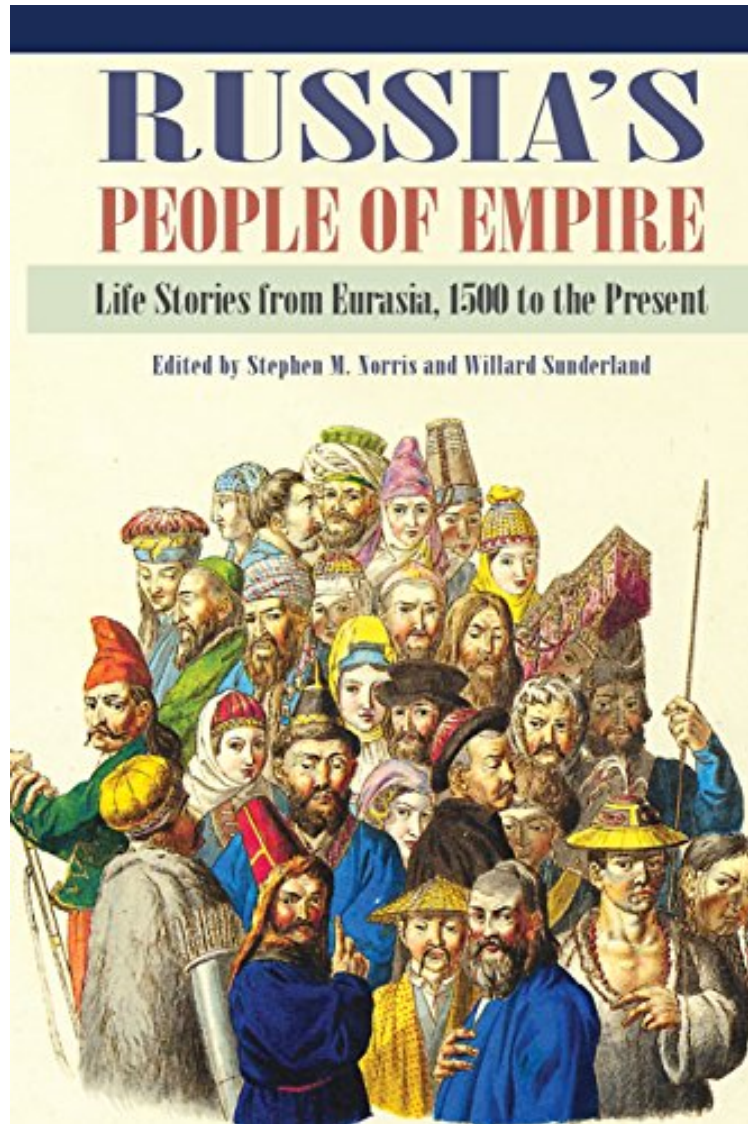


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Russia's People of Empire: Life Stories from Eurasia, 1500 to the Present

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From Brand: Indiana University Press : Russia's People of Empire: Life Stories from Eurasia, 1500 to the Present before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Russia's People of Empire: Life Stories from Eurasia, 1500 to the Present:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great for showing Russia's multiethnic diversity By Paul E. Richardson Should you find yourself so unlucky to be in the company of someone arguing for a "Russia for Russians"

or similar nationalistic nonsense, you would do well to have this book in your arsenal. Not for flinging at the fool, of course, but for citation and reasoned argument. As if that gets one very far these days...In any event, as this book makes patently clear in its 31 biographical essays, Russia is a complex, multi-ethnic state founded, shaped and expanded by rulers, leaders, thinkers and artists who came from a wide variety of nations, confessions and traditions. Yes, we all know about Catherine the Great (German) and Stalin (Georgian), but there have been a broad variety of souls, from Lomonosov, Gogol and Borodin, to Bagration, Shamil and Mannerheim, who have influenced all aspects of Russian culture, science and politics by injecting influences from other cultures and traditions. The objective of this collection is to use the personal, microhistoric approach allowed by biography to "open up a view on the long-running effects of what it meant to live in a densely multicultural neighborhood." That the volume begins with biographies of Ermak Timofeyevich - the Cossack who opened up Siberia, and Simeon Bekbulatovich - the Tatar prince that Ivan IV installed on the Kremlin throne for a year, and ends with the writer Boris Akunin and the Kremlin puppeteer Vladislav Surkov, gives a sense of the breadth of its coverage. It would be silly to expect that the fullness of Russian cultural diversity could be expressed in a single 350-page book, and the editors well admit they have no such pretensions. But it is an invaluable start down the road to grasping the often sadly overlooked diversity that Russians will joke about ("scratch a Russian and you find a Tatar") but rarely embrace (contrast the continued discrimination against Tatars with the reality that Tatar princes and descendants of the Mongols were instrumental in the expansion of the Russian empire under Ivan IV). Each biography here opens a door onto unknown pages of history. Yes, there are biographies of the sort of better-known luminaries enumerated above. But the strength of this book is how these are balanced by biographies of unknown souls who had great influence or whose lives signified the times they lived in, from a fake Circassian princess, to a Central Asian poet, to an itinerant pretender to the Russian throne. As reviewed in Russian Life magazine. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By CLIFFORD R. SCOTTE Excellent historical book!!!

A fundamental dimension of the Russian historical experience has been the diversity of its people and cultures, religions and languages, landscapes and economies. For six centuries this diversity was contained within the sprawling territories of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, and it persists today in the entwined states and societies of the former USSR. *Russia's People of Empire* explores this enduring multicultural world through life stories of 31 individuals? famous and obscure, high born and low, men and women? that illuminate the cross-cultural exchanges at work from the late 1500s to post-Soviet Russia. Working on the scale of a single life, these microhistories shed new light on the multicultural character of the Russian Empire, which both shaped individuals' lives and in turn was shaped by them.

[S]tudents of Russian empire would be well served with this work, given its snapshots of diverse imperial milieus and their attendant multicultural dialogues at the personal level. . . . this text will be a welcome tool for undergraduate use, especially for a survey course, since it spans Russian history even up to the twenty-first century. (SLAVIC AND EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL) This compilation of examples that spans 500 years of history and includes both the famous and the lesser known gives readers a more in-depth, personal understanding of how the inescapable existence of diversity in Russia and the Soviet Union related to everyday life . . . Highly recommended. (Choice) [T]his collection offers a fresh and lively approach to understanding how the various Russian empires have worked. (Slavic) This book will engage students with its lively narratives of figures from the past, serve teachers with varied examples reflecting the diversity of the empire, and challenge researchers to think about the difficulties of restoring the individual to broad narratives. The editors and the contributors are to be complimented for their accomplishment. (The Russian) There is an enormous amount to like in this volume, which will be a boon to students as well as scholars. (Slavonica) This is the first book, to my knowledge, to present such compelling, nuanced and sustained portraits of personalities stamped with the varied practices of Russian/Soviet imperial multiculturalism. . . . I anticipate that it will become a classic. (Roberts Crews Stanford University) About the Author Stephen M. Norris is Associate Professor of History at Miami University of Ohio. He is author of *A War of Images: Russian Popular Prints, Wartime Culture, and National Identity* and editor (with Helena Goscilo) of *Preserving Petersburg: History, Memory, Nostalgia* (IUP, 2008) and (with Zara Torlone) of *Insiders and Outsiders in Russian Cinema* (IUP, 2008). Willard Sunderland is Associate Professor of History at the University of Cincinnati and author of *Taming the Wild Field: Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe*.