

Donald Ostrowski. *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-Cultural Influences on the Steppe Frontier, 1304-1589*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, xvi-329 p., fig., tab., glossary, chronology, biblio., index.

Allen J. Frank

**Édition électronique**URL : <https://journals.openedition.org/abstractairanica/36548>

DOI : 10.4000/abstractairanica.36548

ISSN : 1961-960X

Éditeur :

CNRS (UMR 7528 Mondes iraniens et indiens), Éditions de l'IFRI

Édition imprimée

Date de publication : 15 mai 2001

ISSN : 0240-8910

Référence électronique

Allen J. Frank, « Donald Ostrowski. *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-Cultural Influences on the Steppe Frontier, 1304-1589*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, xvi-329 p., fig., tab., glossary, chronology, biblio., index. », *Abstracta Iranica* [En ligne], Volume 22 | 2001, document 227, mis en ligne le 15 février 2010, consulté le 31 août 2023. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/abstractairanica/36548> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/abstractairanica.36548>

Ce document a été généré automatiquement le 31 août 2023.

Tous droits réservés

Donald Ostrowski. *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-Cultural Influences on the Steppe Frontier, 1304-1589*.
Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, xvi-329 p., fig., tab., glossary, chronology, biblio., index.

Allen J. Frank

- 1 The debate surrounding the Mongol influence on Russia, and Russia's Inner Asian inheritance in general, is a theme that has captured the attention of both popular and scholarly studies of general Russian history for centuries. The idea that the Mongol conquest of the 13th century, Mongol domination and Mongol influence on Russia's political institutions « explain » the presence of autocracy, despotism, distinctiveness (from Europe) are deeply rooted and commonplace both in the West and among Russian historians. The issue of Russia's Mongol legacy is a fundamental part of any overall discussion of Russian history as a whole, and perhaps the fundamental issue in Russian medieval history. The most common clichés should be familiar even to the layman: the Mongols are responsible for Russian « oriental despotism », the Mongols isolated Russia from Europe economically and culturally, the Mongols « taught » Russians to isolate their women, etc. In short, the Mongols are the cause of Russia's economic and political « backwardness ».
- 2 Donald Ostrowski has done a fine job of leaping into this daunting and incalculably complex topic, displaying a masterful grasp of the primary Russian sources, and the growing international scholarship on Inner Asian and Mongol steppe imperialism in the Middle Ages. The A. divides his book into two principle sections: the first evaluates some of the clichés regarding the Mongol role in « bringing » despotism to Russia, isolating it economically and culturally, and « teaching » Russians to seclude their

women. In this section, the A. finds evidence for extensive borrowing from Mongol practices in the areas of political administration and military structure in Muscovy. Economically Russia suffered from the initial effects of the Mongol conquest, but many areas experienced economic resurgence under Mongol rule. Similarly, those areas which enjoyed little contact with Europe under Mongol rule for the most part had had little contact before the Mongol conquest, while areas of northwestern Russia retained their commercial ties with Europe. Similarly, the A. argues that autocracy, rather than despotism functioned as the main political ideology in Russia under Mongol rule, and that the antecedents of autocracy in Russia were of Byzantine origin. Indeed, the A. points out that neither the Byzantium nor the Mongol empire, despite popular conceptions, had genuinely despotic political systems.

- 3 The second part of the book consists of a critical evaluation of Russian church sources and their role in the development of an « anti-Tatar » ideology, which is still strongly felt in historical literature today. This section of the book, in which he examines the Church's historical and political writings in Muscovy, and the creation of both a mythology and ideology to initially challenge Mongol-Tatar political and military hegemony, and later to justify Russia's eastward expansion.

INDEX

Thèmes : 4.1. Histoire médiévale

AUTEURS

ALLEN J. FRANK

Takoma Park, Maryland (USA)