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Reviews

Pavel Vladimirovich Lukin, *Narodnye predstavleniia o gosudarstvennoi vlasti v Rossii XVII veka*. Moscow: Nauka, 2000. 294 pp. ISBN 5-02-010206-7.

Anna Gessen and Marshall Poe

It is difficult to find out what common folk think in any age, but it is particularly difficult before the state-sponsored efforts to educate the masses swept the globe. In the pre-modern world, commoners (with a few remarkable exceptions) generally could not read or write, and they had little interest in doing so. Thus historians find very few texts – letters, diaries, tracts, or treatises – penned by the fabled pre-modern “common man.” Of course there were no pre-modern pollsters wandering about charting the opinions of the “man on the street” (or rather, in the hayfield). Thus historians cannot rely on anything like a pre-modern survey of opinion, for nothing of the sort existed. Pre-modern literary representations of common people, such as those found in Shakespeare or Rabelais, are at best verisimilar fictions and at worst biased stereotypes. Historians thus tend to be very wary of literary musings on the “simple people.”

Left without convenient sources, historians have long tried to infer what ordinary people thought by investigating what they were taught by church and state. Archives are full of didactic tracts written by one or another official lecturing the ignorant on what they were supposed to think. Such an approach, as even its practitioners admitted, was rather unsatisfying insofar as people rarely think exactly what they are told. Human nature – pre-modern and modern – is just plain contrary.

In the 1970s, however, a group of enterprising historians found a better way to get at what common people believed long ago. They point out that there was at least one instance in which the thoughts of “the people” were transcribed, that is, when the authorities (and especially the clerical authorities) considered their beliefs were dangerous. Historians such as Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie and Carlo Ginzburg, working with inquisitions records, began a vogue in what is now called “the history of mentalities.”¹ With the aid of the careful clerical records, the people were made to speak again in the colorful language of the urban lane and peasant village. The book under review brings “the history of mentalities” approach to early modern Russia in an attempt to answer a fundamental

¹ Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou, village occitan de 1294 à 1324* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975); Carlo Ginzburg, *Il formaggio e i vermi: Il cosmo di un mugnaio del '500* (Torino: G. Einaudi, 1976).

historiographical question – what did Muscovites think about the person and power of the tsar?

Russian historians, particularly in the United States, are divided on the issue of popular mentalities and power in Muscovy. Some argue that the tsar was seen as a semi-deity. They point to Orthodox teachings in which the tsar is compared to God; to Muscovite habits of deference, for example, calling themselves “slaves of the tsar” (as they called themselves “slaves of God”); to the testimony given to visiting foreigners suggesting that Muscovites attributed God-like powers to the tsar; and to the fact that there was arguably no principled political opposition to tsarism in Muscovy. These considerations suggest that Muscovites believed (as the Bible said) that opposition to the divinely appointed ruler was opposition to God himself. Muscovy, these scholars conclude, was a kind of Christian despotism (in the Aristotelian and not evaluative sense) – a regime in which the legitimate ruler held nearly universal power over the lives and property of his subjects.² Others argue that this is a fundamental misreading of the evidence. The Orthodox teachings in question, they say, had little or no impact on secular political mentalities; the habits of deference were simply polite conventions; the foreigners misunderstood what they observed; and, finally, if there was a conflict between various groups (families, gentry “corporations,” etc.) in the Muscovite polity, it was just hidden by the “façade of autocracy.”³ These historians see Muscovy as a fairly typical early modern European monarchy, one in which a fairly typical theory of divine right masked a fairly typical sort of political conflict. As we will see, Lukin’s interesting book helps us understand which of these interpretations has more merit and why.

At the center of Lukin’s work is an investigation of a relatively neglected source – direct-speech testimonies given by political prisoners in the Military

² Many of these ideas are set forth in Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime* (New York: Scribner, 1974), and Richard Hellie, “The Structure of Modern Russian History: Towards a Dynamic Model,” *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 4: 1 (1977), 1–22.

