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052154811X - Treasure of the Land of Darkness: The Fur Trade and its Significance for Medieval Russia

Janet Martin

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TREASURE OF THE LAND OF DARKNESS

The fur trade and its significance for medieval Russia

Treasure of the Land of Darkness traces the flow of fur from the lands of the North, or “lands of darkness,” as they were described in contemporary Islamic texts, through the major trade centers of medieval Russia to the consumer markets of the world, stretching from western Europe to China. Professor Martin reconstructs the fur trade network of each center (including Kiev, Novgorod and Moscow) and examines the changes they experienced over time. She demonstrates how shifting control of certain key elements within the trading network played an important role in the political evolution of the region. Aggressive principalities enhanced their political authority through manipulation of such factors as fur resources and trade routes: thus the mid-sixteenth-century supremacy of Muscovy was based upon both political advantage and monopolization of the networks of the fur trade. Quantitative analysis of the available data substantiates this conclusion: control over the trade of fur drawn from the “land of darkness” was of fundamental importance to the political development of medieval Russia.

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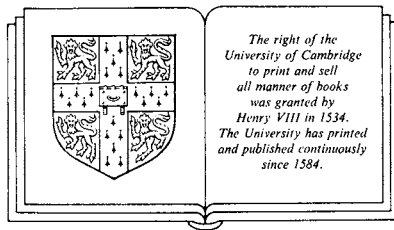
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TREASURE OF THE LAND OF DARKNESS

*The fur trade and its significance
for medieval Russia*

JANET MARTIN

University of Miami



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge

London New York New Rochelle

Melbourne Sydney

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PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
40 West 20th Street, New York NY 10011-4211, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

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First published 1986
First paperback edition 2004

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress cataloguing-in-publication data

Martin, Janet, 1945–
Treasure of the land of darkness.
Bibliography: p.
Includes index.
1. Fur trade – Soviet Union – History. 2. Fur trade –
Political aspects – Soviet Union – History. 3. Soviet
Union – Politics and government – To 1533. I. Title.
HD9944.S755M37 1986 380.1'456753'0947 86-6094

ISBN 0 521 32019 4 hardback
ISBN 0 521 54811 X paperback

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To my parents

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is the result of many years of effort, throughout which I have been fortunate to have received support and kindness from a number of individuals and institutions. I would like to express my appreciation first of all to the International Research and Exchanges Board, the United States Department of Education (Fulbright-Hays), and the American Association of University Women, whose grants enabled me to conduct research in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and then to write my Ph.D. dissertation, the previous incarnation of this volume. I would similarly like to thank the Central State Archive for Ancient Documents (TsGADA) in Moscow and the Leningrad Division of the Institute of History (IOII) for allowing me access to their archival collections, and also to the Library of the Academy of Sciences (BAN) and the Saltykov-Shchedrin Library in Leningrad, the Lenin Library in Moscow, Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago, the Slavic Library at the University of Illinois (Champaign-Urbana), and Richter Library at the University of Miami.

On a more personal level I am indebted to Daniel Waugh for reading my manuscript and offering his critical comments and suggestions, to Gerald W. Day for sharing his expertise on Byzantine and eastern Mediterranean trade issues, to Edward L. Keenan for his unexpected and timely help, and to Bettina Stöckl for her assistance during one of the several stages of revision of the manuscript. To my professors at the University of Chicago, Alexandre Bennigsen, Richard Hellie, and the late Arcadius Kahan, who challenged, encouraged, guided, prodded, and taught me, I owe much more than any statement of gratitude can convey. I would like nevertheless to take this opportunity to express to them my deep and affectionate thanks. Finally, a very special thank you must go to my husband Daniel and our furry little friends.

Despite the best efforts of these and other friends and colleagues, imperfections remain in this volume. For them I alone claim responsibility with the hope that they do not overshadow those positive features of the book, achieved through the influence of those who have so generously helped me.

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Because the following text draws upon sources originally composed in and sometimes translated into a variety of languages, it has been difficult to standardize the spelling of proper names, book titles, and other specialized terms. I have, however, employed some principles of transliteration that, hopefully, will clarify, although not eliminate, what may otherwise be confusing inconsistencies.

Firstly, when transliterating from the Cyrillic alphabet (Russian language) into the Roman, I have followed the Library of Congress system. Secondly, when referring in the text to Arabic or Persian names and terms drawn from translated editions I have adopted the spelling that appears in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*. In citations and in the bibliography, however, spellings appear as they occur literally in each edition or, in the case of Russian-language editions, according to the transliteration system noted above.