

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.

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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.
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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America under state control, beginning with chief ruler Captain-Lieutenant Leontii von Hagemester, mired the colony in outdated labor relations, technological backwardness, stultifying bureaucratism, a transient Russian population, and finally, military and commercial weakness in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

according to time, place, and personalities. Grinev details the heated disagreements among the RAC, different imperial ministries, and educated bystanders on the potential sale of Alaska. Here one might hope for even more context on the lively public debate that emerged during Russia's Era of Great Reforms. Grinev dismisses Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich as an "intransigent" (231) critic and "irreconcilable enemy" (227) of the RAC, for instance, while downplaying the intense national conversation the Grand Duke instigated and oversaw in *Morskoi sbornik*, the journal of his own Naval Ministry. Briefly and unexpectedly, the fate of Russian America rose to national attention on the pages of the journal. There are missing voices in Grinev's analysis, too: Creoles and Native Alaskans appear in the book primarily as objects of policy rather than subjects of ideas and actions. The Orthodox Church, both cooperative and competitive with the RAC, similarly receives relatively little analysis.

In sum, the prolific and insightful Grinev brings a wealth of thought and research to this study of the Russian American colonies and presents it in a clear, concise, and well-documented way. The book and its prequel volumes will be invaluable for introductory readers seeking a readable and intelligent overview. Grinev also provides illustrations and helpful appendices, including translated primary sources and a glossary. Advanced readers will find fruitful research trails to explore in Grinev's endnotes and bibliography. The organizing concept of politarism, however rough, does introduce a comparative framework for Russian America in its global context for scholars of Russia and empire to refute or refine.

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Poslednii Pol'skii Korol': Koronatsiia Nikolaia I v Varshave v 1829 g. i Pamiat' o Russko-Pol'skikh Voinakh XVII–nachala XIX v. By Ekaterina Boltunova. *Historia Rossica*. Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2022. vi, 560 pp. Appendixes. Bibliography. Index. Plates. ₺1140, hard bound.

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This book deals with a difficult episode for Russian historiography—the coronation of a Russian Orthodox tsar in Catholic Poland. The book is devoted to a challenging scenario in Russian imperial history, when the conservative Tsar Nicholas I, contrary to his views and feelings, decided on a second coronation. In 1826, in Moscow, he was crowned the Russian Tsar. In 1829, in Warsaw, he was crowned King of Poland, already being the Emperor of Russia.

The content of the book is much broader than its title. It focuses on key episodes of Russian-Polish relations, or rather the difficult topic of imperial strategies toward a suppressed, subjugated Poland. The book is in two parts, each of which could have been a separate monograph. The first part describes the motives behind the coronation, the preparation of regalia, manifestos, the script itself, and the outcome of the coronation. The second part describes the reception of the Polish question during different periods of Russian history. This second part extends the scope of the book's problems. In reality, the author dwells not only on a particular episode of Nicholas I's rule, but gives a detailed analysis, based on numerous sources (including interesting archival data), concerning the manifestos, opinions and correspondences of the three brothers, the emperors—Aleksandr, Konstantin, and Nikolai.

Chap. 1 recounts the motives behind the coronation of 1829 and the complicated and contradictory feelings of Nicholas I, who had to keep his promise to Aleksandr to respect the Polish constitution and to preserve traditions, including his special status