THE SOVEREIGN AND HIS COUNSELLORS

RITUALISED CONSULTATIONS IN
MUSCOVITE POLITICAL CULTURE,
1350s–1570s

SUOMALAISEN TIEDEAKATEMIAN TOIMITUKSIA
ANNALES ACADEMIÆ SCIENTIARUM FENNICÆ

Sarja-ser. HUMANIORA nide-tom. 307

SERGEI BOGATYREV

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Sergei Bogatyrev

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Academic dissertation to be publicly discussed, by due permission of the
Faculty of Arts at the University of Helsinki in auditorium XII, on the
4th of March, 2000, at 10 o'clock.

Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae is part of the publishing cooperation
between the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters and
the Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters.

The series Humaniora continues the former ser. B.

Editor:
Professor Heikki Palva
Viheriötie 5
04310 Tuusula
Finland
Tel. +358-9-2751443

Associate Editor:
Kaj Öhrnberg
Merikasarminkatu 10 B 43
00160 Helsinki
Finland
Tel. +358-9-666786

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Layout: Federation of Finnish Learned Societies/Tiina Kaarela

Cover design: Markko Taina

Cover: the council of the grand prince (bas-relief on the tsar's throne in the
Cathedral of the Dormition in the Moscow Kremlin). From M. V. Alpatov,
Uspenskii sobor Moskovskogo Kremlya (Moscow, 1971).

Distributor:
Bookstore Tiedekirja
Kirkkokatu 14
FIN-00170 Helsinki
Finland
Email: tiedekirja@pp.kolumbus.fi
Fax: +358-9-635017

ISBN: 951-45-9148-8 (PDF version)
ISBN: 951-41-0874-4 (printed version)

Printed by Gummerus Printing, Saarijärvi 2000; Electronic by Helsingin yliopiston verkkojulkaisut, Helsinki 2000

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe many people a debt of gratitude. In Moscow, the boyar council was proposed to me as a research subject by Sigurd Ottovich Shmidt, full member of the Russian Academy of Education. His profound knowledge, broad erudition, and familiarity with the sources, along with his personal generosity and positive attitude made the period I worked with him unforgettable. I am indebted to E. I. Kouri, professor of general history at the University of Helsinki, who has supervised my studies with consideration and interest. Thanks to his wide-ranging knowledge in general history, valuable advice, and effective help, my work has acquired its final shape. Professor Paul Bushkovitch (Yale University), a leading expert in the history and culture of Muscovite Russia, kindly agreed to be the opponent at the defence of my doctoral dissertation. Special thanks are due to Docent Timo Vihavainen, the former Co-ordinator for the Russian and East European Studies Programme at the Renvall Institute, University of Helsinki, and currently the Director of the Finnish Institute in St. Petersburg. Thanks to Timo Vihavainen's broad interest in Russian history, I had the unique opportunity to articulate and discuss the main ideas of this work during the lecture courses that I gave under the auspices of the Programme. I am deeply grateful to those of my colleagues who read the manuscript for their constructive critical comments: Peter Brown (Rhode Island College), David Goldfrank (Georgetown University), Marshall Poe (School for Historical Studies, Princeton), and Jaakko Lehtovirta (University of Turku). I would also like to thank Professor Jukka Korpela (University of Joensuu) for his detailed and penetrating comments on the results of my study.

The Centre for International Mobility and the University of Helsinki have provided financial support for this study. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the staffs of the Russian State Archives of Ancient Records and the Slavonian Library of Helsinki University. Thanks to the generosity of a close friend of mine, Victor Leonidov (Russian Foundation for Culture) I have become acquainted with the recent Russian publications on the subject of my work. I am also grateful to John Pickering, Roderick McConchie (Department of English, University of Helsinki), Mark Shackleton (Department of English, University of Helsinki), Nicholas Hill (Department of History, University of Helsinki and University of Wisconsin-Madison), and Johannes Remy (Renvall Institute, University of Helsinki) for their help and suggestions. Kaj Öhrnberg has been an encouraging and

helpful editor. Jutta Ivaska has helped greatly in the preparation of the index of names for this book. Finally, throughout the entire work, I have constantly benefited from the reliable and patient support of my parents, Valentina Bogatyreva and Nikolai Bogatyrev. Without the help of all of these people, this book would never have seen the light of day. However, I alone am responsible for all interpretations and opinions in this book.

INTRODUCTION

Starting from the 14th century, the Moscow princes' power began to spread to other Russian lands. In the course of the next two centuries, Moscow gained dominion over huge territories with a variety of economic, political and cultural traditions. In order to control and rule such an extensive and varied country, the princes of Moscow developed a special kind of power, which is generally referred to as autocracy. The autocracy was a complex system which ought not to be reduced to the figure of the monarch alone.¹ The Muscovite sovereign handled domestic and foreign policy with the aid of a close circle of counsellors. These counsellors played a highly important role in political and court life, participating in the preparation and implementation of political and administrative decisions. Historians have a variety of opinions about the nature of the relations between the monarch and his counsellors in the Muscovite state. According to Richard Pipes, the crown tended to "humiliate anyone who by virtue of ancestry, office or wealth may have been inclined to become self-important."² In contrast, Edward Keenan argues that the Muscovite state was ruled by a centralised boyar oligarchy while the grand prince/tsar was little more than a figure-head.³ Similar ideas have been advanced by N. Sh. Kollmann.⁴

Muscovite understanding of how the autocratic ruler and his subjects should interact with each other was explicitly expressed in ritualised consultations between the sovereign and his counsellors. In my work, I endeavour to answer the question of how these consultations met the ideological needs of the autocracy and the requirements of the state administration. In the historiography, this question has often been reduced to

¹ D. Rowland, "Did Muscovite Literary Ideology Place Limits on the Power of the Tsar (1540s–1660s)?" *The Russian Review* 49 (1990): 125–155; see also M. Szeftel, "The Title of the Muscovite Monarch up to the End of the Seventeenth Century," *Canadian–American Slavic Studies*, 13 (1979): 59–81; I. Banac and P. Bushkovitch, "The Nobility in the History of Russia and Eastern Europe." In *The Nobility in the History of Russia and Eastern Europe* (New Haven, 1983), 7, 8; P. Bushkovitch, "The Formation of a National Consciousness in Early Modern Russia," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 10 (1986): 355–376; V. I. Karpets, "Samoupravlenie v Rossii v XVI–seredine XVII v." In *Instituty samoupravleniya: Istoriko-pravovoe issledovanie* (Moscow, 1995), 158.

² R. Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime* (New York, 1974), 180.

³ For a bibliography of Keenan's works, see Kamen Kraeug"n". *Rhetoric of the Medieval Slavic World: Essays Presented to Edward Keenan on His Sixtieth Birthday by His Colleagues and Students*, ed. N. Sh. Kollmann and others (Harvard Ukrainian Studies, 19; Cambridge, Mass., 1995), 1–22. I am grateful to Professor Edward Keenan for providing me with a copy of his bibliography.

⁴ See her *Kinship and Politics: The Making of the Muscovite Political System, 1345–1547* (Stanford, 1987).

debates on the format of consultations among the leaders of the Muscovite elite. Most scholars have interpreted the practice of consultation in abstract juridical terms alien to Muscovite political culture. On the other hand, some specialists radically deny any role for formalised government structures in decision-making in Muscovy.⁵

In my study, I examine the practice of consultation between the sovereign and his counsellors in a wider cultural context. These consultations are regarded in this work as an instrument for deciding important ideological and organisational tasks. When discussing Muscovite political culture and ideology, I availed myself of Daniel Ostrowski's interpretation of these notions. By "political culture" Ostrowski means the totality of institutions, attitudes, concepts, and practices connected with the running of a polity. Ideology exists when a belief system fulfils all three of the following functions: (1) interprets social experience; (2) provides a guide for political action; and (3) creates a collective consciousness through, among other things, the formulation of a commonly agreed upon virtual past.⁶

My study covers the period from the mid-14th century to 1572, the year in which most historians agree that Ivan IV's Oprichnina policy of terror was abolished. The period selected for study undoubtedly encompasses the most important events in the formation of the Muscovite autocracy. The rise of the principality of Moscow, the considerable expansion in territory of the Moscow principality as a result of the annexation of Novgorod, Kazan' and Astrakhan', as well as the move of many appanage principalities to the control of the Moscow sovereign had a fundamental effect on the overall Russian political situation. Yet the organisation of power remained outmoded, and often failed to correspond to the new demands of a vastly expanded central government. And so as a result of a string of political crises in the late 1540s and early 1550s, power switched to the hands of a regime that carried out serious reforms of law, court service, military affairs, and of central and local administration. The policy of reforms in the 1550s was superseded by the Oprichnina (1565–1572) – Ivan IV's most famous and enigmatic act.⁷

The structure of the present work has been conditioned by the goals of the research. In the Introduction I discuss the methods of my research, the composition of the elite in Muscovy, and the sources of my work. The first chapter examines the ideological function of consultations and their ritu-

⁵ For a more detailed analysis of historiography, see Appendix I.

⁶ See D. Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-Cultural Influences on the Steppe Frontier, 1304–1589* (Cambridge, 1998), 1 note 1, 136–137.

