

Title: The Historical Writings of Nicolae Milescu Spafarii and Seventeenth Century Russian Political Ideology

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My paper examines the historical writings of the seventeenth century Muscovite writer Nicolae Milescu Spafarii in the context of official state ideology legitimizing and strengthening the rule of the recently enthroned Romanovs, while at the same time promoting tsarist absolutism and autocracy. Spafarii produced a number of works, which not only reinforced the rightful succession of the Romanovs to the Russian throne, but also proclaimed the Russian tsar to be the true successor to both Roman and Byzantine emperors.

Thus the lavish *Tsar's Book of Titles* (*Tsarskii Tituliarnik*, 1672) proudly displayed portraits of the Romanov tsars alongside their illustrious predecessors, with accompanying texts showcasing their diplomatic achievements. The *Tituliarnik* stressed the God-favored reign of the Romanovs and maintained the continuity of rule between Fedor Ivanovich (the last Rurikid monarch) and Mikhail Fedorovich (the first Romanov tsar) by glossing over the reign of Boris Godunov and the Time of Troubles.

Similarly, Spafarii's *Book of Rulers* (*Vasiliologion*, 1674) declared that the tsar's rule derived from God and that consequently the tsar was God's representative on earth. The work presented short histories of famous rulers culminating with Aleksei Mikhailovich. Michael's and Aleksei's inclusion in the company of such illustrious predecessors as Ivan IV, Dmitrii Donskoi, and Alexander Nevsky, and the Roman emperors Augustus and Julius Caesar, underscored the work's political message. Notably, the only other Russian ruler discussed was the feeble-minded Fedor Ivanovich, whose inclusion was necessary for Spafarii to maintain the theme of dynastic continuity in the work.

Spafarii's *Book of Prophecy* (*Khrismologion*, 1672) was his most inspired panegyric to the Russian monarchy. While examining ancient and medieval exegesis on Daniel's prophecy of the Four Kingdoms, Spafarii persuasively argued that Russia was the only true successor to Daniel's Fourth Kingdom – Rome, through its historical and dynastic connections to Constantinople.