

# ROADS TO SOURCES RUS MATERIALS CONCEPTS

A panel discussion with Alexandra Vukovich (London), Leif Inge Ree Petersen (Trondheim), Monica White (Nottingham) and Tonicha Mae Upham (Århus)

**Wednesday, November 9, 2022, 16:30–18:00**

The Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul  
Istiklal Caddesi 247, Tünel–Beyoğlu  
Register at [event@sri.org.tr](mailto:event@sri.org.tr)



In the ninth century there emerged along the Dniepr river systems of current-day Ukraine, a series of territorial powers – amalgams of Scandinavian traders, raiders and settlers, of local Slav and Khazar power structures, of cultural impulses from Byzantium, the Islamic world, and Central Asia.

The Byzantines called them Rus, a term which initially pertained to all Northerners, including the many Scandinavians that proceeded down to Constantinople to sell their goods or take up service in the famous Varangian Guard. Arabic sources indicate the presence of “Rusiyyah” all over the river roads from the Baltic down to the Black and Caspian Seas. Nordic sagas, runestones, art and material culture testify to centuries during which the Rus states acted as a major point of gravity to Northerners, and especially their largest, richest and most powerful city – Kyiv.

The name Rus lives on in the current state names of Russia and Belarus. Its origins became hotly debated already among eighteenth-century Russian historians, and its legacy has resurfaced in Russian propaganda before and during the invasion of Ukraine. In connection with the launch of the digital exhibition “Nordic Tales, Byzantine Paths”, the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul invites four scholars of Nordic, Byzantine, Eastern European and Middle Eastern history to discuss the ways and pitfalls of approaching Rus history at a time when it is being held hostage to simplification and distortion – but also to present their own research in the field and show what incredibly rich insights it can offer to the multi-layered realities of early Medieval Eurasia.