

that loved a good story at a time when the travel account was perhaps the most popular form of literature. Precisely in the decades on which Hennings focuses, European publishers doubled down on the theme of the exotic that had been ambient in travel literature since the sixteenth century (see Benjamin Schmidt's *Inventing Exoticism*, 2015). But it did not represent cultural or political reality. Hennings shows that these stereotypes did not reflect the cultural acuity of the Muscovite court nor prevent European peers from accepting early modern Russia into the family of European states.

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***Petr Velikii kak Zakonodatel': Issledovanie zakonodatel'nogo protsessa v Rossii v epokhu reform pervoi chetverti XVIII veka.*** By N. A. Voskresenskii. D. O. Serova, ed. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2017. 637 pp. Notes. Index. RUB 585, hard bound.  
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Historians of Russia may know of Nikolai Alekseevich Voskresenskii (1889–1948) because of his invaluable collection of Petrine legislative acts. Although only the first volume came out in 1945, it has been recognized as more thorough and reliable than the tsarist-era Complete Collection of Laws that he edited (*Zakonodatel'nye akty Petra I*, Moscow, 1945). Unfortunately, the rest of Voskresenskii's massive scholarly contribution remained unpublished, including a fascinating monograph on the law-making process under Peter the Great that has now been issued with an illuminating introduction by legal historian Dmitrii Olegovich Serov. Unfinished and debatable in some of its conclusions, this study is nonetheless of great interest not only to legal historians, but to all scholars interested in Peter the Great or the development of Russia's government and political culture. Equally fascinating—and particularly resonant today—is Voskresenskii's personal and professional biography, narrated in Serov's introduction.

Popular understanding of Peter's reign leaves little room for legality or legal rights, following influential interpretations of his government as either ad hoc and even chaotic (Vasilii Kliuchevskii and Pavel Miliukov) or proto-totalitarian (Evgenii Anisimov). Yet historians know very well that Peter was a prodigious legislator whose project to rebuild Russia's administrative machinery included a new court structure. Nonetheless, such scholars as Mikhail Bogoslovskii, Iurii Got'e, Claes Peterson, John LeDonne, and more recently Serov argued that Peter's legal reforms were incomplete and perhaps even misconceived, marred by lacunae and backtracking. Nancy Kollmann finds that criminal justice under Peter generally continued Muscovite practices, with some innovations such as public executions, meant to expand and secure Peter's absolutist power. At the same time, archival-based studies by Kollmann, as well as by Aleksandr Kamenskii, Olga Kosheleva, and other historians, reveal a vibrant legal culture in early imperial Russia that directly affected people's daily lives in diverse ways.

Voskresenskii's study contributes to this literature by focusing not on the details of individual legislative acts, but rather on lawmaking as a comprehensive process ranging from Peter's brainstorming and observations recorded in his private notebooks to lengthy drafting, editing, and publication procedures (Chapters I–VIII). The second half of the book (Chapters VIII–XII) consider the intellectual and political underpinnings of Peter's legislation, including his personal views, the influence of foreign models, and the question of whether Peter's lawmaking was spontaneous or

proceeded according to a coherent plan. The source material for the book is what lawyers call “legislative history,” but the underlying concern here is not the correct interpretation of particular statutes but rather understanding the practice of lawmaking as part of a Petrine ruling style and political culture.

Voskresenskii argues, first, that Peter personally initiated many of his laws and decrees and maintained formal overall control of the legislative process and, by implication, of his government (or, one may quibble, that he at least considered himself to be in overall control). This argument leads to the question of the intellectual underpinnings of his activity, examined in two lengthy chapters. Over-ambitiously given the space allotted, Voskresenskii seeks to correct Peter’s reputation for cruelty and reckless disregard for the human and economic costs of his modernization and of his subjects’ cultural sensibilities, arguing that legislative documents show Peter’s genuine attention to popular welfare and improvement, rather than abstract concern for state interests. Specialists will note that Voskresenskii explicitly privileges information gleaned from legislative history as opposed to foreigners’ accounts and diplomatic papers. While this overall argument is rather hagiographical in the manner typical of Soviet scholarship in the mid-1940s, it presents the tsar as a human being and an active politician as opposed to the proverbial “civilizing” force or mindless technician on the throne concerned solely with procuring cannon and uniforms.

The second set of arguments shows convincingly that Peter’s legislation was not a top-down imposition of ready-made texts but a genuine political process that involved private letters and petitions proposing and discussing legislation and included multiple drafts and complex revisions. Moreover, new laws included carefully drafted preambles, sometimes written by Peter personally, showing that the tsar and his officials considered it imperative to “sell” new legislation to the people and to make sure it was properly understood and interpreted. All of this contradicts much accepted wisdom about Peter’s reign, for example, Victor Zhivov’s view of Petrine legislation as a “cultural fiction,” that is, a set of rhetorical texts that were allegedly never meant to be used in practice. Given the importance ascribed to justifying, editing, and revising new laws, Voskresenskii’s book supports instead the more recent interpretation of Petrine politics offered by Paul Bushkovitch that emphasizes the enduring role of conflict and accommodation among powerful elite clans at Peter’s court.

