

# The End of Muscovy: The Case for circa 1800

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In 1450, Muscovy was a relatively small principality on the steppe frontier; by 1800, Russia had become a major Eurasian empire.<sup>1</sup> How this transformation occurred is one of the fundamental questions of Russian historical study. A popular view, also held by many scholars, is that Peter I (1682–1725) brought Muscovy/Russia into the modern age by embracing contact with Europe and with western enlightenment and by turning Muscovy into the Russian state and empire. In this view, Peter is the revolutionary who “changed everything.” Another scholarly, though slightly less widespread, view holds that Peter took advantage of changes that were already occurring, although he accelerated the pace of those changes.

Russia’s transition during this period may, instead, be better understood in terms of the general trends of historical development and influences across the Eurasian land mass and Africa (Afro-Eurasia, also called the “World Island” by H. J. Mackinder) than in terms of the course of Russian history being transformed or sped up by one person.<sup>2</sup> Placing Peter’s reign in the context of Muscovite/Russian developments (both micro and macro changes) and, in turn, placing Muscovite/Russian developments in the context of Eurasian developments tends to corroborate the view that sees Peter as a utilizer of changes already occurring. But it also brings into question how much Peter succeeded in accelerating the pace of change. Studying the entire period of early modern Russian history from 1450 to 1800 allows us to see that the velocity of change remains fairly constant throughout. Particular changes can be faster or slower during different reigns, so one cannot use a few relatively rapid changes as evidence of the general rate of change for the entire reign. And the pace of change in a single reign cannot be viewed in isolation but must be compared to the rate of change in previous and succeeding reigns. Finally, one encounters a tendency in the historiography to engage in “post hoc ergo propter hoc” reasoning by attributing to Peter I changes occurring after him that would have occurred anyway.

A consideration of Eurasian influence flows can provide the broader context necessary for a better understanding of Russian developments. From at least the Qin Dynasty (221–206 BC) and its initial unification of China in the late third century BC, until foreign trade and exploration were cut off during the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) in the early fifteenth century AD, China was the fountainhead of invention and innovation for all of Afro-Eurasia. Hundreds of inventions and discoveries in the fields of agriculture, astronomy, cartography, engineering, industrial technology, medicine and health, mathematics, the physical sciences, transportation

1. I consider *Eurasia* to be all of Europe and Asia combined. What the Eurasianists call *Eurasia* I am calling *Inner Eurasia*.

2. H.[alford] J.[ohn] Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality: A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction* (New York, 1919), 79–84; cf. Mackinder, “The Geographical Pivot of History,” *Geographical Journal* 23, no. 4 (April 1904): 421–37.

and exploration, music, and warfare were first made in China and found their way westward.<sup>3</sup> During that period of over a millennium and a half, influence generally moved across Eurasia from east to west. When the exploratory voyages ended after the death of Admiral Zheng He in 1433, the Ming emperors and scholar-administrators turned China inward to concentrate on self-sufficiency. They did so at a point when China dominated the Indian Ocean, the economic locomotive of Afro-Eurasian trade, and was on the verge of political and economic hegemony over the World Island. But with that decision to give up political and economic domination of the Indian Ocean and foreign trade in general, arguably one of the most significant decisions in world history, a concomitant reverse polarization of the general flow of influence across Afro-Eurasia began to manifest itself.

Gradually at first, then picking up speed, influence moved from west to east. Whereas the Chinese invented the gun in the thirteenth century, it was the Portuguese who brought the gun to Japan in 1543. Instead of the Chinese mapping the European coast as they had the coasts of the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, it was the Spanish and Portuguese who mapped the Chinese and Japanese coasts during the sixteenth century. Instead of China's claiming the Azores, it was the Spanish who claimed the Philippines. Instead of Chinese scholars residing at the courts of Europe, it was European Jesuit scholars who resided at the court in Beijing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Instead of Chinese dragon ships opening European ports to Chinese silk, it was British gunboats that opened Chinese ports to Indian opium. By the nineteenth century, western Europe had replaced China as the generator of invention and innovation not only for Afro-Eurasia but also for the entire globe as the scientific, agricultural, and industrial revolutions leap-frogged the countries at the western end of the Eurasian land mass ahead of the rest of the world technologically.

