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Upon his death [Ivan III] in 1504, his son and successor, Gavriil, known to posterity as Vasilii [III], brought into submission all the remaining princes of the Muscovite clan and regained Smolensk, and emboldened by these conquests, began to nourish higher ambitions and adopted for himself the imperial title, according to the testimony of Herberstein, the ambassador of the Roman Emperor Maximillian I.

Augustin Freiherr von Meyerberg, 1661[1]

Neither John Milton nor Jodocus Crull had ever been to Muscovy, yet both wrote descriptions of the country. Interestingly, the two stay-at-home ethnographers offered strikingly different images of Muscovite civic culture. In *A Brief History of Muscovy*, the famous English poet stressed the efficiency and fairness of Russian government. All Russian subjects, Milton assured his readers, served the tsar loyally and were rewarded according to their merits. "Any rich man," Milton wrote admiringly, "who through age, or other impotence is unable to serve the Publick, being inform'd of, is turn'd out of his Estate, and forc'd with his family to live on a small Pension, while some other more deserving, is by the Duke's authority put into possession."[2] Milton's paean to Muscovite governance was virtually unique among seventeenth-century European descriptions of Russia. In contrast, Crull's *The Ancient and Present State of Muscovy* echoed the far more common opinion that Muscovy was ruled despotically. "The State of Muscovy, or its Political Government," Crull believed, "is not only Monarchical, but also Despotical or Absolute; forasmuch as the Czar being sole and absolute Master over all his Subjects, disposes without Controul of their Lives and Estates."[3]

Why did Milton and Crull disagree so strongly about the nature of Muscovite government? The answer cannot lie in differing experiences because neither man had ever set foot on Russian soil. Neither is an explanation to be found in contrasting political perspectives, for Milton surely would have joined Crull in condemning tsarist tyranny had he believed that the Russian prince was a tyrant. Rather, Milton and Crull could not agree because their sources could not. Milton based his description on early and, by seventeenth-century standards, very unusual accounts, namely, Paolo Giovio, an Italian cleric who had written a description of Muscovy in 1525, and Richard Chancellor, an English navigator who had visited Russia in 1553.[4] Both men had praised the fairness of the Muscovite monarchy, and Milton blindly followed them.[5] Like so many ethnographers of the later sixteenth and seventeenth century, Crull relied on

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[1]Meyerberg (1661), 106.

[2]Milton (1648), 336-37.

[3]Crull (1698), 169.

[4]Milton's information was, as the subtitle of his book relates, "Gather'd from the Writings of several Eye-witnesses." See Milton (1648), 331. By this he meant primarily the sixteenth-century English travelers who had contributed to Hakluyt, among whom one finds Chancellor. Milton called Giovio a "Pattern or Example" to be used by writers of ethnographies. See Milton (1648), 327.

[5]Milton copied, almost *verbatim*, Adams/Chancellor (1553), 260. Chancellor's statement received partial corroboration in Giovio (1525), 55: "In every part of the administration they [the Muscovites] observe the useful and excellent institution that all according to their services receive eternal reward or eternal shame."

Herberstein's *Notes on the Muscovites* of 1549 and works that had borrowed information from it.[6] Herberstein had written that the grand prince holds "unlimited control over the lives and property of all his subjects."[7] Slightly rephrasing the Habsburg ambassador, Crull repeated that the tsar "disposes of the Lives and Fortunes of his subjects at his pleasure."[8]

As we shall see in what follows, *Notes on the Muscovites* was in some measure responsible for convincing not only Crull but many Europeans that Muscovy was ruled by a despot and peopled by slaves. Herberstein did not invent the image of Russian despotism, but his depiction of it was the first to be grounded in personal experience. Where his predecessors had based their sketchy understanding of Russian rule on wishful-thinking or brief interviews, Herberstein had been to Moscow, seen the Russian court with his own eyes, and met with men who served the grand prince. His observations convinced him that though Muscovy had once been a balanced monarchy, Ivan III and Vasilii III (Herberstein's host) had transformed Russia into a kind of tyranny. The Habsburg ambassador's picture of Muscovite political life *circa* 1525, as memorialized in the pages of *Notes on the Muscovites*, was broadcast throughout Europe *via* the power of the printing press. In a period starved for intelligence about Russia, Herberstein's book proved tremendously popular and it was often re-printed in the second half of the sixteenth century. Soon after its initial publication, his tome became the major European source of information on Muscovy and, more generally, the interpretive lens through which men of the late Renaissance viewed Russia. Almost every serious student of Muscovy read *Notes on the Muscovites* and was influenced by the image of Russian civic culture it presented.

Herberstein's Image of Russia

Any discussion of the growth of European knowledge about Russia in the second half of the sixteenth century must begin with Herberstein's *Notes on the Muscovites*. The facts of Herberstein's life are well known. He was born in 1486 at Wippach, in Styria, to a prominent German family. Slovenian was spoken in that region of the Habsburg domain and the young Herberstein became familiar with the South Slavic language, a fact that would be significant later in his career. In 1499, he entered the University at Vienna where he studied philosophy and law. During his days as a student, he may have come into contact with Konrad Celtis, who taught at Vienna and was one of the pioneers of the new Humanist science of "chorography," or regional ethnographic description.[9] In 1506, Herberstein became an officer in the Imperial army and served with distinction in a number of campaigns. He was knighted by Emperor Maximillian I himself in 1508 and entered the Imperial Council in 1515, the year which also marked the beginning of his long and storied diplomatic career. From 1515 to 1553, Herberstein carried out something on the order of sixty-nine foreign missions for his Habsburg masters, traveled throughout much of Europe (including Turkey), and became acquainted with the

[6]It seems that Crull had Olearius (1656) and Reutenfels (1671) at hand, both of whom were heavily dependent on *Notes on the Muscovites*.

[7]Herberstein (1517-49), 1: 32.

[8]Crull (1698), 169. In fact, Crull recognized that Giovio was wrong in praising Muscovite monarchy. He wrote (apparently unaware that the Italian cleric had authored his treatise in 1525), that "Ivan IV" was not "a good and devout Christian" as Giovio had written. Giovio, of course, had Vasilii III in mind. Crull then repeated Herberstein's thesis that Ivan III was the original architect of Muscovite despotism. See Crull (1698), 330-31.

[9]On Celtis and early Humanist chorography, see Gerald Strauss, *Sixteenth-Century Germany. Its Topography and Topographers* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959), 12-26.

personalities and practices of courts too numerous to mention here.[10] He was lauded for his achievements: the Habsburgs granted him estates and titles, and books and collections of panegyrics were dedicated to him.

Herberstein first journeyed to Muscovy to make peace between Russia and Lithuania. Aware that Sigismund I, king of Poland and grand prince of Lithuania, was consolidating his hold on the Hungarian throne, Maximillian initiated an anti-Jagellonian coalition, of which Vasilii III was to be a member. In early 1514 the grand prince, already at war with the Lithuanians, agreed to an alliance with the Habsburgs. Vasilii renewed his advance on Smolensk and awaited Maximillian's offensive against Poland. Smolensk fell, but the Muscovites were badly beaten at Orsha in September, 1514. Sigismund learned of the Imperial-Russian pact and realized that he was in desperate straits. At the Council of Vienna in 1515, Sigismund made peace with Maximillian and agreed to a dynastic marriage that ensured the Habsburgs would receive the coveted Hungarian crown. With this rapprochement between the Habsburgs and Poland, the Russian war with Lithuania lost value for Maximillian; therefore, he dispatched Herberstein in 1517 to arrange a truce between the two parties. Though Herberstein remained nine months in Moscow, he was unable to persuade the parties to reconcile their differences. In 1522 a second Imperial embassy under Francesco Da Collo culminated in the signing of a five-year truce between the Lithuanians and Muscovites. Herberstein was sent to Moscow for a second time in 1526 to secure the renewal of that treaty.

The earliest version of Herberstein's account of Muscovy was probably written between 1517 and 1527. Though no early manuscript of *Notes on the Muscovites* has been found, several facts point to the existence of some sort of proto-text. In the first edition of the book, Herberstein recollected having made numerous notes during his diplomatic missions "doubtless worthy of being commemorated in print."[11] Herberstein also remarked in *Notes on the Muscovites* that he gave the emperor a "description of the customs and ceremonies of the Russians," but it is unclear whether this report was written or oral.[12] The ambassador mentioned an early report on Muscovy in his autobiography, but again it is not certain whether it was written or oral.[13] There is another possible reference to a written treatise in 1518, but what relation it bears to *Notes on the Muscovites* is unknown.[14] A letter from Ferdinand to Herberstein of 1526 asked the ambassador to produce a formal account of his experiences in Russia.[15] The original report may have remained unattended in the

[10]There is no full-lenth, modern biography of Herberstein, though much has been written in various places about his activities. For a nearly complete list of studies on Herberstein, see Marshall T. Poe, *Foreign Descriptions of Muscovy* (Columbus, OH: Slavica, 1993), 61-65 and Bibliography 4 below. The best treatment of Herberstein's diplomatic activities is Berthold Picard, *Das Gesandtschaftswesen Ostmitteleuropas in der frühen Neuzeit. Beitrag zur Geschichte der Diplomatie in der ersten Hälfte des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts nach den Aufzeichnungen des Freiherr Sigmund von Herberstein* (Graz, Vienna, Cologne: Bohlau, 1967) (*Wiener Archiv für Geschichte des Slaventums und Osteuropas*, Bd. 6).

[11]Herberstein (1517-49), 1: clx.

[12]Herberstein (1517-49), 2: 158.

[13]Theodor Georg von Karajan, *Selbstbiographie Sigmunds Freihern von Herberstein, 1486-1553*, in *Fontes Rerum Austriacarum*, Abt. 1, Bd. 1 (1855), 135.

[14]The reference occurred in a letter from Ulrich Hutten to Pirckheimer. See Willehad P. Eckert and Christoph von Imhoff, *Willibald Pirckheimer: Durers Freund im Spiegel seines Lebens, seiner Werke und seiner Umwelt* (Cologne: Wienand, 1971), 336-49.

[15]Frank Kämpfer, "Herbersteins nicht eingestandene Abhängigkeit von Johann Fabri aus Leutkirch," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 44 (1996), 1-3.