In sum, Voskresenskii’s book shows its age but is still of great interest because it demonstrates that lawmaking was an organic element of Petrine politics, his “stuff of rule” every bit as much as, for example, the All-Drunken Assembly examined by Ernest Zitser. Mistakes and improvisations were obviously common, but taken together Peter’s body of legislation appears as neither peripheral and superficial nor ill-informed and haphazard. Voskresenskii undermines the myth that Petrine political culture was antithetical to law or considered it of secondary importance, or that it was imposed mechanistically from above on non-comprehending subjects.

Voskresenskii’s own experiences form an important background to the book. Considering how innovative and prodigious his archival research was, it is striking that Voskresenskii worked outside of the Soviet academic establishment, employed as a high school teacher in Leningrad and its environs. Accurately described by Serov as a heroic devotee (*podvizhnik*) of historical knowledge, Voskresenskii was nonetheless able to conduct research in his spare time and at his own expense. Voskresenskii was spared from the purges of academics in the 1930s, especially of those close to his early mentor Sergei Platonov, who had earlier refused to continue to sponsor him. He also continued to work through the siege of Leningrad and miraculously survived it. Ironically it was the Stalinist sudden interest in several carefully selected “great” figures of Russia’s past that allowed Voskresenskii to be partially and temporarily incorporated into the Soviet academy. He was finally allowed to defend his dissertation in

1944 and given an academic appointment at the influential Institute of Law in Moscow. Yet his nascent career was quickly stomped out, apparently because of professional rivalries: he was not allowed to continue to publish before his untimely death. This dramatic life story and the prospect of the publications Voskresenskii might have contributed to our field during his lifetime without these obstacles evokes our current academic climate, when approximately three-quarters of university teaching faculty in the US are contingent and therefore prevented from developing their full scholarly potential (let alone rewarding the investment of the universities that trained them). In this light, Voskresenskii's story is at once heartening and deeply depressing, but certainly not remote from our immediate professional concerns.

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***Russia: The Story of War.*** By Gregory Carleton. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2017. ix, 288 pp. Appendix. Notes. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Maps. \$29.95, hard bound.

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In *Russia: The Story of War*, Gregory Carleton convincingly argues that in the historical mythology of the nineteenth through twenty-first centuries especially, “Russia’s wars are pushed into a single frame of reference that, as held in collective memory, fosters a distinct national identity both born and bred in war” (3). He suggests that these “archetypal sets of causality, character types, scenarios, and outcomes” create a “neo-nationalist civic religion” in the Russian Federation today, and that these mythic tropes outlasted both the Romanov Dynasty and the Soviet era to dominate in present-day Russia. In an engaging and accessible way, Carleton explores the central Russian war myth while not flattening all Russian history into one narrative. He also examines the historical truths that the war myth elides, the western counter-myths of Russian conquest and expansionism, the events that have to be squeezed awkwardly into the myth, and internal Russian revisions and rejections of the myth. Carleton highlights numerous literary and historical sources to demonstrate the myth’s shape; while these sources are not comprehensive, they effectively sketch out the essence of the myth.

Carleton first explores the myth’s origins through Russia’s early history, including the Mongol invasion, Aleksandr Nevskii’s victories, and the Time of Troubles. He identifies the key aspects of the myth: the threat of encirclement and the reality of invasion; the bond to the Russian land, or *rodina*, that gives one birth; folk resistance to invasion by outsiders; Christ-like willingness to die for the *rodina* because “there is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (28). Mythic Russia sacrifices itself to save all of Europe from invaders such as the Mongols, and later Napoleon and Hitler. The second chapter explores the maturation of the myth primarily through narratives of the Napoleonic invasion. As a literary scholar, Carleton naturally gravitates toward Lev Tolstoi’s *War and Peace*, but also features other works such as Nikolai Karamzin’s histories as nineteenth century repositories of the myth.

Next Carleton skips over the first Soviet decades to consider the Second World War as the centerpiece of the modern war myth and of contemporary Russian civic religion. In a particularly well-crafted chapter, Carleton lays out how from 1945 to the present, Soviet and Russian authors and filmmakers have both upheld the war myth and undercut it. Post-*glasnost*’ “revisionist” works such as Viktor Astafev’s 1994 novel *The Damned and the Dead* emphasized “futility, waste, betrayal” (97), and called