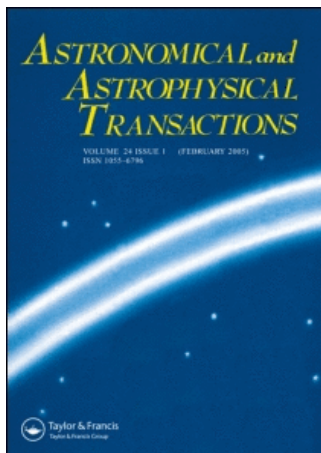


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THE RUSSIAN CALENDARS AFTER THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE COUNTRY

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The Russians became acquainted with the Christian religion in 860 A.D. In the middle of the 10th Century, Princess Olga of Kiev visited Constantinople and was baptized under the name Elene. Later, when her grandson Vladimir became a Christian, all the Russians became Christians too. Moreover, the Russians adopted the Cyrillic alphabet and the Julian calendar. In 1918 the government replaced the Julian calendar with the Gregorian one. However, the Russian Orthodox Church never accepted the Gregorian or the New Rectified Julian calendar. Even today it retains the old Julian calendar. An important but short-lived change in the history of the Russian calendar took place in the year 1929. Then the seven-day week was abolished being substituted with five-day intervals. This attempt was unsuccessful and finally the Soviet government restored the use of the initial Gregorian calendar and the ancient seven-day week.

Keywords: Orthodox Church; Calendars; Julian; Gregorian; Russian

1 INTRODUCTION

The Russians made their first appearance in southeastern Europe, in Constantinople, with an attack against it in 860 A.D. The Russ invaders terminated the siege of the Byzantine capital in exchange for commercial privileges, while at the same time they became acquainted with the Christian religion.

Thus, Russia knew Christianity in the 9th Century, when the Scandinavian Russ organized the small states of Novgorod and Kiev; these incorporated the Slavic tribes of the respective areas. The Scandinavian sovereigns of Kiev accepted to be baptized and to receive Byzantine missionaries. The people were also baptized (Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 109,209, 121,1057 and 135,25), but the missionaries' activity was interrupted when the pagan Russ of Novgorod invaded Kiev at the end of the century.

In the middle of the 10th Century (957 A.D.), Princess Olga of Kiev visited Constantinople and was baptized under the name Elene. Later her grandson Vladimir (972–1015), sovereign of Kiev and allied with the Byzantine Empire, visited Hersona, married Anna the Porphyr-ogennete, sister of the Byzantine Emperor Vassilios II, and became a Christian. This caused

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TABLE I The Russian Months.

#	<i>Gregorian month</i>	<i>Russian name</i>
1	January	Yanvar'
2	February	Fevral'
3	March	Mart
4	April	Aprel'
5	May	Mai
6	June	Iyun'
7	July	Iyul'
8	August	Avgust
9	September	Sentyabr'
10	October	Oktyabr'
11	November	Noyabr'
12	December	Djekabr'

the immediate christianization not only of Kiev's Russians, but also the rest of the sovereignties of the Russian land (Novgorod, Suzdal, etc.).

Moreover, the Russians adopted the Cyrillic alphabet for the writing of their old Slavonic language, and also for a gradual acquaintance with all the religious and other literature of the rich Byzantine cultural heritage.

After they adopted the Christian religion, the Russians started using the Julian calendar, which was weaved together with the Christian holidays. The months of the Julian calendar are given in the above Table I.

Accordingly, the days of the week and the seasons of the year, which bear names similar to the ones of the other Slavic countries, are given in Tables II and III.

The cultural influence of Byzantium was important for the intellectual development of these people, who, after their christianization, followed the Christian holidays and adopted at the same time the Julian calendar. The christianization of the Slavs, the creation of the Slavic alphabet by Cyrillus and Methodius, and the translation of the Greek works made the Slavs participators of the neighboring Greek civilization.

TABLE II The Days of the Week.

<i>Russian name</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Correlation</i>
Vaskresenie	Resurrection	Sunday
Panedel'nik*	After Sunday	Monday
Vtornik	Second day	Tuesday
Sreda**	Central day	Wednesday
Chetverg	Fourth day	Thursday
Pyatnitsa	Fifth day	Friday
Subbota	Sabbath	Saturday

*Nedelya means week in Russian and Sunday in Old Russian/contemporary Ukrainian.

**Day being in the middle of the week.

TABLE III The Seasons of the Year.

<i>Russian name</i>	<i>Correlation</i>
Vesna	Spring
Leto	Summer
Osen'	Autumn
Zima	Winter

2 THE RUSSIANS AS THE SUCCESSORS OF THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

Some centuries later, in 1472, the Great Prince of Moscow, Ivan III Vassilievich (1462–1505) married Sophia-Zoe Palaiologina, the daughter of Thomas Palaiologus (Sovereign of Mystras) and niece of Byzantium's last emperor. Because of this marriage, he considered himself the successor of the Byzantine Empire, which in 1453 had succumbed to the Moslem Turks; he adopted for his labarums the Byzantine two-headed eagle and introduced the Byzantine rituals in the Russian Church. Thus, the eagle of Ivan's coat of arms became two-headed, and the Prince declared himself the inheritor and successor of Byzantium. Moscow became the "Third Rome", the Rome of Czars (the new Caesars). A few years earlier the Russian Orthodox Church had declared its independence from Constantinople (1458), giving as a reason the attempt of the Byzantines to sign their union with the Roman Catholic Church at the Synod of Florence (1439).

The relations with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople were restored in 1557, when the Czar Ivan IV the Terrible sent a delegation to Constantinople recognizing the primacy of the Ecumenical Patriarch in order to obtain by him the validation of the title "Czar of all the Russians". The period of good relations continued; in 1589 the Ecumenical Patriarch Jeremy II visited Moscow and consecrated the Archbishop Job of Moscow as "Patriarch of all the Russians". The Patriarchate of Moscow was recognized by a Synod in Constantinople.

