
REVIEWS

GROSSFÜRST UND THRONFOLGER: DIE NACHFOLGEPOLITIK DER MOSKAUER HERRSCHER BIS ZUM ENDE DES RJURIKIDENHAUSES. By *Peter Nitsche*. *Kölner Historische Abhandlungen*. vol. 21. Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1972. xiii, 361 pp. DM 66.

Dr. Nitsche's book is a study of the ways in which the princes of Moscow, from Dmitrii Donskoi to Ivan IV, tried to arrange an orderly succession to their thrones. Its first chapters are primarily studies of the grand princely wills and treaties with an eye to succession arrangements and the changing ranking and titles of the heirs. The later sections deal more intensively with chronicle accounts and diplomatic reports of political crises in which the issue of the succession or the ambitions of possible successors played an important role. The nature of these varied sources leads the author into considerable confusion: through the greater part of his work, Nitsche seems unsure whether he is dealing with changing judicial norms and categories or with a series of concrete political crises. For although he states that there were no fixed rules governing the succession, his analysis of the wills and treaties seems to be a search for just such rules or norms.

At the center of his discussion lies the old distinction between succession through primogeniture or through seniority within the grand princely family—that is, whether the eldest son or the eldest living brother of the deceased was to succeed him. As Nitsche sees it, successive rulers wavered between these two principles in making concrete succession arrangements. By somewhat strained conjectures, indeed, he argues that succession by seniority was a live theoretical option until the reign of Vasiliï III.

In spite of the underlying confusion, there is much of merit in Nitsche's book. For the most part, his scholarship is impressive, his arguments are subtle, and his common sense cuts through many of the mystifications of his predecessors. In discussing the princely wills and treaties, for example, he makes interesting attempts to redate several important documents by pointing to inexplicable inconsistencies in the titles of the successors to the throne. A skeptical reviewer, however, is disturbed by his assumption that, at a time when the grand prince's own titles were in flux, official documents referred to his designated successor with complete consistency. Nitsche also makes a number of interesting observations on the succession crises of the reigns of Ivan III and Ivan IV. In this regard, his treatment of the revolt of Andrei of Staritsa in 1537 is particularly successful. His handling of Ivan III's succession problems is sound, but suffers from his failure to use Kashtanov's recent study of the problem, a work which he cites in the bibliography.

In the final analysis, Nitsche's work seems to be too much ado about too little. All too often, the author appears simply to pile up all extant contemporary references to the successor to the throne and his titles. Much more serious is his failure to ground his discussion of the succession firmly and consistently in the concrete political circumstances of the time. Indeed, the most successful parts of the book are precisely those in which he does attempt to analyze political conflicts, including some which have only the most tangential connection with his main theme. The strong points of Nitsche's work, then, make it all the more regrettable

that a scholar of his caliber expended much erudition and effort for a very modest reward.

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IVAN GROZNYJ IM SPIEGEL DER AUSLÄNDISCHEN DRUCKSCHRIFTEN SEINER ZEIT: EIN BEITRAG ZUR GESCHICHTE DES WESTLICHEN RUSSLANDBILDES. By *Andreas Kappeler*. Geist und Werk der Zeiten: Arbeiten aus dem Hist. Seminar der Universität Zürich, no. 33. Bern: Herbert Lang. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1972. 298 pp. sFr. 44, paper.

Andreas Kappeler is primarily concerned with describing the image of Ivan IV Groznyi created in the sixteenth-century continental European printed pamphlets and books dealing with Muscovy, works that provide facts not found in other sources and that had a significant influence on subsequent perceptions of the tsar in the West and in Russia itself. A second aim of the author is to describe and analyze the most important items of such Western *Rossica*, since they have not been studied in their entirety and are in most cases extremely rare today. Kappeler's book will be valuable both as a reference guide to this literature—the coverage seems to be exhaustive—and as a stimulus to further research.

Given his stated aims, there are a number of things the author probably should have done, although in the process it would have meant writing a much longer book. The most important criticisms of Kappeler's work have been detailed by A. L. Goldberg (in *Istoriia SSSR*, 1973, no. 5, pp. 209–11). For one thing, the book's value as a reference guide is somewhat diminished because Kappeler fails to indicate in sufficient detail the dependence of one author's work on another's, or the relation of one edition of a pamphlet to the other editions of the same. Establishing what was the original, unedited version is significant if such publications are to be used as sources. A second failing of the book is that the author avoids evaluating the historicity of the material in the publications he analyzes and describes. Although it is interesting to know the image that Ivan's Western contemporaries had of him, by itself this image does the modern historian little good. Kappeler does indicate where it may have influenced political decisions in the West, but too infrequently does he tell us when one or another item of information is unique, apparently accurate, or the like. Obviously his painstaking research has led him to do much of the necessary comparison of the Western sources with Russian ones to establish the veracity of the former, but too few of the results of such comparison appear in the book.

Among the numerous interesting observations which Kappeler makes is that sixteenth-century *Turcica*, that extraordinarily abundant Western literature about the Ottomans, clearly influenced the contemporary *Rossica*. One wishes that the author had elaborated on this point to indicate precisely how much of the image of Ivan may have derived from the image of the sultan or a more generalized view of any ruler of a "rude and barbarous kingdom."

The very important question of precisely how the sixteenth-century image of Ivan influenced subsequent historiography and popular conceptions has been left by the author for further study, which one hopes he will pursue.

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