⁷ For a survey of Russian history during this period written in English, see R. O. Crummey's *The Formation of Muscovy, 1304–1613* (London, New York, 1987).

alised character. The second and third chapters are devoted to the evolution of the organisational forms of these consultations. These chapters endeavour to answer the following questions: who surrounded the sovereign, whom did he consult? The final chapter focuses on the role of the privy counsellors in the Muscovite state. The work also contains an appendix devoted to the historiography of the Privy Council (Blizhnyaya Duma) and the Boyarskaya Duma. The appendix also includes summary charts on the composition of the sovereign's council, together with some additional information. The data employed in Chapters III, IV have been published in abbreviated form in Russian in *Arkheograficheskii ezhegodnik*.⁸

A few words need to be said about the terms used. In the third quarter of the 16th century the circle of counsellors began to be known as the Privy Council, Blizhnyaya Duma. The word *duma* means literally "thought," "thinking," by extension "advice," "counsel," "a council." According to tradition, this was the name given to the legislature in the Russian Empire, and eventually in modern Russia. Unlike the purely academic concepts of the "boyar *duma*" (*boyarskaya дума*) and the "assembly of the land" (*zemskii sobor*), the term "privy council" (*blizhnyaya дума*) is encountered in a number of 16th-century documents.⁹ Judging by the diplomatic correspondence of the period, synonyms for the expression *blizhnyaya дума* were *tainaya дума* ("privy council") and *naivyshaya rada* ("highest rada").¹⁰ Besides direct references to the Privy Council, the sources also refer to the "nearness," "closeness" (*blizost'*, *priblizhenie*) of a counsellor to the tsar.¹¹ In the 16th century the words "privy people" (*blizhnie lyudi*) meant "the sovereign's counsellors" (*gosudarevy sovetniki*), as the text of a 1558 diplomatic document bears witness.¹²

It is important to emphasise that this work is not a study of political history. It does not therefore examine the relationship between the grand prince and other political forces – the Orthodox Church and appanage princes. Although as a result of concrete political circumstances, representatives of these forces sometimes appeared on the council, they were not ordinarily members. The study concerns only the counsellors of the prince

⁸ S. N. Bogatyrev, "Blizhnyaya Duma v tret'ei chetverti XVI v." In *Arkheograficheskii ezhegodnik* za 1992 g. (hereafter AE) (Moscow, 1994), 119–133; AE za 1993 g. (Moscow, 1995), 94–112; AE za 1994 g. (Moscow, 1996), 64–81.

⁹ Some researchers have erroneously supposed that the Privy Council is mentioned only in 17th-century sources. See M. F. Vladimirovskii-Budanov, *Obzor istorii russkogo prava* (Kiev, 1907), 167; V. B. Kobrin, *Ivan Groznyi* (Moscow, 1989), 35.

¹⁰ See *Sbornik imperatorskogo Russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva* (hereafter *Sbornik RIO*), LIX, 471, 472; LXXI, 74. Historians translate *Blizhnyaya Duma* as the Privy, Secret or Chamber Duma. See *The Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History* (hereafter *MERSH*), IV (1977), 221.

¹¹ See *Slovar' russkogo yazyka XI–XVII vv.*, 1 (Moscow, 1975), 239.

¹² *Sbornik RIO*, LIX, 541.

of Moscow, although it may be supposed that authority in the appanage principalities was organised along similar lines.¹³

In transliterating Russian words I have used ISO Recommendation R9 of September 1968 (with modifications permitted under note 2 to Table 1).

1. THE METHOD

In the Muscovite system of political values, there was no room for any constitutional limitations on the sovereign's power. At the same time, everyone, including the ruler, had to abide by "law." Yet law was understood here in a medieval sense, i.e., primarily as a combination of the divine commandments, moral precepts, and unwritten traditions.¹⁴ Such a conception of the state and law was characteristic of medieval Europe in the period prior to the signing of the Magna Carta.¹⁵ It was not at all necessary for these commandments and precepts to be confirmed in the form of a legal statute. In Muscovite Russia, the earthly state was perceived as the visible incarnation of the heavenly kingdom described in the Holy Scriptures.¹⁶ Thus, the concept of "state" was interpreted in categories drawn from medieval theology. The people involved in the running of the state were conceived by medieval society to be bearers of divine revelation. The head of state, the grand prince and in particular the tsar, were likened to the Son of God, and the counsellors surrounding him were perceived as the apostles and faithful disciples of their Teacher. The process whereby the sovereign consulted with his privy people was likened to Christ's conversation with his disciples. Thus the concept of advice acquired a sacred connotation in medieval society.¹⁷

¹³ Cf. V. A. Kuchkin, B. N. Florya, "Knyazheskaya vlast' v predstavleniyakh tverskikh knizhnikov XIV–XV vv." In *Rimsko-konstantinopol'skoe nasledie na Rusi: Ideya vlasti i politicheskaya praktika. IX Mezhdunarodnyi seminar istoricheskikh issledovaniy "Ot Rima k tret'emu Rimu,"* Moskva, 29–31 maya 1989 g. (hereafter *Nasledie*) (Moscow, 1995), 189, 193–196.

¹⁴ See V. I. Sergeevich, *Lektsii i issledovaniya po drevnei istorii russkogo prava* (St. Petersburg, 1910), 15; D. H. Kaiser, *The Growth of the Law in Medieval Russia* (Princeton, 1980); V. I. Karpets, "Verkhovnaya vlast' v Rossii XVI–XVII vv.," *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo*, 1985, no. 9: 108–114.

¹⁵ Rowland, "Muscovite Literary Ideology," 139.

¹⁶ A similar vision of the state prevailed in the realm of the Franks in the 8th century. See J. L. Nelson, "The Lord's Anointed and the People's Choice: Carolingian Royal Ritual." In *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, ed. D. Cannadine and S. Price (Cambridge, 1987), 150.

¹⁷ Of interest is the fact that such sacred conceptions of advice can be found in both Russian and Western medieval literature. See Rowland, "Muscovite Literary Ideology,"; idem, "The Problem of Advice in Muscovite Tales about the Time of Troubles," *Russian History* 6 (1979), part 2: 259–283; Yu. P. Malinin, "Srednevekovyi dukh 'soveta'," *Odissei. Chelovek v istorii*. 1992 (Moscow, 1994), 176–192.

The sacred conception of advice was expressed in the practice of regular consultations between the sovereign and his privy counsellors. This practice was based on the conviction that each decision was supposed to be sanctified by the united will of the sovereign and his counsellors. Only after deliberation with wise and pious counsellors could a decision pleasing to God be found. On the whole, the act of consultation fulfilled two functions in Muscovite political culture. Firstly, it carried a specific ideological loading, and expressed the ideological values of the society (the ideological function). Secondly, the practice of consultation provided ready organisational forms for state administration (the organisational function). A similar set of functions was also typical of ritualised activities practised in other traditional societies.¹⁸

The political development of the Russian medieval state was characterised by the continuous strengthening of the family property of the ruling dynasty. This tendency emerged even before the Mongol invasion and was preserved until the end of the 16th century, i.e., as long as the single Ryurikid dynasty ruled in Russia.¹⁹ The numerous rituals performed by the Muscovite sovereigns emphasised the legitimacy and divine nature of their power, the unity of the royal family and the Russian people.²⁰ It was very important for the Muscovite sovereigns to display full agreement and mutual understanding with the leading representatives of the court elite. The significance of the act of consultation was repeatedly emphasised by Old Russian writers when they examined the character and nature of autocratic power. Their works diligently created a collective image for the autocratic ruler and his loyal counsellor-assistants.

As is well known, in Russian medieval culture the aesthetic functions of literary works were not separated from their practical ones. Literary texts

¹⁸ For example, in the kingdom of the Franks, the royal hunt manifested the collaboration between the king and aristocracy and helped at the same time to provision the palace. See Nelson, "The Lord's Anointed and the People's Choice," 169. On the combination of symbolic and utilitarian aspects in Byzantine rituals, see A. Cameron, "The Construction of Court Ritual: The Byzantine Book of Ceremonies." In *Rituals of Royalty*, 118, 122. For more information on various functions of ritualised activities, see A. M. Hocart, *Kings and Councillors: An Essay in the Comparative Anatomy of Human Society* (Collection of Works Published by the Faculty of Arts of the Egyptian University, no. 12; Cairo, 1936), 30–35, 42, 82.

¹⁹ A. L. Yurganov, "Udel'no-votchinnaya sistema i traditsiya nasledovaniya vlasti i sobstvennosti v srednevekovoi Rossii," *Otechestvennaya istoriya*, 1996, no. 3: 93–114.

²⁰ On ritual in Muscovite society, see N. Sh. Kollmann, "Ritual and Social Drama at the Muscovite Court," *Slavic Review* 45 (1986), no. 3: 486–502; eadem, "Pilgrimage, Procession and Symbolic Space in Sixteenth-Century Russian Politics," *Medieval Russian Culture*, II, ed. M. S. Flier and D. Rowland (California Slavic Studies, 19; Berkeley, 1994), 164–165; M. E. Bychkova, *Moskovskie samoderzhtsy: Istoriya vozvedeniya na prestol. Obryady i regalii* (Moscow, 1995); A. K. Levykin, *Voinskie tseremonii i regalii russkikh tsarei* (Moscow, 1997).

by authoritative writers were often perceived as edifying didactic and moral admonitions which people ought to follow in their lives. In Old Russia the works of literature served both as a means of conceptualising ideas and as a method of social practice.²¹ In my work, the literary interpretations of the “sovereign and counsellors” theme are examined as topos, i.e., “a recurrent proposition, formula or element that can be used in literature and other types of communication to construct representations of an event.”²² In their works on early Russian literature, modern specialists tend to focus on the study of the communicative function of medieval texts.²³ In parallel with this trend, I approach the “sovereign-counsellor” topos as a literary device, and also as an important element of Muscovite political culture. By means of the “sovereign-counsellor” topos, the Muscovite ideologists included the archaic tradition of consultation by the ruler with his privy advisors among the range of concepts expressing the idea of autocracy. The Muscovite writers resorted to this topos when they interpreted the events of political life, the struggle between the court factions, competition for the sovereign’s favour, etc. The Muscovite ideologists thereby transformed the “sovereign-counsellor” topos into an important element of autocratic ideology. It is important to note that the “sovereign-counsellor” topos was reproduced not only in literary texts but also in other means of communication used in Muscovite society – in legislative acts, in juridical materials, in diplomatic documents and records of military and court service. Thus, studying the “sovereign-counsellor” topos, I enlisted not only literary works but also documents created in Muscovite chancelleries.²⁴ In my view, this approach enables one to broaden the framework of literary and documentary texts and to explain how they influenced each other in the course of the 14th–16th centuries.

The act of consultation between the sovereign and his privy counsellors also served as an effective instrument of conflict resolution in Muscovite society. Consultations led to a decision which took the form of

²¹ See N. W. Ingham, “Early East Slavic Literature as Sociocultural Fact.” In *Medieval Russian Culture*, II, 3–17.