Muscovy/Russia was not isolated from this Afro-Eurasian continuum. Situated on the boundary between east and west, Muscovy/Russia experienced the criss-crossing influence flows, both from Asia and from Europe. One can better understand this point within the context of David Christian's division of the Eurasian land mass into Outer and Inner Eurasia. He argues that Inner Eurasia (an area that coincides in great part with what Mackinder called the "Heartland" and what Denis Sinor has called "Central Eurasia" or "Inner Asia") provided the pathways by which not only goods and ideas but also technologies and innovations could be transferred from one part of Outer Eurasia to another.<sup>4</sup> Muscovy, situated at the western end of Inner Eurasia, adapted influences from the east (as a result of the Mongol/Tatar transfer through Inner Eurasia) well into the sixteenth century and from the south (specifically Byzantine Church cul-

3. These categories are taken from Robert Temple, *The Genius of China: 3000 Years of Science, Discovery and Invention*, 2d ed. (New York, 2007).

4. David Christian, "Inner Eurasia as a Unit in World History," *Journal of World History* 5 (1994): 173–211; Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia*, vol. 1, *Inner Eurasia from Prehistory to the Mongol Empire* (Malden, Mass., 1998), xxi.

ture from Outer Eurasia) well into the seventeenth century. Yet, as early as the latter half of the fifteenth century, Muscovy began to adopt material culture and administrative practices from the west (western Outer Eurasia). Somewhat paradoxically, however, many of the inventions and innovations that Muscovy/Russia adopted from the western end of Outer Eurasia had their origins at the eastern end.

Much of the study of Russian history in the early modern period has been focused on “modernization.” Russia is often presented as being behind Europe in historical development, and insofar as Russia “Europeanizes,” it is considered to be modernizing. As a result, Peter is seen as the great modernizer because he is the great Europeanizer. Other historians have questioned this approach as misrepresentative. Daniel Clark Waugh has argued that “to emphasize modernization under Peter may be a greater distortion of reality than the reverse.”<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Waugh points to “three tendencies” in the historiography that are of concern to him: “the continuing focus on the center (and thus on Petrine pronouncements) as opposed to the provinces (arguably the locus of Russian realities); the concomitant emphasis on the elite as opposed to the mass of the population; and the emphasis on secularization, to the extent that religious belief and practice are ignored.”<sup>6</sup> Waugh suggests that, taken as a whole, Russia remained more traditional than modern even after Peter’s reign, and he draws on Bruno Latour’s ideas about the insufficiencies of modernization theory.<sup>7</sup> But even before Latour, Marion J. Levy Jr., had questioned whether we can consider modernization to have emerged full-fledged before the nineteenth century precisely because modernization is based on increasing interdependency. In 1972, Levy wrote: “Modernization is no more than 150 years old by anyone’s estimate.”<sup>8</sup> Simon Dixon in his application of the “modernisation model” to analyze Russian developments from 1676 to 1825 found that it had “limited applicability” and that “Russia in 1825 was by no means a modern state.”<sup>9</sup>

The meaning of the term *modernization* itself depends on the standpoint of the person using it. As such, it can be used in two broad senses: relative to the time, in the sense of adopting then state-of-the-art innovations; and relative to the present. In the first sense, insofar as medieval Europe adopted the stirrup (eighth century), crossbows (eleventh century), paper (twelfth century), gunpowder (thirteenth century), and guns (fourteenth century), it was modernizing according to the Chinese standard. Muscovy, in turn, modernized when it adopted military weaponry, strategy, and tactics, as well as certain administrative techniques

5. Daniel Clarke Waugh, “We Have Never Been Modern: Approaches to the Study of Russia in the Age of Peter the Great,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 49 (2001): 326.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Cambridge, Mass., 1993).

8. Marion J. Levy Jr., *Modernization: Latecomers and Survivors* (New York, 1972), 4.

9. Simon Dixon, *The Modernisation of Russia, 1676–1825* (Cambridge, Eng., 1999), 256. See also his survey of various theories of modernization, 3–26.

from the Mongols in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>10</sup> Insofar as Muscovy/Russia was borrowing whatever the advanced innovations of the time were, it was modernizing from the fourteenth century on.

A present-oriented view of modernization, in contrast, would call a state “modern” when it developed or was well on its way to developing each of the following eight characteristics: a competitive spirit; widespread literacy; constitutionalism; the implementation of scientific thinking (the “spirit of number and reason”); secularization of social practices; nationalism (including ethnic and racial equality); industrialization and the accompanying urbanization; and gender equality. In that sense, then, particular states are only more or less “modern,” and most of Europe was not “modern” until the second half of the twentieth century. One of the problems with using the term *modernization* is that the two senses are often merged, so that particular institutions of a premodern country are evaluated as more or less modern, not in relation to its contemporaries, but in terms of where its contemporaries would be later or even are in the present.

