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would be especially relevant given the gendered religious rhetoric in Russia's current war against Ukraine. That war also gives the topics in this excellent book a grim resonance. One might take some consolation from the notion of demilitarization. In times of peace, bellicose saints and liturgical services to them could be toned down (compare the peace-celebrating joint service for the transfer of relics of Alexander Nevsky and the Treaty of Nystadt (1721) to the venomous one composed for the 1709 Battle of Poltava). In their day, Princes Boris and Gleb became political ideals precisely because they instructed Rus' princes not to fight one another (a model rejected by Vladimir Putin). When Christians become serious about reconsidering the glorifying of war, nation, and violence in their traditions, the essays in this volume will be an excellent – and chastening – place to start.

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The Secret of Secrets – The East Slavic Version. Introduction, Text, Annotated Translation, and Slavic Index

Ed. by W. F. Ryan and Moshe Taube. London: Warburg Institute, 2019. XIII, 544 S., 1 Abb. = Warburg Institute Studies and Texts, 7. ISBN: 978-1-908590-73-2.

The pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum Secretorum*, consisting of two Latin translations of *Sirr al-Asrār* (The Secret of Secrets) written in Arabic in the 10th century, was a very popular book to copy prior to the Early Modern period. Pretending to be Aristotle's letters of political, medical, and occult advice to his pupil, Alexander the Great, it is summarizing all the knowledge necessary for a mighty ruler and was composed like a medieval encyclopaedia. The work as translated into Hebrew is known under the title *Sod ha-Sodoth* (The Secret of Secrets), and in the mid-15th century, the Hebrew text was translated in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania into the western variant of Eastern Slavonic as *Tajnaja Tajnykh* (The Secret of Secrets; it is likely that the work was mentioned in Slavonic under other names as well). The Slavonic text contains interpolations from other Hebrew works translated from Arabic, and some additional material, and it seems that the *Tajnaja Tajnykh* was somehow tainted by the already translated Slavonic reworkings of the *Alexanderroman* (the Alexander Romance). The history of the Slavonic text of the *Tajnaja Tajnykh* as a translation of the Hebrew *Sod ha-Sodoth* was overlooked or mistreated in the previous scholarship, and now, this bilingual text edition with extensive notes and indices, a monumental and industrious product of Will Ryan and Moshe Taube's encyclopaedic learning, interdisciplinary insights, and perfect scholarship, finally fills this gap. One can be certain that this edition will remain the standard edition of the Slavonic version.

This impressive book of 544 pages contains a well-written Introduction (pp. 1–82, with a list of existing manuscripts on pp. 69–80); the original Slavonic texts as established by the editors and translated into English, both with copious notes, (pp. 84–369); a Bibliography (pp. 370–379); and a Slavic index consisting of 128 pages with every Slavonic word cross-referenced with its Hebrew

counterpart and textual citations. The authors worked with 27 Slavonic manuscripts of *Tajnaja Tajnykh* (dated to the period between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries), 43 Hebrew manuscripts of *Sod ha-Sodoth*, many of them by Byzantine and Karaite hands (dated to the 14th to the 19th centuries), with references to 7 Arabic manuscripts of *Sirr al-Asrār* (from the 12th to the 18th centuries).

The translation of *Sod ha-Sodoth* into Slavonic seems to be one of the results of the activities of Zechariah b. Aharon ha-Kohen of Kyiv, who was active between 1454 and 1485 (and possibly later; cf. pp. 16–24), and/or Moses b. Jacob of Kyiv (1448–1520) (cf. pp. 25–30, p. 39), later the founder of the united Rabbanite community in the Crimea. Much can be said and, indeed, was said and will be said, about these two illustrious men.

“There is a strong probability that” both the *Tajnaja Tajnykh* and “the Logika of the Judaizers” (ed. by Moshe Taube) “were the work of the same translator(s)” (p. 59). The work “was first translated [...] for its political and ethical message and for its medical advice” (p. 69). Directly or indirectly, the translated text served, for a while, as a stimulating factor in ideological disputes surrounding Ivan IV of Muscovy (r. 1533–1584), with “echoes [...] in Ivan IV’s political opinions” (p. 63), and even Ivan’s appellative, “Grozny” (awe-inspiring, but generally translated as “Terrible”) ultimately goes back to the Slavic translation of the “Jewish text translated from a tenth-century Muslim pseudepigraph attributed to Aristotle” (p. 62). The political advice of the book “intended for either the ruling princes in Kiev or Ivan III of Muscovy” (r. 1462–1505) “was particularly relevant in the turbulent reign of Ivan IV” and “scholars have seen possible influence [...] in the works of Maxim the Greek, Ivan Peresvetov, and Prince Andrej Kurbskij” (p. 61); in 2010, the translated composition was “hailed as the foundation of Russian legal thought and constitutionalism” (p. 68).

The history of this pseudo-Aristotelian composition and its many translations is a good story in itself; the text, itself, is an excellent read for a modern reader, too. Congratulations go to Will Ryan and Moshe Taube for their excellent bilingual edition.

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Verschwürungsdenken und Machtkalkül. Herrschaft in Russland, 1866–1953

Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019. IX, 259 S. = Ordnungssysteme.

Studien zur Ideengeschichte der Neuzeit, 53. ISBN: 978-3-11-061647-7.

Eine bekannte antike Parabel besagt, dass der Tyrann Dionysios von Syrakus einem neidischen Günstling namens Damokles angeboten habe, einen Tag lang das Leben eines Herrschers zu führen. Nachdem Damokles reichlich vom herrschaftlichen Luxus gekostet hatte, befahl Dionysios, ein Schwert über dem Nacken des Mannes aufzuhängen. Gehalten wurde es von einem Rosshaar. Damokles’ Appetit war verständlicherweise verdorben. In dieser Parabel, die das Spannungsver-