²² D. E. Collins, “Early Russian Topoi of Deathbed and Testament.” In *Medieval Russian Culture*, II, 135. See also D. Bulanin, *Antichnye traditsii v drevnerusskoi literature XI–XVI vv.* (Slavistische Beiträge, 278; Munich, 1991), 218–219.

²³ See G. Lenhoff, *The Martyred Princes Boris and Gleb: A Socio-Cultural Study of the Cult and the Texts* (UCLA Slavic Studies, 19; Columbus, 1989), 18–19.

²⁴ According to Ingham, literature means written works that were evidently intended for reading, as opposed to documents, which normally were not copied for any other purposes beyond their original function. See his “Genealogy and Identity in the Rhetoric of Muscovite Rulership.” In *Culture and Identity in Muscovy, 1359–1584*, ed. A. M. Kleimola and G. D. Lenhoff (UCLA Slavic Studies, n. s., III, Moscow, 1997), 166.

a judicial sentence (*prigovor*). These sentences of the council were aimed at reestablishing social norms that had been destroyed during the conflict. Thus, the council's sentences effectively restored relationships of brotherhood and cooperation among the representatives of the elite.²⁵ The prince and the representatives of the elite consulted with each other every time they found themselves in a non-standard situation or in conflict.

In the 16th century the practice of consultation involved a definite ceremony for performing the meetings: the secretary presented the contents of the issue, the counsellors gave their opinions, and the principal counsellor informed the sovereign of the council's view and pronounced the final decision on the matter in hand. Each participant in the act of consultation was thereby assigned specific functions. Thanks to its organisational function, the act of consultation constituted an ideal instrument for resolving the conflicts which arose in the work of the administrative system. It is not by chance that the practice of consultation acquired a particular significance in the 16th century, when a system of administrative organs (*prikazy*) arose in Russia. The council was assigned problems which could not be settled by the chancelleries owing to absence of precedents, dearth of information or some other causes. The council also made decisions which regulated service relationships within the ruling elite. The council was thereby transformed into a kind of coordinating centre which fulfilled important organisational functions in the service hierarchy and in the administrative system of Muscovite society.

The council's organisational function developed in parallel with the development of the administration in the Muscovite state. A more or less complete picture of the Muscovite Privy Council can be created by taking into consideration the progress made in the field of the administrative history of the medieval state. By administrative history an acknowledged specialist in this field, G. R. Elton, means "the analysis and description of past administrative processes, the discovery of principles implicit and explicit in the conduct of government, and an understanding of the manner in which the theoretical mechanism operated in practice."²⁶ The study of the administrative mechanism calls for the simultaneous examination of personal relations within this mechanism.

²⁵ For more on the strategy of conflict resolution in Muscovite society, see Kollmann, "Ritual," 494–495.

²⁶ See G. R. Elton, "The Problems and Significance of Administrative History in the Tudor Period." In *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government*, I (Cambridge, 1974), 249–250.

The chief military and administrative structure in the Muscovite state was the Sovereign's Court (Gosudarev Dvor). It is entirely understandable that the main members of the court became privy counsellors of the sovereign on all military, political and administrative matters. In order to get a better idea of the position of these counsellors in the court hierarchy, it is appropriate to look at the history of the Sovereign's Court in greater detail.

2. THE COMPOSITION OF THE ELITE IN MUSCOVY

The Sovereign's Court was an organisation that united the top layers of Russian society. In the 14th century the princes of Moscow tirelessly waged a battle for the grand prince's throne (i.e., for nominal leadership over the other Russian princes), resorting to all available methods – military force, political intrigues, and bribery. The Prince of Moscow, Dmitrii Ivanovich Donskoi became the leader of the armed resistance to the Tartars. The victory of Dmitrii Ivanovich over the Tartars on the Kulikovo Pole (1380) injected a new impulse into Moscow's political ambitions.²⁷ From that time on, the princes of Moscow began attaching more and more territories to their possessions – those close at hand to begin with, and then lands further afield.

The rise of Moscow has acquired a new interpretation in the latest works of Russian historians. For a long time, relying on the tendentious testimonies of pro-Moscow chronicles, scholars have considered that particular objective causes lay behind the strengthening of Moscow such as convenient trade routes, and developed handicraft and agriculture. In actual fact there were no exceptional conditions prevailing in the principality of Moscow compared to other principalities. The Moscow district possessed quite poor natural resources, it had no convenient routes for trade, nor did it have highly developed industries nor advanced agriculture. The princes of Moscow were never uncompromising opponents of the Tartar invaders. Soliciting the khan for the patent (yarlyk) to the grand princely office, they spent considerably more time in the Golden Horde than the other princes.²⁸

²⁷ Though the military results of the battle have been called into question, nevertheless Kulikovo was apparently a great moral victory for the Russians. See J. Fennell and A. Stokes, *Early Russian Literature* (London, 1974), 98; Ostrowski, *Muscovy*, 155–156.

²⁸ A. A. Zimin, *Vityaz' na rasput'e* (Moscow, 1991), 191–195. See also V. M. Paneyakh "Rus' v XV–XVII vv. Stanovlenie i evolyutsiya vlasti russkikh tsarei." In *Vlast' i reformy. Ot samoderzhavnoi k sovetskoi Rossii*, ed. B. V. Anan'ich, R. Sh. Ganelin, V. M. Paneyakh (St. Petersburg, 1996), 13–110; A. A. Gorski, "K voprosu o prichinakh 'vozvysheniya' Moskvy," *Otechestvennaya istoriya*, 1997, no. 1: 3–12.

The secret of the Muscovite princes' success lay in the fact that they knew how to organise their servants into an effective military and administrative group. The "brain-centre" for this remarkable activity was the Sovereign's Court. J. H. Hexter points out that in the medieval state "the court was at once a source of patronage, a focus of power, a way of life, and a repository of administrative authority at the centre of which stood, not the abstract crown, but the living, breathing prince."²⁹ As a result of the accession to Moscow of new territories, an increasing number of newcomers from the annexed lands began to gather at the court of the Muscovite prince. All their hopes of material prosperity, and above all of acquiring lands, were tied to faithful service to their lord. For the sake of obtaining new possessions or income from industries, the new members of the court were prepared to carry out any assignment set by the grand prince.

Noticeable changes in the organisation of the court took place throughout the 15th century. By the mid-15th century, the division between court and provincial servitors can be clearly seen. The court at that time consisted of three basic elements: the princes who had been in service in Moscow as early as the 14th century (the Gediminovichi, Obolenskiis, Ryapolovskiis), the boyars long since associated with Moscow (the Koshkins, Morozovs and others), and a special category of servitors known as the *deti boyarskie*. The *deti boyarskie* included representatives of collateral branches of boyar families, people who had advanced through faithful service, immigrants and deserters from other, non-Moscow principalities. The people from the Sovereign's Court were the most battle-worthy section of the troops faithful to the prince of Moscow. This was because the lands owned by members of the Sovereign's Court were situated in the central areas of Russia that had long since entered the Moscow principality.³⁰

The sovereign selected people from his court to carry out various political, military and administrative missions – diplomats, officials for the central and local institutions, functionaries for solemn ceremonies and the reception of ambassadors, clerks. Thus, the court was the agency for carrying out the decrees of the crown. On the whole, the court provided the

²⁹ J. H. Hexter, *Reappraisals in History: New Views on History and Society in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago, 1979), 36. Cf. G. Alef, *The Origins of Muscovite Autocracy: The Age of Ivan III* (Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte, 39; Berlin, 1986), 222; N. Elias, *The Court Society*, transl. Edmund Jephson (Oxford, 1983). On the Sovereign's Court, see also U. Halbach, *Der russische Fürstenhof vor dem 16. Jahrhundert: Eine vergleichende Untersuchung zur politischen Lexikologie und Verfassungsgeschichte der alten Rus* (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der östlichen Europa, 23; Stuttgart, 1985).

³⁰ See Alef, *The Origins*, 226; Zimin, *Vityaz'*, 204; idem, *Formirovanie boyarskoi aristokratii v Rossii vo vtoroi polovine XV–pervoi treti XVI v.* (Moscow, 1988), 20–22.

mechanism by which the grand prince governed his land, and became the arena for rivalry among the various factions and groups based on family ties and patronage. The members of the court received and gathered vital information, and all kinds of rumours and gossip circulated in their midst. The increase in the number of administrative functions performed by members of the court was accompanied by a marked growth in the power of various officials. These were the masters of horse, chamberlains, majordomos of the palace and court domains, and the masters of the hunt.³¹

The power of the Muscovite prince was noticeably strengthened during the civil war in 1425–1453. His power was now conceived as self-sufficient, possessing legitimate succession from the very earliest times and a divine origin. The prince of Moscow was now referred to in the sources as the “sovereign of all Rus’” and the “Russian autocrat.” The concept of “sovereign” was associated with power over dependent people. Originally the word “sovereign” (*gosudar’*) meant master of slaves. After the fall of Constantinople, Grand Prince Vasilii II began to be referred to as the “great earthly ruler,” “sovereign of all the land of Russia.” In this case, the term “sovereign” indicated that the grand prince possessed unlimited power over his subjects. As Vasilii II was blinded during the war against his opponents, the senior boyars (*vvedennye boyare*, lit. “the introduced boyars”) acquired a particular force at his court.³²

The structure of the Sovereign’s Court became fundamentally more complicated between the close of the 15th century and the first third of the 16th century. In the course of wars between Muscovy and Lithuania Ivan III’s court received Western Rus’ princes who wished to join the service of the Muscovite ruler. Thanks to their high noble origins, these princes constituted an influential grouping at the Muscovite prince’s court, and they laid claim to the highest service appointments.³³ Ivan III also gained a decisive victory over the long-standing opponents of the Moscow princes, Novgorod and Tver’. Thanks to this victory, Ivan III now fundamentally extended the fund of lands intended for distribution to the members of his court in return for loyal service. With the aim of centralising power, an attempt was made to unify the law, which resulted in the appearance of a new codex, the Code of Laws (*Sudebnik*) of 1497. In the central administration, there was a marked increase in the role of the administration of the

³¹ Alef, *The Origins*, 234, 250.

