Outline
• Historical writing in Muscovy
• Ivan as Grand Prince and Tsar
• Kurbskij as general and traitor
• The correspondence
  • Overview
  • Authenticity debate
  • Lićače: Ivan as writer
  • Fennell: Language and style
  • Lićače: Research methodology

Sources
  • [http://medieval.obdurodon.org/sessions/22_Kurbskij/]

Historical writing: chronicle and Xronograf
• From factography to thematic organisation
• Chronicle: annalistic organisation
  • Nikita: c. 1040 and extensions; Ivan IV conquest of Kazan’ (1552)
  • Features of chancery style (lists and reports), rhetorical flourishes (speeches of Ivan and Makarij), military tales
  • [Licevoj] letopisnyj svod (10 v., through 1567)
• Kazan’ Chronicle (historical narrative; respectful of “heathen” Tatars)
• Xronograf: synthetic historical narrative
  • Incorporate Byzantine, Serbian, biographies
  • 1512: Popular revision, ends with fall of Constantinople (1453)
  • 1617: Romanov dynasty

The historical Ivan IV Groznyj
• 1530–84
• Grand Prince since 1533 (regency and “boyar rule” until 1547)
• Consolidation of power through vertical succession
  • Fedor Ivanovič dies without surviving male issue, 1598
• Divinely chosen defender of the faith (supported by Makarij, r. 1542, d. 1563)
• Conquest of Kazan’ (1552), Astrakan (1556)
• “Abdication” 1564 and establishment of the oprichnina (1565–72)
• Ottoman and Crimean incursions (1569–72)
• Livonian War (1558–83; Poland Lithuania, Sweden, Denmark, Crimean Tatars) ends in truce with Russian concessions
• Economic crisis (war, loss or ruin of estates, taxation)

Licevoj letopisnyj svod

Andrej Kurbskij and Ivan Groznyj
David J. Birnbaum
Medieval Rus’
Unit 22, 2020-11-04
Ivan IV Groznyj

The historical Andrej Kurbskij

- c. 1528–83, Prince (князь), childhood friend of Ivan
- 1552: Military commander during Russian conquest of Kazan’
- 1556: Boyar
- 1564: Russian military commander in Livonia, escape to Lithuania and Polish-Lithuanian military service
  - Participated in Varangian campaign against Pskov
- Receives estate in Volhynia from Sigismund, retires to literary career
  - History of the Great Prince of Moscow (1573)
  - Translations from Latin, Novyj margarit (Chrysostom), polemical letters against Catholicism and Protestantism

The correspondence

- 1564: Kurbskij’s first letter to Ivan, Ivan’s (lengthy) response
- Total of 5 letters by Kurbskij and 2 by Ivan, ending in 1579
- No autograph manuscripts; earliest is datable to late xvi, multiple redactions
- Open letters as convention
- Keenan (1971) attributes the texts to Simeon Šaxavskoj, first quarter of xvii; the debate continues …

Lixačev on Ivan as writer

- “Сочинения Царя Ивана Васильевича Грозного” (Великие искания)
- Individuality is common in rulers, but weakly developed in writers until Ivan
- Erudite, well educated, violates and reforms literary etiquette
- Oral influence on written language (writes as he speaks): loquacity, repetition, digression, rhetorical questions and exclamations, apostrophe, feigned modesty
- Assumes various narrative roles, and therefore writes in mixed vernacular/Slavonic style
- Biblical citations
- Low-style abuse, apostrophe, interruptions
- Skomoršij ton
- Abuse, mockery
- Applies rhetorical eloquence to vernacular language
- Rhetoric used for abuse, irony, ribaldry, humor
- Vernacular as literary language (Čiževskij)

Fennell on language and style

- “Prince A. M. Kurbskij and Tsar Ivan IV” (Early Russian literature)
- Correspondence was a convention
  - Intended for public consumption (Lur’e 1958)
  - Polonisms, Latinisms, some Russianisms, but orientation on Slavonic
  - Criticizes Ivan’s bombast and attention to bytovye topics
- Ivan
  - Applies rhetorical eloquence to vernacular language
  - Vernacular as literary language (Čiževskij)
Lixačev on Keenan’s methodology

• “Существовали ли произведения Курбского и Грозного?” (Великое наследие)
• Critical vs compilatory (svodnyj) textual scholarship
• Dates of manuscripts and dates of texts?
• Direction of influence [Isaiah, Xvorostinin (Зенковский 511), Kurbskij]
• Religious vs secular education
• Language ~ style; mixture of Slavonic and prikaz language
• “Working hypothesis”: is the object of study Kurbskij and Ivan, or Keenan?