Habsburg archives until Herberstein began the revision of it, perhaps in the 1530s.[16] It was only then, as Herberstein explained, that he found time away from his "various embassies and other labors" to revise his manuscript.[17]

Herberstein succeeded in producing the first detailed, eyewitness ethnography of Muscovy. His account was in every way more trustworthy and complete than those of his predecessors, largely due to the great variety of sources he used.[18] Herberstein carefully reviewed the existing literature on Russia including works by Miechowa, Giovio, Campensé, Fabri, Weid, Olaus Magnus, and Münster.[19] The Habsburg diplomat viewed all their opinions sceptically, for he realized that the early ethnographers and cosmographers had not had the opportunity to visit Russia and see "what no one but an ambassador could have become acquainted with."[20] Unlike many ethnographers of his age, Herberstein was no plagiarist: he read the early descriptions of Muscovy critically and compared what they had to say with his own observations. To take but one example, Herberstein received a copy of Fabri's brief account while on his way to Moscow in 1526, and in *Notes on the Muscovites* he responded — both positively and negatively — to many points made in the book.[21] While in Muscovy, Herberstein employed his knowledge of Slavic to interrogate a sizable circle of Russians on a host of topics.[22] The ambassador proclaimed that he "daily availed [himself] of every opportunity to converse much upon such matters with a great number of people."[23] Even here Herberstein exercised caution, making sure that all the intelligence he gathered from Russians was well corroborated. "I made myself acquainted with the greater part of the talented and trustworthy men of the place," wrote the Habsburg diplomat, "and did not rely upon this or that man's account, but trusted only to the unvarying statements of many."[24] Herberstein investigated various Russian written sources. These materials provided him with details about Russian culture completely unavailable at the time in Europe, even to those such as Giovio and Fabri who had interviewed visiting Russian diplomats. But as a rule, the ambassador only fully trusted his own senses. Again and again he stressed that the information in *Notes on the Muscovites* was credible because it was based on his own observations. "And in order that my opinion in this matter may not be looked upon

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[16]See Walter Leitsch, "Westeuropäishe Reiseberichte über den Moskauer Staat," in *Reiseberichte als Quellen europäischer Kulturgeschichte*, eds. Antoni Maczak and Hans Jurgen Teuteberg (Wolfenbüttel: Herzog August Bibliothek, 1982), 159-60 and Walter Leitsch, "Herberstein's Ergänzungen zur Moscovia in späteren Auflagen und die beiden zeitgenössischen Übersetzungen ins Deutsche," *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte* 27 (1980), 186-87. There is no indication of the report circulating in manuscript. Note that Herberstein continued to up-date the book after its first publication. On Herbertstein's additions, see Walter Leitsch, "Herberstein's Ergänzungen zur Moscovia in späteren Auflagen und die beiden zeitgenössischen Übersetzungen ins Deutsche," *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte* 27 (1980), 177-94.

[17]Herberstein (1517-49), 1: clxi.

[18]The best general treatment of Herberstein's sources is Anna L. Khoroshkevich, "Die Quellen Herbersteins und die Moscovia als Quelle zur politischen, Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Rus im ersten Viertel des 16. Jahrhunderts," in *Siegmund von Herberstein, Kaiserlicher Gesandter und Begründer der Rußlandkunde und die europäische Diplomatie*, ed. Gerhard Pferschy (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagstalt, 1989), 179-244.

[19]Herberstein (1517-49), 1: clx-clxi.

[20]Herberstein (1517-49), 1: clxi.

[21]Kämpfer, "Herbersteins nicht eingestandene Abhängigkeit von Johann Fabri," 1-27.

[22]See Anna L. Khoroshkevich, "Sigizmund Gerbershtein i ego Zapiski o Moskovii" in Sigismund von Herberstein, in *Zapiski o Moskovii*, ed. Valentin L. Ianin et al. (Moscow: Izd. Moskovskogo universiteta, 1988), 32-37.

[23]Herberstein (1517-49), 1: clxi.

[24]Herberstein (1517-49), 1: 1.

with suspicion, or considered presumptuous," he wrote, "I assert with all honesty, that not once only, but repeatedly, . . . I have seen and investigated Moscow, as it were under my very eyes."[25]

Herberstein's book was a veritable encyclopedia of Moscovitica. Its contents were finely tuned to the interests of the day. Merchants hoping to trade in the east would find the best chorography of Muscovy, Tataria, and Lithuania available anywhere. Those concerned with religious affairs and particularly the question of ecclesiastical union could read in *Notes on the Muscovites* a detailed, even-handed treatment of the Russian Orthodox faith. Envoys could use the long description of Muscovite diplomatic practice to prepare themselves for embassies to Russia. *Notes on the Muscovites*, however, was not merely a collection of facts. In the work, Herberstein offered a coherent vision of Muscovite civic life, a veritable theory of Russian political culture. At the center of Herberstein's perception was the overwhelming power of the grand prince and the servility of his subjects. The observation that the Muscovite monarchy was despotic was not new: Campensé and Fabri, both of whom Herberstein read, had stressed the unfettered authority of the grand prince over his people.[26] There is little doubt that Herberstein's description of Muscovite civic culture was influenced by these early accounts. Campensé noted that the grand prince had "full power to dispose of [his subjects'] lives and property" — Herberstein wrote that the Muscovite ruler had "unlimited control over the lives and property of all his subjects."[27] Similarly, Fabri insisted that "there is no other realm in the world that is more subject to its master" — Herberstein told his readers that "in the power he holds over his people the ruler of Muscovy surpasses all the monarchs of the world."[28] But Herberstein's understanding of Muscovite civic life, while formally similar to that of his predecessors, was in actual fact radically different. Campensé and Fabri held up an idealized depiction of Muscovy as a mirror to what they believed were the corrupt polities of Europe. The Russians, they claimed, were fanatically loyal to their grand prince and were willing to sacrifice all to fulfill his orders. Europeans, in contrast, showed great disrespect for their kings and knew nothing of civic pride. Herberstein may have traveled to Muscovy with this fantasy in mind, but what he learned there quickly disabused him of the thought that there was anything virtuous in the rule of the grand prince.

Herberstein arrived in Moscow at the end of a fundamental shift in the political life of the East Slavic territories. In the first half of the fifteenth century, northeastern Rus' was overgrown with a tangle of principalities, appanages, and republics. Though most of these jurisdictions were ruled by a single, loosely-knit dynasty of East Slavic princes — the Riurikid — and though all the Riurikid princes were nominally subordinate to the senior member of their line — the grand prince of Vladimir — northeastern Rus' was, in fact, anything but united. Several principalities acted as sovereign entities; these entities were further subdivided into semi-independent appanages under the control of junior members of the ruling line; and two city-states in the north, Novgorod and Pskov, refused direct control by the Riurikid altogether. During the second half of the century, the political heterogeneity of northeastern Rus' ended as Moscow rose to prominence. Ivan III brought the once sovereign principalities of Iaroslavl', Rostov, and Tver to heel; he severely

[25]Herberstein (1517-49), 1: 1. See Christine Harrauer, "Beobachtungen zur Darstellungsweise und Wahrheitsanspurch in der 'Moscovia' Herbersteins," in *Landesbeschreibungen Mitteleuropas vom 15. bis 17. Jahrhundert*, ed. Hans-Bernd Harder (Cologne: Bohlau, 1983), 186ff.

[26]On Herberstein conception of Russia, see Samuel H. Baron, "Herberstein's Image of Russia and Its Transmission Through Later Writers," in *Siegmund von Herberstein*, ed. Pferschy, 245-73.

[27]Campensé (1524), 32 and Herberstein (1517-49), 1: 32.

[28]Fabri (1526), 298-99 and Herberstein (1517-49), 1: 30.

restricted the rights of the appanage princes in the Moscow line; and he violently ended the independence of Novgorod and Pskov. The princes of Rus' and their high-born retainers came to Moscow to serve Ivan as his dependents. In 1493 Ivan declared himself "sovereign of all Rus'" (*gosudar' vse Rusi*), and with that Muscovy — a fundamentally new East Slavic kingdom and European state — was born.

The Habsburg ambassador probably knew little of this when he first traveled to Moscow in 1517. There were no histories of Muscovy available in Europe, and few of those who had been to Moscow or who were conversant with Muscovite affairs — men the ambassador might have interviewed — likely took an interest in the past of a country whose present was so dimly understood. Herberstein felt, however, that no description of a nation could be complete without at least a brief history, and thus he invested considerable energy in reading Russian chronicles and interviewing his Muscovite attendants about the *res gestae* of their country. What Herberstein discovered must have shocked him, for his investigations made it clear that Rus' had suffered a violent political struggle and that Muscovy had emerged only very recently as the dominant power in the region. Herberstein's reading of the chronicles suggested that "from the time of Vladimir Monomach," who ruled Kiev in the twelfth century, to the reign of Vasilii II, prince of Moscow from 1425 to 1462, "Russia had no monarch."[29] The ambassador emphasized that before the mid-fifteenth century, discord and division had torn the Rurikid house apart. According to Herberstein, the man responsible for unifying Russia was Ivan III, Vasilii II's son, whom the Habsburg ambassador characterized as a cruel tyrant, a drunk, and a misogynist.[30] Herberstein went to great lengths to describe Ivan's effort to bring all the sovereignties of Rus' under his high hand. After marrying the sister of "Michael, Grand Duke of Tver, he drove out his brother-in-law, and took possession" of the principality; he "reduced the inhabitants [of Novgorod] to abject servitude"; he forced his cousins, the princes of the "province of Severa" to surrender "themselves up to the government of Russia"; he seized Riazan' "and dispersed a great portion of [its population] through different colonies, so that the strength of the entire principality was loosened and broken"; he exiled "the citizens [of Pskov] through the colonies, and sending Muscovites into their place, he utterly abolished their liberty"; he "thrust out and banished" the princes of Rostov; he "drove" the lords of Suzdal' from their territories.[31] At the conclusion of Ivan's "plan of ejecting all princes and others from the garrisons and fortified places," all the formerly independent princes of Rus', "being either moved by the grandeur of his achievements or stricken with fear, became subject to him."[32] Having forced all his rivals into submission, Ivan "assumed the title of Grand Duke of Vladimir, Moscow, and Novgorod" and declared himself "monarch of all Russia."[33]

According to Herberstein, Vasilii III, Ivan's son and the ambassador's host, simply continued the policies of his tyrannical father. Vasilii, Herberstein wrote, "certainly grants no fortresses to his relations, nor even puts them in charge of any, but oppresses nearly all of them with close confinement."[34] He compelled all the magnates to serve him, largely at their own expense. Vasilii appointed local governors for brief tenures, presumably so that no provincial leaders could

[29]Herberstein (1517-49), 1: 20.

[30]Herberstein (1517-49), 1: 24-25.