As a result, after the fall of Constantinople, Moscow (the Third Rome) was the only free seat of a Patriarchate of the Eastern Orthodox Church. For Russia, Orthodoxy formed the emotional and ideological background of the union of the Russian territories into a strong European power.

Initially, the beginning of the Russian year was probably the astronomical vernal equinox, on March 21. Later on, starting from the 13th Century, the Russians adopted the 1st of September as the beginning of the year (beginning of the indictus, the ecclesiastical year). Finally, during the reign of Peter the Great (1672–1725) the start of the civil year was transferred to January 1st, a starting point used by many European countries.

Connected with the calendrical cycle are the *vesnianki*, ancient ritual songs spread not only among the Russians, but also among the Ukrainians, Belarusians and all the Eastern Slavs. These songs, which inform us about calendrical festivals, include "Invocations of Spring", spring odes, games and circular dances. There are *vesnianki* prayers, forming the basis of the spring ritual songs of all the Eastern Slavs. Today the *vesnianki* have lost their intensely mystical character, however they remain as hymns of nature awakening and of spring.

An important calendrical record is the chronicle of Ipatiev's monastery, known as the "Chronicle of Galicia-Volynia", which describes events from the beginning of the 13th Century A.D. until 1292 A.D. It includes a single text of the fifth decade of the 13th Century originating from the court of Daniel of Galicia, and events from a Kiev's chronicle. As far as the fifth decade is concerned, the dates differ by 4 to 5 years from the generally accepted chronology. The most plausible explanation is that during this period the people of South West Russia were using a calendar according to which 5,504 or 5,505 years had passed from the Creation of the World until the birth of Jesus instead of 5,509.

3 THE ATTEMPT TO ABOLISH THE WEEK

In 1918, the government that resulted from the October Revolution replaced the Julian with the Gregorian calendar. By doing this, the "Council of the People's Commissioners" under Lenin calendrically harmonized Russia with Western Europe, omitting 13 days from the

Julian calendar, so that the 1st of February, 1918, became the 14th of February of the same year. For this reason, the annual celebration of the great anniversary of the “October” Revolution was (and still is) taking place on November 7th of the Gregorian calendar, instead of the 25th of October of the Julian.

However, the Russian Orthodox Church never accepted the Gregorian or the New Rectified Julian calendar. Even today it retains the old Julian calendar and for this reason there is a delay of 13 days in the dates of its religious festivals and holidays as compared with their dates in the Gregorian calendar, *i.e.* the Russian Christians celebrate Christmas on January 7th.

An important but short-lived change in the history of the Russian calendar took place in the year 1929. Then the seven-day week was abolished; being substituted with five-day intervals which were thought of as more in pace with the new working conditions. The days of each interval were named with their order: Panedel’nik (First), Vtornik (Second), Sreda (Third), Chetverg (Fourth) and Pyatnitsa (Fifth). The 12 months retained their ancient Roman names, but not the duration they had in the Gregorian calendar. For an easier date calculation all months had 6 five-day intervals and equal length, *i.e.* 30 days, so that one could immediately calculate the day of the interval from the date (Table IV).

The year had 72 five-day intervals ($5 \times 72 = 360$ days), while the 5 “white” induced days of the common year were added in the following way:

- The first white day without a date was inserted after the 30th of January and was called “Lenin’s Day”.
- The second and third white days were inserted after the 30th of April and were dedicated to the celebration of the workers’ “First of May”.
- The fourth and fifth were inserted after the 7th of November, were combined with the great celebrations of the October Revolution, and were dedicated to the industry.

In the leap years one more *intercalary* day was inserted after 30 February, dedicated also to industry. The insertion of these 5 or 6 white days did not alter the sequence of the other days of the month or the year. Since Sunday was abolished, any day of the five-day interval was used as a day of rest but not necessarily the same for all branches of work so that production was not interrupted.

Moscow’s Academy of Sciences had approved this calendar. However, the attempt to change the week was unsuccessful, and in 1932 the government of the Soviet Union replaced the five-day intervals with six-day intervals, so that the year of 360 days consisted of 60 such intervals. But neither system could take root in the people’s conscience. Therefore, in 1940 the Soviet government restored the use of the initial Gregorian calendar and the ancient seven-day week, with its Saturdays and Sundays. The seven days of the week were the same as in Table II.

TABLE IV Dates of the Russian Calendar.

#	Day of the interval	Date (in the month)					
1	Panedel’nik	1	6	11	16	21	26
2	Vtornik	2	7	12	17	22	27
3	Sreda	3	8	13	18	23	28
4	Chetverg	4	9	14	19	24	29
5	Pyatnitsa	5	10	15	20	25	30

TABLE V Correlation of the Dates of the Russian and Gregorian Calendars.

<i>Russian</i>	<i>Gregorian</i>	<i>Russian</i>	<i>Gregorian</i>
1 January	1 January	30 July	1 August
30 January	30 January	1 August	2 August
Lenin's Day	31 January	30 August	31 August
1 February	1 February	1 September	1 September
30 February	2 March	30 September	30 September
1 March	3 March	1 October	1 October
30 March	1 April	30 October	30 October
1 April	2 April	1 November	31 October
30 April	1 May	7 November	6 November
2 Days of Workers' First of May	2nd and 3rd of May	2 Days of Industry	7th and 8th of November
1 May	4 May	8 November	9 November
30 May	2 June	30 November	1 December
1 June	3 June	1 December	2 December
30 June	2 July	30 December	31 December
1 July	3 July		

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