

BORIS GODUNOV: TSAR OF RUSSIA. By *S. F. Platonov*. Translated from the Russian by *L. Rex Pyles*. Introduction by *John T. Alexander*. The Russian Series, vol. 10. Gulf Breeze, Fla.: Academic International Press, 1973. xlii, 230 pp.

IVAN THE TERRIBLE. By *S. F. Platonov*. Edited and Translated by *Joseph L. Wieczynski*. Introduction by *Richard Hellie*. The Russian Series, vol. 28. Gulf Breeze, Fla.: Academic International Press, 1974. xxxviii, 166 pp.

In the 1920s, keeping faith with his long-time commitment to the diffusion and popularization of accurate historical knowledge, S. F. Platonov produced a series of short works on important themes in Russian history. Two of these, *The Time of Troubles* and *Moscow and the West*, were recently published in English translation, and now two others of the same genre have been made available. Since the historical literature in English on Muscovite Russia is all too sparse, the appearance of these volumes is welcome. Joseph Wieczynski's translation of *Ivan the Terrible* gets high marks for accuracy and readability. L. Rex Pyles's rendition of *Boris Godunov* is passable, but marked by some awkwardness and occasional errors. Both translators reproduce Platonov's few notes to the texts, and contribute explanatory notes of their own for the benefit of the student reader. The value of their work would have been enhanced if they had given some indication of how Platonov's data and judgments have stood the test of time.

By way of an introduction to *Boris Godunov*, John Alexander contributes a well-researched, brisk, and informative account of Platonov's life and work—perhaps the most substantial to date in any language. Richard Hellie's introduction to *Ivan the Terrible* is somewhat less successful. His characterization of Platonov's political orientation and historical outlook would have profited from an examination of Alexander's better-informed portrayal, published the year before. I am puzzled by his judgment that Platonov "showed little interest in philosophies of history. . . . Instead he was concerned with the determination of the scientific laws or regularities responsible for historical events" (p. x). Hellie devotes the greater part of his introduction to the protracted historiographical controversy over whether Ivan's policies were fundamentally rational or pathological. As against Platonov's qualified alignment with the rational school, Hellie presents the case for Ivan as a paranoid. Curiously, although he refers to the recent exhumation and medical examination of Ivan's remains (p. xxxiv), he neglects to mention the suggestive finding that Ivan suffered from a physical ailment that kept him in excruciating pain much of the time.

Those familiar with Platonov's work on the Time of Troubles, either his monumental study first published in 1899 or the abbreviated, more popular volume of 1923, will recognize many of the leading ideas advanced in these books. Platonov's conceptualization in both is identical. After surveying the historiography of the subject, he arrives at the conclusion that past studies exaggerated the role of personality, and that a better understanding emerged as historians shifted their attention to the chief problems and characteristics of the eras concerned. He himself strives to envisage the principals (whose qualities he tries to determine by carefully sifting the evidence) pitted against forces and circumstances with which they must contend. Ivan achieves certain key objectives, but undercuts his achievements with his barbarous methods. Boris endeavors to rule generously and wisely, but is defeated by forces beyond his control.

Platonov's narratives sometimes have an old-fashioned ring, but they are basically clear and well told, embellished with well-chosen excerpts from the sources, and the student will find these works engaging and rewarding. His interpretations are usually persuasive, though not always. At one point (p. 112), for example, Platonov remarks that Boris "served no private or class interests"; yet he later (p. 123) contradicts himself, when he states that the sovereign "acted in the interests of the middle classes of Muscovite society at the expense of those of the aristocracy and the enserfed masses."

One final point, of another order, may be noted. Into the popular-survey style of *Boris Godunov*, Platonov injects a lengthy, scholarly examination of charges that Boris plotted the murder of Tsarevich Dmitrii, and subsequently contrived his own election to the throne. Carefully weighing the evidence, he rejects both counts, and thus establishes the book's *raison d'être*. Taking his stand against the malicious indictments of Godunov scattered through the chronicle literature, and perpetuated by a pleiade of historians, by Pushkin's drama and Moussorgsky's opera based on it, Platonov declares in the closing lines of the book: "It is the duty of historical scholarship to restore the character of Boris Godunov."

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ARCHIVALISCHE FUNDSTÜCKE ZU DEN RUSSISCH-DEUTSCHEN BEZIEHUNGEN: ERIK AMBURGER ZUM 65. GEBURTSTAG. Edited by *Hans-Jürgen Krüger*. Osteuropastudien der Hochschulen des Landes Hessen, series 1. Giessener Abhandlungen zur Agrar- und Wirtschaftsfor-schung des europäischen Ostens, vol. 59. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1973. viii, 199 pp. DM 48, paper.

This collection of essays is part of a series that has produced many distinguished volumes, and it is dedicated to a scholar of Baltic descent who greatly contributed both to our knowledge of Russian-Western economic and cultural relations and to our documentation of the history of Russian administrative personnel. Besides the editor's preface on Erik Amburger, the volume contains twelve studies, mostly of a *Quellenkunde* character, and includes some heretofore unpublished source materials from the end of the seventeenth century (1667) on. All these materials (except an essay by Dietger Langer on K. D. Kavelin's memorandum concerning the land reform and the publication by Peter Scheibert of a 1712 letter by Peter the Great) pertain at least in some respects to Western relations, testimonies, or influences (and, contrarily to the title of the book, not only German ones). Even the essays on the two Baltic scholarly figures, the great naturalist Karl Ernst von Baer and the paleontologist Christian Heinrich Pander (both members of the Russian Academy of Sciences), undoubtedly belong to that category.

Two studies concern Russian foreign relations: Hans Schenk's essay on the unsuccessful French mediation in the Northern war and Boris Lukin's contribution to the history of Russian and Latin American scholarly relations from 1717 to 1915. There is a comparative study by Hans-Jürgen Krüger of the Russian diary of Ludwig Gruno, prince of Hessen-Homburg (1723), with Bergholz's classic testimony on Peter the Great's epoch. There is a study by Otto-Heinrich Elias of Wilhelm Hetling's testimony in French on Emperor Paul's coronation