into his work and the nature of Old Russian painting in general. If one man's contribution to this process should be singled out, it must be that of Igor' Grabar' – himself an excellent painter – who for decades bore the heaviest burdens in the fields both of restoration



and research. However, the rediscovery of Old Russian art required not simply the dedication of individuals, but a revolution in aesthetic taste. This came about with the rise of 'modernism' in the years preceding the First World War. The dominance of Renaissance 'picture-space' and naturalism over serious art was shattered, and qualities such as the static stylization and the free play of line and colour typical of Old Russian painting could at last be appreciated for their aesthetic worth. Too much, indeed, has often been made of some of these qualities: the 'primitivism' of icon-painting (gauged on the basis of late or provincial examples) can easily be overestimated, and the nature of Old Russian art thereby seriously misjudged.

From the 1910s Old Russian paintings were systematically collected (or, in the case of wall-paintings, identified) and cleaned – a process which is continuing to the present day, but as early as the 1920s had produced a remarkable body of material on which scholarly work could be done. The serious investigation of Old Russian architecture, on the other hand, lagged a little: to re-establish and restore the early aspect of a building is no small task. Paradoxically, the destruction suffered by many important Old Russian buildings during the Second World War had some positive effects: it permitted, for example, the investigation into the original form of the partially-destroyed Pyatnitsky Church in Chernigov, which has helped us radically to revise our ideas about the evolution of medieval architecture. Since the war, in fact, previous notions of what happened to architecture in the important age from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries have been entirely superseded, and this has had interesting implications for the general history of Russian culture.

Much has been discovered or evaluated very recently; many problems are still debatable, and many tasks remain. The original ground-plan of so important a building as the St Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod, for example, was only established (despite widely differing speculations through the years) when central heating was installed there in the 1960s. The wealth of Old Russian sculpture is only slowly becoming known: older books denied its very existence, and treated the famous carvings of Vladimir-Suzdal' (still the subject of controversy) as utterly exceptional. Frescoes as important as those of the Mirozhsky Monastery at Pskov have yet to be properly cleared from overpainting. Soviet archaeology is continually turning up new, and sometimes surprising, facts. Though the history and evaluation of Old Russian art and architecture can now be undertaken, we should be rash to regard even their basic outlines as finally established and agreed. The present survey aims not so much to make quasi-definitive judgements on doubtful points as to present the development of early Russian art in the light of recent research and current critical appreciation.