
REVIEWS

RUSSIAN INSTITUTIONS AND CULTURE UP TO PETER THE GREAT.

By *Marc Szeftel*. Preface by *Donald W. Treadgold*. London: Variorum Reprints, 1975. 374 pp. £13.50. \$37.45.

Russian Institutions and Culture up to Peter the Great is a summary title for Professor Marc Szeftel's republished thirteen journal articles and other studies. The pieces span a quarter of a century, from 1949 to 1973, and they are reproduced exactly as originally presented, with the result that the book contains a great variety of paginations and formats. Also, appropriately for those who know Professor Szeftel and his work, the contributions are in three languages, and they appeared originally in diverse publications in three countries, although seven of the thirteen, including the last six, come from the *Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin* in Brussels, a scholarly society and series in which the author has played such a prominent part. In addition, the volume contains a personal tribute by Professor Donald W. Treadgold and a general index.

The first item, a meticulous study of "The Vseslav Epos," is followed by the lengthy "Review: The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text (S. H. Cross and O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor)," written for *Speculum*, and an appreciation of "Aspects of Feudalism in Russian History," part of the well-known volume, *Feudalism in History*, edited by Rushton Coulborn. Subsequent pieces range in similar fashion, from the specific, including a valuable obituary, to the general. They are, in order: "La condition légale des étrangers dans la Russie novgorodo-kievienne," "Pamiati A. A. Ekka," "Some Reflections on the Particular Characteristics of the Russian Historical Process," "Joseph Volotsky's Political Ideas," "La participation des assemblées populaires dans le gouvernement central de la Russie depuis l'époque kiévienne jusqu'à la fin du XVIII^e siècle," "Les principautés russes avant l'ascension de Moscou (IX^e-XV^e siècles)," "La monarchie absolue dans l'Etat moscovite et l'Empire russe (fin XV^e siècle-1905)," "The History of Suretyship in Old Russian Law," "La formation et l'évolution de l'Empire russe jusqu'en 1918," and "The Legal Condition of the Foreign Merchants in Muscovy."

Professor Szeftel is a historian's historian. His work is characterized by a remarkable expertness, clarity, and precision. To be sure, the reader is free to disagree with the author concerning many points under discussion—although at the reader's own risk, for few specialists are as well-informed as Professor Szeftel in matters which he chooses to expound. In any case, a brief review is not the place to engage in specific arguments. Rather, it is important to stress in conclusion, that Professor Szeftel, through his teacher Alexander Eck and especially through his own study of historical literature, belongs in the main line of the Russian prerevolutionary historical and general academic tradition. It is particularly pleasant to note the presence and influence of that tradition at a time when the study of pre-Petrine Russia is being established in the West, notably in the United States.

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