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MATTHEW P. ROMANIELLO: The Elusive Empire. Kazan and the Creation of Russia, 1552–1671. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012. XIII, 296 S., 6 Abb., 5 Ktn., 9 Tab. ISBN: 978-0-299-28514-2.

The conquest of the Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan in 1552 and 1556 by Ivan IV with the incorporation of a significant portion of a non-Slavic and non-Orthodox population marked the beginning of Muscovy's imperial status. Since this fact is obvious and fairly undisputed, scholars have paid little attention on how and why the Russian empire building actually succeeded after the end of the military operations. Matthew Romaniello fills this gap with his weighty study which is largely based on archival sources. He demonstrates that it took more than a hundred years until these territories became fully integrated into the Muscovite tsardom under more or less the same legal and social conditions. This proposition counters the image Muscovite history writers had drawn in the 16th century by claiming that Ivan had achieved a somewhat devastating victory of Orthodoxy over Islam. This view was, according to Romaniello, rather a symbolic empire-construction directed at the Muscovite heartland, while Muscovite rule pervaded the Tatar territories only slowly. Romaniello, therefore, concludes that in relation to its symbolic claims the imperial character of Muscovy after 1552 was rather "elusive".

Romaniello outlines his argument in six chronologic-thematic chapters. Initially, he explains that the Muscovite imperial idea derived from both Byzantine and Mongol legacies. While the tsars took the symbolic language from Byzantium, they adopted their ruling practices (centralization, administration, military) from the Mongols (pp. 22–23). This categorization is catchy, but it should not be overlooked that some of the "Byzantine" symbols like the double-headed eagle were adopted from the West.

Romaniello explains the Muscovite empire-building with the model of a "composite monarchy": different territories with different structures are only loosely interconnected under the umbrella of a single monarch. This form of government which could be found in other early modern states as well was not intended, but born out of necessity due to the lack of resources. The long-term goal, Romaniello expounds, remained to create a centralized and unified empire. Typically for this approach was the construction of defense-lines with fortresses. These were designed to show the claim to territories which, however, remained largely under Tatar control. This

measure was also accompanied by the foundation of monasteries.

The second chapter addresses the problem of "conflicted authorities". Romaniello describes the chancellery system with the *Priказ Kazanskogo dvortsa* in charge of the Tatar territories, the local administration headed by *voevody* and *d'iaki*, and the ecclesiastical institutions which formed a parallel administration structure. He calls this a "cooperative competition" that helped to successfully pursue the imperial goals. He is, however, mistaken, when he states that Church officials were in charge of legal disputes like domestic violence and divorce even of the non-Orthodox population (pp. 77–78). Within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, three areas must be distinguished: the jurisdiction of the church (a) as institution (over the clergy), (b) as landowner ("feudal" rights over the local inhabitants), and (c) the jurisdiction over the entire population. The latter was granted by the Statute of Vladimir of 1113 and related mostly to what we today call family and inheritance law. But the jurisdiction of the Church in this field applied, of course, only to Christians. The non-Orthodox population was subjected to their own customary law, i.e. Muslims to the Sharia and the animists to the Great Yasa. Therefore, one may consider adding the representatives of the local traditions as a fourth conflicted authority.

The third chapter discusses the foreign implications following the conquest of Kazan and Astrakhan. Since Muscovy was now in control over the entire Volga River, she became an important and interesting partner in the international trade system. The fourth chapter is titled "Loyal Enemies". It explores how the defeated Tatar elites became subsequently integrated into the Muscovite state service and the societal order. While Tatars who had converted to Orthodoxy were, quite naturally, generally preferred, those who remained Muslims or animists did not suffer major disfavor. For their service to the tsar, they were equally granted *pomest'e* and, thus, could retain their social status. Romaniello points out that the *mestnichestvo*-system, usually blamed for its inefficiency, facilitated this integration process. The sixth chapter deals with "irregular subjects". This category refers to the non-elite, non-monastery or non-*pomest'e*-peasants: the *iasachnye liudi* who had a diverse ethnic background (Tatar, Mari, Chuvash, Mordvin, Udmurt). These people were obliged to pay a yearly tribute to the tsar, but lived in the vast territories more or less separated from the others. Romaniello shows that this arrangement was to the benefit of both the Muscovite state and the *iasachnye*

liudi and he suggests that even the Orthodox Church supported the confessional plurality. With the *Uložhenie* of 1649, however, their situation began to change, since the bondage of the peasants to the soil initiated a process which eventually transformed the *iasachnye liudi* into state peasants.

