

Introduction

Ivan IV (Ivan Vasil'evich), became Grand Prince of All Rus' in 1533 at the age of three upon the death of his father. He was crowned tsar' in 1547 and died in 1584. Ivan is infamous as Ivan the Terrible (Ivan Groznyi), although *groznyi* in the sixteenth century meant "terrible" in the sense of "awe-inspiring." He is most notorious—aside from his seven marriages—for establishing the *oprichnina*¹ in 1565, an appanage whose minions, the *oprichniki*, dressed in black, rode black horses with dogs' heads and brooms on their necks, and instituted a reign of terror in Muscovy. Ivan abolished the oprichnina in 1572. The atrocities he committed do not constitute the entirety of his reign, which included reforms, conquests, and cultural achievements. Ivan continues to confuse and confound historians trying to encompass both the good and bad sides of his contradictory and paradoxical reign within a single coherent interpretation.

This anthology contains nineteen essays, eighteen previously unpublished and the nineteenth previously unpublished in English. The essays vary in length from what might more accurately be called "notes" to full-length, even excessively long articles. They also vary in their sources, from a single sentence in a diplomatic report to data bases of hundreds of records. The advantage of publishing such a heterogeneous collection as an anthology is precisely the flexibility of not having to worry about whether any individual essay is too short or too long. Each essay is based upon the appropriate sources and is as long as required to deal with its theme. For the interested reader it is more convenient to publish them between two covers, instead of nineteen separate articles in nineteen separate journals.

I have chosen to organize the articles in six thematic groups, containing from one to five chapters. Several chapters could have appeared in different groups or under a theme not included in the anthology at all. Nevertheless, I hope structuring the book around thematic parts will facilitate orienting the reader to its contents.

¹ Territories not included in the *oprichnina* were called the *zemshchina*, the "land" (*zemlia*).

Part 1, "Source Studies," contains five chapters. Chapter 1 asks why the quantitatively ambitious *Illustrated Chronicle Compilation* and the qualitatively innovative *Book of Degrees* ceased in 1567 and 1563 respectively, when regional chronicles did not. The answer may be that the economic resources for such grandiose projects had run out. Chapter 2 uncovers a paradox in the relationship of the central Moscow chronicle to government documentation. The amount of data on military appointments and diplomatic activities found in the chronicle is so large that it could only have been acquired by direct access to written government records, but the quantity of errors of commission and omission, as well as factual and transcription inconsistencies, makes it highly implausible that the chronicler had direct access to written government records. Chapter 3 uncovers a significant difference between the works on the oprichnina by Germans and Livonians who defected after serving Ivan and those written in Muscovy by Muscovites during the oprichnina. The foreigners describe the semiotic elements of the oprichnina such as dogs' heads and brooms, but the domestic sources, unlike émigré sources like Kurbskii's *History* and post-Ivan Muscovite sources, uniformly omitted mention of the oprichnina's symbolic features. Perhaps it was unnecessary to write down what everyone in Muscovy knew. Chapter 4 identifies a paradox in the works of Ivan Peresvetov. Although Peresvetov was thoroughly familiar with Muscovite political, administrative, and social terminology, he only used the word "boyar" (supposedly the boyars were the prime object of his criticism) in a work on the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans which borrowed rather than censored the word from the text that was his source. Chapter 5 analyzes the presence of seals on documents, showing quantitatively that seals were not the exclusive prerogative of the landed elite, and that lay elite members used the same seal in their public activities as in their private lives, indicating that they perceived no separation between the two. Chapter 5 provides a serendipitous segue to part 2, on social history, to which it could just as easily have been assigned.

Part 2, "Social History," contains four chapters. Chapter 6 quantifies the roles of clergy as witnesses and substitute signatees in the private documentary lives of the lay elite, a practice illustrative of the high social regard for clergy by the laity. Monks played a significant role in these transactions and as "spiritual fathers" to the laity despite their self-imposed "isolation" from the outside world. Chapter 7 asks who was covered by the precedence system regulating military, administrative, and ceremonial appointments based upon a man's place in his family's genealogy and the service of his ancestors compared to that of other appointees. Although almost all scholarship treats the precedence system as an issue of boyar politics, in fact a quarter of the cases and individuals involved came from the gentry. Chapter 8 qualifies

two generalizations about Muscovite society during Ivan's reign, that families were coherent and unified social actors and that slaves were overwhelmingly native-born, by discussing admittedly a relatively few but still significant examples of fractious families and by making a case that the number of foreign slaves in Muscovy, captive prisoners of war, destined either for domestic use or re-export, has been underestimated. Chapter 9 returns to the theme of violence, evaluating apolitical violence by members of almost all social classes against their own and other classes. Non-political violence declined during the oprichnina but resumed and increased after its abolition, despite the experience of massive state violence during the oprichnina.

