



Andrei Pavlov, Maureen Perrie. *Ivan the Terrible*. London: Pearson Longman, 2003. 234 + ix pp. \$16.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-582-09948-7.



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Ivan the Terrible's Political Theology

Andrei Pavlov of St. Petersburg and Maureen Perrie of Birmingham have written not only a very impressive synthesis of scholarship on the reign of Ivan IV, in itself a great accomplishment, but also a monograph which presents a coherent thesis concerning the relationship of Ivan's rule to Russia's political evolution.

Perrie wrote the introduction, chapters 1 ("Ivan's Inheritance"), 2 ("The Young Ruler"), and 3 ("The Conquest of Kazan' and Astrakhan'"), and the conclusion. Pavlov wrote chapters 4 ("Reformers and Reform"), 5 ("From Consensus to Conflict"), 8 ("The Introduction of the *Oprichnina*"), 7 ("Repression and Resettlement"), 8 ("The Culmination of the Terror"), and 9 ("After the *Oprichnina*"). Perrie translated Pavlov's chapters (prepared for a Russian-language university textbook) from Russian and edited and enhanced them. Pavlov read the entire final English-language text.

The authors, consistent with the series of which this book is a part, focus on questions of territorial expansion, the relationship of the ruler to the elite, and the mythology of power, especially in pictorial evidence and ritual. Of necessity some topics (for example, the heretics Fe-

dor Bashkin and Feodosoi Kosoi and the printer Ivan Fedorov) are omitted.

In the introduction Pavlov and Perrie dismiss as speculative psychological (or psychiatric) theories, endorsing a "rational" approach to Ivan's actions which pays more attention to their consequences than to Ivan's motives. Such an approach need not require either a positive evaluation of Ivan's rule, or, even if Ivan's achievements in foreign and domestic policy are credited, a justification of the horrific means he employed to achieve his ends.

According to the authors, the reforms of the 1550s contributed to the development of united corporate estates (*sosloviia*), such as a landowner estate of both "aristocrats" and "gentry" (*boyare* and *deti boiarskie* or misleadingly *dvoriane*) similar to Western Europe, although as yet only in embryonic form. However, despite Ivan's role in the promulgation of these reforms, he decided in the 1560s that corporate-estate institutions placed unacceptable limits on his autocratic authority and power. Therefore, he established the *Oprichnina* to divide the nascent estates against themselves. Ivan succeeded in his goal, enhanced the dominance of state over society, and

imposed state service on all segments of society. In short, Ivan decided Russia's political future. Muscovy was at a crossroads, and Ivan personally decided which path Russia would take.

In addition, Pavlov and Perrie invoke semiotic interpretations by Panchenko, Uspenskii, and Iurganov that Ivan was punishing sinners in anticipation of the apocalypse. The pseudomonastery Ivan established at *Oprichnina* headquarters in Aleksandrova Sloboda also constituted an ideal model social order. The symbolism of Ivan's reign was complex and multilayered. Ivan's conflict with the elite, and all of Muscovite society, was driven by religious ideology, not merely policy disagreements or personality.

The *Oprichnina* generated its own opposition, which led to more repression. In its final stages, the desire of lower-born *oprichniki* for career advancement inspired a purge of the upper ranks of older *oprichniki*. The *Oprichnina* successfully destroyed local boyar-aristocratic corporations. Although Ivan abolished the *Oprichnina* in 1572, repression, mass resettlement, and violence continued until Ivan's death. Nevertheless, at least mass repression was "relatively short-lived" (p. 204). "In spite of the failures and disappointments of the Livonian War, Ivan had demonstrated that Muscovy was a force to be reckoned with in Europe," and Ivan passed on his ambitions toward Livonia as well as Kiev to his successors (p. 205).

This succinct volume now sets the standard by which all future "short" syntheses of Ivan's reign will be judged. This is far and away the most readable survey of Ivan's reign in print in English.

The writing and translating are excellently done, and I found only one Anglicism ("what the *oprichniki* got up to" [p. 162]). The book's accessibility is increased by the absence of typographical errors and the presence of a chronology, a glossary, and "illustrations"—(four maps and four genealogical tables called "figures"; the only real illustration is on the cover, a partial view of Vaznetsov's "*Tsar' Ivan IV Vasil'evich Groznyi*"). Readers would have benefited if the Muscovy Company been explained at the first mention of Jenkinson (cf. pp. 52 vs. 90, 137) and terms such as "conciliar courtier" (*dumnyi dvorianin*) (pp. 61 vs. 176 n. 18) and political surety (pp. 99 vs. 105) had been defined on their initial appearance.

The authors have had to be selective in bibliography, but they are familiar with recent Russian and Western scholarship. (Unlike the chapter endnotes, the bibliography cites only English-language works and favors recent

publications.) Their analysis is replete with acute original observations. They admit that there are open questions which cannot be answered because of the lack of evidence. They present historiographic issues fairly and clearly.

As a matter of taste, I have always disliked referring to the local government reform, called the *zemskaia* reform from the word for "land" (*zemlia*), as creating a *zemstvo*, even if George Vernadsky did so. The anachronistic nineteenth-century term introduces too much confusion.

Specialists may at their leisure dissect the details of the narrative. Pavlov and Perrie's overall thesis on Russian political development is not new, although it has not previously been argued as comprehensively or cogently. I am not convinced that the reforms of the 1550s tended to create in Muscovy an estate-representative monarchy in the European sense or that the "counter-reformer" Ivan later rued their implementation (p. 65).

It is beyond dispute that the reign of Ivan IV was the most repressive in Muscovite history, but, despite the authors' explicitly comparative European framework, they do not compare the violence of Ivan's reign to that of the reigns of his contemporaries.

The authors take a critical approach to sources, arguing, for example, that the Ivan-Kurbskii correspondence is authentic but tendentious. Other source decisions are open to discussion. Schlichting recounted that Ivan sat boyar Ivan Petrovich Fedorov-Cheliadnin on Ivan's throne, mocked Fedorov's ambition to succeed Ivan, and then stabbed him to death. Pavlov and Perrie accept this story (pp. 138-139). All foreign accounts in which Ivan personally killed people, save accidentally tsarevich Ivan, should be suspect, since imperial decorum would have trumped even Ivan's cruelty. There is no reason to believe Oderborn, who never visited Muscovy, that after tsarevich Ivan's death Ivan often "collapsed and lost consciousness" (p. 197), when Jerome Horsey, who was there, says nothing of the kind.

Finally, if Ivan really did expect the apocalypse imminently, it is odd that he never said so or wrote words to that effect. Moreover, if Ivan thought the last judgment was at hand, why did he continue living so dubious a personal life, especially sexually?

In conclusion, Pavlov and Perrie have written a work which will appeal to specialists and nonspecialists alike, and will provide much food for thought about the still little-understood but always intriguing reign of Ivan the Terrible.

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