

Mathuber does a meticulous job of researching her topic, making abundant use of archival materials as well as of secondary sources, and branching out, when appropriate, into discussions of royal imposture in western European traditions. Paradoxically, this is both a major strength and an occasional weakness. On the one hand, readers will profit from comprehensive treatments of the who, what, when, where, how, and why of Russian royal imposture. On the other, they will occasionally be frustrated by the overabundance of detail; the book originated in a dissertation and retains some of that genre's trappings. More than one discussion hares off in a fascinating but ultimately distracting direction, and Mathuber's treatment of secondary sources can be unduly prolonged and finicky. From time to time readers become entangled in the trees at the expense of the forest. That said, the digressions are always penetrating and informative.

In summary, while readers may disagree with some of *Körperkommunikation's* operating assumptions, they will undoubtedly be grateful for its discussions of lesser known aspects of *samozvanstvo* as well as for the new perspectives it brings to bear on better known ones.

MARCIA A. MORRIS
Georgetown University

Regiony Rossiiskoi imperii: Identichnost', reprezentatsiia, (na)znachenie. Ed.

Ekaterina Boltunova and Willard Sunderland. *Historia Rossica*. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2021. 304 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Illustrations. Tables.

Maps. ₴540, hard bound.

doi: 10.1017/slr.2024.58

Regiony Rossiiskoi imperii, edited by Ekaterina Boltunova and Willard Sunderland, discusses the history of various regions of the Russian empire between the 1760s and 1910s, including central Russia, the Urals, Siberia, and the Caucasus. It understands regions as constructs, dynamic and changeable systems of political, cultural, social, and economic relations, and investigates how they were produced and changed. As formulated in the introduction by Willard Sunderland, the book sought to further develop a regional perspective on the Russian empire, building on the research by Anatolii Remnev, to whom the book is dedicated. One of the volume's central arguments, formulated in Sunderland's introduction (26) and reaffirmed throughout the book, is that regional histories were intricately connected to those of the imperial center and the empire as a whole.

The twelve research chapters were organized into five parts. The first two chapters offer broader outlooks. Vladislav Boiarchenkov investigates the development of a regionalist approach to Russian history in the 1850s–60s by Afanasii Shchapov, Mykola Kostomarov, and other intellectuals who opposed statist and centralist perspectives. Boiarchenkov concludes that they did not succeed in establishing solid foundations for such an approach. Katherine Pickering Antonova offers a regional outlook on economic development, focusing on territorialized textile production in European Russia, and argues against a teleological understanding of industrialization.

The ensuing two chapters investigate regional aspects of social hierarchies. Olga Glagoleva studied the participation of Moscow, Tula, and Orel provincial nobility in the elections to the Legislative Commission in 1767. She demonstrates that it had no single mode: whereas some nobles preferred to vote in Moscow and St. Petersburg, others opted for using the elections for local self-organization. Ekaterina Boltunova discusses the transportation of Alexander I's remains from Taganrog to St. Petersburg

in 1826. She argues that although on the level of symbols, the rites in different provinces demonstrated standardization and hence coherence of the empire, in performative terms, they revealed diverse social structures.

Four chapters discuss the conceptualization and representation of individual regions. Mark A. Soderstrom analyzes Petr Slotvsov's understanding of Siberia. Although Slotvsov, an imperial official and historian who was active in the first half of the nineteenth century, was later portrayed as a predecessor of Siberian Regionalists, Soderstrom concludes that his vision was largely centralist and etatist. Amiran Urushadze investigates the context of government reform in the Caucasus in 1837–41, which was supposed to make it closer to central Russia. He convincingly demonstrates that its failure, rooted in the poor knowledge of the region, was not solely the responsibility of the imperial bureaucrat Pavel Gan, but of the central government as a whole, including Nicholas I. Aleksei Volvenko discusses the renaming of the Land of the Don Host into the Region in 1870, as part of its transformation into a "standard" province. Despite the expectations of ruling elites, it faced no opposition in the region, most likely due to the simultaneous reform of property rights that favored regional officers and bureaucrats. Sergei Liubichankovskii studies the image of the Orenburg Province in the reports of its governors in 1885–1914. He concludes that after the abolition of the Orenburg General Governorship, regional ruling elites did not stress the territory's special character.

Two chapters address regional aspects of judicial reforms in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ivan Popp's research demonstrated the inefficiency of county (*volost'*) courts. The peasants in the Ural region, who did not have a tradition of commune, preferred the standard imperial judiciary to these courts based on common law. Having analyzed the distribution of district courts in Siberia, Evgenii Krest'iannikov shows that locating them in provincial centers contradicted the transportation network topologies and population distribution, undermining the courts' efficiency.

