

TERRA SEBVS

ACTA MVSEI SABESIENSIS

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PREFACE

This volume of studies is the result of a collaboration between “Ioan Raica” Municipal Museum of Sebeș, Kazan Federal University and the “1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia. The collaboration gave several university scholars and researchers from the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan the opportunity to publish the results of their research on Russia and nearby regions from the early Middle Ages to the present day. Grouped in several sections, the 32 articles written by 48 authors with very diverse institutional backgrounds have been drawn up in accordance with the publication rules of the *Terra Sebus: Acta Musei Sabesiensis* journal, i.e. they use abbreviated quotes in the footnotes and then provide details at the end of the articles, under the bibliographical abbreviations. Given that the volume is an English language publication, it was decided that the Russian titles be written in Russian but with Latin letters instead of Cyrillic, to facilitate their understanding by readers who use English.

With a surface area of over 17 million square kilometres, today’s Russian Federation is 70 times bigger than the United Kingdom, which makes it a “geographical dimension” hard to ignore in the contemporary world, but also difficult to understand, especially by West Europeans and North Americans. Without claiming that this volume has fully encapsulated the long and fascinating history of Russia, we can say that it does provide the reader with unique information. It analyses cultural, economic, social and political aspects of the big evolutionary stages of the Russian state, which has had several names along the centuries - The Great Principality of Moscow, The Russian Empire, The Soviet Union and The Russian Federation. The *Miscellanea* chapter also includes studies whose diversity exceeds the geographic and cultural borders of Russia and approach interesting aspects of the lives of certain Asian communities (slavery and elites in early Turkic society, the typology of culture during the Ming dynasty) and aspects from the medieval history of Western Europe (hagiographies, the study of castles).

It may easily be observed that although located at the periphery of Europe but in the centre of Eurasia, the Russian space is more closely linked to the European continent than to the Orient, as proven by the