



Crime and Punishment in Early Modern Russia (New Studies in European History)

Nancy Kollmann

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This is a magisterial account of the day-to-day practice of Russian criminal justice in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Nancy Kollmann contrasts Russian written law with its pragmatic application by local judges, arguing that this combination of formal law and legal institutions with informal, flexible practice contributed to the country's social and political stability. She also places Russian developments in the broader context of early modern European state-building strategies of governance and legal practice. She compares Russia's rituals of execution to the 'spectacles of suffering' of contemporary European capital punishment and uncovers the dramatic ways in which even the tsar himself, complying with Moscow's ideologies of legitimacy, bent to the moral economy of the crowd in moments of uprising. Throughout, the book assesses how criminal legal practice used violence strategically, administering horrific punishments in some cases and in others accommodating with local communities and popular concepts of justice.



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