[31]See Herberstein (1517-49), 1: 20, 1, 24, 1, 23, 2: 11, 2: 29, 2: 33, 2: 44, respectively.

[32]Herberstein (1517-49), 1: 30, 1: 21, respectively

[33]Herberstein (1517-49), 1: 21.

[34]Citations in this paragraph are from Herberstein (1517-49), 1: 30-32 unless otherwise noted.

arise to challenge his authority, and he exacted tribute from each region annually. He appropriated gifts made to ambassadors at foreign courts and, in general, reserved the right to confiscate the goods of any servitor who would dare to question his authority. He exercised complete control over the clergy, appointing whomever he pleased to all ecclesiastical offices.[35] The commons were similarly ill-treated. Vasilii and his men systematically exploited and abused the peasantry:

> Laborers work six days in the week for their master, but the seventh day is allowed for their private work. They have some fields and meadows of their own allowed them by their masters, from which they derive their livelihood: all the rest is their master's. They are, moreover, in a very wretched condition, for their goods are exposed to plunder from the nobility and soldiery, who call them Christians and black rascals by way of insult.[36]

And common folk had little recourse to legal remedies, for they were granted no access to the prince but instead were forced to turn to his councilors who either ignored their grievances or exacted bribes from them.[37] Indeed the simple people had been held down so long that they had grown to "enjoy slavery more than freedom" and to understand beating as a sign of affection.[38] Finally, Herberstein was struck by the fact that all Russians — both high and low — were incredibly obsequious to Vasilii, calling themselves his slaves, prostrating themselves before him, and claiming that he was like God.[39]

Why did Herberstein take such a dim view of Ivan III and Vasilii III? To answer this question it must be borne in mind that Herberstein was a jurist and important member of the local nobility in his native Styria. As such, he was fully aware of both the carefully prescribed limits of Imperial power in his native Habsburg lands and the legally protected rights of provincial magnates in the sundry localities of the Empire. Given his knowledge and experience, he could not have interpreted what he read in the Russian chronicles about Ivan III's activities as anything but the unlawful destruction of a loose confederation of semi-sovereign principalities by a power-hungry tyrant. Moreover, as the representative of an ancient provincial family, he doubtless felt sympathy for his unfortunate Russian peers. While in Russia he was surrounded by men who clung to their identities as the princes of formerly independent sovereignties, some of whom he named. For example, Herberstein wrote that the principality of Iaroslavl' "was forcibly taken by the same monarch [Ivan III]; and although there still remain dukes of the province called *knesi* [princes], yet the prince usurps the title to himself, the country being granted to the *knesi* as to subjects."[40] He then went on to identify three of these former princes, all descendants of Prince Vasilii Davidovich of Iaroslavl' and all of whom Herberstein had met —

[35]Herberstein (1517-49), 1: 54?

[36]Herberstein (1517-49), 1: 106.

[37]Herberstein (1517-49), 1: 105-106.

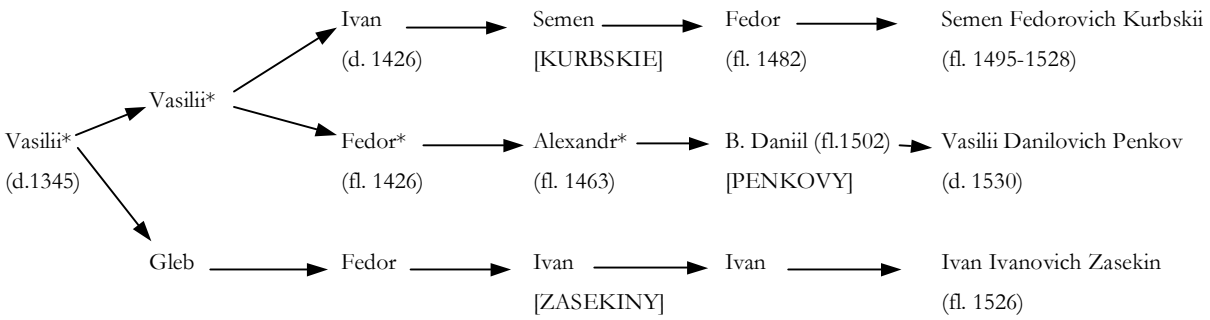
[38]Herberstein (1517-49), 1: 95, 1: 106-107.

[39]Herberstein (1517-49), 1: 32; 1: 95, 2: 125.

[40]Herberstein (1517-49), 2: 34.

Prince Semen Fedorovich Kurbskii, Prince Vasilii Danilovich Penkov, and Prince Ivan Ivanovich Zasekin.[41] Their lineages are traced in Table 1.

Table 1: The Descendants of Vasilii Davidovich of Iaroslavl'



Key: * = senior prince of Iaroslavl'; B. = Boyar; [Upper Case] = new (cadet) line.

Semen Fedorovich Kurbskii's father, Fedor Semenovich, entered Muscovite service as early as 1482. Semen himself became an important commander in the Muscovite army. It is unclear how Herberstein became acquainted with Semen, but in light of the fact that he was able to relate a number of biographical details about him, the ambassador probably knew him well. Vasilii Danilovich Penkov's grandfather, Aleksandr Fedorovich, was the last sovereign prince of Iaroslavl'. Aleksandr ceded his rights and properties to Ivan III in 1463 or 1471.[42] Vasilii's father, Daniil Aleksandrovich, had entered Muscovite service by 1485 and was made a boyar by 1500.[43] Vasilii himself enjoyed a distinguished military and diplomatic career in Muscovy. According to Herberstein, Vasilii escorted the Habsburg legation to and from the royal palace during Herberstein's visit in 1526. It is known from Muscovite records that Vasilii sat across from Herberstein at an official banquet on October 18, 1526.[44] Very little is known about the ancestors of Ivan Ivanovich Zasekin beyond the fact they represented a junior branch of the Iaroslavl' line. In any case, Ivan was active in the Muscovite army and ambassadorial corp. He had been sent on a mission to Emperor Charles V in 1524, and from January to April, 1526, he accompanied Herberstein on his journey from Vienna to Moscow. Though none of these men could personally have recalled an independent Iaroslavl', they would have learned about the existence of such a place from the testimony of their fathers, court chronicles, and genealogical registers.[45] There would seem to be little doubt that the Iaroslavl' princes and others like them were very conscious of the loss their families had suffered at the hands of Ivan III. And it is hardly difficult to imagine that proud men such as Semen, Vasilii, and Ivan — all of whom spent

[41]All the biographical information on these three persons is drawn from Aleksandr A. Zimin, *Formirovanie boiarskie boiarskoi aristokratii v Rossii v vtoroi polovine XV - pervoi treti XVI v.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1988), 83-98 and Herberstein (1517-49), 2: 34 unless otherwise noted.

[42]On the incorporation of the principality of Iaroslavl', see Lev V. Cherepnin, *Obrazovanie russkogo tsentral'izovannogo gosudarstva v XIV - XV vekakh* (Moscow: Izd-vo sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi literatury, 1960), 825-30.

[43]Nancy S. Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics. The Making of the Muscovite Political System, 1345-1547* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1987), 226-27.

[44]Khoroshkevich, "Sigizmund Gerbershtein i ego *Zapiski o Moskovii*," 33.

[45]On Russian genealogical books (*rodoslovnye knigi*) of the early sixteenth century, see Margarita E. Bychkova, *Rodoslovnye knigi XVI-XVII vv. kak istoricheskii istochnik* (Moscow: Nauka, 1975).

considerable time with the Habsburg embassy — told Herberstein tales of their once mighty ancestors and their dispossession by Ivan III. In short, all of the data Herberstein gathered in Russia — his reading of the chronicles, his observation of contemporary Russian life, and his interviews with Muscovite princes — pointed to one conclusion: Vasilii III was a new-born despot who, as Herberstein famously put it, "holds unlimited control over the lives and property of all his subjects."[46]

The Popularity of *Notes on the Muscovites*

Prior to the 1550s, Muscovy had been the object of slight European attention, particularly west of the Vistula. Commercial relations between Russia and Europe were weak. Contarini, the author of the first European description of Russia, had suggested the possibility of trade with Russia, but his propositions went largely unheeded. Political relations between the two regions were somewhat more lively. Livonia and Lithuania-Poland were in constant contact with the Russians. Characteristically, the first printed text about Muscovy was written by a Livonian — Bomhover — and the next by an Italian in Polish service — Piso. Outside the Baltic and Dniepr basin, however, only the Papacy and the Empire showed any interest in the Russians. As the accounts of Campensé, Giovio, and Fabri demonstrate, both these parties (vainly) sought to enlist the Russians in an anti-Turkish alliance or to use the Muscovites as pawns in this or that dynastic struggle. Somewhat surprisingly, cosmographers seem to have been among those most fascinated with Russia. Scholars such as Miechowa, Krantz, Boemus, Pirckheimer, and Magnus attempted to shed light on the geo-ethnography of the distant northern land though it must be said they enjoyed limited success. In the 1550s and 1560s, however, European interest in Muscovy grew appreciably, primarily in connection with the opening of Muscovite trade by the English, the on-set of the Livonian war, and the terror of Ivan IV. It was in the context of this rising consciousness of Muscovite affairs that *Notes on the Muscovites* appeared and became the most influential book on Russia ever published.

Since the waning years of the fifteenth century, the Muscovites had been frustrated by the Hansa's and the Livonian Order's virtual monopoly on Russian-European trade through the Baltic. In the 1490s Ivan III took aggressive measures to break the hold of the Germans over Baltic commerce by closing the Hanseatic entrepot in Novgorod and building an entrepot for European trade — Ivangorod — directly across the Pliussa river from the Order's staple, Narva. The first decade of the sixteenth century was not a happy time for Russian-Baltic relations: the Hansa refused to trade with Russian merchants and the Livonians entered an alliance with the Lithuanians against Ivan III. Tensions eased under Vasilii III. The Russians re-opened the *kontor* in Novgorod in 1514 (though the Hansa trade withered), and they signed lengthy peace treaties with the Order in 1514 and 1531. Nonetheless, by the 1550s, the Russians again had reason to be dissatisfied with arrangements in the Baltic: several Baltic commercial towns refused to honor Russian trading privileges, and the Livonians seemed to be moving closer to Lithuania.[47] Thus when the English merchant-adventurer Richard Chancellor appeared unexpectedly (and accidentally, for he was looking for the northeastern passage to China) at the mouth of the Dvina river in 1553, Ivan IV was very pleased.[48] The English offered the Russians an opportunity to break the hold of the Baltic powers over Russian-European trade, and Ivan quickly granted them extremely advantageous

[46]Herberstein (1517-49), 1: 32.

