



1998

Review of Bruce Elleman, *Diplomacy and Deception: The Secret History of Sino-Soviet Diplomatic Relations, 1917-1927*

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Recommended Citation

Atwood, Christopher P., "Review of Bruce Elleman, *Diplomacy and Deception: The Secret History of Sino-Soviet Diplomatic Relations, 1917-1927*" (1998). *Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations*. 30.
<https://repository.upenn.edu/ealc/30>

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Disciplines

Arts and Humanities | East Asian Languages and Societies

Comments

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Elleman, Bruce A.: *Diplomacy and Deception: The Secret History of Sino-Soviet Diplomatic Relations, 1917–1927*. (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), xviii + 322 pp., \$ 76.95. ISBN 0-7656-0142-7.

At the conclusion to his introduction, Bruce Elleman notes “the widely accepted myth . . . that the Bolsheviks treated China equally” and informs the reader that “it is the debunking of this . . . myth that will be at the heart of this work”. True to his promise, *Diplomacy and Deception* is cast as an exposé first of the hypocrisy and duplicity of the Soviet Union and then of the myopia of successive Chinese governments who promoted a bogus image of Soviet idealism to facilitate their own petty diplomatic victories against the United States.

The author covers virtually the same ground as Leong's *Sino-Soviet Diplomatic Relations*, handling the establishment of Sino-Soviet diplomatic relations, the United Front, Outer Mongolia, the Chinese Eastern Railway, the Boxer Indemnity, territorial concessions, extraterritoriality, and the formation of the Chinese Communist Party. In addition, his introduction contains a summary of 1914–1919 negotiations on the Shandong issue, and in the conclusion an account of T. V. Soong's 1945 negotiations with Stalin. In every chapter, Elleman finds that while the Soviet negotiators proclaimed their adherence to a new egalitarian diplomacy, their practice was invariably one of cynical *realpolitik*. A second theme is how their Chinese interlocutors used Russia's mythical concessions to extract real ones from Britain and the United States. China's conservative governments, Elleman contends, fecklessly fed the image of the Soviet Union as China's only true friend. Despite Elleman's offputting acrimony in tone, these two central points, while not entirely new, are fundamentally sound.

As befits an exposé of Soviet machinations and secret diplomacy, Elleman's study dramatically hails secret documents only now made public. He has indeed visited a wider range of archives than any previous researcher on the topic, yet the claim to blaze a new archival trail is misleading. While Elleman visited both Nanjing's No. 2 Historical Archives and Moscow's Lenin Library, the vast majority of documents cited come from archives, especially in Taiwan, already exploited in part or full by scholars.

This lack of major new archival data is the more damaging as Elleman has staked his book on finding hitherto unknown Soviet machinations. Elleman does not synthesize the existing literature; indeed, Rupen's *Mongols of the Twentieth Century* for the Soviet role in Mongolia, Lensen's *The Damned Inheritance* for the Chinese Eastern Railway, or Garver's *Chinese-Soviet Relations* for the negotiation of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of 1945, are all nowhere to be found in the notes or bibliography. And while he occasionally mentions Leong, and Wilbur and Howe's *Missionaries of Revolution*, he does not demonstrate why they now need to be replaced.

Nor does the author place sophisticated analysis into the foreground. As Elleman combs like a prosecuting attorney the records of Sino-Soviet relations, looking for a “smoking gun”, archival tunnel vision is often the unfortunate result. The Mongolian issue, for example, is presented as simply a case of disputed real estate; Elleman never once shows the slightest interest in what the Mongolians might have had to say about the choice between Soviet protectorate vs.

Chinese annexation. Likewise, retelling the history of the first United Front almost entirely from the pages of the Chinese Communist and Soviet press does not make a balanced coverage of the period.

If there is anyone who still believes in a prelapsarian period of Soviet diplomatic innocence before the evil Stalin introduced power politics, Elleman's polemic will be a shock. Specialists in Sino-Soviet relations may profit from points of detail in the narrative. But as a complete account of Sino-Soviet relations up to 1927, *Diplomacy and Deception* is a disappointing volume.

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Piggott, Joan R.: *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship*. (Stanford University Press, 1997), xii + 434 pp., \$ 55.00. ISBN 0-8047-2832-1.

Joan Piggott's *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship* is a pioneering study of the formation of a centered polity in Japan from the third to the eighth centuries, undoubtedly one of the most understudied eras among Western scholars in spite of frequent new discoveries and publications in Japan. Attempting to fill this void, Piggott skillfully combines archeological sources, which must necessarily be the foundation for exploring this era, with documents and myths from Japan, China and Korea. She succeeds in composing a coherent analysis that effectively traces the development of rulership over several centuries. She has also done the Western scholarly community a considerable service by including a comprehensive "Catalogue of Major Source Documents and Collections", which, together with a useful glossary and eloquent illustrations, make this book an important reference work.

Using Braudel's macro-historical perspective, with appropriate attention to both regional and national developments, Piggott traces the gradual development of a centered state through seven cross-sections (or trenches). She examines, in chronological order, the rulership of Himiko, Yūryaku, Suiko, Tenji, Temmu and Jitō and the establishment of the *Ritsuryō* law code in the early eighth century. Her study culminates with Shōmu, who raised Buddhism to the level of state doctrine in the middle of the eighth century. The treatment of Himiko (early third century) and her kingdom of Yamatai is informative, with a lucid account of Japanese scholarship to date, but the reader might be disappointed to find that the author does not offer her own view regarding the controversial issue of Yamatai's location. This is perhaps a diplomatic choice that makes good sense if one considers the recent discovery of triangular rimmed mirrors (believed to have been associated with Himiko's court) in central Japan, giving more weight to the proponents of that school.

Piggott then moves from Himiko's theurgic rulership to the martially based kingship of Yūryaku (456–479), demonstrating how greater control of resources and technology, combined with a monopoly of continental relations enabled the Yamato rulers to receive support from local chieftains and to build gigantic burial mounds for themselves in direct proportion to their power. Though the omission of several important rulers does not hurt Piggott's general thesis, the reader may wonder why such prominent kings as Ōjin and Nintoku (late fourth and