³ Most of these ideas were sketched out in Edward L. Keenan, “Muscovite Political Folkways,” *Russian Review* 45: 2 (1986), 115–81. They have been investigated and amplified by several of his students. See, for example, Valerie A. Kivelson, *Autocracy in the Provinces: Russian Political Culture and the Gentry in the Seventeenth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); Nancy S. Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics: The Making of the Muscovite Political System, 1345–1547* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); idem, *By Honor Bound: State and Society in Early Modern Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999); Daniel Rowland, “The Problem of Advice in Muscovite Tales about the Time of Troubles,” *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 6: 2 (1979), 271–72; idem, “Did Muscovite Literary Ideology Place Any Limits on the Power of the Tsar?” *Russian Review* 49: 2 (1990), 125–56; George G. Weickhardt, “Due Process and Equal Justice in Muscovite Law,” *Russian Review* 51: 4 (1992), 463–80; idem, “Political Thought in Seventeenth-Century Russia,” *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 21: 3 (1994), 316–37; idem, “The Pre-Petrine Law of Property,” *Slavic Review* 52: 4 (1993), 663–79.

Chancellery (*Razriadnaia izba*) in Moscow during the 17th century. The prisoners in question were accused of a political crime known as “improper speeches” (*neprigozhie rechi*), that is, remarks concerning royal honor. The first scholars to study the improper speech cases were interested in legal history. In 1911, Nikolai Iakovlevich Novombergskii published a seminal and meticulous edition of case materials from the first half of the 17th century.⁴ Although Novombergskii planned to cover the whole of the century, he never completed the project. A year later, the prominent Russian legal historian Georgii Gustavovich Tel’berg produced a scrupulous analysis of the formal juridical aspect of the political cases of improper speech. He did not, however, discuss the contents of these cases.⁵ Later, several prominent historians of Muscovite thought – Aleksandr Mikhailovich Panchenko, A. P. Bogdanov, Nina Borisovna Golikova, and Sergei Vladimirovich Bakhrushin – referred to the cases published in Novombergskii’s book. Generally, however, these materials were not considered as reflections of popular ideology in the strong sense. This opinion was reinforced by the only detailed American investigation of the subject, Mark C. Lapman’s dissertation.⁶ He argued that the criminals made up accusations of improper speech to please the authorities and settle scores. Lukin’s book, therefore, breaks new ground in that he both adds considerably to the corpus of sources investigated (many of which are unpublished) and he interprets the improper speech recorded in them as a reflection of popular political beliefs.

What are the principal elements of the improper speech case? Utterances were considered “improper” (or else *nepristoinye*, *nepodobnye*, *nevezhlivye*, *nevnestimnye*) when they caused injury to the royal honor (*gosudareva chest’*). The honor of the Muscovite monarch could be injured by word to the same extent as by deed. Improper speech did not have to be deliberately offensive; it could simply be the result of a slip of the tongue or the omission of an element in the tsar’s elaborate title. Tel’berg divided “improper speeches” into four categories: 1) those that were demonstrated to lead to more serious offences as described in the Ulozhenie of 1649 (article two): treason, revolt, threats to injure the tsar’s physical health (*zloe delo na gosudarevo zdorov’e*); 2) insulting remarks addressed to the tsar; 3) unauthorized (*nevnestnye*) deliberations on state affairs; and 4) all sorts of slips of the tongue and missed elements in the tsar’s full title (most often in petitions).

⁴ Nikolai Iakovlevich Novombergskii, *Slovo i delo gosudarevy: Protsessy do izdaniia Ulozheniia Alekseia Mikhailovicha 1649 g.* (Moscow: A. I. Snegireva, 1911).

⁵ Georgii Gustavovich Tel’berg, *Ocherki politicheskogo suda i politicheskikh prestuplenii* (Moscow, 1912).

⁶ Mark C. Lapman, “Political Denunciations in Muscovy, 1600 to 1649: The Sovereign’s Word and Deed” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1981).

The nature of punishment for improper speech depended on its degree of offensiveness. Punishments ranged from short-term imprisonment to severance of the tongue and exile to Siberia. In especially grievous cases, the offender would be sentenced to death, but very few executions were actually carried out.

Improper speech cases consisted of a number of documents, of which the most important was the accusing petition (*izvetnaia chelobitnaia*) that normally opened the case. If the offence was given orally it was immediately written down and converted into a formal petition. The addressee of the *izvet* was an authorized government representative (usually, a *voevoda*). He was to send the accusation directly to the Military Chancellery in Moscow for review. An *izvet* (unlike its later cousin, the *donos*) could not be anonymous. Moreover, the accuser ran a great risk by filing a petition: were his *izvet* found to be fabricated, his life would be at stake, because in a case concerning the tsar's honor (*gosudarevo delo*), someone – the accuser or the accused – had to be punished. The petition was expected to recount all the circumstances of the case: the complete identification of the accused (name, address, social status); when, where, and why he pronounced the improper speech; and, finally and importantly, the accuser had to repeat the actual improper speech word for word.