[47]See Thomas Esper, "Russia and the Baltic, 1494-1558," *Slavic Review* 25 (1966), 458-74.

trading privileges. Ivan's generosity was met with enthusiasm in England: in 1555 approximately 200 investors formed what would be called the "Muscovy Company," Englishmen began to travel to Russia in ever larger numbers, and goods began to flow between the two countries. And not only goods, but information as well — the English, it seems, were fascinated by the Russians. English pilots, merchants, and ambassadors produced some of the first and best European ethnographies of Russia, notably those by Chancellor, Jenkinson, Horsey, and Fletcher — all of which were published (in whole or in part) in what was the largest early modern collection of Moscovitica ever issued, Hakluyt's *The Principal navigations*.[49] News of the Muscovites spread far and wide throughout English society.[50] Famously, Shakespeare included a "masque of the Muscovites" in *Love's Labours Lost*.[51]

Ivan's hopes of solving the Baltic question were not solely pinned on the English. The White Sea trade was rather a diversion, an ancillary move in his larger strategic plan — the conquest of the Baltic littoral itself. Frustrated by the continued recalcitrance of the Livonians and believing that the Order was crumbling, Ivan attacked Livonia in 1558.[52] The Livonian elite immediately began to make desperate appeals to their patrons in the Empire for aid against the "godless" Muscovites.[53] Soon fearful talk of the Livonian conflict again entered Imperial correspondence.[54] Once more furtive discussions of the Russian threat were held in Imperial diets.[55] In a brief span, Muscovy became the object of intense interest in northern and central Europe and remained so until the war ended in 1585.[56] The fascination which Muscovy held for the inhabitants of the Baltic, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and the Empire is reflected in the rather sudden appearance of Russian news in the burgeoning pamphlet press and in the entry of Muscovy into European

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[48]The literature on the English discovery of Muscovy and the activities of the "Muscovy Company" is large. See Chester S. Dunning, "Russia Company," in MERSH 32: 27-33.

[49]Adams/Chancellor (1553), Chancellor (1553), Jenkinson (1557), Horsey (1584-1611), Fletcher (1591), and Hakluyt (1969).

[50]See Karl H. Ruffmann, *Das Russlandbild im England Shakespeares* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1952).

[51]William Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost* [c. 1600], edited by Alfred Harbage (Baltimore: Penguine Books, 1963), V, ii, 79-265.

[52]See Thomas Esper, "Livonian War of 1558-1583," in MERSH 20: 112-16.

[53]For Livonian correspondence, see Friedrich G. Bienemann, ed., *Briefe und Urkunden zur Geschichte Livlands in den Jahren 1558-1562*, Bd. 1-5 (Riga: N. Kymmel, 1865-76); Carl C. G. Schirren, ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte des Untergangs livländischer Selbständigkeit. Aus dem schwedischen Reichsarchive zu Stockholm*, Bd. 1-8 (*Archiv für Geschichte Liv-, Ehst- und Curlands*, N.F. 1-8 (1861-79)); and Carl C. G. Schirren, ed., *Neue Quellen zur Geschichte des Untergangs livländischer Selbständigkeit. Aus dem dänischen geheimen Archive zu Kopenhagen*, Bd. 1-3 (*Archiv für Geschichte Liv-, Ehst- und Curlands*, N.F. 9-11 (1883-85)).

[54]For correspondence among princes in the Empire, see August Kluckhohn, *Briefe Friedrichs des Frommen, Kurfursten von der Pflaz mit verwandten Schriftstücken*, 2 Bde. (Braunschweig: C. A. Schwetschke und sohn, 1868-1872), bd. 1: 64ff., 70, and 211; Georgii V. Forsten, *Akty i pis'ma k istorii Baltiiskogo voprosa v XVI i XVII stoletiiach* (St. Petersburg: Tip. I. N. Skorokhodova, 1889-93), 130ff. and 153ff.; and Pierre de Vaissière, *Charles de Marillac. Ambassadeur et homme politique sous les règnes de François Ier, Henri II. et François II. 1510-1560* (Paris: H. Welter, 1896), 378ff.

[55]Karl H. von Busse, ed., "*Deutsche Reichtags-Verhandlungen über Livland vom Jahre 1559 und 1560*," *Monumenta Livoniae antiqua* (Riga and Leipzig: E. Frantzen, 1847), vol. 5, 706-48. Also see Eduard Reimann, "Das Verhalten des Reiches gegen Livland in den Jahren 1559-1561," *Historische Zeitschrift* 35 (1876), 346-80 and Gustav Sommerfeldt, "Die Betrachtung über eine gegen Russland und die Türkei zu gewährende Reichshilfe 1560-1561," *Historische Vierteljahrsschrift* 13 Jg. (1910), 191-201.

[56]In general, see Walter Platzhoff, "Das erste Auftauchen Rußlands und der russischen Gefahr in der europäischen Politik," *Historische Zeitschrift* 115 (1915-16), 77-93 and Erich Donnert, *Die livländische Ordensritterstaat und Russland. Der livländische Krieg und die baltische Frage in der europäischen Politik 1558-1583* (Berlin: Rutten und Loening, 1963), 101-103. Both of these treatments are to be used with great care. Platzhoff's ringing Russophobia may be taken as evidence of the persistence of the "*russische Gefahr*" through more than three centuries. Donnert's doctrinaire Marxist treatment offers the opposite extreme — that fear of Muscovy ("*diese künstlich gezüchtete russiche Gefahr*," as he calls it) was *wholly* the product of Livonian propaganda and was accepted by the reactionary German "ruling classes" alone. Neither interpretation is supportable.

historiography. During the first half of the sixteenth century — particularly in connection with the Turks and the battles of the Reformation — a proto-news press had developed in central Europe.[57] Part propaganda and part hard fact, *Flugschriften* or "pamphlets" provided common readers with printed information on events (particularly spectacular events) of the day. Beginning in the 1560s, pamphlets concerning the course of the Livonian war began to appear in central Europe, often issued by Imperial authorities for partisan purposes. They were generally anti-Muscovite in tone, as the title of the very first pamphlet, printed in Nuremberg in 1561, suggests: "Very gruesome, shocking, unheard-of true new tidings of the cruel tyranny of the Muscovite committed against the Christian prisoners abducted from Livonia, both men and women, virgins, and small children . . ."[58] Directly under this title is a well-wrought woodcut graphically depicting the Muscovite atrocities mentioned in the text. It displays (according to the text) how the Muscovites slaughtered young children, "nailing their tender little hearts to trees," and how they raped "the most beautiful noble and common virgins" and afterwards made a game of shooting their "privy parts."[59] In the course of the second half of the sixteenth century, over sixty such pieces were issued: fourteen from 1561 to 1570, thirty-four from 1571 to 1580, and nine from 1581 to 1582.[60] The vast majority of the pamphlets were in German and printed in Imperial cities; however, several were published in Livonia, Poland, and Italy.[61] During the war, German, Polish, and Livonian historiography began to reflect the basic message of the pamphleteers — that Ivan was a godless, cruel invader, bent on destroying Livonia and indeed all Christendom.[62] During the first two decades of the conflict, references to Ivan and the Livonian war are found in only a handful of historical texts.[63] In the next two decades — the 1580s and 1590s — the number of histories more than doubled.[64] Approximately thirty historical texts — local histories, histories of the war, universal

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[57]On early *Flugschriften*, see Margot Lindemann, *Deutsche Presse bis 1815* (*Geschichte der deutschen Press*, *Teil* 1) (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1969), 64-69; Robert E. Prutz, *Geschichte des deutschen Journalismus. Erster Teil* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1971), 98-116; and Matthias A. Shaaber, *Some Forerunners of the Newspaper in England, 1476-1622* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1929).

[58]The pamphlet is reprinted in Konstantin Höhlbaum, "Zeitungen über Livland," *Beiträge zur Kunde Ehst, Liv- und Kurlands* 2 (1876), 120-24.

[59]Höhlbaum, "Zeitungen über Livland," 121.

[60]For a complete bibliography, see Andreas Kappeler, *Ivan Groznyi im Spiegel der ausländischen Druckschriften seiner Zeit. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des westlichen Russlandbildes* (Bern: Herbert Land, 1972), 253-58. Five of the pamphlets have no date and have been omitted.

[61]One edition, Augsburg; one edition, L'vov; one edition, Cracow; four editions, Danzig; one edition, Dauci; one edition, Fiorenza; one edition, Frankfurt am Oder; three edition, Frankfurt am Main; three edition, Cologne; one edition, Lübeck; one edition, Magdeburg; one edition, Marburg; thirteen editions, Nuremburg; three editions, Prague; one edition, Rome; two editions, Rostock; one edition, Speir; and one edition, Torun. Twenty two of the items specify no place of publication.

[62]The topic of contemporary historical depictions of Ivan has been treated by Kappeler, *Ivan Groznyi im Spiegel der ausländischen Druckschriften*, 37-38, 44-45, 51-53, 69-73, 77-82, 87-91, and 102-4.

[63]Kappeler, *Ivan Groznyi im Spiegel der ausländischen Druckschriften* discusses the following historians from the 1560s and 1570s (the date of publication of the text mentioning Muscovy is in parentheses): Martin Kromer (1562); Tilmann Bredenbach (1564); Laurentius Surius (1566); Jan Dymitr Solikowskis (1574); Jean Choisnyn (1574); Balthasar Rüssow (1578); and Timann Brakel (1579).

[64]See Kappeler, *Ivan Groznyi im Spiegel der ausländischen Druckschriften*, 69-71, 77-82, 85-90, for histories of the 1580s and 1590s: Maciej Stryjakowski (1582); Johann Pistorius (1582); Reinhold Heidenstein (1584 or 1585); Paul Oderborn (1585); Laurentius Müller (1585); Micheal Neander (1586); Micheal von Isselt (1586); Girolamo Catenas (1587); Stanislaw Sarnickis (1587); Micheal Beuther (1588); Johannes Baumgartens (1588); Salomon Henning (1590); David Chytraeus (1590); Basilius Plinius (1595); Joachim Bielskim (1597); Piotr Dunin-Spoth (1590); Marcin Broniowski (1595); Adam Henricpetris (1593); Heinrich Rätel (1591); and Georg Nicholas (1599).

histories, historical compendia — over the entire period (1562-99) contain critical references to Ivan and the Livonian conflict.