Although early modern societies may not have had the interdependency that Levy saw as characterizing modern societies, they were interconnected, as Joseph Fletcher pointed out, during the period from 1500 to 1800.<sup>11</sup> He proposed a terminological framework for studying and analyzing that interconnectedness consisting of four aspects: *interconnection*, “historical phenomena in which there is contact linking two or more societies”; *horizontal continuity*, “an economic, social or cultural historical phenomenon experienced by two or more societies between which there is not necessarily interconnection” but that “must result from the same ultimate source”; *vertical continuity*, “survival of institutions, patterns, and the like through time” in a society; *parallel events*, some event that does not have an ultimate common source, such as possibly population loss or gain, occurring more or less simultaneously in two societies that do not have contact.<sup>12</sup> In addition, he used the device of an imaginary airplane that could travel back in time and “circle the globe,” but this plane would not allow us to do so on any particular day. Instead, it would compel us “to see the image of the world superimposed upon itself a thousand times, day after day, for the three centuries (sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth) of early modern history,” which in turn would allow us to discern “general patterns” and parallels. Among the parallels Fletcher discerned are: population growth; quickening tempo; growth of “regional” cities and towns; rise of urban commercial classes; religious revival and missionary movements; rural unrest; and decline of nomadism.<sup>13</sup> Being cognizant of these

10. See Donald Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-Cultural Influences on the Steppe Frontier, 1304–1589* (Cambridge, Eng., 1998); and Ostrowski, “Muscovite Adaption of Steppe Political Institutions: A Reply to Halperin’s Objections,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 1, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 267–304.

11. Joseph Fletcher, “Integrative History: Parallels and Interconnections in the Early Modern Period, 1500–1800,” *Journal of Turkish Studies* 9 (1985): 57.

12. *Ibid.*, 37.

13. *Ibid.*, 41–56.

parallels with non-Russian areas is important for understanding what was happening in Russia during this time.

For one thing, such cognition tells us that we may be doing a disservice to our evidence by attempting to interpret it in terms of some kind of turning or acceleration of Russian historical development around 1700. The “Peter changed everything” school of historiography may be minimizing the vertical (diachronic) continuities of Russian history, while the “Peter sped things up” school may be minimizing the horizontal (synchronic) continuities of Muscovite/Russia with the rest of Afro-Eurasia. Instead of minimizing what came before Peter and seeing Russia as significantly different after Peter, or using modern societies as the standard by which to judge early modern Russia, a better approach might be to evaluate all of Russian and Afro-Eurasian history on the same basis and place it on the same analytical grid. One may then see that the “turning point” (the continental divide) in Russian history comes in the early nineteenth century, not the early eighteenth. In that sense, the “long eighteenth century” in Russia is really part of a continuum that goes back to the late fifteenth century.

The year “1800” is admittedly an arbitrary and fuzzy cutoff. Some areas show definite changes before 1800; others not until after. Muscovy/Russia remained “traditional” in outlook and function through the eighteenth century. Between 1450 and 1800, there are no turning points, just more or less continuous trends (micro-changes with velocity). Only at the beginning of the nineteenth century does that traditional outlook begin to end and then initially only among the ruling class. My argument for circa 1800 as the “end” of Muscovy, however, is not based so much on outlook (a difficult determination at best) as on the following eight categories of historical development.

1. *Contact with the world.* Although it might be claimed that Muscovy’s contacts with western and southern Outer Eurasia before Peter could be considered sporadic, the same might be said about Russia’s contacts in the eighteenth century. To be sure, one can find more examples of contacts with western Outer Eurasia (i.e., Europe) in the eighteenth century than in the seventeenth, and more in the seventeenth than in the sixteenth, and so forth. But this represents only an increasing involvement with western Outer Eurasia rather than a sudden and dramatic “turn to the west” at any specific point. Middle and late Muscovy was in more or less continuous dialogue with European countries. By the early nineteenth century, however, Russia’s contacts with Europe were becoming qualitatively integrated or, to use Levy’s term, interdependent.

2. *Establishment of an empire.* The Russian empire, according to current definitions of what constitutes an empire, had been established long before Peter I. Beginning with the conquest of Kazan’ in 1552 and then Astrakhan’ in 1556, continuing with Ermak Timofeevich’s expedition against the Sibir’ Khanate in the 1580s as well as the subsequent exploration and claiming of Siberia all the way to the Pacific Ocean by the 1640s, a claim affirmed by the Treaty of Nerchinsk with China in 1689, the Russian empire was already in place by the end of the seventeenth century. Yet, the

Russian elite did not think of Russia as an empire until well into the nineteenth century, and most of the rest of the population did not think of themselves as being part of “Russia” until the twentieth century.

