

JAROSLAW PELENSKI, *Russia and Kazan: Conquest and Imperial Ideology (1438–1560s)*. (Near and Middle East Monographs, v.) The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1974. Pp. xii, 368; 14 black-and-white illustrations, 3 maps. Glds 90.

PROFESSOR Pelenski sets himself the ambitious task of deriving from a study of Muscovite writings regarding relations with the Khanate of Kazan

through the period immediately following its annexation in 1552 a "model of an emerging imperial ideology." While it is not entirely clear how one can presume to obtain a "model" on the basis of one example, the scope and subject of Professor Pelenski's investigations make his book a significant one. The only previous attempt to deal with the question of ideological justifications for the conquest of Kazan was that by Frank Kämpfer, but his focus was different and the range of sources he covered more limited than Pelenski's.

The most convincing sections of the book are those which rely primarily on documentary sources that can be firmly dated. In particular, where Pelenski discusses (Chaps. III-V) the legal claims made in diplomatic documents that a Muscovite right to control of Kazan had been established through investiture of the khans of Kazan by the grand princes of Moscow, by virtue of Kazan's having long been a patrimony of the grand princes, and by the "right of conquest," it is possible with some assurance to trace the evolution and importance of such claims from the 1520s on. As the author points out, the first two of these justifications tended to be used in relations with European states, whereas the third — since it corresponded to a legal justification by conquest that might be acceptable in the Muslim world — was used in relations with Muslim rulers.

The use of religious arguments at least on the very eve of the conquest can likewise be established rather convincingly from a number of sources, among them epistles of Metropolitan Macarius. As Pelenski demonstrates, the religious arguments contained several elements, the most important of them being a "logical outgrowth of the Providential interpretation of Russian history" (p. 291) in the depiction of two antagonistic worlds of Orthodox Christianity and Islam. Although conversion of the heathen was one obvious consequence of the conquest — as the author shows in a rather long excursus going beyond the stated chronological boundaries of his study — he does not persuade me that such a concern was significant initially. Less convincing still is his assertion that Russification was official policy from the beginning and inseparable from the aim of Christianization (p. 269).

Pelenski's examination of a variety of prophecies, tales about miracles, and hagiographic works connected with the conquest (some of them previously unpublished) is quite original and apropos to any effort to study religious justifications for the conquest. In this connection, while I cannot think of any source pertaining directly to the problem of Kazan that the author has missed, I would suggest that further perspective on the religious polemics against Islam copied and edited under the aegis of Metropolitan Macarius might have been gained by examination of other contemporary works such as the translation of Ricoldo de Monte Croce's *Disputatio contra Saracenos et Alchoranum* and the *Vita* of Georgii "Novyi". Both of these were incorporated into Macarius's Great Menalogion along with the already well-known polemical account about Mohammed by George Harmatolus.

The most serious criticism of Pelenski's book concerns his dating and use

of a number of the narrative sources. While he seems to be quite aware of the difficulties and disputes about dating such material, he does not always explain clearly his reasons for choosing a particular date (e.g., pp. 94, 99, 157), or he fails to deal adequately with proposed alternatives. The most obvious case is that of the "Kazan History" (*Kazanskaia istoriia*), a long narrative that purports to relate the history of the Khanate of Kazan and its fall to Muscovy. The work is of particular importance here, in part because it is the primary source for evidence of what Pelenski terms the "most modern" justification of the conquest, the "national" claim that Kazan was "Russian" land originally inhabited by Russians. Most scholars consider that the work was written in the 1560s; the only major dissenter is Edward Keenan, whose arguments for a date early in the seventeenth century have failed to convince specialists. Yet no one has provided satisfactory answers to a number of the questions Keenan has raised that cast considerable doubt on the accepted dating and chronology of redactions. Pelenski does offer evidence against two of Keenan's linguistic arguments, but this new evidence still does not support a date earlier than the 1580s. Moreover, he seems to rely heavily on Kämpfer's doubts whether Keenan's thesis will withstand criticism, even though Kämpfer himself hardly undertook to prove his point (p. 125, n. 7). If one maintains as Pelenski does that the Kazan History "was written with propagandistic intent," then it is very easy to consider as secondary arguments that it is primarily a work of belles lettres. Yet to set aside those arguments is hardly to answer them. Furthermore, the apparent indifference Pelenski displays towards the importance of settling which redaction of the Kazan History is primary (p. 105, no. 1) is hardly a mark of careful scholarship. All this is not to say that Pelenski fails to provide astute analysis of the sources for the Kazan History and of its relationship to the question of Muscovite expansionist ideology — he does offer these things — but he does not convince me that "a considerable part" of the source was written as early as the 1560s, nor does he demonstrate adequately that a "second stage of writing and editorial revisions" dates between 1584 and the early 1590s (p. 131). Without being certain of the date of our sources, we cannot, of course, provide a convincing scheme of the evolution of an ideology.