³² Paneyakh, “Rus’ v XV–XVII vv.,” 24, 29, 30.

³³ For more details, see M. M. Kromm, *Mezh Rus’yu i Litvoi: Zapadnorusskie zemli v sisteme litovsko-russkikh otnoshenii kontsa XV–pervoi treti XVI v.* (Moscow, 1995).

Palace (Dvorets) and the Treasury (Kazna), where the experienced government officials were concentrated.

In the course of the first half of the 16th century, the grand princely power perfected its system of control over the members of the Sovereign's Court. The grand prince was in a position to advance representatives of those families who appeared most suitable to him because of their personal qualities.³⁴ As far as advancement at the court was concerned, an increasing role began to be played by personal devotion and skills in practical activity as opposed to intrigues and plots, and endless backbiting. Finally, the grand prince forged family ties with the most distinguished servitors at his court. There was also always an effective means at hand for dealing with obstinate individuals, the sovereign's disgrace (opala).³⁵

Notwithstanding the appearance at the court of distinguished newcomers from the once-independent principalities, the established Muscovite families remained among the highest court ranks right up until the rule of Vasilii III (1505–1533). During his reign, the highest court rank of boyar and the principal military posts began increasingly to be taken by princes. In the final years of Vasilii III's rule, the relationship between the two highest ranks at the court – the boyars and okol'niche – changed. The number of boyars in relation to the okol'niche began to rise sharply. This tendency can be explained by the fact that Vasilii III wanted to strengthen the position of his supporters, by conferring upon them the highest court rank.³⁶

Further changes in the composition of the Sovereign's Court were linked to the reforms of the 1550s. In the mid-16th century, serious work was carried out on codifying secular and ecclesiastical legislation. The year of 1550 saw the appearance of a new Law Code (Sudebnik), which fixed the legal norms and procedures that had developed by that time. The government took measures to regulate service relations in the army and at court. As is well known, these relations in Muscovite Russia were based on the rules of precedence (mestnichestvo), a complex system defining the right to hold a given post depending on the degree of prominence and the service appointments of ancestors and relatives. Relations among the members of the court were formalised in detailed genealogical reference books. The possession of a rank or appointment to a post was linked to the position of each family in the genealogical hierarchy and was defined by the

³⁴ Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 304.

³⁵ See Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 305.

³⁶ A. M. Kleimola, "Patterns of Duma Recruitment (1505–1550)." In *Essays in Honor of A. A. Zimin*, ed. D. C. Waugh (Columbus, 1985), 233–235.

particular rules of the system of precedence. If a courtier considered that an appointment granted to him was unsuitable, he initiated a dispute over precedence, which involved a special investigation.³⁷ The new resolutions issued in 1550 regulated the rules of precedence in the army in the field. Particular attention was paid to the precedence relations between the commanders of the main army units, which were known as the “regiments” (polki). As a rule, the Russian army consisted at that time of five regiments – the Great Regiment, Advance Regiment, Rear Regiment, Right-Wing Regiment and Left-Wing Regiment. Precedence disputes among the commanders (voevody) of these troops often inflicted significant damage on the fighting efficiency of the entire army. By the resolutions of 1550, the commander of the Great Regiment was recognised as the chief commander of the army. In addition, the relations between the commanders of the other regiments were defined.

Fundamental changes took place within the central administration. Mid-16th century Russia saw the formation of a series of central administrative bodies – the chancelleries (prikazy). As in other states at that time, the Russian prikazy emerged within the royal household administration and were chiefly based on the principle of departmental government. The main tasks of administration were delegated to special chancelleries: foreign policy to the Foreign Affairs Chancellery (Posol'skii prikaz), defence to the Military Chancellery (Razryadnyi prikaz), and control over the service lands to the Service Land Chancellery (Pomestnyi prikaz).³⁸ As a rule, these chancelleries were headed by counsellor secretaries (dumnye d'yaki), who were also admitted into the tsar's privy council. At the level of local administration, particular attention was paid to the struggle against brigandage and banditry.³⁹ Thus, in 1555, the Privy Council issued a special decision (prigovor) on brigandage (this document is analysed more fully later on).

Service at the court was also meant to be reformed as a result of the reforms carried out by the government in the 1550s. It was proposed that a thousand chosen military servitors be posted in the territories surrounding Moscow, thereby creating a special body of trusted servants to the tsar.

³⁷ For the period from the 14th century until the third quarter of the 16th century, information about 200 such disputes is extant. See Yu. M. Eskin, *Mestnichestvo v Rossii XIV–XVII vv. Khronologicheskii reestr* (Moscow, 1994), 39–59.

³⁸ See for details P. B. Brown, “Early Modern Russian Bureaucracy. The Evolution of the Chancellery System from Ivan III to Peter the Great (1478–1717).” Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1978.

³⁹ See C. B. Stevens, “Banditry and Provincial Order in Sixteenth-Century Russia.” In *Culture and Identity in Muscovy*, 583–589.

Although historians still argue over the extent to which this project was implemented, it is nonetheless evident that the very idea of picking out an elite from the general mass of military servitors was an important phase in the formation of the Muscovite political system.⁴⁰

This idea was developed in the famous Oprichnina of Ivan IV the Terrible. The period between 1553 and 1572 was marked by the gradual yet steady deterioration in relations between Ivan IV and his counsellors. According to the writings of A. M. Kurbskii, in 1553, one of the influential monks advised the tsar: "If you wish to be an autocrat, do not keep beside you a single councillor wiser than yourself."⁴¹ The subsequent events showed that the tsar seemingly accepted this advice. He began to see his counsellors as the main source of danger, and Ivan's search for a "safe refuge" was to become the principal motive of many of his actions. On the eve of the Oprichnina the tsar began to suspect that all the members of the old court were hatching plots against his person and his family. Gradually a profound conflict arose between the tsar and his court, which called for a decisive solution.⁴² This is why in 1564, Ivan "created for himself an oprichnina." He announced the creation of a new court, the structure of which was a repetition of the old Sovereign's Court. However, people were chosen for the new Oprichnina court on the basis of unconditional personal allegiance to the tsar. Relying on the Oprichnina court, Ivan unleashed an unrestrained terror against his subjects, among which fell many members of his council as well. Even in the 17th century, it was remembered that Ivan IV "began to destroy many of his own family and also many of the grandees of his council (sinklit)."⁴³

Thus the members of the Sovereign's Court were the closest servants of the ruler, they carried out his orders on military, administrative, diplomatic and judicial matters. There was a hierarchical system of ranks within the

⁴⁰ For more on the reforms of the 1550s, see R. O. Crummey, "Reform under Ivan the Terrible: Gradualism and Terror." In *Reform in Russia and the USSR: Past and Prospects* (Urbana, Chicago, 1989), 12–27.

⁴¹ J. L. I. Fennell, ed. and trans., *Prince A. M. Kurbsky's History of Ivan IV* (Cambridge, 1963), 82–83. For a review of the discussion on Kurbskii's works, see A. I. Gladkii and A. A. Tsekhanovich, "Kurbskii Andrei Mikhailovich." In *Slovar' knizhnikov i knizhnosti Drevnei Rusi* (hereafter SKK), II (Leningrad, 1988), part 1: 494–503. See also Ch. Halperin, "Edward Keenan and the Kurbskii–Groznyi Correspondence in Hindsight," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 46 (1998): 376–403.

⁴² See S. B. Veselovskii, *Ocherki po istorii oprichniny* (Moscow, 1963), 25, 47, 133. Historians have a range of opinions about the causes and aims of the Oprichnina. See V. D. Nazarov, "Oprichnina v kontekste sovremennoi istoriograficheskoi situatsii." In *Spornye voprosy otechestvennoi istorii XI–XVIII vv. Tezisy Pervykh chtenii, posvyashchennykh pamyati A. A. Zimina* (hereafter *Spornye voprosy*) (Moscow, 1990), 193–198.

⁴³ *Russkaya istoricheskaya biblioteka, izdavaemaya Imperatorskoyu Arkheograficheskoyu komissiei*, 2nd ed., XIII (St. Petersburg, 1892), col. 1275.

Sovereign's Court. The members of the Sovereign's Court were ranked according to their origin and service. By the 1550s, the members of the Sovereign's Court were divided into several rank categories:

- the counsellor ranks (boyars, okol'niche, counsellor dvoryane, counsellor secretaries);
- the household ranks and chancellery secretaries (dvortsovye chiny, d'yaki);
- the sovereign's personal guard (stol'niki, stryapchie, zhil'tsy);
- service princes (sluzhilye knyaz'ya);
- the lowest ranks (deti boyarskie, later vybornye dvoryane).

THE COUNSELLOR RANKS

The highest category at the Sovereign's Court, the counsellor ranks (dumnye lyudi) received the highest command posts during military campaigns, headed embassies abroad, and held talks with foreign diplomats residing in Russia. The counsellor ranks were in their turn split into several groups. Prior to the 16th century, two categories of counsellor ranks existed: boyars and okol'niche. The majority of modern linguists consider that the word "boyar" is of Turkic origin. It could have entered Russian no later than the turn of the 9th–10th centuries from a Bulgarian or Khazar word meaning "rich," "distinguished."⁴⁴ The word "boyar" referred solely to a person serving the prince. The word okol'niche is derived from the word okolo (by, near), and so an okol'niche is a person near to the sovereign. Originally, during military campaigns, the okol'niche went on ahead of the prince, prepared the road and bridges for him, and found him a worthy lodging for the night. In the second half of the 15th century, the okol'niche was turned into the second rank at the Sovereign's Court after that of boyar.⁴⁵ The boyars and okol'niche were appointed as military governors to the chief cities and fortresses. They were also often given the task of carrying out policing and judicial functions. In the first half of the 16th century, some differences in the nature of the service of boyars and okol'niche can be observed. If the boyars essentially served in military posts, then the okol'niche tended to carry out various administrative and court assignments. With time, the role of the okol'niche in the administrative system declined, and their place in the state administration was taken over by the secretaries.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ P. Ya. Chernykh, *Istoriko-etimologicheskii slovar' sovremennogo russkogo yazyka*, 1 (Moscow, 1993), 106; *Slovar' russkogo yazyka XI–XVII vv.*, 1: 307–309.