Events within Muscovy also drew the attention of Europeans. In the 1570s, printed reports from diplomats, merchants, and resident tradesmen began to appear that told of unspeakable atrocities perpetrated by Ivan IV at the Muscovite court. The earliest such account is *Truthful New Tiding* (n.p., 1571), a product of official Polish propaganda: a one-time Polish prisoner-of-war in Moscow was deposed by a Polish border officer, who then sent the critical report to Sigismund. The Polish pamphlet of 1571 describes Ivan's punitive raids on the Russian cities of Tver, Novgorod, and Pskov.[65] This item was followed by *Actual Truthful Description* or *Brief Trustworthy Tiding* (Frankfurt, 1572), which, though of unclear provenance, would seem to be the work of one or more eyewitnesses. Like the *Truthful New Tiding*, it reports Ivan's attack on Tver, Pskov, and Novgorod as well as other activities.[66] The *News from Diverse Places in the World* (Florence, 1572) is also of mysterious origins. The anonymous author wrote of a conspiracy against Ivan involving a group of nobles and the Poles.[67] Further information regarding Ivan's murderous experiment was made available in two printed works of the 1580s. The first was by Alessandro Guagnini. Guagnini was an Italian who entered Polish military service *circa* 1556. In addition to being a soldier, he evidently had scholarly pretensions, and it was the combination of these, together with his life in the service of the Polish crown, that led him to write and publish his influential *Description of European Sarmatia* (Cracow, 1578).[68] Guagnini's account of the murderous activities of Ivan IV's *oprichnina* was drawn from the unpublished writings of Albert Schlichting, a German in Polish military service during the first phase of the Livonian war.[69] Schlichting was probably captured with Lithuanian forces at Ozerishche in late 1564 and taken to Moscow, where he served as an assistant to the tsar's doctor until he fled to Poland in 1570. While in Moscow he witnessed the height of the *oprichnina* terror, and upon his return to Poland he drafted two reports describing how "the grand prince executed his nobles and citizens."[70] Schlichting's account is a mass of horrific episodes. For example, in a typical passage he recounted Ivan's retribution for a conspiracy he believed to have been hatched by the boyar Ivan Petrovich Fedorov-Cheliadin.

> Immediately upon his arrival at the palace the tyrant ordered Ivan arrayed in the same kind of clothing the prince wears, to take the scepter princes alone bear, and to sit upon the throne where only the grand prince sits . . .. The tyrant arose, stood before him, bared his head, and genuflecting in his honor said: 'Now you have what you sought for and strove to obtain — to be grand prince of Muscovy and occupy my place. For the moment you are grand prince: enjoy and savor the dominion you have craved.' In a few minutes he spoke again: 'Since I have the power to

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[65]See Kappeler, *Ivan Groznyi im Spiegel der ausländischen Druckschriften*, 40-41 and Andreas Kappeler, "Die letzten Oprichninajahre (1569-1571) im Lichte dreier zeitgenössischen deutschen Broschüren," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 19 (1971), 6-7.

[66]Kappeler, *Ivan Groznyi im Spiegel der ausländischen Druckschriften*, 41-42 and Kappeler, "Die letzen Oprichninajahre (1569-1571)," 7-12.

[67]Avisi's source may be one of Schlichting's reports regarding Muscovite affairs then in currency in Italy. See Kappeler, *Ivan Groznyi im Spiegel der ausländischen Druckschriften*, 43. On Schlichting, see below.

[68]Guagnini (1560).

[69]On Guagnini's reliance on Schlichting, see Kappeler, *Ivan Groznyi im Spiegel der ausländischen Druckschriften*, 54 and Hugh Graham, "Guagnini, Alessandro (1538?-1614)," in MERSH 13: 174.

> seat you upon this throne I also have the power to remove you from it.' Suddenly grasping a knife, he plunged it several times into Ivan's heart and all the soldiers present thrust daggers into him and his stomach and entrails poured out before the tyrant's eyes. Directly afterwards Ivan was dragged by his feet all over the fortress and around the city, and exposed in the middle of the square as a horrible example. The tyrant then had the prince's chief retainers and the rest of his servants drowned.[71]

The second eyewitness account of Ivan's excesses printed in the 1580s was by Johan Taube and Elbert Kruse. Taube and Kruse were Livonian officials who fell into Muscovite hands at the onset of the war and became *oprichniki*. In 1571 Taube and Kruse fled to Poland, where they wrote *The Shocking, Cruel, and Unheard-of Tyranny of Ivan Vasil'evich* (n.p., 1582).[72] This tract is, like Schlichting and Guagnini, an inflammatory indictment of Ivan's merciless tyranny. It recounts story after story of Ivan murdering his nobility, torturing his subjects, and plundering the land.

Despite growing European interest in Muscovy in the 1560s and 1570s, little new information beyond that found in the accounts of the first half of the sixteenth century was available to European readers. Not counting some bawdy poems published by George Turberville in 1587[73], only one of the English ethnographic reports was printed prior to the appearance of Hakluyt in 1589 — a mysterious version of Chancellor edited and translated by one "Clement Adams."[74] The anti-Muscovite pamphlets produced in the course of the Livonian conflict provided shocking accounts of the misbehavior of Russian soldiers and their tsar, but offered no overview of Muscovite life. The same might be said of the printed European descriptions of Ivan IV's putative reign of terror: they over-flowed with bloody personalia but were bereft of more general ethnographic information. Prior to the appearance of Guagnini in 1578 — itself largely based on Schlichting and Herberstein — interested readers had no place to turn for an accurate survey of Muscovite society but *Notes on the Muscovites*. Only three monographs about Russia had gone to press before 1550 — Giovio, Fabri, and Campensé — and they were issued a total of five times. Additional information on Muscovy was available in printed compendia such as Miechowa or Münster, but these works did not offer extensive descriptions of Russia. It is not unlikely that for most European readers of the 1550s to 1580s, *Notes on the Muscovites* seemed to be the first printed book — or at least one of the first printed books — about Russia.

Given the level of European interest in Russia and the paucity of ethnographic information, it is hardly surprising that Herberstein's book proved very popular, as is suggested by Table 2, which indicates whole or partial editions of *Notes on the Muscovites* published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

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[70]Schlichting (1571b), 272.

[71]Schlichting (1571a), 223-24.

[72]The identity of the authors was long confused by a manuscript attributed to a certain "Georg von Hoff." Adelung, for example, considered Taube/Kruse and Hoff as separate pieces. See Friedrich von Adelung, *Kritisch-literarische Übersicht der Reisenden in Russland bis 1700, deren Berichte bekannt sind*, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg: Eggers, 1846), 1: 350. That "Hoff" is a textual varient of Taube and Kruse's treatise was demonstrated by A. I. Braudo, "Poslanie Taube i Kruze k gercogu Ketleru (bibliograficheskaia zametka)," *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosvieshcheniia*, 271 (Oct. 1890), 386-95.

[73]Turberville (1568).

Table 2: Editions of or Large Extracts from *Notes on the Muscovites*, 1549-1611[75]

Language	*Dates of Re-Publication*
Latin:	1549 (Vienna), 1551 (Basel), 1556 (Basel), 1557 (Antwerp), 1571 (Basel), 1582 (Basel), 1584 (Frankfurt a. m.), 1600 (Frankfurt a.m.)
German:	1557 (Vienna), 1563 (Basel), 1567 (Basel), 1576 (Frankfurt a.m.), 1576 (Frankfurt a.m.), 1579 (Frankfurt a.m.), 1589 (Basel)
Italian:	1550 (Venice), 1583 (Venice)
Czech:	1590 (Prague), 1602 (Prague)
Polish:	1611 (Cracow)
English:	1577 (London)
Dutch:	1605 (Utrecht)

From 1549 to 1611, twenty-two editions or substantive excerpts of Herberstein were printed in eight major cities. The only monograph explicitly devoted to Russia that was published with comparable frequency (eleven times) in the same time period was Giovio, largely because it was often appended to editions of *Notes on the Muscovites*.

By the last quarter of the century, Herberstein's book was recognized as the authoritative description of Russia. In 1568, for example, Turberville recommended Herberstein in the highest possible degree:

> A dieu friend Parker, if thou list, to know the Russes well
> To Sigismundus booke repaire, who all the trueth can tell:
> For he long earst in message went unto the savage King,
> Sent by the Pole, and true report in each respect did bring,
> To him I recomment my selfe, to ease my penne of paine,
> And now at last do wish thee well, and bid farewell again[76]

Many eyewitness ethnographers of the second-half of the sixteenth century took Turberville's advice and turned to Herberstein's work for information about Russia.[77] In most cases, Herberstein's influence was ambient and its impact on later descriptions is therefore difficult to trace with exactitude. In the 1550s and 1560s, many authors seem to have read Herberstein before their departure to Russia or at the time they wrote their accounts after their return home. They often borrowed freely from *Notes on the Muscovites* without acknowledgment, as may be seen in Table 3.

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[74]Adam's translation was apparently published in the 1554, but it does not survive. An English version of the text appears in Eden (1555), 256ff. and was reprinted in Hakluyt (1589). Hakluyt reported that Chancellor's account was "written in the Latine tongue, by that learned yong man Clement Adams." See Adams/Chancellor (1553), 239.

[75]The information in this table is largely drawn from Herberstein, *Zapiski o Moskovii*, 389-91. Khoroshkevich, et al. cite a German edition published in Frankfurt in 1560 which does not seem to have existed.

[76]Turberville (1568), 424-44.

[77]On Herberstein's influence, see Baron, "Herberstein's Image of Russia and Its Transmission," 245-73 and Walter Leitsch, "Herberstein's Impact on the Reports about Muscovy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: Some Observations on the Technique of Borrowing," *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte* 24 (1978), 163-77.

Table 3: Printed Sources of the Chief Sixteenth-Century Eyewitness Ethnographies

Account		*Sources*
Chancellor	>	[Herberstein?]
Jenkinson	>	[Herberstein?]
Barbarino	>	[Herberstein?]
Randolph	>	[Herberstein?]
Guagnini	>	[Herberstein?], Schlichting
Printz	>	Herberstein
Possevino	>	Giovio, Campensé, Herberstein
Fletcher	>	[Herberstein?], Horsey, Hakluyt Items
Horsey	>	Fletcher, Hakluyt Items

Key: Arrows indicate sources; no brackets indicate that the source is cited explicitly; brackets indicate the source was probably used without acknowledgment.