During Peter’s reign, instead of an acceleration, we see a deceleration in the rate of territorial acquisition. If we count Peter’s reign as beginning in 1696, when he assumed real power, we obtain a territorial acquisition figure of 18,933 square kilometers per year (it is lower if we count from 1682). From 1505 to 1682, Muscovy acquired, on average, 70,734.79 square kilometers per year. And from 1725 to 1800, it was 39,687.43 square kilometers per year. The high territorial acquisition rate before Peter can be attributed to the conquest of Siberia, how is the high acquisition rate after Peter (more than twice as much per year on average as during Peter’s reign) to be explained? The numbers in themselves do not mean much and should not be overemphasized, but the comparisons do raise questions concerning the claims that Peter founded the Russian empire or that he was an “empire builder.” Peter is responsible, though, for changing the name of the country officially to “the Russian empire.”

3. *Court politics.* As Muscovy expanded, it needed a formal means of incorporating the nobility of newly acquired territories into the ruling class. From the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries, court politics was conducted in much the same way with the prominent families and clans dominating positions in the government. Court politics throughout this period was not issue or policy driven.<sup>14</sup> Instead it consisted of the personal relations of the greater and lesser ruling families. A family could rise in status, power, and wealth for a number of reasons, including as Robert O. Crummey stated, “talent, energy, ambition, or good luck,” by “marrying into the royal family,” or if “one of their family members became a celebrated military leader.”<sup>15</sup> Yet, families could just as quickly fall from status. In order to confirm a family’s change in status and, thus, to maintain and even expand their position, families had to play the marriage politics game well.<sup>16</sup> As Russell Martin argues in another contribution to this forum, all that changed with the Succession Law of 1797.

It may seem counterintuitive to argue that the eighteenth century in Russia was no more different from the seventeenth than the seventeenth was from the sixteenth. After all, with a Renaissance aesthetic in art and European aristocratic style in dress, language, and facial hair configurations on men along with powdered wigs, was Russian court culture not more “European” in the eighteenth century? Yet, the deep-structural

14. For the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see S. B. Veselovskii, *Issledovaniia po istorii klassa shuzhilykh zemlevladel'tsev* (Moscow, 1969); and Nancy Shields Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics: The Making of the Muscovite Political System, 1345–1547* (Stanford, 1987); for the seventeenth century, see Robert O. Crummey, *Aristocrats and Servitors: The Boyar Elite in Russia, 1613–1689* (Princeton, 1983); for the eighteenth century, see John P. LeDonne, “Ruling Families in the Russian Political Order, 1689–1825,” *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 28 (1987): 233–322.

15. Crummey, *Aristocrats and Servitors*, 113.

16. On marriage politics, see especially Russell E. Martin, “Gifts for the Bride: Dowries, Diplomacy, and Marriage Politics in Muscovy,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 119–45.

power relations remained the same. Although the court elite took on the *maskirovka* of European style and speech, its behaviors and attitudes were consistent with those of Russian courts of preceding centuries.

4. *Military*. Through the sixteenth century, the Muscovite military was based on the steppe model with emphasis on cavalry, quick movement, and flexible tactics. Such practices worked well in the steppe. But as Russia came increasingly into contact with the European-type infantry army of Sweden and the cavalry of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, European-type infantry and cavalry formations, firearms, and tactics were adopted to battle those armies.<sup>17</sup> As early as the middle of the sixteenth century, Muscovy had established a standing unit of infantry, the musketeers (called the *strel'tsy* "shooters"). "Europeanizing" the army had begun in the early part of the seventeenth century under Tsar Mikhail (1613–1645). Tsar Aleksei (1645–1676) accelerated the reform of the Muscovite army along European lines. Between 1651 and 1663, the percentage of troops in new-formation regiments rose from 7 to 79 percent.<sup>18</sup> Peter I used the reorganization of the Russian army that had already occurred, although in order to battle the army of Charles XII (1697–1718), he ordered large numbers of dragoon regiments to be recruited, most of which were disbanded after 1725.<sup>19</sup> Yet, even after Russia's victory over Sweden in the Great Northern War, the European perception of Russia as a secondary military power had not changed. Only in the second half of the eighteenth century can we speak of Russia's becoming a major player in European politics. In 1760, a Russian army, led by General Gotlib-Genrikh Totleben, occupied Berlin, and in 1799 a Russian army, led by General A. S. Suvorov, was in the Alps. By 1814, Russian troops headed by Tsar Alexander I marched into Paris and a Russian governor, General Fabian Osten-Saken, was appointed there. These achievements were the result of changes that had begun in the sixteenth century as Muscovy looked increasingly to the west for military weaponry and techniques at the same time as it was beginning to expand southward along the Volga into Central Asia and eastward across Siberia, benefitting from the economic resources gained thereby.