⁴⁵ *Slovar' russkogo yazyka XI–XVII vv.*, 12: 334–335.

⁴⁶ Kleimola, "Patterns of Duma Recruitment," 236, 237.

During the 16th century, the ranks of boyars and okol'nichie were joined by two more groups: the counsellor dvoryanin (dumnyi dvoryanin) and counsellor secretary (dumnyi d'yak). The counsellor dvoryane included representatives of impoverished Muscovite families and of families that had gone over to Muscovite service from other lands. The counsellor secretaries advanced thanks either to their personal talents, or to favouritism and the protection of influential families. As was noted, the counsellor secretaries headed the principal Muscovite chancelleries.

THE HOUSEHOLD RANKS

The members of the household ranks were closely linked to the palace economy of the sovereign. They included the equerry (konyushii), majordomo (dvoretiskii), treasurer (kaznachei), arms bearer (oruzhnichii), master of the bedchamber (postel'nichii), keeper of the seal (pechatnik), and also people holding posts relating to the daily life and leisure of the tsar (kravchie, yasel'nichie, sokol'nichie, lovchie). The results of my research show that the chief household ranks were present on the council of the Muscovite sovereign, and their presence on the council was determined by the importance of their duties. As has already been pointed out, the household bodies became the basis of the Muscovite administrative system. As the oldest government structures, the household bodies possessed the most qualified personnel with long experience of chancellery work.

THE SOVEREIGN'S PERSONAL GUARD

The representatives of the third group at the Sovereign's Court, the stol'niki, stryapchie, and zhil'tsy comprised, as it were, the sovereign's personal guard. The stol'niki were thus part of the cream of the Russian middle upper-service class. They were generally young people beginning their career at the court. The service of the stol'niki generally revolved around the court, they participated in palace ceremonies, were the honoured servants at the tsar's table, served in the tsar's personal retinue, were employed as messengers from the tsar to the army in the field in order to distribute decorations and rewards, and also carried out inspections of military servitors prior to campaigns.⁴⁷ There were far fewer distinguished persons amongst the stryapchie. The majority of them were representatives of old Muscovite boyar families that had entered the counsellor ranks earlier

⁴⁷ See V. D. Nazarov, "O strukture 'Gosudareva dvora' v seredine XVI v." In *Obshchestvo i gosudarstvo feodal'noi Rossii* (hereafter *Obshchestvo i gosudarstvo*), ed. V. T. Pashuto (Moscow, 1975), 49; A. P. Pavlov, *Gosudarev dvor i politicheskaya bor'ba pri Borise Godunove, 1584–1605* (St. Petersburg, 1992), 111.

(before the mid-15th century), but had now been relegated to secondary and lower ranks. Unlike the stol'niki, the stryapchie had as a rule already completed their career, sometimes having had as many as thirty years' service behind them.⁴⁸ The service carried out by the stryapchie was essentially the same as that of the stol'niki, but, generally speaking, the stryapchie occupied a lower position in the hierarchy than the stol'niki. The zhil'tsy usually belonged to the cream of the local servitor people. They were selected to come to Moscow to take part in palace ceremonies and receptions of ambassadors. They also acted as assistants to the tsar's bodyguards during campaigns and performed a variety of military functions.⁴⁹

THE SERVICE PRINCES (*SLUZHILYE KNYAZ'YA*)

Prior to the mid-16th century, the service princes (the Mstislavskii, Odoevskii, Glinski, Vorotynskii, Bel'skii, Trubetskii) were formally superior to the other servitors on the hierarchical ladder. At the same time, the service princes were for many years, until 1528, unable to receive the counsellor ranks. As was noted, the mid-16th century was a period that saw changes in the basic organisation of the Sovereign's Court. The court was now based upon the hierarchical principle, whereby the service princes' hopes of a career were tied to the acquisition of a court rank. The service princes were, therefore, incorporated into the rank hierarchy of the court.⁵⁰ With time most of them forfeited their privileges, whereas the most distinguished of the service princes began to hold a key position on the tsar's council, receiving the title of prime counsellor (*pervosovetnik*). The transformation of the Sovereign's Court continued during the Oprichnina years, when the group of service princes ceased to exist at court.⁵¹

THE LOWEST RANKS

The *deti boyarskie* were the lowest category of courtiers until the mid-16th century. The *deti boyarskie* constituted the essential military force at court. The status of court *deti boyarskie* meant that its bearers were in the service of the grand prince. Although the court *deti boyarskie* spent a considerable amount of time in the provinces, they possessed an important advantage compared to other provincial military servitors. The court *deti boyarskie* were periodically summoned to service in Moscow, and they also had the

⁴⁸ See Nazarov, "O strukture," 50; Pavlov, *Gosudarev dvor*, 111–113.

⁴⁹ See Pavlov, *Gosudarev dvor*, 117–119.

⁵⁰ Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 144–146.

⁵¹ Pavlov, *Gosudarev dvor*, 102, 107 note 57.

opportunity of receiving more prestigious service appointments. Residence in the capital enabled them to arrange the necessary connections with the highest court ranks, and to secure their support. The changes in the structure of the Sovereign's Court also affected this group of servitors. Even prior to the Oprichnina the majority of *deti boyarskie* had ceased to be regarded as members of the Sovereign's Court. By the middle of the 16th century, many of them had succeeded in settling down in the provinces and had virtually ceased to be summoned to service in the capital. In the 1550s, they were replaced by a new rank, the *vybornye dvoryane* (lit. "selected" *dvoryane*). It was now these *vybornye dvoryane* who were selected from the provinces to carry out service at the Sovereign's Court. They were placed above the basic body of *deti boyarskie*. Along with the higher ranks at the Sovereign's Court, the *vybornye dvoryane* constituted a special officer corps, while the *deti boyarskie* comprised the rank-and-file cavalry.⁵²

* * *

The Sovereign's Court was the principal service organisation, through which the representatives of the elite hoped to acquire the tsar's special favour and mercy, and the personal prosperity that went with these. The supreme incarnation of such aspirations was entry into the inner circle of the most trusted counsellors to the sovereign, his Privy Council. It had long been considered natural that the grand prince consulted with his privy advisers, in order to make a weighty and well-grounded decision, and, when necessary, to transfer to the counsellors a share of responsibility for an incorrect or unconsidered action. The sovereign involved in consultations those courtiers whose own authority lent special weight to any decisions taken. It was natural for such people to be chosen from amongst the courtiers who held the highest positions in the hierarchy of the day and so were closer to the sovereign – and closer not just in a hierarchical sense but very much in a physical sense. They had access to those palace apartments through which other members of the court were not allowed to pass. Therefore, the majority of counsellors were men of the highest ranks in the service hierarchy. These ranks constituted a basic reserve for replenishing the council; that is why they were counsellor ranks.⁵³

⁵² For details, see Pavlov, *Gosudarev dvor*, 94–101.

⁵³ The name *dumnye chiny/dumnye lyudi* was apparently of a nominal character, like another court term, *deti boyarskie* (lit. boyars' children). Obviously, the *dumnye lyudi* were not necessarily members of the council, as the run-of-the-mill *deti boyarskie* were not sons of boyars.

Historians usually consider that the boyars' council (Boyarskaya Duma) included all the holders of the counsellor ranks (for more details, see Appendix I). At the same time, not all the people holding the rank of boyar or okol'nichii were automatically guaranteed council membership. V. I. Sergeevich has justifiably noted that "many men had been granted a counsellor rank, but not all were counsellors to their sovereigns."⁵⁴ One should distinguish between the rank hierarchy of the Sovereign's Court and the personal composition of the council. In my view, the Boyarskaya Duma did not exist in the Muscovite state (for more details, see Chapter IV). As to the Privy Council (Blizhnyaya Duma), though its history was tied to the evolution of the Sovereign's Court, the structure of this council was never as rigid and organised as that of the Sovereign's Court. This can be explained by the fact that the Blizhnyaya Duma constituted the sovereign's personal council, and so its activity was in many respects based on informal personal relations between the ruler and his close counsellors. These counsellors were the tsar's favourites, or, as they put it in those days, his "friends" (priyateli). There was no room for such informal relations within the framework of the Sovereign's Court, which was based on a rigid system of service and genealogical ties. We should bear in mind that the Sovereign's Court and the Privy Council were founded on different principles. Thus, it would be a mistake to transfer the hierarchical structure of the Sovereign's Court to that of the council.

3. THE SOURCES

The medieval understanding of the state was expressed not in juridical acts but with the aid of Biblical symbolism. This understanding was reflected in literary texts and in works of fine art. As has been noted, the "sovereign-counsellors" topos is reproduced in the works of varying literary genres, though the variations in genre had no noticeable effect on the interpretation of the "sovereign-counsellors" topos. In Old Russian literature, the verbal formulae and expressions employed in the text depended not on the stylistics of the genre but on the actual subject of the account.⁵⁵ In this work,

⁵⁴ V. I. Sergeevich, *Drevnosti russkogo prava*, 2 (St. Petersburg, 1908), 516.

⁵⁵ D. S. Likhachev, *Poetika drevnerusskoi literatury* (Moscow, 1979), 81. Likhachev's assertion is based on the observation that the medieval Slavic literary system is more chaotic than modern literary systems. This idea is gaining widespread currency among specialists. For example, Gail Lenhoff points out that in early Russian writing structural alterations almost always derive from the writer's conception of decorum or function rather than from a

the symbolism of the council is examined on the basis of literary works from a wide range of genres from the 14th–16th centuries: chronicles, works devoted to the battle of Kulikovo Pole, tales about the Tartar raids, panegyric literature, historical accounts, translated works, and polemical literature. For the purposes of comparative analysis, the Discourse (Slovo) of Daniil Zatochnik, written in the 12th–13th centuries, is also enlisted.⁵⁶

In Muscovite Russia, the ideology of autocratic power was expressed not only through the texts of literary works but also by the methods of fine art. Images of the ideal tsardom created by the Muscovite ideologists were depicted on icons, frescos and chronicle miniatures. Works of fine art not only illustrated the corresponding literary texts, but also extended the limits of the literary text, and introduced into the discourse new images and additional emphases. Finally, visual images made the text accessible to a wider circle of people; thanks to fine art, even illiterate people could grasp the contents of literary texts. In their studies of Muscovite political ideology, modern historians actively draw upon the works of fine art.⁵⁷ The visual image of the “sovereign–counsellors” topos is examined in this work using miniatures from the *Radziwiłł* Chronicle (Radzivillovskaya letopis’), some published miniatures from the Illustrated Chronicle Compilation (Litsevoi letopisnyi svod) and bas-reliefs from the Tsar’s throne in the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Moscow Kremlin.