If the petition was missing, the *voevoda* could substitute a report (*otpiska*) wherein he related the entire contents of the petition and asked the authorities in Moscow for instructions. Protocols of interrogations and cross-examination usually added important details to the basic petition. During interrogation the accused could either plead innocent (*zaperet'sia*) or admit his guilt, completely or partially.

All case materials were brought together in the final report (*vypiska v доклад*): on the basis of the *vypiska* the tsar and the Boyar Duma passed sentence. Quite often the *vypiska* would be the only document of all case materials to survive. But these lengthy documents usually recounted the original materials verbatim, that is, the petition, the minutes of the interrogation, and the cross-examination. If jurisprudence in Europe employed highly formulaic Latin until very late, in Russia all documentation was recorded in plain vernacular and the formal requirements were far less rigorous. Relying on this premise, Lukin reasons that the distance between thought and expression in the case materials was closer in Russia than in the West.

Lukin argues that improper speech cases are invaluable resources for the study of popular social and political beliefs. First of all, the documents record the direct speech of actual 17th-century persons. Therefore, Lukin believes, political cases reflect actual opinions better than official ideology and foreign travelers' accounts. Second, we almost always know the authors of the improper speech and *izvet*, whether actual or presumed. Thus, there can be no question as to what

social group they represent. The participants in the improper speech cases reviewed by Lukin belonged to every imaginable stratum of Muscovite society: semi-free peasants (*pomeshchich'e, chernososhnye*), townsmen (*posadskie liudi*), hired servitors (musketeers, Cossacks, artilleryists), priests, monks, and provincial low-rank nobility (*deti boiarskie*). Third, the cases Lukin investigates are spread evenly over the course of the century and are not associated with particular events, unlike investigation materials on the participants in peasant and urban revolts. This factor eliminates the danger of overestimating public radicalism.

One peculiarity of Lukin's sources is that about half of them were fabrications, or at least so the authorities believed. The slanderous use of accusations of improper speech was noted and emphasized by Lapman. For Lukin's purposes, however, the veracity of the claim itself is not important. Whether it was spoken or not, the "speech" was understood by Muscovites to be offensive.

Lukin convincingly argues that Muscovites believed the tsar's authority was universal but not unlimited. In the cases under review, universality was represented in the idea of an all-encompassing tsarist "will" (*volia*) authorizing every legitimate action. For example, a miller on one of the tsar's estates, Abramka Ivanov, was going to be beaten by his father-in-law on the way home from an inn. To prevent the beating he declared that only "the grand prince had power over him" (*volen v nem velikii gosudar'*) and only he could beat him (19). Abramka expressed the common belief that nobody could legitimately injure a man without the tsar's permission. As Lukin explains, this belief rested on the idea that all men somehow belonged to the tsar. In one case, a musketeer named Semka Makarov testified that not only were his land and livestock owned by the tsar, but that he himself was the tsar's property (19–20). One might add that Muscovites commonly expressed similar ideas to visiting Europeans.⁷ All men, Lukin argues, were equal insofar as they were the tsar's property and subject to the tsar's omnipresent will. "For the sovereign," one Muscovite stated, "there are no mighty ones" (*sil'nykh u gosudaria net*) – everyone was subject to his command and no one could be punished without his sanction.

Corresponding to the idea of the tsar's authorizing will was the notion of the tsar's grace (*tsarskaia milost'*) – the former brought order, and the latter brought goodness. Everything good came from divine and royal grace – not even a piece of bread could be obtained without the tsar's benign sanction. Even punishments could be seen as a sign of grace. Subjects sometimes boasted of being punished by the tsar rather than by their equals (23). Interestingly, this corroborates the

⁷ See Marshall Poe, "A People Born to Slavery": *Russia in Early Modern European Ethnography, 1476–1748* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000), 61–62, 101.

testimony of many foreigners who reported that Muscovites thanked the tsar when punished by him or his officials.⁸

The source of this model of power – universal authority, all-forgiving grace, just punishment – is not far to seek. In the cases reviewed by Lukin, nearly every mention of the tsar was accompanied by a mention of God. Indeed, the concepts of tsar and God were so close that “God and the great sovereign” (*Bog i velikii gosudar’*) was a standard formula, a stable semantic unit. Numerous statements by accusers and accused equate divine and temporal authority: God ordered, the tsar ordered; God forgave, the tsar forgave; God punished, the tsar punished. As God ruled his people, so the tsar ruled his.