In other instances, Pelenski's views regarding the date of sources must be modified in the light of work that appeared subsequent to the submission of his manuscript. For example, one notes the recent studies regarding the "Chronograph of 1512" and the "Nikon Chronicle" by B. M. Kloss, who advances persuasive new arguments regarding the origins of these works. If anything, the substance of these conclusions provides additional support for points Pelenski makes — in particular Kloss's demonstration that the first part of the Nikon Chronicle was compiled under the close supervision of Metropolitan Daniil in the latter 1520s. Pelenski spends some time showing how the Nikon Chronicle alters some of its sources to buttress historical claims of Muscovy to Kazan (by identifying Kazan with the Volga Bulgar state). Furthermore, he indicates that Daniil probably was an advocate of

expansion against Kazan. Daniil's involvement in editing the Nikon Chronicle is additional evidence for such a view.

One should make the following additional observations about Pelenski's work insofar as it deals with the Muscovite chronicles. That same establishment of "Volga-Bulgar/Kazan continuity" by the Nikon Chronicle might be explained simply by the well-known inclination of that chronicle's compiler to provide explanations and definitions of proper names largely, it appears, in order to make them more comprehensible to the reader. Pelenski has not given sufficient weight to this fact. Neither does he provide adequate indication in his introductory survey of the history of Muscovite-Kazani relations in the fifteenth century that he has done all the necessary textological study of the chronicle sources. One finds in his notes the all-too-common "blind citations" of half a dozen volumes in the "Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles," with too little explanation of whether the texts are the same, how they are related, whether there are significant differences and the like.

My final criticism of Pelenski's book concerns his manner of citing the works of certain scholars who have studied most recently related materials and whose views in some instances differ markedly from those of the author. There are many places where he clearly is polemicizing with Professors Keenan and Pritsak — on the nature of Muscovite-Kazani relations and on the question of the approach to use in studying the subject — but he fails to indicate this fact by appropriate notes (pp. 18, 58, 177, 297, 302). Furthermore, Pelenski fails to convince me with his rather disingenuous suggestion that Kämpfer's book (which Pelenski received only after completing most of his own work) does little more than follow his own article that had appeared previously, at least insofar as the question of ideology is concerned. To assert that Kämpfer "limits himself to general observations" in his analysis of the icon "The Church Militant," which Pelenski promises to treat in a separate study, is hardly fair and gives inadequate credit to Kämpfer for realizing the relevance of that remarkable painting to the subject of Muscovite attitudes about the conquest of Kazan.

These criticisms notwithstanding, Professor Pelenski's book is a serious examination of political and religious ideas in Muscovy. He has provided us with the first thorough analysis of the official justifications for what is generally conceded to have been the initial imperial expansion of the Muscovite state, even though the chronology he establishes for those ideas' evolution may undergo revision. His book will be the starting point for any further investigation of imperial ideology in Russia and will be invaluable for those who wish to draw comparisons with the development of such ideas in other empires.

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