The volume concludes with two chapters on ethno-national aspects of regional histories. Darius Staliūnas traces the construction of the Northwestern Territory out of the areas that were the historical Grand Duchy of Lithuania and were annexed from Poland. Russian elites sought to define the region as the original Russian lands, but its very conceptualization contributed to the notion of its difference from the rest of the empire. Although Polish, Jewish, and Lithuanian intellectuals and activists acknowledged the new administrative division into provinces, many of them discussed the region as Lithuania, filling it with different meanings. Sören Urbansky analyzes the Pacific macroregion by comparing Sinophobic discourses in Vladivostok, San Francisco, and Singapore. Having found multiple similarities in the stereotypes about the Chinese in the three cities, he located the transimperial phenomenon of Sinophobia in the Russian Far East.

The contributions vary in their genres, from economic to political and from urban to intellectual history. The close attention to the efforts of the imperial government at various levels in most chapters, however, ensures the coherence of the volume. At the same time, individual chapters rarely discussed the notion of empire and its co-production through specific regions. Leaving the broader discussion of the usefulness of the term "identity" aside, its use in the title does not appear necessary, as most chapters discuss the production, creation, and conceptualization of regions.

Further research on regions in the Russian empire would benefit from more comparisons and discussions of transimperial phenomena, as seen in Urbansky's chapter, and from closer attention to non-elite and non-Russian perspectives, as explored in Staliūnas's chapter. Including one or two chapters on Central Asia and indigenous intellectuals and activists from the Asian part of the empire, as well as a study of regional aspects in the imperial transformations of 1905–17, could further strengthen the volume.

Although some of the chapters are more readable than others, each of them is a high-quality empirical study. These studies make use of a variety of regional archives. The volume as a whole and the individual chapters make a valuable contribution to the historiography of the Russian empire and can be used in university curricula.

IVAN SABLIN
Heidelberg University

Russian Colonization of Alaska: From Heyday to Sale, 1818–1867. By Andrei Val'terovich Grinev. Trans. Richard L. Bland. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022. xi, 415 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Photographs. Tables. Maps. \$70.00, hard bound.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2024.59

As in the first two volumes of Andrei Grinev's *Russian Colonization of Alaska*, the present monograph develops the concept of politarism, a "social system based on supreme private ownership by the state of the basic means of production and of the individual" (2) to explain the ultimate failure of Russia's North American colonial venture. The Russian American Company (RAC), formed in 1799, received monopolistic privileges to manage the state's interests in its overseas empire. What followed, under the exploitative administration of chief ruler Aleksandr Baranov, ought to have set the foundations for Russia's capitalistic expansion along the lines of other contemporary empires. Instead, in 1818 the direct administration of the colony was turned over to naval officers, chosen by directors of the Russian American Company who were themselves institutionally subordinate to the state. The maturation of the politarian system in Russian America under state control, beginning with chief ruler Captain-Lieutenant Leontii von Hagemeister, mired the colony in outdated labor relations, technological backwardness, stultifying bureaucratism, a transient Russian population, and finally, military and commercial weakness in comparison to its foreign rivals. The result was the sale of the colony to the United States in 1867.

Grinev's analysis of state and company policy is comprehensive. Among many other subjects, he addresses the RAC's institutional structure, social services, relations with Native peoples, environmental conservation, economic diversification, expansion and exploration, public health measures, interactions with foreign powers, connections to Siberian development, and, of course, wavering finances. All of these discussions are grounded in the primary evidence, much of it archival. There is frequent and judicious consideration of the relevant Russian and American historiography around each subject, and an extended historiographical review on the sale of Alaska. Beyond the specific context of Russian America, Grinev beautifully situates the colony against the wider backdrop of Russian, Eurasian, and global history.

Few would argue against the near omnipresence of the state in modern Russian history. Grinev's politarism, however, seems a loose fit for the complicated, particular, and sometimes ambiguous story of Russian America that follows. Though Grinev gives most attention to policy, there are tantalizing descriptions of individual actors' views and decisions. At its best, the book shows us that the state did not have complete "ownership" over its property. Chief Ruler Wrangell, for example, clearly exercised his own judgement in instituting relief measures for RAC workers; state policy and permission arrived only afterward (78–84). Other primary quotations included in the text remind us that these were real people implementing their own interpretations of policy, far from the control of St. Petersburg.

Even the Russian state, positioned by Grinev's introduction as the main actor (or impetus) in the story, is displayed in the body of the text as variable and vacillating