Yet the tsar was not God. Lukin argues that in Russian consciousness it was not the person of the tsar that was sacred, but rather his office, though it is clear that these two were often confused. This is where we find the much sought after “limitations” on tsarist power. Apparently, Muscovites believed that the “true” tsar would act according to the dictates of his divine office. As is clear from the documents, the tsar’s crucial virtue was considered a nebulous “righteousness” (*blagoverie*), which he was expected to practice both in his public and private behavior. It is impossible to set forth a bill of particulars pertaining to “righteousness” – none is provided in the sources surveyed or in any other Muscovite document. All we find in Muscovite texts are rather vague pronouncements indicating that the tsar was obligated to protect his subjects, to “punish and forgive” (*kaznit’ i milovat’*), to protect the Church, and so on. “Righteousness” appears to have been a bit like art: Muscovites couldn’t define it, but they knew it when they saw it. Thus when the tsar’s actions clashed with the notion of “righteous” tsarist behavior, people sometimes complained, saying things like “the so-called tsar should not do this, that, or the other thing.” For example, Tsar Mikhail Romanov was often chastised for marrying twice, a clear violation of *blagoverie*. A “true” tsar would not do that. It was a short step from such complaints to the question of authenticity. If he did not act like a tsar, perhaps he was not a tsar? From the authorities’ point of view – particularly in the wake of the Time of Troubles – such statements were seen as seditious. Popular censure became “improper speech,” and the street-corner critics were hunted down as traitors. Obviously, it was best to keep your mouth shut.

Political inquisitions did not, of course, quiet criticism. The very state-sponsored ideology that sacralized the tsar made it possible for malcontents to claim that the badly behaved man on the throne was not the “true” tsar. A false tsar was a false tsar, moreover, no matter how many of his subjects were tortured, exiled, or put to death. Once the question was raised, many Russians wanted to know who the real tsar was, both during the Time of Troubles and after. Many

⁸ *Ibid.*, 80, 114.

Russians were willing to play the role of tsar, or perhaps even believed they were the “true” tsar.⁹ In the 17th century, pretenderism (*samozvanchestvo*) became a mass phenomenon. It centered, as is well known, around the legend of “little Prince Dmitrii,” the youngest son of Ivan IV, ostensibly assassinated by Boris Godunov’s underlings. As is clear from the cases Lukin examines, many ordinary people were not at all convinced that Dmitrii was dead (despite elaborate efforts on the part of the state to prove that he was). Numerous Russians through the 1630s claimed that Dmitrii’s omnipresent authorizing “will” guided them. As recollections of the Time of Troubles and Dmitrii faded, the *samozvanchestvo* phenomenon shifted from ruler to ruler. The authenticity of Mikhail Romanov’s successor, his only son Aleksei, was widely doubted in the 1630–40s in various cases. For example, the nun Marfa Zhilina explained that the young prince had to be a fake, since Mikhail was apparently incapable of fathering a son (119). Who was this man who claimed to be the scion of Mikhail?

Aside from these serious (or rather sincere) emanations of pretenderism, the improper speech cases also provide evidence of what might be called innocent or even jocular pretenderism. It was probably fun to be the tsar, and people knew it. Therefore, when they were happy, they used expressions that equated themselves with the grand prince (139) – “Look at me! I’m the tsar!” As one might imagine, such sentiments were often expressed at weddings, banquets, and in taverns when the company had had a bit too much to drink. Similarly, people knew that the tsar had power. So, when they had power they would describe themselves as tsars (145) – “Back when I was in charge of the village, I was the tsar!” Innocent as such statements might seem to us (they are only analogies), the authorities took them very seriously indeed. They were rather more literal-minded than the drunks and braggarts who, foolishly, said they were “tsars.” It was only good to be the tsar if you were in fact the tsar. If you were not and said you were, even in drunken jest, you were likely to get beaten with the knout.

There were sincere pretenders, there were jokers, and then there were many who claimed royal status for no apparent reason. In order to explain this class of imposters, Lukin has recourse to the concept of “mythological consciousness,” as Iurii Lotman termed it (157). According to this theory, the mind of medieval man often made identifications that seem odd to us, particularly in the sphere of proper names. Lukin employs this theory when he needs to explain why, for instance, in the middle of a drunken conversation a certain Aleksashka was impulsively addressed by drinking companions as “tsar” (“Budesh’ ty tsar”).

