

woman and vacuum cleaner, a move away from the communal towards ‘rampant consumerism and commodity fetishism’ (153).

The level of this book is so high that it would be churlish to find failings, but its impact would have been increased by having coloured illustrations instead of the standard black and white. Helena Goscilo’s most sensuous evocation of the colours and tonings of the posters and paintings would have been greatly enhanced by illustrations which captured some of the force of her argument. The same could be said for the illustrations of magazine covers in Emma Widdis’ article on clothing (126–7) and the stills from films in Graffy’s chapter. Jesse Savage is credited as the translator of two of the articles written originally in Russian (Dobrenko and Turovskaya). These on the whole read well, but occasionally the meaning remains opaque or the turn of phrase awkward (249). In my view Dobrenko’s chapter is overly long and Turovskaya’s, although it does as the editors claim, provide a useful source of comparative and contrastive material is marginally concerned with the theme of the book. Variant spellings of the critic Kracauer (193) should not have passed the proof-reading phase. But these are all minor details and this collection is to be highly recommended as an insightful and well-research addition to studies of the former Soviet state, failed Utopia that it was.

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Paul Dukes, Graeme P. Herd and Jarmo Kotilaine, *Stuarts and Romanovs: The Rise and Fall of a Special Relationship* (Dundee: Dundee University Press, 2009), xiii + 262 pp.

The premise of the ‘special relationship’ examined in this study derives from the historical coincidence that Mikhail Romanov ascended the Muscovite throne (1613) within a decade of the ‘union of the crowns’ (1603) that brought James Stuart (James VI of Scotland) to the English throne. To base on this any kind of parallel history of the two dynasties would be a dubious project indeed and one that (whatever its title might suggest) forms no part of the intention of this scholarly monograph. Rather, its authors are concerned with the whole range of British–Russian relations throughout the seventeenth century, including contacts

between two royal houses which from the opposite ends of Europe cleaved to the idea of absolute monarchy in an era of upheaval and turmoil.

Essentially, the book presents a chronological narrative whose dominant theme is the changing course of diplomatic and commercial relations. From the British perspective, the determining factor was most often the fortunes of the Muscovy Company and its perennial but unsuccessful campaign for the restoration of the privileges originally granted by Ivan IV but effectively revoked in the reign of Aleksei Mikhailovich. On the Russian side, the principal objective was to secure the support of Britain (among other European powers) in a 'holy war' against the Ottoman Empire. Against this background of strategic cross purposes were played out the periodic crises that threatened to complicate or disrupt the relationship: Russian reaction to the execution of Charles I, Dutch threats to British commercial interests, changing markets and trading conditions, the Thirty Years' War, the Great Northern War, the 'Glorious Revolution'. Successive chapter headings provide a key to overall trends: 'New Beginnings, 1603–1625'; 'From Decline to Disruption, 1625–1649'; 'Crisis, Interregnum and Restoration, 1649–1663'; 'The Struggle for Revival, 1663–1676'; 'Towards Termination, 1676–1688'; 'Endgame, 1688–1698'.

Within this framework, the authors deploy a wealth of primary material (much of it previously unpublished), including official documents and despatches, the *vesti-kuranty* (embryonic Russian 'newspapers' heretofore largely neglected as an historical source) and the private letters and journals of British travellers, merchants, envoys and expatriates, most notably the Scots general Patrick Gordon, a mercenary in the Muscovite service, employed at various times as an ambassador to the court of James II and British representative at the court of Fedor III and Peter I, and advocate for the Jacobite cause in Moscow. Meticulous analysis of this evidence and an exhaustive survey of secondary sources leads the authors to recognise not only the process of convergence (economic, diplomatic, cultural) at work in seventeenth-century Europe, but also the contrary movement towards political divergence exemplified by the final defeat of Stuart absolutism on the one hand and by the consolidation of Petrine autocracy on the other (218–9). At the same time, differing interpretations (for example, of William III's 'revolution') are acknowledged and entrenched assumptions (for example, the underestimation of Russian diplomatic successes in Europe before Peter) are challenged.

Disavowing any claim to be a parallel history, *Stuarts and Romanovs* nevertheless (as the Preface concedes) ‘encourages comparisons’ (ix) which sometimes strike the reader with their appositeness: the vicissitudes of Charles I in 1648, for example, had some parallel in the real danger of a popular uprising that confronted Aleksei Mikhailovich in the same year. Four decades later, while William III was defending his position from the legitimist backlash, Peter I had to deal with the threat to his authority posed by the *streltsy* and Sophia. And although it is more (or less) than the history of two families, the book contrives to end, as it began, on a note of dynastic intrigue, the project to find an English bride for Ivan IV finding its reflection in an even less likely putative plan for a marriage between the Empress Elizabeth and Bonnie Prince Charlie.

Joint authorship inevitably presents challenges and problems in an undertaking such as this. The solution adopted was to assign to each author a particular area of responsibility: commerce to Kotilaine, diplomacy to Herd and war to Dukes, who also assumed the task of overall editorship. The result is a lucid, coherent and stylistically harmonious whole, although different readers will no doubt find some parts more readable than the rest, and others may regret the necessity of the frequent recapitulations as the different strands in the narrative are woven together. The volume is handsomely produced, with twenty-one monochrome illustrations, including some rare contemporary views of Arkhangelsk, Vologda and Narva.

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Eternity Can Wait: Alec Derwent Hope and Other Poets = Vechnost' podozhdet: Alek Dervent Xoup i drugie poety, translated by Galina Lazareva (Moscow: Rudomino, 2011), 159 pp.

Galina Lazareva was the winner of the 2010 prize for poetry translation awarded by the Pushkin in Britain Festival of Russian Poetry and Culture which has been held in London annually since 2003. In publishing this volume, she has chosen to focus on the work of the Australian poet A. D. Hope, which is here presented to a Russophone audience for the first time.