When dealing with works of art and literature, a historian of polity always faces one problem: how are these works related to actuality? It is important to notice that early Russian literature and art are characterised by abstractions, a striving to break away from the phenomena of life and flesh-and-blood personages.⁵⁸ Thus, the Old Russian writer prefers to omit all details, including references to the name of concrete counsellors surrounding the sovereign. Very often, the author limits himself to general moral assessments of the counsellors’ activity, indicating that some ruler or another heeded the advice of worthy or evil counsellors. If the author pinpointed one of the evil counsellors, he still preferred to avoid names. Even when

notion of stylistic elegance or generic norms. See Lenhoff, *The Martyred Princes*, 17–18, 21.

⁵⁶ There is no consensus among specialists as to when some of the works of Old Russian literature were written. Since my study concerns some of the basic features of Muscovite political culture, its tasks do not require a discussion on the precise dating of each literary work that is discussed here. And so, with some exceptions, I have confined myself to indicating a wide time period for the literary texts I am dealing with.

⁵⁷ See P. Hunt, “Ivan IV’s Personal Mythology of Kingship,” *Slavic Review* 52 (1993), no. 4: 769–809; D. Rowland, “Biblical Military Imagery in the Political Culture of Early Modern Russia: The Blessed Host of the Heavenly Tsar,” *Medieval Russian Culture*, II, 182–212.

⁵⁸ Likhachev, *Poetika*, 104.

the Muscovite author referred to the names of counsellors, his testimonies cannot always be trusted. The counsellors referred to in literary works often include perfectly authentic names recorded in other sources, but the literary texts frequently extol the role of counsellors who, judging by other sources, did not play a particularly prominent part in the sovereign's entourage.⁵⁹ Another typical feature of Muscovite literary texts is the virtually complete absence of references to disputes in the council. Reproducing the "sovereign-counsellors" topos, the Old Russian authors stressed the unity of will of the sovereign and his privy counsellors. The concepts of erroneous, incorrect ideas were alien to the medieval mentality.⁶⁰ According to the notions of that time, any incorrect advice emanated from evil will, behind which were the machinations of the Devil. The primary goal of the Muscovite writer lay in uncovering this evil will. Respectively, the task of the sovereign lay not in discussing erroneous judgements but in immediately expelling the miscreant from his entourage.

Thus, the literary texts reveal the general, conceptual notion of the act of consultation between the sovereign and his privy counsellors. The literary works also show what ideological functions this act performed in Muscovite society. The organisational functions of the act of consultation is reflected in the texts of documents written in connection with concrete circumstances – the transfer of power prior to the ruler's decease, decisions on judicial suits, and the appraisal of issues of domestic and foreign policy. These documents also reveal the make-up of the counsellors' circle. The earliest systematic information on the Muscovite rulers' counsellors is contained in the wills of the grand princes (*dukhovnye gramoty*), and wills which include lists of counsellors dating back as far as the 14th century are extant.

The evidence of the wills is complemented by the agreements between the princes of Moscow with other rulers, land acts and reports in the chronicles (see below). Sometimes the counsellors attended court examinations held by the grand prince. Lists of the participants at the court sessions can be found in the judgement charters (*pravye gramoty*).⁶¹

As a result of wars, fires, accidents and poor storage, few historical sources on the privy councils of medieval and early-modern monarchies

⁵⁹ See *Povesti o Kulikovskoi bitve* (Moscow, 1959), 284, note 52; A. N. Grobovsky, *Ivan Grozny i Sil'vestr*, London, 1987.

⁶⁰ See D. S. Likhachev, *Chelovek v literature Drevnei Rusi* (Moscow, 1970), 134.

⁶¹ See A. M. Kleimola, *Justice in Medieval Russia: Muscovite Judgment Charters (Pravye Gramoty) of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, vol. 65, part 6, Philadelphia, 1975).

have survived. Moreover, the formation of documents was naturally directly linked to the administrative process. For this reason, the state of the source materials is determined not by external conditions alone, but by the nature of the work of a given institution.⁶² Undoubtedly, the documents of the council are also scarce because appointments to the council and council sessions were made orally. Furthermore, the counsellors often took an oath never to divulge anything the ruler had said. The anthology of instructive writings popular in Muscovy entitled *Golden Chain* (*Zolotaya Tsep'*, turn of the 14th and 15th centuries) emphasised that whoever desires to preserve his life and head must firmly keep the tsar's secret.⁶³ This is why today's researchers seldom have records of the sessions at their disposal.⁶⁴

The way out of this situation was shown by V. O. Klyuchevskii, who suggested that the extensive body of documents of the chancelleries could be used in the study of the council.⁶⁵ Subsequent historians carrying out research into the council achieved notable successes in this approach, and today the chancellery papers are justifiably regarded as the most important source on the council. In the course of their work, the chancelleries accumulated a vast collection of documents of all kinds and of varying degrees of importance. The purposes of our study do not call for a detailed description of all the types of documents involved, especially as there already exist special studies on this subject.⁶⁶ And so I shall concentrate solely on those chancellery documents which are related most closely to the activity of the council.

One ought in the first instance to mention the diplomatic documents which have survived much better than other types of sources. The diplomatic papers can be divided into three main groups – charters and letters (*gramoty*, as a rule, this was the sovereign's correspondence with foreign monarchs or international treaties); scrolls (*stolbtsy*, regular correspondence between officials, draft documents), and diplomatic records (*posol'skie*

⁶² See Elton, *The Problems and Significance of Administrative History*, 258.

⁶³ F. Buslaev, *Istoricheskaya khrestomatiya tserkovno-slavyanskogo i drevne-russkogo yazyka* (Moscow, 1861), 480.

⁶⁴ A similar situation has even arisen with research into the Privy Council of the Tudors, although, on the whole, 16th-century archives have been preserved much better in England than in other European countries. See M. B. Pulman, *The Elizabethan Privy Council in the Fifteen-Seventies* (Berkeley, 1971), 53; C. S. Knighton, "The Principal Secretaries in the Reign of Edward VI." In *Law and Government under the Tudors* (Cambridge, 1988), 165.

⁶⁵ V. O. Klyuchevskii, *Boyarskaya дума Drevnei Rusi* (Moscow, 1909).

⁶⁶ See S. O. Shmidt, S. E. Knyaz'kov, *Dokumenty deloproizvodstva pravitel'stvennykh uchrezhdenii Rossii XVI–XVII vv.* (Moscow, 1985). For more on the chancelleries in general, see P. B. Brown, "Muscovite Government Bureaus," *Russian History*, 10 (1983), part 3: 269–330.

knigi). The latter constitute collections of the most important materials concerning relations with one state or another for specific time periods. The special value of these records is that they generalise the contents of primary sources, many of which are no longer extant.⁶⁷

The compilers of the diplomatic texts carefully recorded all the details of the talks and receptions with foreign envoys. As the members of the Privy Council took a highly active part in talks alongside the tsar, their names are frequently mentioned in the diplomatic papers. Decisions on foreign policy matters were taken by the tsar during consultations with the Privy Council. Sometimes the Privy Council could debate an issue without the sovereign, but it was always under his control. In the course of the discussion, a decision (*prigovor*) of the Privy Council was formulated. The *prigovor* of the Privy Council contained the council's resolutions and instructions on the decisions' execution. Although the actual decisions of the council are often to be found in all kinds of chancellery documentation, for the purposes of our research the decisions in the diplomatic records of the 1560s are of singular importance. The fact is that these decisions contain lists of the counsellors that took them, and so we obtain a clear picture of which boyars were really members of the council and actually contributed to its proceedings. Lists of the members of the Privy Council are also incorporated into precise descriptions of diplomatic ceremonies.

The diplomatic records contain correspondence between the boyars and the members of the Lithuanian Council (*Rada*). The diplomatic relations between Muscovy and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania had a number of distinctive features. In particular, the boyars actively corresponded with the Lithuanian magnates throughout the 16th century, discussing in their letters border conflicts, exchanges of prisoners-of-war or future diplomatic missions. This correspondence is vital for the study of the Privy Council in the 1560s, and it was precisely in the 1560s that the correspondence between the Lithuanian *Rada* and the Muscovite Duma grew more

⁶⁷ For more on extant diplomatic records, see N. M. Rogozhin, "The 'Ambassadorial Book on the Ties between Russia and England 1613–1614' as a Historical Source." In M. Jansson and N. Rogozhin, *England and the North: the Russian Embassy of 1613–1614*, trans. P. Bushkovitch (Philadelphia, 1994), xxix–xxxi; N. M. Rogozhin, *Posol'skie knigi Rossii kontsa XV–nachala XVII vv.* (Moscow, 1994); idem, comp., *Obzor posol'skikh knig iz fondov-kollektsii, khraryashchikhsya v TsGADA, konets XV–nachalo XVIII vv.* (Moscow, 1990). This review does not take into account the little-known diplomatic record on relations with the Nogai Horde from the summer of 1576. See *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov* (hereafter RGADA), F. 137, Op. 1, Novgorod, D. 137, ff. 338–393; V. N. Shumilov, *Knigi prikazov v fondakh TsGADA: Opis'*, ed. L. V. Cherepnin (Moscow, 1972), 139, no. 1323.

intense.⁶⁸ This allows us to make use of the Russian–Lithuanian correspondence in our study of the composition of the Privy Council during the period under consideration.