5. *Society and economics*. Northern Russia continued throughout this period to be an agriculturally labor-intensive land where seed-to-yield ratios often failed to exceed an average of 1:3, which is regarded as the minimum for subsistence. A ratio of 1:5 is generally considered necessary for a civilization to develop. Russian peasants, at best, could support

17. For a recent comparative study of Russia's military interaction with its western neighbors, see Robert I. Frost, *The Northern Wars: War, State and Society in Northeastern Europe, 1558–1721* (New York, 2000).

18. Richard Hellie, *Enserfment and Military Change in Muscovy* (Chicago, 1971), 269. The Academy of Sciences history of the USSR placed it at 76 percent in 1680. A. A. Novosel'skii and N. V. Ustiugov, eds., *Ocherki istorii SSSR: Period feodalizma* (Moscow, 1955), 448.

19. Donald Ostrowski, "Peter's Dragoons: How the Russians Won at Poltava," in Serhii Plokhy and Michael Flier, eds., *Poltava 1709: Revisiting a Turning Point in European History* (Cambridge, Mass., forthcoming).

only a small ruling class. John LeDonne, among others, has estimated that, in the eighteenth century, the Russian nobility counted for just over 0.5 percent of the population.<sup>20</sup> But the ruling order was adept at making the adjustments necessary to survive with limited resources. Russian agriculture received a boost from the cultivation of western Eurasian steppe black soil areas made possible by the introduction of the moldboard plow with coulter.

As far as production is concerned, gunpowder and iron manufacture provide good examples. Guns and gunpowder, which were invented in China and brought westwards across Eurasia by the Muslims, began to be produced in large quantities in Muscovy by the early seventeenth century. Muscovy seems to have become self-sufficient in guns and gunpowder manufacture by the 1660s. By the early 1720s, Russia was exporting iron through St. Petersburg and Baltic ports, but this was primarily bar iron.<sup>21</sup> Russia continued to import wrought iron and steel throughout the eighteenth century. Arcadius Kahan concluded that this circumstance “indicates that the level of technical proficiency was lower in Russian iron production than in Western European production, or that the organization of production to meet customers’ demands was worse.”<sup>22</sup> Only a few iron manufacturers existed in Russia, mostly in the Urals, and they concentrated primarily on export, as did the government-owned ironworks. Kahan has argued that “the basic economic continuity between the Petrine and post-Petrine periods in the manufacturing sector was not so much provided by government policy as by the existence of a ‘natural’ link of an emerging distinct group of Russian manufacturers.”<sup>23</sup> Only in the nineteenth century does Russia begin to undergo what we can call “industrialization.”

6. *Governmental administration.* Muscovy/Russia became a dynastic state in the reign of Ivan III (1462–1505) and remained one until the early nineteenth century. Before then, from 1240 through the reign of Ivan’s father, Vasiliï II (1425–1462), the khan in Sarai chose the ruler of Rus’. Ivan III was the first grand prince of the later Rus’ principalities who ruled without receiving the *iarlyk* (patent) of the khan. Russia becomes a nation-state only in the nineteenth century, with the establishment of

20. John LeDonne, *Absolutism and the Ruling Class: The Formation of the Russian Political Order, 1700–1825* (Oxford, Eng., 1991), 22 and 318n1; cf. V. M. Kabuzan, *Narodonaselenie Rossii v XVIII–pervoi polovine XIX v. (po materialam revizii)* (Moscow, 1963), 154, 159–65.

21. Bar iron is pig iron that is drawn out into bars after fining. H. R. Schubert, *History of the British Iron and Steel Industry from c. 450 BC to AD 1775* (London, 1957), 230–91; R. F. Tylecote, “Iron in the Industrial Revolution,” in Joan Day and R. F. Tylecote, eds., *The Industrial Revolution in Metals* (London, 1991), 200–260; and R. F. Tylecote, *A History of Metallurgy*, 2d ed. (London, 1992), 95–105. Among the advantages of bar iron over pig iron is that it can more easily be cut into rods to make nails and made into knives and tools as well as hinges and locks. See Peter King, “The Production and Consumption of Bar Iron in Early Modern England and Wales,” *Economic History Review* 58, no. 1 (February 2005): 4–5.

