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New book: B. N. Floria on foreign policy of Ordin-Nashchokin

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B[oris] N[ikolaevich] Floria. *Vneshnepoliticheskaia programma A. L. Ordina-Nashchokina i popytki ee osushchestvleniia*. Moskva: "Indrik", 2013. 448 pp. ISBN 978-5-91674-267-1.

I open eagerly every new publication by the prolific Boris Nikolaevich Floria. His new book does not disappoint.

At the time he was feted for his 60th birthday (b. 1937), his bibliography already numbered nearly 200 items, including half a dozen monographs and several other major collectively authored works. The breadth of his interests encompasses much of eastern Europe and extends from the Cyrillo-Methodian mission through the 17th century. He reads most of the relevant languages. A significant part of his oeuvre focuses on foreign relations in Eastern Europe. As the introductory essay by his admirers who published the birthday Festschrift emphasized, his knowledge of the archives is unsurpassed, and the intensity which he brings to his scholarly work impressive. In fact, one is struck by how little they had to say about anything but his scholarship (see *Florilegium. K 60-letiiu B. N. Floria* [M.: Iazyki russkoi kul'tury, 2000], 9-16).

The new book is a sequel to his recent *Russkoe gosudarstvo i ego zapadnye sosedi (1655-1661 gg.)* (2010) which has to be considered the standard work on Muscovite diplomatic relations with its East European neighbors in the indicated period. The task he has set himself here is somewhat narrower, even if the focus on Ordin-Nashchokin touches on a broad range of issues affecting Muscovite foreign policy. As Floria repeatedly and generously acknowledges, there are already a lot of important scholarly contributions relating Muscovite diplomacy of the 1660s. Of particular relevance here is the work of I. V. Galaktionov, who mined the Russian archives in his work on Ordin-Nashchokin but whose publication of the results half a century ago in Saratov was somewhat circumscribed by the opportunities there (and, one might add, thus his work today is not always readily accessible). For the Polish archival materials, the monographs by Zbigniew Wójcik (*Traktat andruszowski 1667 i jego geneza* [Warszawa, 1959]; *Między traktatem andruszowskim a wojną turecką. Sostunki polsko-rosyjskie 1667-1672* [Warszawa, 1968]) have never been superseded. Floria finds those two scholars' judgments to be basically sound (even as he revises some details), and draws heavily on Wójcik for the Polish side of things. Of course there is much more here in Floria's use of published primary sources and scholarship, and, above all, his careful analysis of everything that is relevant in RGADA.

If the existing scholarship has painted a fairly clear picture of Afanasii Lavrent'evich Ordin-Nashchokin's foreign policy goals leading up to the truce of Andrusovo in 1667, a close reading of the sources can tell us a lot more about his views and that of his government and colleagues

concerning the larger questions of Muscovy's place in European politics and invite a re-examination of the degree to which he succeeded or failed in reaching his goals. His ideas and activity following Andrusovo, when he was placed in charge of the Diplomatic (and Malorossiiskii) chanceries, have drawn less attention. Filling these gaps then is Floria's goal. Sources for understanding Ordin-Nashchokin's thinking include memoranda he wrote to the Tsar, some of which are couched in tones that may surprise us for their bluntness. Aleksei Mikhailovich seems to have tolerated a lot from Afanasii Lavrent'evich even when he chose to overrule or ignore his suggestions.

What we get here then is a careful, step-by-step analysis of the making of foreign policy, one whose nuances show clearly how the Kremlin had to adapt to changing circumstances, responded to news which may have caught it off balance, and failed in some cases to avoid the consequences of events it did not foresee and in any event could not control. The role of intelligence gathering and more generally the acquisition of news was critical in this, sources including reports by spies and ambassadors, translations from foreign newspapers, personal communications between Ordin-Nashchokin and key members of the Lithuanian elite, and much more.

He had an abiding concern with the threat posed by Sweden in the Baltic and thus placed great hopes on stabilizing relations with Poland and in Ukraine (*vis-à-vis* the Tatars and the Ottomans). This then explains the sometimes torturous and ultimately unsuccessful efforts he made to get a permanent peace with Poland and convert it into a meaningful alliance that would enforce peace in the south. The inability of Moscow to control events within Ukraine, and the growing weakness of Poland defeated what at least on the face of it had been sensible goals, and this in turn had a negative effect on the ability of Muscovy to strengthen its position in the Baltic. While it would be wrong to judge Ordin-Nashchokin's career in the 1660s as a complete failure, his star burned out, the situation exacerbated by his ego and abrasive character. Understanding he could no longer get his way, he retired to a monastery in February 1672.

For a full biography of Ordin-Nashchokin, one must look elsewhere (arguably a good scholarly one has yet to be written). For a complete and detailed treatment of many facets of Muscovite diplomacy, one also must read other work (Floria explicitly directs his readers to it rather than cover ground that is well trodden). Even though it is mentioned here only in passing (much of it is not directly relevant), among the broadening readings one might consult is the two excellent two-volume *Osmanskaia imperiia i strany Tsentral'noi, Vostochnoi i Iugo-Vostochnoi Evropy v XVII v.* (M., 1998-2001), to which Floria contributed.

That said, one might well start with Floria's new book for any exploration of Muscovite foreign policy in the 1660s. The prose is exquisitely crafted, the details often make for a compelling narrative, and one senses everywhere that the author is thinking about them critically and offering sound judgments, even where this may require reading into the silences left by the not infrequently spotty preservation of the documents.