

argument. Furthermore, the book is a delight to read, never obscure or jargon-filled. Despite the rich detail and documentation, the argument is always clear and the forest never lost in the trees. It is a major contribution to the study of eighteenth-century Russia.

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CATHERINE THE GREAT: ART, SEX, POLITICS. By *Herbert T. Altenhoff*. New York: Vantage Press, 1975. xx, 114 pp. \$4.50.

The sole reason for reviewing this book is to warn scholars and librarians not to waste their money. The work was published, it would seem, mainly to purvey some miserably reproduced photographs of pornographically decorated furniture. The author, a *Wehrmacht* veteran of the Russian campaign, maintains that he took these pictures "in Catherine's Chambers" in the former *Tsarskoe Selo* during "a dangerous excursion into enemy territory." No substantiation is offered; the pictures might have been clipped from any porno pulp. The prose is unintentionally hilarious: awkward, ungrammatical, ponderous, naïve, and repetitive. One cannot begin to enumerate the hundreds of errors. The only conceivable scholarly use of this book might be as an object of psychoanalytic study: a twentieth-century example of the old salacious treatment of "naughty Catherine."

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A SIBERIAN JOURNEY: THE JOURNAL OF HANS JAKOB FRIES, 1774–1776. Edited and translated by *Walther Kirchner*. London: Frank Cass, 1974. xii, 183 pp. Illus. £5.50.

To understand Russia one must know its component parts, particularly Siberia. Information on this vast and varied region is often fragmentary and exceedingly rare, thus any new source is welcome. The account of Jakob Fries, a young Swiss surgeon in Russian service who accompanied a recruiting officer as far as *Kiakhta* in the 1770s, is lively reading and more informative about Siberian society than most works of its time. First published by Professor Kirchner in the original German in 1955, it has now been translated into English, with additional notes, a bibliography, and an index.

Professor Kirchner's introduction is of equal if not greater value. Beginning with Peter the Great's reign, he discusses the works of a pleiad of distinguished naturalists, including Messerschmidt, Müller, Gmelin, Krashennikov, Steller, the envoys Izmailov and Lange, the voyager Waxell, the Swedish war prisoner Strahlenberg, and many others. This was the great age of Siberian research. From 1775 to 1825 the reports, including that of Fries, are more touristic, lacking the purpose and much of the novelty of earlier ones. Each; however, contributes additional facts.

The scope of the introduction seems a bit contrived: purporting to be concerned with travel accounts, it includes scientific field studies; supposedly concerned mainly with foreigners, it includes Russians; and it excludes the seven-