In the final chapter, Romaniello analyzes the impact of the Stepan Razin revolt on the Kazan region. It was crucial in this situation that the majority of the Tatars remained loyal to the tsar. This proved, according to Romaniello, the success of the tsar's security policy in the former khanate and its progressing integration into the Muscovite empire. This incident corresponded with more unifying measures. They had already begun with the *Uložhenie* which limited, for instance, the right of Muslim Tatars to have Orthodox peasants on their estates and they continued in the reign of Fedor Alekseevich with the reorganization of the *Prikaz*-system and the abolition of the *mestnichestvo* in 1680. But precisely because Romaniello is convincingly elaborating this process, it is not really evident, why he refers in the book title to the year 1671 in which the Razin revolt was suppressed. Romaniello clearly demonstrates that it were the reforms of Fedor Alekseevich which eventually adjusted the "colonial" regime over the

Kazan region to the universal state rule (p. 204).

But these are only minor objections. "The Elusive Empire" is, without any doubt, a significant contribution. It not only enhances our understanding of the Muscovite empire-building processes, it also provides useful insights into Muscovite central institutions. The book illustrates that it is most enlightening to look at them from the perspective of the periphery. Additionally, Romaniello lays a solid ground for further investigations and for comparative studies. It would be interesting to learn about similarities and differences of the developments between the Kazan and the Astrakhan regions. Also, the concept of a "composite sovereignty" calls for a comparison with other early modern empires. This European perspective might expose that all early modern empires were to a certain extent "elusive", thus making Russia not as much a special case within the European framework as it may seem. Finally, it is worth noting that the "imperial evolution" Romaniello describes was accomplished well before Peter the Great assumed power. Romaniello, therefore, adds a new and most important aspect to the conception of the "long 17th century" as a distinct period in Russian history.

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Rußlands Reformen und Reformer von Aleksandr II. bis Gorbačev und El'cin. Hrsg. von Leonid Luks, Nikolaus Lobkowitz, Alexei Rybakov, Andreas Umland und Gunter Dehnert. Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, 2011. 206 S., Abb. = Forum für osteuropäische Ideen- und Zeitgeschichte, 15 (2011), 2. ISBN: 978-3-412-20796-0.

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Russlands Reformen und Reformversuche beschäftigen weiterhin die Forschung, wie etwa die neue Langzeitstudie von Carol Scott Leonard über Agrarreformen von 1800 bis zur Gegenwart oder die Monographie von Larisa Zacharova über die Aufhebung der Leibeigenschaft zeigen. Die Reformen der spät- und postsowjetischen Ära harren überhaupt noch einer systematischen Erforschung. Den ersten Teil des besprochenen Themenhefts bilden acht Beiträge des im Titel genannten und von den Universitäten Eichstätt-Ingolstadt und Erlangen 2010 ebenda abgehaltenen Symposions. Die bekannten Reformer in Russland waren, wie die Koherausgeber Gunter Dehner und Leonid Luks in ihren Einleitungen fest-

halten, „fast ausschließlich Produkte des jeweils herrschenden Systems, das sie im Laufe ihrer Entwicklung als unbedingt reformbedürftig erkannten“ (S. 10), wobei Luks die notwendige Differenzierung zwischen der gespaltenen Gesellschaft des zarischen Russlands und der durch den Reißwolf der Revolution und des Stalinismus „homogenisierten“ sowjetischen einfordert. Zu diskutieren wäre ferner, wie grundlegend die totalitäre Staatsstruktur der Sowjetunion die Entfaltungsmöglichkeiten für Reformer veränderte und wo heute sinnvollerweise die Grenze zwischen Reformen und den viel zitierten „Revolutionen von oben“ zu ziehen ist. Während etwa Chruščëvs Entstalinisierung von Helmut Altrichter im Heft beleuchtet wird, sind Gorbačev und El'cin nicht eigens berücksichtigt.

Die gegenläufigen Strategien im späten Zarenreich, der drohenden Revolution entweder durch Reformen von oben zuvorkommen oder aber sie aber durch Restriktion zu unterdrücken, analysiert LUKS anhand zweier konträrer Persönlichkeiten: Während Finanzminister Sergej Witte den Staat durch Reformen wirtschaftlich konkurrenzfähig machen wollte und die Autokratie für die beste Regierungsform hielt, derart große Veränderungen einzu-