

Publishing in Tsarist Russia: A History of Print Media from Enlightenment to Revolution. Ed. Yukiko Tatsumi and Taro Tsurumi. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. xv, 264 pp. Notes. Index. Bibliography. Illustrations. Photographs. Figures. Tables. \$115.00, hard bound.

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This book edited by Yukiko Tatsumi and Taro Tsurumi focuses on the history of publishing in Russia from an original perspective, starting from one important question: what impact did publishing in Russian have on the non-Russian communities living in the tsarist empire? Reflecting on Benedict Anderson's famous theory, according to which the expansion of print media made a fundamental contribution to the spread of nationalism and to the formation of nation-states at the expense of the national minorities present in the old nineteenth century empires, the editors underline how, in the case of the tsarist empire, the Russian print media not only fostered Russian nationalism, but also enabled other minority national identities to develop. The editors warn against wholly identifying the spread of Russian language publishing with Russification policies: "the history of Russian publishing is not confined to the history of Russification or the development of Russian nationalism: it also includes the history of the nationalism of non-Russians" (4). The editors underline how, especially from the second half of the nineteenth century, the Russian publishing system set itself up to be a relatively independent field not entirely controlled by the government. The book argues that publishing in the Russian language at that time was also a tool used by various national and religious minorities to promote their own national identities. In this sense, according to Taro Tsurumi, even though the weight of the Tsarist government's linguistic policies should not be underestimated, it nevertheless has to be acknowledged that Russian language publishing offered some national minorities a "soft infrastructure," parallel to the "hard infrastructures" (such as railways, communication networks) that enabled them to develop by using Russian as a sort of *lingua franca*.

Part 1 covers the period that goes from the reign of Catherine II to the 1880s, which is when the Russian publishing system was created and consolidated. In Chapter 1 Yusuke Toriyama analyzes the work of the "Society Striving for the Translation of Foreign Books" founded by Catherine II, showing how the efforts of Russian translators did not only make the ideas of the European Enlightenment accessible to Russian readers, but also created a modern language capable of serving as the empire's *lingua franca*. In Chapter 2, Abram Reitblat describes the numerous players and factors that in the course of the second half of the nineteenth century helped establish a canon of Russian literature classics. In Chapter 3, Hajime Kaizawa analyzes a key period in the history of publishing in Russia, the 1880s. At that stage, thanks to the technological progress of the publishing industry, certain classics of Russian literature began to circulate in affordable editions in the empire's schoolrooms and among the masses of new readers from the countryside: at the same time, translations of the Russian classics crossed the empire's borders, enjoying great acclaim in western Europe.

Part 2 focuses on the interaction between the European and Russian publishing industries and the role played by Russian publishing in the cultural development of certain non-Russian national minorities within the empire. In Chapter 4, Yukiko Tatsumi describes the contribution given by certain important publishers of non-Russian origin to developing the Russian publishing industry between the 1870s and the 1880s. Tatsumi highlights how these publishers promoted a nationalist ideology in their magazines more for commercial rather than for political reasons. In Chapter 5, Takehiko Inoue analyzes the role played by Russian language publishing in keeping alive the cultural traditions of the Buddhist community of the Kalmyks in the Lower

Volga steppe. The author, in fact, shows how, after the Kalmyks had been assimilated into the Russian empire and had lost their previous links with other Tibetan Buddhist communities, resorting to Russian publishing and being integrated into the empire's scientific establishment had enabled certain members of the community not only to restore previously interrupted cultural ties, but also to recover and enhance the importance of Kalmyk national identity. The next two chapters analyze the role of publications in Russian among the Muslim Tatar community present in the Volga-Ural region. In Chapter 6, Danielle Ross reconstructs the indirect contribution that being able to print in Russian gave to the cultural development of this community between the late eighteenth and late nineteenth centuries. The author underlines how, on the one hand, the Russian government's promotion of publishing and papermaking stimulated a rapid growth in the manuscript production of local religious texts, and, on the other, had favored the circulation of mass-printed books in local languages even outside the cultural elite. In the following chapter, Akira Sakurama shows the importance of certain religious magazines published in Russian for the Tatar communities who had converted to the Orthodox church (baptized Tatars), and underlines how these publications had, especially after 1905, offered them a platform from which to claim their non-Muslim Tatar identity.

In the chapter that opens Part 3, Melissa K. Stockdale describes the role played by the popular press during the First World War in involving the peasant masses in the events of the war. The author shows how these publications first helped to stimulate a patriotic spirit, accelerating the formation of mass national identity, and then, after the February revolution, to emphasize the Tsarist government's lack of organization and the suffering inflicted by the war. Lastly, Taro Tsurumi describes the role that certain Zion Russian-language periodicals played for the Jewish communities living in Siberia and, after the revolution, in the Far East. Apart from the symbolic importance of Hebrew for those communities, Turumi highlights the functional importance of using Russian and of turning to Russian media to build networks and maintain links with other communities of Russian Jews present in the Russian empire and in Palestine.

The book has the merit of considering the Russian empire for what it was: a multi-national, multi-confessional, poly-lingual entity, and of assessing, broadly and not schematically, the innumerable functions that publishing may have had within an imperialistic cultural context. At the same time, in order to reconstruct an overall historical vision, it would also have been important to offer an analysis of the cultural policies put in place by Russian publishing in areas, for example, such as Ukraine, Poland, the Baltic, or the Caucasus, in which publications in Russian could have had a more oppressive role than those highlighted in this book.

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DAMIANO REBECCHINI
Università degli Studi di Milano

Writing History in Late Imperial Russia: Scholarship and the Literary Canon.

By Frances Nethercott. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. X, 280 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$115.00, hard bound.

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The author of this exhaustively argued and heavily documented monograph (71 pages of notes support 191 pages of text) sets out to illustrate the “literary interface” (2) of Russian historical scholarship in nineteenth and early twentieth century Russia, a task at which she succeeds admirably. Frances Nethercott attributes the persistence