

ROSSIIA NA POROGE NOVOGO VREMENI (OCHERKI POLITICHESKOI ISTORII ROSSII PERVOI TRETII XVI V.). By A. A. Zimin. Moscow: "Mysl'," 1972. 452 pp. 1.83 rubles.

The reign of Vasilii III has suffered from relative neglect by historians. There have, of course, been specialist studies on certain aspects of the period—ideological, sociopolitical, diplomatic—by Kazakova, Kashtanov, Nosov, and I. I. Smirnov, to name only a few of the most outstanding scholars. But there has been no scholarly monograph devoted to the political history of the reign: the more spectacular reigns of Vasilii's father and son seemed to have captured the imagination and interest of historians. Yet Vasilii's reign is of vast importance in the history of the growth of the centralized Muscovite state not only because it witnessed the consolidation of Ivan III's achievements at home and abroad, but also because during the first third of the sixteenth century the ground was being prepared for the dramatic and revolutionary changes which were to take place under Ivan IV. Historians of Muscovy will welcome the appearance of Professor Zimin's work, which, as he says in his preface, forms part of a series of monographs on sixteenth-century Russian history.

The book deals primarily with the political history of the period 1505–33, more or less equal space being allotted to internal and external affairs. A certain amount of attention is also paid to questions of sociopolitical thought (Maxim the Greek, Patrikeev, Karpov, Filofei, et al.), though these sections tend to develop into *comptes rendus* of other scholars' views (predictably Zimin is inclined to disagree with the findings of certain of his colleagues, notably Kazakova and Moiseeva: the latter's views on the secularization of church property are severely attacked). Foreign affairs, particularly Russo-Tatar relations and diplomatic maneuvering in the West, are afforded the most detailed treatment. Needless to say, all the available sources are scrupulously examined and sifted, and Zimin leads us through the maze with all the skill of the expert *istochnikoved* that he is.

Admirable and helpful as most of this guided tour through Vasilii III's military and diplomatic adventures is, it is the final chapter ("Results of the Struggle for Political Unity") that will probably prove most stimulating to students of the reign. Apart from some rather generalized summarizing statements—an overall estimate of Vasilii III's achievements—there is an interesting section on that by no means homogeneous group of the titled aristocracy, the so-called service princes (*sluzhilye kniaz'ia, slugi*). This species of the *boiarstvo*, which historians tend to lump together with the appanage princes proper, that is, the close relatives of the sovereign (Skrynnikov, for example, in his *Nachalo oprichniny*, calls them all *udel'naia aristokratiia*), is divided by Zimin into four separate groups, each with different rights, privileges, and affiliations, and all, for some reason, seemingly debarred from membership in the Boyar Duma until 1530. Zimin's analysis is of great value, and it is only to be regretted that he does not carry his quest further and investigate the political affiliations and activities of the various northeast Russian princely families and the interrelation of all four major aristocratic groups: the *udel'nye kniaz'ia*, the *sluzhilye kniaz'ia*, the northeast Russian Riurikovichi, and the Old Muscovite untitled *boiarstvo* (curiously enough Zimin describes certain of the latter group as "expressing the interests of the wide circles of the *dvorianstvo*," p. 418, although he makes no attempt to elucidate this provoca-

tive statement). Such an investigation might help to throw light on the inter-boyar rivalries during Ivan IV's minority.

On the debit side must be placed the totally inadequate and inaccurate index. What can be more frustrating than chasing abbreviated references to works not mentioned previously? See, for example, the reference to "N.P. (E?) Andreev" on page 342 (note 69). The map, which excludes Lithuania, is also poor. There are, as well, several points on which one could disagree with Zimin's findings: for example, he is unconvincing in his rejection of the widely held view that Vassian Patrikeev was *not* brought to trial for any openly expressed disapproval of Vasillii III's divorce and that he *continued* to enjoy the grand prince's favors *after* 1525—after all, Zimin produces no evidence to disprove Vassian's successful *chelobitie* of 1526 (*Akty, sobrannye . . . Arkheograficheskoi ekspeditsiei*, vol. 1, no. 173), and the fact that Silvester evidently survived the crisis of 1553 can hardly be cited as a parallel case. In his analysis, in chapter 12, of the Bersen-Beklemishev and Maxim the Greek affair some of Zimin's statements require further elucidation and confirmation. It is pure speculation to suggest that Maxim, "a man of dubious moral purity," hoped to lessen his guilt by incriminating Bersen or that he "hoped that he, as a foreigner, would enjoy a certain immunity" (pp. 278–79); nor is there sufficient evidence to show that Iurii Ivanovich was suspected of secret relations with the Crimean Tatars (p. 282).

However, these are minor points, and they do not really detract from the essential value of Zimin's work; furthermore, it would be odd if the reviewer of a book of these dimensions did not carp at *some* of the author's findings. Zimin has now covered the period 1505 to 1584 in his three major historical monographs. It is to be hoped that he will continue his work up to the accession of the first Romanov.

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OCHERKI RUSSKOI DIPLOMATIKI. By S. M. Kashtanov. Moscow: "Nauka," 1970. 502 pp. 1.88 rubles.

The ancillary historical disciplines have in recent years begun to receive much-needed attention from Soviet specialists. One of the best and most important of the studies which have appeared is Sergei Mikhailovich Kashtanov's book, which provides for the first time a detailed guide to techniques of formal diplomatic analysis of Russian documents. The material covered is much broader in its implications than the book's title would suggest; though intended for the specialist, the work should be studied carefully both by those using documentary material as an historical source for medieval and early modern Russia and by anyone planning to work with old Russian manuscripts.

Kashtanov's first chapter, much of which has appeared before, defines the subject and objectives of diplomatics and lays out the methodology of studying the form of documents. In defining the subject as acts ("documents which reflect a legal transaction," p. 8) and the objective as "the study of acts as sources" (p. 10), he has opened himself to criticism: in the first instance for adopting too narrow a definition and in the second too broad a one (see the remarks by Edward L. Keenan in *Kritika*, 6 [1970]: 67 ff.). However, his stress on formulaic analysis