

according to time, place, and personalities. Grinev details the heated disagreements among the RAC, different imperial ministries, and educated bystanders on the potential sale of Alaska. Here one might hope for even more context on the lively public debate that emerged during Russia's Era of Great Reforms. Grinev dismisses Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich as an "intransigent" (231) critic and "irreconcilable enemy" (227) of the RAC, for instance, while downplaying the intense national conversation the Grand Duke instigated and oversaw in *Morskoi sbornik*, the journal of his own Naval Ministry. Briefly and unexpectedly, the fate of Russian America rose to national attention on the pages of the journal. There are missing voices in Grinev's analysis, too: Creoles and Native Alaskans appear in the book primarily as objects of policy rather than subjects of ideas and actions. The Orthodox Church, both cooperative and competitive with the RAC, similarly receives relatively little analysis.

In sum, the prolific and insightful Grinev brings a wealth of thought and research to this study of the Russian American colonies and presents it in a clear, concise, and well-documented way. The book and its prequel volumes will be invaluable for introductory readers seeking a readable and intelligent overview. Grinev also provides illustrations and helpful appendices, including translated primary sources and a glossary. Advanced readers will find fruitful research trails to explore in Grinev's endnotes and bibliography. The organizing concept of politarism, however rough, does introduce a comparative framework for Russian America in its global context for scholars of Russia and empire to refute or refine.

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Poslednii Pol'skii Korol': Koronatsiia Nikolaia I v Varshave v 1829 g. i Pamiat' o Russko-Pol'skikh Voinakh XVII–nachala XIX v. By Ekaterina Boltunova. *Historia Rossica*. Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2022. vi, 560 pp. Appendixes. Bibliography. Index. Plates. ₺1140, hard bound.

doi: 10.1017/slr.2024.60

This book deals with a difficult episode for Russian historiography—the coronation of a Russian Orthodox tsar in Catholic Poland. The book is devoted to a challenging scenario in Russian imperial history, when the conservative Tsar Nicholas I, contrary to his views and feelings, decided on a second coronation. In 1826, in Moscow, he was crowned the Russian Tsar. In 1829, in Warsaw, he was crowned King of Poland, already being the Emperor of Russia.

The content of the book is much broader than its title. It focuses on key episodes of Russian-Polish relations, or rather the difficult topic of imperial strategies toward a suppressed, subjugated Poland. The book is in two parts, each of which could have been a separate monograph. The first part describes the motives behind the coronation, the preparation of regalia, manifestos, the script itself, and the outcome of the coronation. The second part describes the reception of the Polish question during different periods of Russian history. This second part extends the scope of the book's problems. In reality, the author dwells not only on a particular episode of Nicholas I's rule, but gives a detailed analysis, based on numerous sources (including interesting archival data), concerning the manifestos, opinions and correspondences of the three brothers, the emperors—Aleksandr, Konstantin, and Nikolai.

Chap. 1 recounts the motives behind the coronation of 1829 and the complicated and contradictory feelings of Nicholas I, who had to keep his promise to Aleksandr to respect the Polish constitution and to preserve traditions, including his special status

within the empire. The analysis of the relationship between Nikolai and Konstantin Pavlovich, the viceroy of Poland, is extremely important and compelling. Chap. 2 deals with the preparation for the coronation, the selection of regalia, and the design of the ritual itself. For Nikolai, already crowned in the Orthodox rite, there was the problem of the legitimacy of a second coronation in the Catholic rites. As a result, “the coronation was shaped as a kind of symbiosis of Orthodox and Catholic rituals” (155), with the obvious dominance of Catholic symbolic scenarios and gestures (Chap. 3).

The lack of ideological or mythological legitimization for the inclusion of the Polish kingdom in the Russian empire was already evident in the era of Alexander I, who motivated the reshaping of Europe by establishing a balance of powers. Unable to find suitable mythologies or symbolic figures, the Russian government, as shown in Chap. 4, reduced the ideological composition of the ceremony—in manifestos—to an attempt to put a “cloak of oblivion” over all the errors of history (205). Of exceptional interest is Chap. 5, which analyzes numerous Russian and Polish sources, expressing an assessment of the coronation and its significance for both sides. Materials from Polish sources make it clear that the Russian Emperor, Alexander I, was perceived sympathetically by the Polish side, while Russian society and the political elite did not share positive feelings about rewarding Poland with rights the Russians did not have.

Chaps. 6 and 7 focus on Alexander’s efforts to diminish the memory of Polish legions’ participation in the Napoleonic campaign of 1812. In his manifestos, Alexander I attempted to erase the image of Poland as the enemy from historical memory, to veil the negative connotations by appealing to the Christian thesis of humility and forgiveness. Extremely interesting is Chap. 8, which discusses the naming of Poland as part of the Russian empire, as well as the official title of the Russian emperor himself. If official Russian papers referred to the annexed lands as “Tsardom of Poland,” in accordance with the tradition adopted back in the sixteenth century, the same documents translated into Polish contained the term “kingdom,” and “cesarsko-krolewski” was taken for the translation of the title in Poland (396).

Chap. 9 tells of the reception of the Time of Troubles in Russia, as well as the peculiarities of Emperor Nicholas’s route upon his arrival in Warsaw in 1829: the Russian Tsar found himself all the time inside the symbolic space associated with the Polish victories over the Russians in the early seventeenth century. Nicholas I, who emphasized his “duty” towards Poland in spite of his contentious “feeling,” earned neither sympathy nor gratitude from the Polish public. Not by chance, therefore, a year after his coronation the Polish uprising broke out, during which on January 25, 1831, an act to depose Nikolai and ban representatives of the Romanov dynasty to the Polish throne was adopted (Chap. 10). Thus, one ceremonial and pseudo-liberal episode of the scenario of a solemn coronation in 1829 was quickly replaced by a routine imperial picture of suppression.

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Mennonites in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union: Through Much Tribulation. By Leonard G. Friesen. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022. xix, 401 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Maps. \$42.95, paper.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2024.61

Leonard Friesen’s book provides an expansive history of Mennonite communities from their initial settlements in imperial Russia to their near universal emigration in