The letters sent between the boyars and the Lithuanian magnates, contain the names of boyars occupying key positions in the tsar's entourage. This conclusion is reached on the basis of the materials from the embassy of A. Ivanov to Poland in 1589. In answer to the question from the Poles as to why the address of the boyars' letters does not mention the chancellor, Leo Sapieha, Ivanov declared:

The grand sovereign's boyars wrote according to the previous custom: the Privy Council of the sovereign to the foremost magnates of the Rada, though the business concerns all the boyars and magnates, but if they had written chancellor Leo Sapieha they would have had to mention all the members of the Rada.⁶⁹

Ivanov was right when he said that this had been common practice for many years. As early as 1555, Metropolitan Makarii wrote to Lithuania that such issues as the extension of the armistice were “dealt with between the sovereigns by the boyars and magnates, by their Privy Council” (italics – S.B.). In October 1562, the members of the Lithuanian Rada also addressed their letter to Prince I. D. Bel'skii, D. R. Yur'ev and “other boyars in the Privy Council” (italics – S.B.).⁷⁰ And so it can be asserted that members of the Privy Council took part in the correspondence with the magnates of the Rada.⁷¹ Nevertheless, the correspondence between the Lithuanian mag-

⁶⁸ See Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossii XVI stoletiya: Opyt rekonstruktsii, ed. A. A. Zimin (Moscow, 1978), I, 83, II, 440. E. F. Maksimovich drew attention to the famous letter sent in 1567 by Ivan IV on behalf of Prince I. F. Mstislavskii to Sigismund II, where a certain “prime council” (pervosovet) is referred to. See E. Maksimovich, “Pervosovetnik Dumi Boyarskoi,” Zapiski Russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva v Prage, II (Prague, 1930), 141–162; Poslaniya Ivana Groznogo, ed. D. S. Likhachev and Ya. S. Lur'e (Moscow, Leningrad, 1951), 253.

⁶⁹ “Velikogo gosudarya boyare pisali po prezhnemu obychnu: Blizhnaya дума gosudar'skaya k peredneishim panam Radam, a delo ikh vopchee vsekh, a tol'ko bylo pisat' kantslera L'va Sopegu, ino bylo pisati i vsekh panov Rad” (RGADA, F. 79, Op. 1, D. 20, ff. 72–72v.).

⁷⁰ Sbornik RIO, LIX, 472–473; LXXI, 94–98. See also Akty, ontosyashchiesya k istorii Zapadnoi Rossii (hereafter AZR), I (St. Petersburg, 1846), 246; Klyuchevskii, Boyarskaya дума, 273; A. I. Markevich, Istoriya mestnichestva (Odessa, 1888), 229; V. I. Savva, O Posol'skom prikaze v XVI v. (Kharkov, 1917), 236.

⁷¹ According to G. Kotoshikhin, the chamber boyars and okol'niche are “referred to as close boyars and okol'niche in the diplomatic letters, owing to their closeness [to the tsar – S.B.]” (Grigorij Kotošichin, O Rossii v carstvovanie Alekseja Mixajloviča, ed. A. E. Pennington (Oxford, 1980), 37. The Russian official Kotoshikhin fled Russia in 1664, going first to Lithuania and then to Sweden. At the request of the Swedish king, he drew up a detailed description of Russia which is regarded as one of the most valuable sources on the history of Muscovy. The manuscript of this work is preserved at the University of Uppsala.

nates and the boyars by no means mentions all the members of the Privy Council. According to the courier, Ivanov, referred to above, "two or three of the magnates on the Rada wrote to the great sovereign's boyars, and also not to many of them, but to two or three, though their business is of a general nature."⁷² Furthermore, the terminology used in sources of this kind is highly variable, and therefore when using diplomatic records the researcher must compare them with other available sources.

Many interesting documents relating to the council can also be discovered amongst the scrolls, in particular the correspondence between the tsar and the members of the Privy Council at the time when the tsar was away from Moscow (this was a common occurrence during the Oprichnina era).⁷³ We learn from these sources how the work of the council was organised, how it used to give a detailed account of its actions to the tsar. Of particular note was the counsellors' humble position before Ivan IV and their complete lack of initiative on issues of any importance. Finally, the correspondence shows that as early as Ivan IV's reign, the counsellors took a special oath of service allegiance.⁷⁴

The next important group of sources were the military service registers (*razryadnye knigi*). We have at our disposal a large collection of special registers containing government orders on annual appointments to military, civil and court service. These registers were kept with the utmost attention to detail, and the majority of facts (dates, names, surnames, etc.) contained in this source are trustworthy, since the facts they contained were used during precedence disputes. Specialists distinguish between two kinds of military service registers.⁷⁵ The expanded version (*prostrannaya redaktsiya*) of these records contains very old entries (starting from the end of the 15th century) and is marked by the completeness of the facts it contains. From

⁷² Radnykh panov dva-tri pisyvali k velikogo gosudarya boyaram takzhe ne ko mnogim, k dvum-trem, a delo vseh ikh vopchee (RGADA, F. 79, Op. 1, D. 20, ff. 72–72v.).

⁷³ See Savva, O Posol'skom prikaze, 98–108; N. P. Likhachev, Delo o priezde Antonio Possevino (St. Petersburg, 1907); S. N. Bogatyrev, "Gramoty Boyarskoi Dumy v dokumentakh Posol'skogo prikaza XVI v." In *Issledovaniya po istochnikovedeniyu istorii SSSR dooktyabr'skogo perioda* (Moscow, 1991), 19–44.

⁷⁴ The wording of such a pledge from the 17th century has survived. For more details, see Bogatyrev, *Gramoty*, 26–27.

⁷⁵ For more on the military registers, see V. I. Buganov, *Razryadnye knigi poslednei chetverti XV–nachala XVII v.* (Moscow, 1962); M. Poe, "Elite Service Registry in Muscovy, 1500–1700," *Russian History*, 21 (1994), part 3: 251–288. During his studies of the Privy Council, I. I. Smirnov made active use of the chancellery papers, including the diplomatic and military service records. He enlisted several such sources, which contain descriptions of the Privy Council's role in drawing up the criminal legislation and in the military campaigns of 1555. See I. I. Smirnov, *Ocherki politicheskoi istorii Russkogo gosudarstva 30-kh–50-kh gg. XVI v.* (Moscow, Leningrad, 1958), 139–165.

the mid-16th century yet another group of similar records appears, known as the Sovereign's Military Records (*Gosudarev razryad*). This version was compiled under the direct surveillance of Military Chancellery officials and was regarded as virtually a canonical collection of the most important military appointments. The Sovereign's Military Records, therefore, contain reliable information, although briefer than that found in the expanded version of similar records. Historians generally prefer to make use of the Sovereign's Military Records, although in order to form a full picture of the Muscovite council, all available kinds of military registers must be enlisted and compared with one another.

The military records demonstrate that as a rule the privy counsellors accompanied the tsar on campaigns. Owing to their status, the privy servants possessed an important privilege (and obligation): they were alongside the tsar in the palace chambers and served in the royal retinue during military campaigns.⁷⁶ Thus, these registers are a vital source on the activities of the Muscovite sovereigns' counsellors.

Chancellery documents reflect the activities of the council at a given time. Yet such uncoordinated testimonies are clearly inadequate for forming a general picture of the Privy Council. The absence of any general sources on the organisation of the Privy Council is compensated for by the precise description of the council penned by the English traveller Giles Fletcher.⁷⁷ Specialists have often had an ambivalent approach to Fletcher's work. On the one hand, all researchers unreservedly acknowledge the unique value of Fletcher's account as one of the most informative sources on 16th-century Muscovy. At the same time, great play is often made of the fact that Fletcher did not understand many aspects of Russian life, and so his reports are not always trustworthy. A similar situation has arisen with respect to Fletcher's accounts of the Muscovite tsars' council. This ambivalent approach with regard to Fletcher's information about the council was first applied by Klyuchevskii, who declared that Fletcher's description of the council was often confused (see Chapter IV). His point of view influenced other researchers as well. However, many present-day studies con-

⁷⁶ Grigorij Kotořixin, *O Rossii*, 45; V. I. Buganov, "K izucheniyu sostava Gosudareva dvora XVI v." In *Obshchestvo i gosudarstvo*, 55–61.

⁷⁷ In June 1588, Queen Elizabeth I sent Fletcher as ambassador to Russia. The main task of Fletcher's embassy was to regulate a number of disputed issues and to establish the Russia Company's trading privileges. Fletcher left Russia at the end of July or in early August 1589, and upon returning to England he presented the Queen with his account of the journey, *On the Russian Commonwealth*. This account was first published in 1591. See L. E. Berry, ed. *The English Works of Giles Fletcher, the Elder* (Madison, 1964).

firm many of Fletcher's accounts of the Russian administration, and so we must pay particular attention to his testimonies about the tsar's council.⁷⁸ It is common knowledge that in order to obtain a true interpretation of an historical source, all known manuscripts of the document must be enlisted wherever possible. As far as Fletcher is concerned, this approach has for some reason never been adopted, although L. E. Berry prepared a critical edition of his accounts, which includes variant readings from all three surviving manuscripts.⁷⁹ A comparison of the various versions of Fletcher's account with other sources concerning the tsar's council shows that, on the whole, Fletcher left a true portrayal of the tsar's council in his work.

The evidence contained in the Russian chronicles (*letopisi*) is also important for the study of the council. The chronicles contain a large number of testimonies about the relationship between the counsellors and the sovereign and about their role in political and court life. Especially important for a study of the council are the separate accounts of some major events preserved among the chronicles (e.g., the accounts of the death of Grand Prince Vasili III and of the sickness of Ivan IV). During these events, the role of the council became particularly noticeable. Early Russian deathbed *topoi* expressed the social and religious obligations which a person was supposed to fulfil before his death, and the deathbed *topos* reflected the real practice of Muscovite society.⁸⁰ This *topos* included the ritual of transferring power from the sovereign to his successor by means of the sovereign's will. Thus, the chronicles cover in great detail the process of composition of the sovereign's will. The chronicles also include detailed lists of the counsellors involved in compiling the will and surrounding the ruler in his final hours.