The earliest ethnographies to manifest Herberstein's influence were those of the Chancellor and Jenkinson in the 1550s. Though neither of them ever mentioned Herberstein in their writings, both the fact that they had access to *Notes on the Muscovites* and several textual parallels suggest that they may have used the book as a well of general information on Muscovy.[78] The Italian merchant Barbarino's description of 1565 also seems to bear the mark of *Notes on the Muscovites* though this is not sure.[79] Randolph, an English ambassador, probably used Herberstein as source for his description of 1568.[80] Guagnini borrowed entire sections of Herberstein for his *Sarmatiae Europeae descriptio* of 1578.[81] By the late 1570s, Herberstein had become the benchmark for all new descriptions of Muscovy. Both Printz and Possevino explicitly relied on *Notes on the Muscovites* as a source of information.[82] Finally, near the end of the century, the English ambassador Giles Fletcher systematized Herberstein's scattered observations on the nature of Russian civic life into a full-blown theory of Russian despotism. The Russian government, Fletcher wrote, is "plaine tyrannical."[83] The only major sixteenth-century ethnographer who seems not to have been influence by Herberstein was Staden, a German mercenary in the employ of Ivan IV.[84]

Herberstein's influence was still stronger among ethnographers of the seventeenth century. His book was the most widely disseminated description of Russia in the sixteenth century, and though the pace of reprinting of *Notes on the Muscovites* slowed *circa* 1600, the book remained extremely popular in the seventeenth century. Thus, simply due to the fame of its author and the availability of his book, it would have been hard for any would-be ethnographer to overlook *Notes on the Muscovites*. Moreover, the most widely disseminated descriptions of Russia published after 1549 — Possevino and Olearius — were heavily dependent on Herberstein: the former was published eight times in two languages and the

[78]Adams/Chancellor (1553) and Jenkinson (1557). For details, see Samuel H. Baron, "The Influence in Sixteenth-Century England of Herberstein's *Rerum moscoviticarum commentarii*," in Samuel H. Baron, *Explorations in Muscovite History* (Hampshire, Great Britain and Brookfield, Vt.: Variorum, 1991), essay XV.

[79]Textual parallels between Herberstein and Barbarino are numberous. See, for example, the similar descriptions of the "golden hag" in Herberstein (1517-49), 2: 40-41 and Barberino (1565), 2: 31, 2: 39.

[80]Randolph (1568). See Baron, "The Influence in Sixteenth-Century England of Herberstein's *Rerum moscoviticarum* commentarii."

[81]On Guagnini's use of Herberstein, see Kappeler, *Ivan Groznyi im Spiegel der ausländischen Druckschriften*, 53-58 and Graham, "Guagnini, Alessandro (1538?-1614)," 174.

[82]Printz (1578), 14, 47 and Possevino (1586), 14, 30, 37.

[83]Fletcher (1591), 194. On Fletcher's use of Herberstein, see Baron, "Herberstein's Image of Russia," 251-60.

[84]Staden (1578).

latter was printed approximately twenty-five times in five languages.[85] Even if seventeenth-century readers were ignorant of *Notes on the Muscovites* itself, they were likely to receive information from it *via* Possevino or Olearius. In sum, Herberstein's renown, the ready availability of his book, and the appearance of popular descriptions based on it made it next to impossible for any serious writer interested in Muscovy to avoid the influence of *Notes on the Muscovites*. An investigation of the sources used by the major seventeenth-century ethnographers suggests that Herberstein was indeed very influential, as Table 4 indicates:

Table 4: Printed Sources of the Chief Seventeenth-Century Eyewitness Accounts

Account		*Sources*
Massa	>	[*The Legend of the Life and Death of Dmitri*][86]
Bussow?		
Margeret	>	[Bodin? > Herberstein][87]
Petreius	>	Miechowa, Giovio, Herberstein, [Bussow]
Olearius	>	Giovio, Herberstein, Guagnini, Ulfeldt, Possevino, Petreius
Paul of Aleppo		
Collins	>	Thevet [> Herberstein]
Meyerberg	>	Herberstein, Guagnini, Possevino, Oderborn, Olearius
Reutenfels	>	Giovio, Fabri, Magnus, Herberstein, Possevino, Bussow, Petreius, Olearius
Wickhart	>	Herberstein, Olearius
Tanner		
Neuville	>	[Herberstein, Avril][88]
Korb	>	Wickhart [Herberstein, Olearius][89]

Key: Arrows indicate sources; no brackets indicate that the source is cited explicitly; brackets indicate the source was probably used without acknowledgment.

Among the major eyewitness ethnographers of the seventeenth century, only Paul of Aleppo and Tanner seem not to have been directly influenced by *Notes on the Muscovites*. Paul probably did not know Herberstein's book: he was a Syrian cleric entirely unfamiliar with the corpus of Renaissance Moscovitica. It stands to reason that Tanner, an educated Habsburg official, would have at least been aware of the existence of *Notes on the Muscovites*. Indeed he claimed that nothing in his work was new, suggesting he had read some account of Russia before writing his description.[90] Moreover, there is some slight evidence that he was told of Herberstein's tome (or some work like it) by resident Germans in

[85]On the publication of Possevino, see Graham's introduction to Possevino (1591), xxix. On the publication of Olearius, see Baron's preface to Olearius (1656), viii-ix.

[86]*La légende de la vie et de la mort de Démétrius, dernier Grand-Duc de Moscovie* (Amsterdam, 1606). On Massa's use of this obscure text, see Orchard's introduction to Massa (1614), xxii-xxiii.

[87]In his introduction to Margeret (1607), Dunning writes (xxv) that "[Bodin's] popular and influential works were certainly known to Margeret, whose portrayl of Muscovite absolutism echoes Bodin's ideas." This is an overstatement. As an educated man, Margeret probably knew Bodin, however his description of Muscovite government is somewhat different from Bodin's. Bodin classified Muscovy (citing Herberstein) as a seigniorial monarchy, that is, a system in which the king is master of slave-subjects. See Jean Bodin, *The Six Bookes of a Commonweale* [1576], trans. Richard Knolles and intro. Kenneth D. McRae (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1962), 201. Margeret, in contrast, simply writes that the Muscovite tsar is "absolute" and that his subjects call themselves slaves. Nowhere does he cite Bodin or offer a formal (Aristotelian) characterization of Muscovite civic culture. See Margeret (1607), 28. If Margeret read Bodin's description of Russia in *Six Books*, then he knew of Herberstein's book, for Bodin cites it explicitly.

[88]On Neuville's use of Avril and Herberstein, see Lindsey Hughes' introduction to Neuville (1698), xxvii-xxviii.

[89]See the borrowing from Herberstein (1517-49), 1: 32 and 1: 95 in Korb (1700), 2: 155-56. Also see the probable borrowing from Olearius (1656), 177 in Korb (1700), 2: 163-64

Moscow who are known (from Krizhanich) to have possessed European descriptions of Russia, including Herberstein.[91] Textual comparison, however, indicates that Tanner's work was independent of any printed book on Muscovy. As for the rest of the seventeenth-century ethnographers, all of them cited Herberstein directly or relied on a text that in turn had drawn information from *Notes on the Muscovites*.

Notes on the Muscovites proved more popular among cosmographers than among ethnographers. This is understandable if we take into consideration the fact that, unlike those who visited Russia, cosmographers were by vocation bookish men and, without firsthand experience in Muscovy, they were compelled to rely on secondhand accounts for information. Cosmographers had traditionally based their brief descriptions of Muscovy on Miechowa or Giovio, the two most popular printed descriptions of Russia. In the second half of the sixteenth century, however, Herberstein's book supplanted all older texts and became the source of choice among the "Universal 'Geographistorians'," as Bodin called those who "combined the history of the peoples with the geography."[92] Ten years after the publication of *Notes on the Muscovites*, William Cunningham borrowed information "set out by Sigismunde Liber baron" in his *The Cosmographical Glasse* (London, 1559).[93] As we have seen, Alexander Guagnini's *Description of European Sarmatia* of 1578 — a cosmography of sorts — borrowed liberally from *Notes on the Muscovites*.[94] Abraham Ortelius's influential *Theatre of the World* cited Herberstein and suggested that the "thirsty reader" refer directly to his book for further trustworthy intelligence on Russia.[95] The French editor of Münster, François de Belleforet, saw fit to add passages from Herberstein to Münster's text in his editions of 1565 and 1575 (where, incidentally, we find one of the last positive descriptions of Muscovite kingship).[96] André Thevet's *Universal Cosmography* of 1575 offered a more detailed picture of Muscovite life than that found in Münster, largely as a result of his appropriation of material from *Notes on the Muscovites*.[97] The Livonian historian David Chytreaus used Herberstein in 1586 to update Albert Krantz's early sixteenth-century regional description of Slavic Europe, *Vandalia*.[98] In the same year, the German scholar Michael Neander published his *The World* with a short description of Russia drawn out of Herberstein.[99] Similarly, the famous Italian

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[90]Tanner (1678), 3.

[91]The editor of Tanner (1678) made this suggestion. Tanner's dependence on Herberstein is hardly certain though. See Tanner (1678), vii-viii. One does find parallel passages in Herberstein (1517-49), 2: 4 and Tanner (1678), 69, both of which concern the existence of the part of Moscow called "Naleika," literally, "Pour!", a place where foreigners are supposed to have imbibed. Yet Tanner's knowledge of "Naleika" need not have come from Herberstein: it was probably folklore within the foreigner community, and information on "Naleika" was available in a variety of accounts, for example: Thevet (1575), 16; Fletcher (1591), 186; Olearius (1656), 116; and Reutenfels (1671), 60-61, 94. On the possession of Renaissance Moscovitica by Germans living in Moscow, see Krizhanich (1663-66), 488.

[92]Jean Bodin, *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*, trans. Beatrice Reynolds (New York: Columbia UP, 1945), 38 and 367.

[93]Cuningham (1559), 18.

[94]Guagnini (1560).

[95]Ortelius (1570).

[96]Belleforest (1565), 1038 and Belleforest (1575), 1824.

[97]Thevet (1575), 109-10.

[98]Chytreaus (1586).

[99]Neander (1586).