22. Arcadius Kahan, *The Plow, the Hammer, and the Knout: An Economic History of Eighteenth-Century Russia* (Chicago, 1985), 186.

23. Arcadius Kahan, “Continuity in Economic Activity and Policy during the Post-Petrine Period in Russia,” *Journal of Economic History* 25, no. 1 (March 1965): 80.



such doctrines as official nationality, forced assimilation of non-Russian ethnic groups (for example, the Valuev Ukaz of 1863 and the Ems Ukaz of 1876), and the emancipation of the serfs. Conceptual challenges to Russia as a dynastic state arose not earlier than the 1830s.<sup>24</sup>

The Law Code (Ulozhenie) of 1649 was Muscovy's third law code, following earlier codifications in 1497 and in 1550. It was comprehensive and as up-to-date as any law code in the world. In fact, there were few comparable law codes in Europe at the time. Poland had formulated a code of laws in 1432, Lithuania in 1588, and Denmark only in 1670. The Holy Roman Emperor Charles V had issued the *Constitutio criminalis Carolina* in 1535, but it dealt with matters of criminal law only.<sup>25</sup> The Slavonic version of the Byzantine *Procheros Nomos* of Basil I and the Lithuanian Statute of 1588 were two of the main sources consulted in formulating the Ulozhenie. For a seventeenth-century law code, the Ulozhenie is quite extensive, although it does not always comport with our twenty-first-century notions of what a law code should be.<sup>26</sup> It does articulate general principles and was relatively well thought out. As supplemented by the Military Regulation of 1716 and other statutes, it remained the law of the land until 1836 when it was replaced by the law code designed by Mikhail Speranskii.

7. *Church relations.* In the second half of the seventeenth century, the Orthodox Church developed its own program of *prosveshchenie* (enlightenment) for raising the spiritual and moral awareness of the Russian people. Peter's reforms of the church were in accord with, and supported by, the segments of the church that backed the principles of that program of enlightenment. The *Spiritual Regulation*, which was in large part composed by the bishop of Pskov, Feofan Prokopovich, was signed by all the prelates and the exarch (head of the church) Stefan Iavorskii, who became president of the Most Holy Governing Synod. The *Spiritual Regulation* initially called the Synod an "Ecclesiastical College," but the prelates changed the name to the more traditional "Most Holy Governing Synod" at its first meeting. As Gregory Freeze has pointed out, this was not just a change in name but a significant raising of the Holy Synod to the same status as the Senate. It replicated the relationship between the Holy Synod and the

24. Zenon Kohut, "A Dynastic or Ethno-Dynastic Tsardom? Two Early Modern Concepts of Russia," in Marsha Siefert, ed., *Extending the Borders of Russian History: Essays in Honor of Alfred J. Rieber* (Budapest, 2003), 26. Kohut contrasts two concepts of tsardom: the Orthodox dynastic concept of F. A. Griboedov's *History of the Tsars and Grand Princes of the Rus' Land* (1669) with the Orthodox proto-East Slavic dynastic concept of the *Sinopsis* attributed to Innokentii Gizel' (1st ed., 1674; 3d ed., 1681). Serhii Plokyh adds that "logically . . . it was in the 1830s that reprints of the *Sinopsis* finally ceased to appear." Plokyh, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations: Premodern Identities in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus* (Cambridge, Eng., 2006), 264n36.

25. My thanks to George Weickhardt for providing information about these law codes. He considers the Ulozhenie to be "much more sophisticated on matters of criminal and civil procedure" than the Lithuanian Statute of 1588. Weickhardt, e-mail communication with author, 20 August 2007.

26. This point has led to the suggestion that the Ulozhenie was more a digest than a law code, like the Code Napoleon. If so, then there were no "law codes" in the world before the Code Napoleon because they all were "digests" to one degree or another.

Boyar Council, of which the Senate was the continuation. Only with the upward change in status was an oberprokurator appointed to act as Peter's representative to the Holy Synod, just as he appointed one to the Senate.<sup>27</sup> The decisions against naming a new patriarch and for revamping the Holy Synod did not make the church a department of the state, as many have asserted.<sup>28</sup> Instead, Freeze has provided sufficient evidence and argued convincingly that the Holy Synod remained independent of the state.<sup>29</sup> If anything, the *Spiritual Regulation* reduced the secular government's involvement in church matters. In Muscovy, following Byzantine practice, the head of the church and the head of the state co-presided over church councils in person and were co-responsible for the external administration of the church. After the promulgation of the *Spiritual Regulation*, a second-tier civil administrator represented the secular government in church matters..