Part 3, "Diplomacy," contains three chapters. Chapter 10 establishes that Muscovites perceived the political culture of the Crimean Khanate as collegial and consensual, not an oriental despotism under an autocratic tyrant. Muscovites applied Muscovite social and administrative terminology to Crimea, suggesting its similarities to Muscovy. Chapter 11 focuses on instances in Muscovite-Lithuanian diplomacy in which Muscovite diplomats eschewed their usual ideological mythology by employing genuine logic (albeit not without hypocrisy and mendacity) based upon common sense, the weather, geography, economics, and history. When appropriate, Muscovite diplomats not only listened to what their Lithuanian counterparts said, but heard them and engaged what was said. Chapter 12 uses the observation of Queen Elizabeth I of England that Ivan was known to prefer beautiful women to illustrate the cultural differences between the English and Muscovite understanding of love and marriage. It is intriguing that Ivan did not take umbrage at her assessment of his admiration for physical beauty as a violation of Russian Orthodox Christian doctrine and royal Muscovite marital protocol that saw marriage as a spiritual and/or dynastic union not based on "chemistry."

Part 4, "Economy," contains one chapter. Chapter 13 explores the practical implications of the existence in Muscovy of only small coins, either 100 or 200 to the ruble, but no ruble coin, when Muscovites could spend or donate hundreds of rubles, even a thousand, in a single transaction. How much all those Muscovite coins weighed and how tens of thousands of coins could be counted and transported remain puzzling questions.

Part 5, "Intellectual History," contains two chapters related to my long-standing interest in the myth of the "Rus' Land" and other "land" terminologies. Chapter 14 concludes that the phrase the "Pskov land," like its counterpart the "Novgorodian land," served no ideological purpose because "land" concepts only applied to polities with dynastic lines. During Ivan's reign both Novgorod and Pskov local "patriotic" texts invoked not these particularist terms but the Rus' Land as the object of their attention. Chapter 15 looks at how the concept of the "Rus' Land" figured in Muscovite thought of

the time. The term survived, although Ivan's coronation as tsar could have dictated its displacement by the concept of the Russian tsardom. A curious occurrence of "the Rus' Land" in diplomacy with Lithuania inadvertently endorsed a counter-usage of the myth as legitimating Lithuanian pretensions to the Kievan inheritance.

Part 6, "Ivan IV," contains three chapters that address Ivan's personality and role. Chapter 16 probes references to Ivan's "anger" and "wrath." Although depictions of Ivan's temper resonate with his image as a volatile and arbitrary tyrant, Muscovites applied the same terms to God and biblical rulers and asserted that "anger" and "wrath" were sometimes justified, and sometimes no more than a formulaic cause to place someone in "disgrace." Chapter 17 poses the previously unasked question of whether Ivan was charismatic. If charismatic leadership is morally neutral, as Weber implied when he created the concept of personal rather than divine charisma, then Ivan should be described as charismatic, literally bigger than life. Chapter 18 rounds the circle because it could have been included in Part 1. It examines whether discarding all problematic or contested sources about Ivan and his reign and relying only on irrefutably authentic documentary sources would "solve" the problem of understanding Ivan's actions as ruler. Without question such an epistemological exercise would fail to achieve that goal.

Part 7, "Historiography," contains one chapter. Chapter 19 compares the English-language version of Ruslan Skrynnikov's Russian-language classic monograph on Ivan's rule, *Reign of Terror* to the original Russian. Although the revised text that Skrynnikov prepared for translation omitted much detail, and added and restructured some material, it still successfully conveys his main conclusions and modes of analysis.

No "magic bullet" will ever fully "explain" Ivan the Terrible's half-century reign in Muscovy, but I hope that the chapters of this anthology will contribute to a better understanding of some aspects of his life and of Muscovite history during the sixteenth century.

Because I do not assume that all readers will read the anthology from cover to cover *seriatem*, I treat the bibliography of each chapter as autonomous, so full references to publications appear multiple times. In addition I repeat background material, such as on the Byzantine calendar, whenever appropriate.