Humanist Giovanni Botero relied heavily on Herberstein in his influential *Universal Relations* of 1591.[100] In his *The World, or a General Description of its Four Parts* (Paris, 1637), Pierre D'Avity cited Herberstein, though it is obvious that he was familiar with other accounts of Muscovy.[101] The description of Muscovy in Peter Heylen's *Cosmographie* (London, 1652), Herman Conring's *Examination of the Great Commonwealths of the World* (1660s), and Samuel Pufendorf's Introduction to the *History of the Most Prominent Empires and States of this Time in Europe* (Frankfurt, 1682) were all deeply indebted to Herberstein.[102]

Herberstein's influence can also be seen in collections of travels to newly discovered or little known areas of the world. Materials on Muscovy had been included in travel compendia since Johannus Hutichius' aptly named *The New World* of 1532, which excerpted both Miechowa and Giovio.[103] Similarly, Antonio Manuzio's *Voyages Made by Venice* (Venice, 1541?) included reprints of Barbaro and Contarini.[104] The first compendium of travel to borrow large sections from *Notes on the Muscovites*, however, was Richard Eden's *The decades of the Newe World*, which consisted of a translation of a cosmography by Peter Martyr together with a large collection of travel accounts. Among them one finds, in the section entitled "Of Muscovy, Cathay and the North Regions," selections "out of the books of Sigismundus Librus."[105] Though the first edition of Giovanni Battista Ramusio path-breaking *Concerning Navigations and Voyages*, published in 1559 (vol. 2) makes no mention of Herberstein, the second edition, issued in 1574, contained a complete Italian translation of *Notes on the Muscovites.*[106] Ramusio's work was the inspiration for Richard Hakluyt's well-known *The Principall navigations* of 1589, which, thanks largely to the efforts of the men of the English Muscovy Company, included the largest collection of Renaissance Moscovitica ever published. The first edition did not mention Herberstein; however, the second, issued in 1598, republished an extract from *Notes on the Muscovites* borrowed from Eden.[107] In the last quarter of the century, two compendia solely devoted to Muscovy appeared, both of which included material from Herberstein.[108] In 1630, *Notes on the Muscovites* and texts dependent on it were excerpted in two more compilations of European Moscovitica.[109]

The Transmission of Herberstein's Image of Russia

It seems clear that knowledge of Herberstein was nearly universal among late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century ethnographers, cosmographers, and editors of travel compendia. But how did they use the text and to what extent were they influenced by its general interpretation of Muscovite civic life? Most ethnographers, and particularly those with wide experience in Muscovy, did not follow Herberstein blindly. By the late 1570s, ethnographers had begun to use

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[100]Botero (1591), 93-94.

[101]D'Avity (1637).

[102]Heylen (1652), 510ff., Conring (1660s), 433-45 and Pufendorf (1682), 377-82.

[103]Hutichius (1532).

[104]Manuzio (1541).

[105]Eden (1555), 281-334.

[106]Ramusio (1550), vol. 2 (1574).

[107]Hakluyt (1969), 2: 405-412.

[108]Òasicki (1582) and *Rerum* (1600).

[109]*Russia sue Moscovia* (1630) and Boxhornius (1630).

Herberstein as a measure by which they judged their own observations. Printz, for instance, wrote in 1578 that while Herberstein had written extensively on the Russian treatment of ambassadors under Vasilii III, "since that time great changes have occurred in many ways." Thus he felt it necessary "to describe in brief how [men in his party] were received and maintained."[110] Possevino found that Herberstein's treatment of Muscovite religion was "not particularly useful for refuting or converting the Muscovites."[111] In addition, the Italian cleric remarked with disgust that later German editions of *Notes on the Muscovites* had been adulterated by "heretics" (i.e., Protestants), making their descriptions of Russian Orthodoxy of even less value.[112] Olearius "did not find that Russian wives regard frequent blows and beating as a sign of intense love," as Herberstein contended.[113] Meyerberg remarked that Herberstein was wrong about the date of Saint Sergei's death.[114] As the years progressed, some seventeenth-century ethnographers went further, arguing not only that *Notes on the Muscovites* contained erroneous details, but that its general interpretation of Muscovite civic life might be outdated.[115] Olearius, for example, castigated those who thoughtlessly repeated what he believed were obsolete opinions about the barbarity of the Russian prince.

> Although they possess the same power, the most recent grand princes have not emulated the former tyrants, who violently assaulted their subjects and their subjects' property. Yet some hold to the contrary view, perhaps basing themselves on old writers such as Herberstein, Jovius [i.e., Giovio], Guagnino, etc., who depicted the Russians' miserable condition under the tyrant's iron scepter. In general, a great deal is written about the Russians which no longer applies, undoubtedly because of the general changes in time, regime, people. The present grand prince is a very pious ruler who, like his father, does not wish a single one of his peasants to be impoverished.[116]

Korb went so far as to speak of a "national metamorphosis" under Peter I and predicted that "as long as the most auspicious reign of his present majesty the tsar last, I do not think that this people will relapse into such pretensions."[117]

Yet despite occasional scuffles over minutiae and even occasional protestations of obsolescence, the ethnographers of the second half of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries generally presented a picture of Muscovite civic life that

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[110]Printz (1578), 47. Possevino disagreed. See Possevino (1586), 14.

[111]Possevino (1586), 37.

[112]Possevino (1586), 37.

[113]Olearius (1656), 170.

[114]Meyerberg (1661), 100. For further examples of criticism of one ethnographer (or ethnographic opinion in general) by another (not necessarily Herberstein), see Barberino (1565), 2: 20; Schlichting (1571a), 213; Ulfeldt (1575), 25; Staden (1578), 4; Printz (1578), 47; Possevino (1586), 3, 3; Massa (1614), 8-9, 16; Petreius (1615), 143-43, 194; Aleppo (1655), 2: 285-86; Olearius (1656), 175; Meyerberg (1661), 106-7, 117-19; Collins (1667), A3-A4; Collins (1667), 85; Reutenfels (1671), 2-3, 66, 108, 116-17, 121, 167, 199; Wickhart (1675), 185, 188, 214-15; and Korb (1700), 1: 284.

[115]On signs of "Westernization" in the European accounts, see Olearius (1656), 175; Collins (1667), 92-93; Reutenfels (1671), 60-61, 65, 73-74, 85, 88, 156-60; Wickhart (1675), 206-7, 244-45; Neuville (1698), 9, 13, 21, 40, 54, 54, 67; and Korb (1700), 1: 82-83, 1: 106, 1: 139-40, 1: 156, 1: 159, 1: 170-71, 1: 223, 1: 244-45, 1: 255, 1: 264-65, 1: 273, 2: 129-30, 2: 133-34, 2: 137, 2: 157-58, 2: 197-98, 2: 226.

[116]Olearius (1656), 175.

[117]Korb (1700), 1: 82-83.

was quite consistent with the view that was put forward in *Notes on the Muscovites*. Herberstein described Russian civic life in terms of four qualities:

1. Absolutism: the grand prince possesses complete control over the various political, administrative, and military organs of the realm.
2. Despotism: the grand prince exercises complete control over the property, and particularly the landed property, of his subjects.
3. Subject-Slavery: the subjects of the grand prince are his slaves.
4. Quasi-Divinity: the subjects of the grand prince worship him as they would God.

Table 5 indicates the presence or absence of these characteristics in major eye-witness ethnographies written between 1549 and 1700.

Table 5: The Despotic Interpretation in the Chief Eyewitness Accounts, 1549-1700

Author/Account	*Written/Printed*	*Absolutism*	*Despotism*	*Subjects/Slaves*	*Quasi-Divinity*
Herberstein	1517-49w/1549p	+	+	+	+
Chancellor [C]	1553-54w/1589p	+?	+		
Jenkinson [C]	1557-58w/1589p	+?			
Barberino [C]	1564-65w/1658p	+?			
Staden	1578-79w	+	+		
Guagnini [A]	1578?w/1578p	+	+	+	+
Printz [A]	1578w/1668p	+	+	+	+
Possevino [A]	1586w/1586p	+	+	+	+
Fletcher [A]	1588-89w/1591p	+	+	+	
Margeret [B, C]	1607w/1607p	+	+	+	
Petreius [A]	1615w/1615p	+	+	+	+
Olearius [A]	1639-47w/1647p	+	+	+	+
Paul of Aleppo	1655-56w		+		+
Meyerberg [A]	1661-63w/1663p?	+	+	+	+
Collins [B,C]	1667w/1667p	+	+	+?	+
Reutenfels [A]	1672-80w/1680p	+	+	+	+
Wickhart [A]	1675w/1675p			+	+
Tanner	1678w/1680p?				
Neuville [C]	1690?w/1698p	+?		+?	
Korb [A]	*1698-99w/1700p*	+	+	+	+

Key: A = the author cited *Notes on the Muscovites* or borrowed text *verbatim* from it; B = the author cited or used a book relient on *Notes on the Muscovites*; C = the author may have known *Notes on the Muscovites*, but this is not sure; w = the approximate date the account was written; p = the date of first edition; + = the characteristic is present in account; ? = the charactaristic is weakly presented in the account.

The distribution of the despotic interpretation among the later sixteenth- and seventeenth-century accounts suggests two conclusions. First, when ethnographers used Herberstein (or some Herbersteinian text), the despotic image tends to be present. Of the twelve authors who either cited Herberstein or a text drawing on it, eleven — the only exception being Wickhart — recapitulated three or more of the basic characteristics of the despotic interpretation.[118] The degree to which ethnographers in this set were indebted to Herberstein for the specific terms of the despotic image varied considerably. Guagnini and Reutenfels represent one extreme: both cited *Notes on the Muscovites* extensively and both repeated almost *verbatim* Herberstein's proposition that the tsar "holds unlimited control over the lives and property of

[118]Wickhart cited *Notes on the Muscovites* and, perhaps under the book's influence, wrote that "the Muscovites are all the slaves of the grand prince, whom they worship almost as a God." See Wickhart (1675), 246. Yet Wickhart did not ascribe universal power to the tsar nor did he claim that that Aleksei Mikhailovich had complete control over the property of his servitors. Rather, he described Aleksei's government as composed of high ministers who supervised the daily affairs of the state. At their head was Artemon Sergeevich Matveev, to whom Wickhart attributes significant power. Characteristically, Wickhart calls Matveev Aleksei's "primarius minister." See Wickhart (1675), 206. About private property or the lack there of, Wickhart related nothing.

all his subjects."[119] At the other extreme are Margeret and Collins: neither probably knew *Notes on the Muscovites* directly and neither characterizes Muscovite despotism in terms similar to those found in Herberstein. Between these poles one encounters a wide range of degrees of dependence. Though each case should be investigated independently, it stands to reason that *direct* influence decreased over time. The authors of the early descriptions — certainly Guagnini, and likely Printz, Possevino, and Fletcher — relied heavily on Herberstein, for his was the only major ethnography available. Moreover, no widely accepted stereotype of Russian rule was at hand. But as the image presented in *Notes on the Muscovites* became commonplace, lines of influence between Herberstein and later ethnographers grew increasingly indistinct. By the first quarter of the seventeenth century, it was not necessary to read *Notes on the Muscovites* to learn that the tsar was a despot whose slave-subjects worshipped him as a god — this idea was available in any number of Herbersteinian descriptions, and furthermore, it was "common knowledge" among educated Europeans. Thus, unless an ethnographer simply borrowed text out of *Notes on the Muscovites* (e.g. Guagnini) or his characterization of Muscovite civic life was strikingly different from Herberstein's (e.g. Margeret), it is very difficult to determine whether a given despotic depiction came from Herberstein, a text dependent on Herberstein, or common opinion. All that can be said is that with the spread of Herberstein's image, unmitigated influence became less likely.