8. *Culture and education.* Catholic cultural influences entered the Rus' lands through Novgorod in the late fifteenth century and subsequently through Kiev in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Pre-Protestant and Protestant influences also came through these cities. Western artistic influences affected religious painting of the mid-sixteenth century, leading to the trial of state secretary Ivan Viskovatyi for objecting to these changes. European-style influences in portraiture began appearing in the early seventeenth century.<sup>30</sup> The first secular play, *The Comedy of Artaxerxes*, staged by Johann Gottfried Gregorius, a Lutheran pastor living in Moscow, was performed at the court of Tsar Aleksei in 1672.<sup>31</sup> Ballet was introduced into Russia in the second half of the seventeenth century and Italian opera appeared during the reign of Empress Anna Ioannovna (1730–1740). Serf theaters, orchestra, actors, dancers, and artists carried much of the artistic culture in Russia into the early nineteenth century. In addition, the visual changes in the urban landscape brought about by the Russian baroque in the eighteenth century had already begun to be evident in the second half of the seventeenth century. Only in the nineteenth century, however, did Russian artistic culture become more or less integrated with that of Europe.

The Slavonic-Greco-Latin Academy opened in Moscow in 1687. Individuals such as the Ruthenians Simeon Polotskii (1629–1680) and Feofan Prokopovich (1681–1736), and the Greek Likhudes brothers, Ioannikios (d. 1717) and Sofronios (d. 1730), as well as Epifanii Slavinetskii (d. 1675) brought western and Greek learning, which had a major impact

27. Gregory Freeze, "Handmaiden of the State? The Church in Imperial Russia Reconsidered," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 30 (1985): 86.

28. Including myself in "The Façade of Legitimacy: Exchange of Power and Authority in Early Modern Russia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44, no. 3 (July 2002): 540.

29. Freeze, "Handmaiden," 82–102.

30. E. S. Ovchinnikova, *Portret v russkom uskusstve XVII veka* (Moscow, 1955).

31. Russell E. Martin, "Muscovite Esther: Bride Shows, Queenship, and Town in *The Comedy of Artaxerxes*," in Valerie Kivelson, Michael Flier, Nancy Shields Kollmann, and Karen Petrone, eds., *The New Muscovite Cultural History: A Collection in Honor of Daniel B. Rowland* (Columbus, Ohio, 2009), 21–42.

on strengthening Orthodoxy in the Russian lands. The development of printing in Slavia Orthodoxa differed from that of the Latin west as well as that of Slavia Romana. Through the eighteenth century, only about a dozen ecclesiastical books were printed, although in large print runs.<sup>32</sup> Whereas there are those who argue printing had no impact in Slavic Orthodox territory because it did not bring secular enlightenment, the Orthodox Church's program of *prosveshchenie* was a religion-based equivalent to the secular enlightenment program of the philosophes. Far from Peter's reforms diminishing the church and church influence in Russia, the church simply continued to spread its own enlightenment program. During the eighteenth century, the church established four theological academies and forty-six seminaries. Father, later Metropolitan, Platon (1737–1812), the tutor of the future Emperor Paul, blended the Orthodox church principles of the moral development of society with the ideals of the European Enlightenment.<sup>33</sup> In the nineteenth century, parish priests did far more to educate the populace than the secular government.<sup>34</sup> Peter I set up a publishing system to report military matters and distribute decrees. But his son "Peter II," as Gary Marker stated, "essentially brought the Petrine publishing system to an end."<sup>35</sup> The result was that, after Peter I, the percentage of titles devoted to military and state decrees dropped sharply and the percentage of titles classified as *belles lettres* increased substantially.

Peter was a very active tsar, but one may well ask what endured from the frenzy of activity that was his reign. If one considers "Muscovy" static and "imperial Russia" dynamic, then one can easily come to believe that Peter was the causative agent of this difference. But to view "Muscovy" that way is a misreading and distortion of the evidence, since Muscovy underwent continuous micro- and macro-transformations. Significant changes did occur under Peter I, and he seemed to be trying to increase the pace of change already occurring. He also had a very active public relations

32. Robert Mathieson ascribes this phenomenon to the independent decisions of printers throughout the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and attributes those independent decisions to the worldview of Slavia Orthodoxa, which depended on a five-cycle 532-year church calendar and to "the traditional cosmology" of Orthodox Slavs. Robert Mathieson, "Cosmology and the Puzzle of Early Printing in Old Cyrillic," *Solanus* 18 (2004): 5–25.

33. Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter, "Religion and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Russia: Father Platon at the Court of Catherine II," *Slavonic and East European Review* 88, nos. 1–2 (January–April 2010): 180–203.

34. Natalie Jensen, "The Contributions of Parish Priests to Education in Late Imperial Russia" (paper read at the Second Biennial Association for the Study of Eastern Christian History and Culture Conference, Columbus, Ohio, 6 October 2007). For the role of the seminaries in education in the eighteenth century, see Gregory L. Freeze, *The Russian Levites: Parish Clergy in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1977), 34–37, 78–106; for the education of *popovichi* in the nineteenth century, see Laurie Manchester, *Holy Fathers, Secular Sons: Clergy, Intelligentsia, and the Modern Self in Revolutionary Russia* (DeKalb, 2008).

35. Gary Marker, *Publishing, Printing, and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700–1800* (Princeton, 1985), 42.

staff that undertook a campaign to praise his “accomplishments” at every step. I am not diminishing what Peter did achieve, which was indeed comparable with many other twenty-five-year periods in Russian history, but I do question the extravagant claims made by the Peterphiliacs. Many of the changes he brought about did not fundamentally affect the course and speed of changes already well under way, or they were not sustained by his successors, or they failed completely. Those changes that did succeed and endure tended, as Dixon has pointed out, to be more in accord with Muscovite antecedents than those that did not.<sup>36</sup>

At the end of Peter’s reign, the governmental administration was in chaos. When Peter came to the throne, the Boyar Council acted as a council of state and the administration was organized around the *prikaz* system. Peter replaced the Boyar Council with the Senate and the prikazes with colleges, based on the Swedish model. But these institutions, no matter what Peter’s intent, tended to function (when they did function) similar to the way their predecessors had because that is what the administrators were familiar with. As Claes Peterson has concluded, Peter’s reforms resulted in confusion for the following reasons: lack of a clear administrative blueprint; the ever-changing needs of war; conflicting advice and poor coordination; the lack of experienced, hardworking, and honest personnel; widespread corruption among public officials; and frequent interference by Peter and his immediate associates.<sup>37</sup> Peter’s “vision,” insofar as there was one, was little understood by the Russian governmental personnel of the time, the very ones who were supposed to implement it. The traditional outlook and way of doing things among the elite—marriage politics and the dynastic state—remained intact. Perhaps more enduring than the changes that Peter wrought personally was his value as a symbol to justify changes made by his successors, Elizabeth Petrovna and Catherine II. The reforms they undertook in his name were often not the reforms he had proposed, but they tended to have more lasting consequences.

Finally, when historians discuss the changes that Peter wrought, they are usually referring only to changes that affected the ruling elite, not even all the ruling class, and these changes scarcely had an impact on the great mass of the Russian population. Study of elites is a worthwhile and fundamental part of historical study, but we do need to be careful in extrapolating from what the elites were doing to what the rest of the population—the merchants, artisans, craftsmen, peasants and serfs, and other groups—were doing. In that respect the vertical continuities of development and change in Russian history from 1450 to 1800 are even more evident. When one puts those developments and changes in the context of the cross-currents of Afro-Eurasian influence flows for the first two millennia AD and, in the spirit of Fletcher’s “integrative history,” takes a view

36. Dixon, *Modernisation*, 6: “relied on well-trying Muscovite methods.”

37. Claes Peterson adds that Peter’s model, the Swedish administrative system, did not fit Russian conditions. Claes Peterson, *Peter the Great’s Administrative and Judicial Reforms: Swedish Antecedents and the Process of Reception*, trans. Michael F. Metcalf (Stockholm, 1979), 414. Or as Catherine II wrote: “He [Peter] did not know himself what laws were necessary to the realm.”

of the historical landscape from the window of an airplane flying overhead, then the horizontal continuities become evident as well. Just as the later Rus' principalities took what they needed from the Mongol/Tatars in the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries, so too did early modern Russia take what it needed from Europe. But, just as borrowing from the Mongols did not make the Russians Mongol, borrowing from Europe did not make them European either. Russia has been its own civilization, a core culture, unique yet fundamentally interconnected with the rest of the world, and the changes it has undergone have had these same characteristics. The evolution of a Russian culture, the establishment of a Russian state, and its expansion into a Eurasian empire are all part of one of the most amazing transformations in world history, but it most definitely did not begin with Peter I.