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***RUSSIAN NOTIONS OF POWER AND STATE IN A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE 1462-1725: ASSESSING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PETER'S REIGN***, By Ayse Dietrich\*, Published by: Academic Studies Press, written by Endre Sashalmi, Year of Publishing: 2022. Subject Area: Russian Politics and government, Peter I. Book Type: Russian History. Total Number of Pages: 507. ISBN: 9781644694176, hardback, \$169.00.

As the author states in the introduction, the book highlights the “main features of Russian notions of power in an era when sovereignty, state, and politics, as understood by authors and statesmen in Western Christendom”, were either non-existent in Russia or were only beginning to be formulated and articulated there”. In addition, this work looks at the Westernization process, the emergence of the concept of the “sovereign state” with a comparison of 17<sup>th</sup> century Western countries, the post-1700s significant change in Russian thought on power and the problem of reception of Western ideas.

The author avoids using the word “political thought” since the term “politics” and “political” was unknown in Russia before the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and therefore he uses the concept of the “notion of power”.

Besides analyzing the issue of the reception of Western ideas in Russia, he discusses the nature of change in Russian ideology under the impact of Western ideas and the different readings of the concepts and terminologies in Russia and the West.

The author emphasizes that the main purpose of his book is to show in a comparative manner how these different interpretations were developing in Russia, the kind of terms that were used to describe the practical aspects of state-building in the context of early modern Europe, and how these terms are suited for the interpretation of Russian history.

The book continues by giving a historical overview of the terms designating Russia. The author discusses the issues of territoriality, the name and the nature of polity. The author stresses that the

Western historians' references to the parallel developments in state-building in Russia as a "composite monarchy" and a "composite state" do not serve as relevant comparisons for contemporary Muscovy. He addresses the issue of the appearance of the term *Russiia/Rossiia*, the change from *Rus'* to *Rossiia* as the standard official designation of the state, the emergence of the new name for the polity *Rossiiskoe tsarstvo*. The author also examines the notions *Rossiia*, *Rossiiskoe Tsarstvo* and *Moskovskoe gosudarstvo* denoting the conglomeration of territories ruled by the tsars in the early 17th century, the specific nature of the Russian political system, whether it can be viewed as a European continuum from the perspective of state-building, the nature of the "autocratic fiscal-military state", and the use of the neologism *Rossiianin* designating a subject of Russia.

Later, the author continues to analyze the definitions of the modern concept of the state outlined in the works of the Western scholars that can be applicable for a comparison with Russia, the role of metaphors and allegorical personifications in the development of the concept of the state in Western Christendom, meanings of the European perspective, the birth and meaning of the Russian state narrative, the link of the territorial integrity of the country to a strong monarchical power as being the cornerstone of Russian statehood, the consequences of the state narrative, the discovery of *Gosudarstvo* in Russian historical writings, the statist school of Russian historiography, Muscovite perceptions of ruling power and characteristics and methodological aspects of a comparison with Western Christendom, the problems of the concepts of *tselost' gosudarstvo*, *autocracy* and *samoderzhavie*, Richard Pipes' patrimonial interpretations of Russia, the concept of "proprietary dynasticism", the concepts of rulership, proprietary, office and divine right and their relation to each other in early modern Europe and Russia, a comparison of the divine right of Kings and the divine rights of Tsars, the contribution of Feofan Prokopovich to Russian thought on power, his theory of law and state, sovereignty, contractualism, and the female allegorical personification of Russia during the reign of Peter the Great and his successors.

Sashalmi's book gives a comprehensive analysis of the Russian notions of power and state, and provides critical analyses of the terminologies used by Western scholars. It is a valuable resource for academicians, researchers and students who study the history of the Russian state structure.

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