The second conclusion following from Table 5 is this: where the ethnographers did not know Herberstein, the despotic interpretation is often wholly or partially absent. None of the six eyewitness ethnographers who were ignorant of *Notes on the Muscovites* or were only tangentially familiar with the book repeated three or more of the characteristics of the despotic view. Chancellor, Jenkinson, and Barberino, for example, may have been aware of *Notes on the Muscovites*, but their understanding of Muscovite civic life was not influenced by him. They all offered a juridical depiction of the grand prince's authority — he personally made all judgments — which is both different in character from and weaker than Herberstein's "unlimited control over the lives and property of all his subjects."[120] Among the three early ethnographers, Chancellor alone followed Herberstein in suggesting that the grand prince was a universal landlord. The Russian prince, he observed, distributed estates to his best warriors and confiscated them from those who refused to serve. Unlike Herberstein, however, the English captain heartily approved of this institution, arguing that it ensured subservience among the Russian nobility. Would it, Chancellor allowed, that English monarchs possessed such power:

> Oh that our sturdie rebels were had in the like subjection to knowe their duety towarde their princes. They may not say as some snudges in England say, I whould find the Queene a man to serve in my place, or make his friends tarrie at home if money have the upper hand. No, no, it is not so in this countrey: for hee shall make humble sute to serve the Duke.[121]

It is somewhat ironic that several decades after Chancellor praised what might be called Russian feudalism as a model, his countryman Fletcher — an avid reader of Herberstein — would condemn the same system as barbarous despotism.

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[119]Guagnini (1560), 27 and Reutenfels (1671), 101.

[120]Chancellor (1553), 233-34; Jenkinson (1557), 423; Barberino (1565), 2: 8; and Herberstein (1517-49), 1: 32.

[121]Chancellor (1553), 232.

Paul of Aleppo, Staden, Tanner, and Neuville provide further examples of accounts that did not follow the Herbersteinian model perhaps because their authors were ignorant of *Notes on the Muscovites* or texts influenced by it. Paul, as we have seen, was a Middle Eastern cleric and could not have been familiar with Herberstein, though he noted many of the same institutions. He, like Chancellor, was an admirer of Muscovite monarchy, but went much further than the Englishman. He praised the fact that the tsar was a universal proprietor and that the Russians worshipped their prince with the same fervor as they did God.[122] Paul was unwilling, however, to ascribe absolute power to the tsar. According to the Syrian cleric, Muscovy was a kind of paradisical theocracy in which the tsar was "like a waiting slave" to the Patriarch.[123] Staden's account recapitulated some of Herberstein's view, but his general perspective is entirely independent of and different from the Habsburg ambassador's. A mercenary who had served Ivan IV for several years, Staden offered a fine-grained view of the life of the military elite in the era of the bloody *oprichnina* rather than an overview of Muscovite civic culture. His personal experience with Ivan's terror told him that Russian absolutism was personal, not systemic. If "everything he [Ivan] orders is done," it was due to Ivan's cruel tyranny and not the in-born servility of his subjects.[124] Staden no doubt knew (as Herberstein had said) that high-born Russians called themselves slaves and identified the will of the tsar with that of God, but for him these facts had nothing to do with Ivan's madness or the regime that resulted from it. Similarly, the German adventurer's understanding of despotism was linked to Ivan's personal brutality, not the long-term patterns of Russian civic culture. According to Staden, Ivan personally "deprived [disgraced servitors] of their estates, which were given to those [men] in the *oprichnina*.[125] Staden implied that Ivan's seizures were illegal, an accidental result of the disturbed tsar's arbitrary rule. Tanner and Neuville, like Staden, seemed to have been largely ignorant of Herberstein's text. More importantly, they did not share Herberstein's purpose: where the Habsburg ambassador sought to provide a guide to Russian culture, Tanner and Neuville subordinated ethnography to history. They wanted to tell stories — Tanner of his embassy and Neuville of Sophia's rise and fall — and they dabbled in ethnography only as an afterthought. Tanner offered no general characterization of Russian civic life, though his account is full of interesting quotidian detail, and Neuville provided only cliches about the tsar's "tyranny" and his subject's "slavery."[126]

Cosmographers and the editors of travel compendia repeated Herberstein's statements about Russian despotism with great frequency and fidelity. Unlike men who had been to Muscovy, cabinet-bound scholars did not have the luxury of direct observation. They borrowed information from whatever description was at hand, and more often than not this seems to have been *Notes on the Muscovites*. Thevet, for example, simply transcribed the key passage in Herberstein's work in his *Universal Cosmography* of 1575.

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[122]Aleppo (1655), 1: 400-401.

[123]Aleppo (1655), 2: 230.

[124]Staden (1578), 55-56.

[125]Staden (1578), 18.

[126]Neuville (1698), 50, 54, 57.

> Ce duc usait de puissance absolue, tant sur les evesques que autres, ordonnant du bien et de la vie de chacun à sa fantasie: et n'y avait aucun qui eust osé dire du contraire, de ce qui luy venoit en la volonté. Aussi sont les Moscovites si amis et affectionnez de leurs ducs, qu'ils disent que la volonté de leur prince c'est celle de Dieu.[127]

The same description of the tsar's power may be found in Botero's *Universal Relations* of 1591 and D'Avity's *The World, or the General Description of its Four Parts* of 1637.[128] As the terms of Herberstein's account were appropiated and altered by later ethnographers, *Notes on the Muscovites*'s influence on cosmographers became increasingly indirect. Heylen, for example, seems to have received the despotic interpretation from Fletcher, who in turn was influenced by Herberstein. In his *Cosmographie* of 1652 one reads:

> The government of this Country is merely Tyrannicall, the Emperor being absolute Lord of the *lives*, *lands* and goods of all his subjects: all of them, the nobles as well as the base, subscribing themselves in their *Petitions* to him, by the name of Keloptery, that is Sclaves.[129]

Furthermore, he wrote that "the commons live in miserable subjection to the Nobles, and they again in as great slavery to the Duke or Emperour."[130] It is little wonder that the English cosmographer was able to affirm that the grand prince's subjects "look on him rather as a God than a King."[131] All of these sentences have close parallels in Fletcher's treatise and, before him, in Herberstein. The version of despotism found in Herman Conring's *Examination of the Great Commonwealths of the World* is more difficult to trace. In his treatment of Muscovy, Conring cited the two compendia of Moscovitica published in 1630, as well as Olearius.[132] Yet his characterization was so general that it could have come from Herberstein, a Herbersteinian text, or common opinion: "The form of government is monarchical: it is plain tyranny and is of the same type of government which obtains in Persia, Turkey, and today in all of Asia."[133] Pufendorf's description of 1682 was equally indistinct and, as a result, difficult to trace: "The Form of Government here is an Absolute Monarchy; the Grand Duke, whom they call in their native Language Czar, being not tied up to any Laws or Rules, unto whom his Subjects are obliged to pay Obedience without reserve, so that they are no more than Slaves."[134] All that can be said with confidence is that the image of Muscovite civic culture found in Conring and Pufendorf is, if not drawn directly from Herberstein, perhaps Herbersteinian in origin.

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[127]Thevet, (1575), 109-10.

[128]Botero (1591), 93 and Avity (1637).

[129]Heylen (1652), 522.

[130]Heylen (1652), 511.

[131]Heylen (1652), 523.

[132]Conring (1660s), 433-45.

[133]Conring (1660s), 440. The passage is very reminiscent of Fletcher (1591), 194. The text could have been transmitted to Conring *via* Boxhornius (1630) or *Russia seu Moscovia* (1630), both of which reprint Fletcher.

[134]Pufendorf (1682), 380.

Conclusion

Would the European image of Russia have been different if the views of a less critical author had been memorialized in the first major printed account of Russia? The evidence presented above suggests that it might well have been. For while *Notes on the Muscovites* was in fact a better description of Russian ways than any to date, it was not only the quality of Herberstein's eye that made his book the seminal text in European Moscovitica. The accident of good timing, the power of the printing press, and the pervasive habit of borrowing from "authoritative" texts all played a large role in ensuring that the views expressed in *Notes on the Muscovites* became in large measure the opinions of most educated Europeans. Had Milton's favorite, Chancellor, found his way to Russia a few years earlier, written a major description instead of a brief overview, published his observations in an elaborate Latin edition rather than an obscure booklet, and become the primary source of European intelligence on Russia, Europeans of the second half of the sixteenth century might have believed that Muscovite civic culture was governed by an upright king instead of a tyrant. Nonetheless one should not exaggerate the power of literary influence. Chancellor's image of Russian rule was at odds with what most European visitors actually observed in Russia. Thus one would imagine that even if the English navigator had written *Notes on the Muscovites*, his impression that Russia was governed by a just king would not have been received with great sympathy by later writers, and particularly by those few who witnessed Ivan IV's reign of terror. The fact that Herberstein was first definitely added to the impression his book made on the European understanding of Muscovite governance, but so did the fact that his observations rang true with later ethnographers. From the point of view of men such as Fletcher, Olearius, and Reutenfels, the Habsburg ambassador was to be followed not only because he was an authority, but also because he was right.

Bibliography 1

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This bibliography lists the ethnographic, cosmographical, and historical accounts and compendia of accounts cited in the notes to this essay. In the column on the left, the accounts are listed in abbreviated form beginning with the name of the author and followed by the approximate year(s) in which the item was written. In the column on the right, full bibliographic information on the account is offered in the following form: a) the full name of the author or authors; b) basic biographical data about the author or authors; c) bibliographic information on the first edition, if the account was published in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries; d) a note giving the date in which the account was composed, if it is significantly different from the date of publication or if the account was not published in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries; e) data on the edition cited in the notes.

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