⁹ On pretenderism, see Chester Dunning, *Russia’s First Civil War: The Time of Troubles and the Founding of the Romanov Dynasty* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), and Maureen Perrie, *Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time of Troubles* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Mythological identification also underlay improper speeches made by clerics. Priests would declare themselves tsars on major feasts, when they headed religious processions, or else on the days when they conducted the service. In this situation, a priest identified himself with God's executor (*bozhii voevoda*), a common title for the tsar, who established spiritual order on earth.

In a word, the very phenomenon of pretenderism in all its forms – genuine, jocular, and ritualistic – was a reflex of the central role played by the tsar in the Muscovite worldview. Theoretically at least, the tsar was the only legitimate authority in the realm. He stood above everyone. Thus the best way to lay claim to authority was to be the true tsar, for he held *all* authority. And the best way to elevate oneself symbolically was to claim to be the tsar, for everyone else was a “slave,” “orphan,” or “pilgrim” (as common people called themselves in petitions to him).

Lukin contrasts the Old Believers' notion of the tsar's power to the standard view. To be sure, Archpriest Avvakum and his followers believed that the office of tsar was sacred. Indeed, they followed the standard logic of pretenderism in claiming that Aleksei Mikhailovich et al. could not be true tsars. But they added an eschatological moment to their conception. For them, Russia was the last true Christian state, the Third Rome upon which the hope of man for salvation rested (189). At the head of the Third Rome was, of course, the divinely appointed true tsar, the bearer of God's divine gifts – sacred power, charisma, and Orthodox Russia. The tsar's name was “awesome and sacred” (*strashno i sviato*) not in itself but only by virtue of these divine gifts. His connection with God through these gifts had to manifest itself in his behavior, which was expected to follow divine law and truth. According to Avvakum, the tsar, like all men, is God's slave (*rab bozhii*), and he bears the title of everyone's sovereign on the condition that he observes a certain behavioral decorum (203). The expression “the tsar's honor loves justice” (*chest' tsareva sud liubit*) was extremely popular in the writing of the Old Believers.

Throughout the early period of the Schism, the Old Believers placed all their hopes upon the tsar. It was the Grecophile patriarch they despised. Consequently, Aleksei Mikhailovich's sacred status was repeatedly emphasized in their early writings. Around 1660, disappointment replaced hope (the tsar would not play along) and the motif of the tsar's earthly nature became more prominent in schismatic writings. Yet the Old Believers found it especially difficult to denounce the tsar. What sinner was so righteous that he could condemn the holder of a divine office, even if he was apparently a heretic? Avvakum provided an answer by claiming he was a divinely inspired prophet. From the height of his newfound sanctity he was able to condemn Aleksei the man (235). Avvakum's fellow prisoner, Deacon Fedor, offered another solution. He argued that Aleksei, rather

than being corrupted by the patriarch and the sly Greeks, had been born a heretic. Thus he was not an authentic tsar, the possessor of the divine gifts. Aleksei was one of the “Antichrist’s horns,” the other being the patriarch (245). Through all this, the Old Believers’ respect for the tsar’s office remained strong: after the death of Aleksei Mikhailovich, the Old Believers sent humble and hopeful letters to Aleksei’s successor, Fedor.

Yet, for many, the solution to the paradox of the corrupt yet sacred tsar was not so simple. Having wrestled with the question, some schismatics faced a real psychological and ideological dead-end (237). The monks of the Solovetskii monastery, unable to watch the tsar drown in heresy, petitioned the tsar to send troops to slaughter them. The tsar complied (241). Others burnt themselves alive (or were burnt alive by fanatics).¹⁰ Still more Old Believers simply removed themselves from the Antichrist’s heretical empire, decamping to the wilderness and taking “Holy Russia” with them.



Does Lukin’s work help us decide whether Muscovy was a kind of despotism or a fairly typical early modern European monarchy? The preponderance of evidence found in the improper speech cases and Old Believer writings suggests that Muscovites believed that the office of the tsar was: a) divinely created (not a human institution); b) universal in its authority (not shared by any legitimate “intermediary bodies”); and c) limited by the requirement that the occupant exercise “righteousness” (not by legal restraints). In brief, the Muscovites understood that the tsar was beholden only to God and his laws; outside the divine sphere, he was sanctioned by God to do anything he willed.

