constantly present, influencing the application of Russian imperial power. The details drawn from countless archival folders are wonderful, ranging from the ridiculous to the painful and sublime. As for a broader interpretation of Russian imperial style, Werth forcefully argues that the mission in the Volga-Kama region—in particular, the government’s concern with inculcating proper faith as a means of turning benighted non-Russians into more “civic-minded” subjects—illustrates the empire’s transformation in the nineteenth century from a “traditional, dynastic, composite state” to a hybrid polity that resembled at once a traditional empire as well as a national state and a modern colonial empire (p. 125). Werth charts this messy transformation through shifts in discourse as much as policy, locating the key transition period in the age of the Great Reforms, though also exposing the deeper antecedents of the shift that began appearing well before the 1860s.

The book’s source base is extremely rich; the arguments are clear, forceful, and compelling. Beyond the valuable overarching interpretations of religious change in non-Russian life and of transformations Russian imperialism, Werth’s work offers a host of smaller insights such as his attention to the Ministry of State Domains as a key institution for tracking the elaboration of new models of governance, his recognition of the Polish Revolt of 1863 as a “seminal event” influencing imperial policy well beyond the Western provinces (p. 135), and his attention to Il’minskii less as a high commander of Russification (the way he has often been studied) than as a missionary whose primary interest was “the salvation of non-Russians” (p. 229). If there is a fault to the book, it is perhaps that it contains too much information going in too many directions, and consequently lacks a single narrative thread. Werth also makes a number of comparisons between Russia and overseas European empires, especially through literature in the footnotes, that fall somewhat flat because he fails to develop them. Yet all told, these are very minor shortcomings. Werth’s study fits among the best literature to emerge on the Russian empire in recent years. While it is too detailed to assign to undergraduates, it should become a staple of graduate instruction in seminars on Russian imperialism and even on Russian society more generally in the imperial period. It is an excellent monograph.

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Drawing on an impressive range of archival and published materials from both the imperial center and Tblisi, this book offers a complex and multi-faceted analysis of the experience of empire in the North Caucasus and Georgia from the creation of the Viceroyalty of the Caucasus in 1845 until the fall of the tsarist regime in 1917. Jersild creatively deploys sources in Russian and Georgian to explore a series of problems that defined the contours of imperial rule, including forced exile, the promotion of Orthodoxy, Orientalism, and the codification of customary law. What emerges is a
thoughtful and engaging account that takes the reader well beyond a traditional, one-dimensional story of military conquest and colonial expansion. As such, *Orientalism and Empire* represents an important contribution to the literature on empire in Russia and comparative colonialism.

At the core of Jersild's account is a tension between two different models of imperial rule. The first, characteristic principally of the early stages of Russian involvement in the North Caucasus, centered on conquest and exile. The Caucasian War was a lengthy and brutal affair, lasting several decades and accompanied by "cleansing"—the forced exile and transfers of perhaps 450,000 mountain people of the west Caucasus after Shamil's surrender in 1859. But in Jersild's view the very incompleteness of the military conquest— the continuation of Sufi-inspired opposition to imperial rule and the difficulties of terminating "military-native administration" in the North Caucasus—helped to generate a second model of imperial rule that emerged already from the 1840s. Central to this second model were acceptance of diversity, a willingness to retain benevolent forms of particularistic rule, and even a "nativist respect for local custom and indigenous culture" (p. 59). Indeed, Jersild finds that if part of the imperial project in the region involved the usual efforts to extend "progress" and "enlightenment" to "backward" borderland peoples, it also involved the fostering of "authentic" indigenous culture.

It is here that Jersild deploys his most interesting material. Considering intellectual developments in Russia more generally, he finds a deep concern among conservative Russian thinkers with the idea of cultural authenticity and "originality" [samobytnost'], which in the North Caucasus led to the proposition that "the secret to the colonial future lay in the distant past" (p. 41). One of the purposes of imperial rule, in other words, would be to uncover, restore, and codify the central elements of traditional indigenous culture that had been either forgotten, obscured, or destroyed by Islam (which was regarded as an artificial imposition and therefore "the enemy of cultural authenticity" (p. 42). Thus missionary work in the North Caucasus was justified, in part, by the proposition that Orthodoxy had deep historical roots in the region and that imperial rule would merely oversee its "restoration." On this basis, the imperial regime was prepared to issue religious works in native languages and to enlist native cadres, since knowledge of texts and literacy offered continuity with the heritage of Orthodoxy and civilization itself, while oral traditions and illiteracy promised confusion and restricted access to that heritage. These same concerns for cultural authenticity also undergirded the state's promotion and codification of customary law and its corresponding rejection of Islamic *shari'a* (treated once again as an inauthentic imposition). Because most of these efforts predated the era of mass culture and parliamentary politics, they did not challenge the idea of empire. On the contrary, "the question of cultural 'originality' was compatible with — indeed, fostered by — imperial rule" (p. 152).

Within this model of empire, Jersild contends, non-Russians could themselves be active participants. In this regard Georgians, themselves Orthodox Christians, stand out. Jersild demonstrates how "Russian" discourses of Orientalism were fundamentally shared by Georgian society (sazogadoeba). "Georgians viewed Russia as their bridge to Europe, and themselves as the chief representative of the 'West' on the