If this is true (and we have every reason to believe it is), then Muscovite political thought would seem to be superficially similar to *one* of the ideologies prevalent in Europe, but at the same time profoundly different from what might be called “Renaissance political culture.” The Muscovites clearly believed in a kind of Biblically-derived theory of divine monarchy – the same Biblically-derived divine monarchy espoused by Absolutists (for want of a better term) throughout Europe. It is certain that King James I would have been happy to rule over the uniformly God-fearing monarchists Lukin describes in Muscovy. Alas, his subjects (and European subjects generally) held fast to a range of well-articulated ideologies, of both indigenous and Classical derivation. To be sure, some were divine monarchists, ready to reconstruct Davidic rule. But others were plain monarchists, or limited monarchists, or constitutionalists, or republicans, or federalists, or what have you. One need only read any of a number of major

¹⁰ Most recently, see Georg Michels, *At War with the Church: Religious Dissent in Seventeenth-Century Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

European political thinkers – Machiavelli, Bodin, Hobbes, Locke – to see that European political philosophy was both more varied than and different from that elaborated by the Muscovites Lukin presents. For Europeans, the question of power was a matter of great complexity; for the Muscovites it was as simple as saying (as the Muscovites commonly did to foreigners) that they and all their possessions were owned by the God-granted tsar.

One might counter that the lofty edifices of Hobbes and other thinkers were not representative of popular political mentalities, and that the common folk in Europe held a similar kind of religiously inspired monarchism. The former is undoubtedly true, but the latter is not. Even in the nominally Absolutist states (Spain, France, Prussia), commoners understood that they had enforceable rights vis-à-vis the state. In Muscovy, the concept of right in the legal sense was completely absent. Certainly subjects could and did make *claims* on the tsar. But in contrast to enforceable legal rights, these claims depended (in theory, at least) on the all-encompassing will and grace of the tsar, just as the prayers of men depended on the will and grace of God. The tsar and God were “masters” (*gosudari*), whereas men were lesser beings – “slaves,” “orphans,” “pilgrims” – all in the service of the master.¹¹ Long ago, Max Weber called this “patrimonial” monarchy. Interestingly, he gave Muscovy as an example.¹²

Thus, on the basis of the evidence presented by Lukin, it seems difficult to claim that Muscovite political mentalities were in any but a superficial sense typically early modern European. They were, rather, a distinct variation on a common Christian theme, divine monarchy. It is easy to understand why the Russian and European cases diverged so severely. When the Germanic invaders entered Western Europe, they found the remnants of a rich Classical civilization. When the Rus’ conquered Northeastern Europe, they found indigenous peoples eking out a meager existence. The former were clearly successors, while the latter were really founders. This is not to say that the Rus’ received no “Classical” learning. Indeed they did in the form of Christian religious texts provided by the Greeks. But where the Roman inheritance was rich and varied, the Byzantine Greek inheritance (at least as it was represented in Rus’) was poor and homogenous.

This difference in “cultural packages” (as Edward Keenan appropriately termed them) became very significant in the early modern period. It was then that the Europeans reached back into their Classical past and, using what they found, re-invented their political culture. The typical Germano-Christian

¹¹ Marshall Poe, “What did Russians Mean When They Called Themselves ‘Slaves of the Tsar?’” *Slavic Review* 57: 3 (1998), 585–608.

¹² Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, trans. Ephraim Fischhoff et al., 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California, 1978).

monarchism of the Middle Ages was replaced by the panoply of Classically-infused ideologies described above. Interestingly, the Muscovites did the same thing – they reached back into *their* Classical past and, using what they found, re-invented *their* political culture. Given the difference in cultural material, it was only to be expected that the Muscovite reorientation would be quite different than that which had occurred in Europe. Prior to the era of Ivan III, Rus' had been ruled by a loose confederation of princely families. To simplify, Ivan destroyed this system and replaced it with a monarchy. How did Ivan understand his new invention? He had three models for monarchy: Biblical (*tsar'* David et al.), Byzantine (*tsar'* of *Tsargrad*), and Mongol (*tsar'* of the Kipchak Khanate). All three of these models (and especially the first two) suggested that a true monarch was the divinely sanctioned ruler of servant-subjects. Thus Ivan became the God-granted “*tsar*” and his subjects became humble “*kholopy*” (or slaves). After a time, common Muscovites – whose models for monarchy came exclusively from Christian texts and the state – came to believe that the tsar was indeed all-powerful and that they were his servants. Without an alternative view (which was unavailable) and without evidence to the contrary (of which there was none), they had no reason to think otherwise.

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