A special position amongst 16th-century chronicles is held by The Illustrated Chronicle Compilation (*Litsevoi letopisnyi svod*), the most substantial chronicle from 16th-century Muscovy. Ten volumes of this mammoth compilation have survived to the present day, encompassing events in world and Russian history and containing over 16,000 miniatures. Two of these volumes are known by specialists as The Synod Chronicle (*Synodal'naya letopis'*) and The Book of Tsardom (*Tsarstvennaya kniga*). These volumes are linked to one of the most intriguing riddles in Russian

⁷⁸ See A. P. Pavlov, "Evolutsiya chetvertnykh prikazov v kontse XVI-nachale XVII vv.," *Arkhiv russkoi istorii*, 3 (1993): 218.

⁷⁹ Early versions of Fletcher's work: Queen's College Cambridge, MS 25; University College Oxford, MS 144; a later version – James Ford Bell Collection (Univ. of Minnesota), MS.

⁸⁰ Collins, "Early Russian Topoi," 158.

medieval studies. The fact is that the sumptuously designed pages of the chronicle were marked with peremptory editing that reflected the interests of Ivan IV. In the process of debate about who the editor was, various proposals have been made, including the idea that the editing was carried out by Ivan IV himself. In line with the majority of experts, I shall, however, consider the author of the additions (*pripiski*) to have been anonymous, although the interpolations are in themselves an extremely important source on the Privy Council. Modern specialists maintain that the interpolations were inserted into the chronicle after the Oprichnina, apparently in 1575–1576.⁸¹ The interpolations contain two kinds of evidence on the councillors of the tsar. First, they catalogue the members of the Privy Council in the early 1550s, describing the circle of the privy boyars who took an oath of allegiance during the tsar's sickness in 1553. Besides that, the editor outlined the position of councillors in various conflicts at court, and provides the reader with his own interpretation of these conflicts. When dealing with the interpolations as a historical source, one should clearly distinguish between these two pieces of information. The main aim of the editor was to discredit those boyars who were executed by Ivan IV and to present them as traitors and schemers. Given this strong bias against some boyars, we cannot rely on the interpolations with regard to the character of the conflicts and the role of the councillors involved. At the same time, the lists of councillors included in the interpolations should not be disregarded in a study of the Privy Council of the 1550s. The editor was eager to ascertain the conduct of certain courtiers during the tsar's sickness in 1553, and it is evident that he paid most attention to the councillors closest to the ruler. Other sources corroborate that the councillors referred to in the interpolations played an important role in the tsar's entourage during the 1550s.⁸²

The chronicle additions are associated with still one more interesting source – the correspondence between Ivan IV and Prince A. M. Kurbskii, who fled to Lithuania in 1564 and began to speak out against the tyranny of the tsar. As is generally known, in 1971, E. L. Keenan published a book

⁸¹ See B. M. Kloss, *Nikonovskii svod i russkie letopisi XVI–XVII vekov* (Moscow, 1980), 253. For a general account of The Book of Tsardom with reference to bibliography, see B. M. Kloss, "Tsarstvennaya kniga." In *SKK*, II, part 2: 506–508.

⁸² For more details, see Chapter III. This issue is also discussed at length in I. Grala, *Ivan Mikhailov Viskovatyi. Kar'era gosudarstvennogo deyatelya v Rossii XVI v.* (Moscow, 1994), 96–108. Grala seems to overestimate the reliability of the interpolations as a historical source on the "political orientation" of the persons referred to. For a more sceptical view on the evidence of the interpolations, see A. I. Filyushkin, *Istoriya odnoi mistifikatsii: Ivan Grozniy i "Izbrannaya Rada"* (Moscow, 1998), 78–83.

in which he advanced the idea that the letters were forged in the 17th century. The ensuing debate on this subject drew the attention of many experts. The actual contributors to the debate evaluate its findings in different ways. R. G. Skrynnikov suggests that the discussion is now finished and the thesis concerning forgery has been rejected by specialists all over the world.⁸³ R. O. Crummey is more cautious, and he notes that “both camps tend to depend, to some extent, on a closed circle of arguments so that dialogue between them is virtually impossible.”⁸⁴

At the same time, as the result of discussion, it has transpired that Keenan’s constructions are, at least, only one of the possible versions. Earlier copies of Kurbskii’s messages have been found recently. One of these copies is dated by experts to the end of the 16th century. References to Kurbskii’s letters have also been found in 16th-century sources. In my work I examine the correspondence not from the standpoint of its text history but from the angle of the ideas expressed in it. Priscilla Hunt has demonstrated in her research that Ivan IV’s views on his power reflected in the correspondence coincide with the official ideas about autocracy that were widespread in the 16th century.⁸⁵ I shall endeavour below to show that the ideas of Ivan and Kurbskii on the relationship between the sovereign and his counsellors correspond to the ideological content of the “sovereign–counsellors” topos. Besides the letters to Kurbskii, we possess a whole series of other letters from the tsar (many of them 16th-century copies). Ivan IV’s epistolary legacy is of exceptional importance for the study of the Muscovite council. After all the tsar was in the best position to know his own council.

⁸³ E. L. Keenan, *The Kurbskii-Groznyi Apocrypha. The Seventeenth-Century Genesis of the “Correspondence” Attributed to Prince A. M. Kurbskii and Tsar Ivan the Terrible* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971). For the latest review of the controversy, see Halperin, “Edward Keenan;” E. L. Keenan, “Response to Halperin, ‘Edward Keenan and the Kurbskii-Groznyi Correspondence in Hindsight’,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 46 (1998): 404–415.

⁸⁴ R. G. Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo terrora* (St. Petersburg, 1992), 37–49; Crummey, *The Formation*, 176, note 2. See also idem, “Kurbskii-Groznyi Controversy,” in *MERSH*, 18: 174–177.

⁸⁵ Hunt, “Ivan IV’s Personal Mythology,” 793–802.

CHAPTER I

APOSTLE AND SLAVE
THE ROLE OF THE COUNSELLOR IN
MUSCOVITE POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

1. THE “SOVEREIGN–COUNSELLORS” TOPOS

According to medieval conceptions, all the actions of the prince and his advisors were meant to be directed towards the creation of an ideal kingdom on earth. To this end, the sovereign and his counsellors were supposed to act in full agreement with each other.

In Old Rus', the conceptions about the relations between the ruler and his counsellors were of an archaic nature which was typical of medieval political culture. Medieval Russian writers frequently stressed in their works that consultation with his counsellors was one of the duties of a worthy prince. From the standpoint of the medieval Russian writer, the prince who discussed everything with his advisors was deserving of praise.¹ On the other hand, worthy of condemnation were those princes who undertook campaigns or took any important decisions without deliberating first with their privy counsellors.

The act of consultation was described using established literary formulae, which confirmed specific functions for its participants. The assigning of functions during the act of consultation was fairly simple. Prior to each important action, the prince asked his close counsellors for advice. The prince's counsellors were divided into the righteous and the wicked. The former gave the prince sensible and good advice. If he listened to their advice, the prince performed acts pleasing to God, strengthened his possessions, and gained victories over his enemies. And so, in Muscovite literary works, a myth of etiquette developed concerning the united will of the tsar and his counsellors. However, not all counsellors wished their ruler well. In the prince's entourage, it was a bad counsellor that was deemed to be the bearer of evil, urging the ruler to take wrong, improper actions. According to Christian conceptions, evil was a chance phenomenon in the world which opposed God and must be fought. Therefore, each righteous prince should resolutely expel evil counsellors from his entourage. All these ideas on relations between the ruler and his counsellors were expressed in the “sovereign–counsellors” topos:

In the period from the late 15th to the mid-16th century, the “sovereign–

¹ Likhachev, *Chelovek*, 35, 38, 39, 43–45.

counsellors” topos became an integral part of the ideology of the Muscovite autocracy. As is well known, the Muscovite ideologists of the autocracy actively employed Byzantine conceptions of imperial power in their works. In particular, the Old Russian conceptions of a virtuous prince were formed under the influence of Byzantine literature. In order to reveal the image of the righteous ruler, the early Russian writers used the work by the Byzantine Deacon Agapetus (7th century) entitled Hortatory Chapters. Agapetus’ work consists of admonitions to the Emperor. Agapetus presents his teachings in the form of formulae, glorifying the greatness of the imperial power, its divine origin and, at the same time, revealing the ruler’s obligations before God and his subjects. Translations from Agapetus were well known in Rus’ as early as the 11th century, and in the 16th century Muscovite writers referred to him as the “God-inspired chronicler” (*bogov-dokhnovennyi letopisets*).² Agapetus’ formulae proved particularly convenient for revealing the archaic conceptions of the dual nature of the tsar’s power: “Though an emperor in body be like all other, yet in power of his office he is like God, Master of all men. For in (sic) earth, he has no peer. Therefore as God, be he never chafed or angry; as man, be he never proud.”³ Addressing the tsar, Agapetus stresses: “Accept and favor them that desire to give Thee good counsel, but not those that strive to flatter Thee on every occasion. The former truthfully consider what is advantageous; the latter look after what may please those in power.”⁴

Agapetus’ ideas penetrated Rus’ not only in the form of Slavonic translations but also via the writings of another Byzantine author, Patriarch Photius (9th century). His works were well known in Rus’ by the mid-15th century at the latest. In the 16th century, the erudite monk Maksim the Greek advised Ivan IV to re-read the writings of the Byzantine patriarch more often.⁵ Like Agapetus, Photius emphasises that the prince must be ter-

² See I. ev’enko, “A Neglected Byzantine Source of Muscovite Political Ideology,” *Harvard Slavic Studies* II (1954), 141–179; idem, “Agapetus East and West: the Fate of a Byzantine ‘Mirror of Princes’,” *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* XVI (1978), no. 1: 3–44; D. M. Bulanin, “Pouchenie Agapita.” In *SKK, II* (Leningrad, 1989), part 2: 300–303; I. S. Chichurov, *Politicheskaya ideologiya srednevekov’ya: Vizantiya i Rus’* (Moscow, 1990).

³ ev’enko, “A Neglected Byzantine Source,” 147. For the corresponding Russian text, see *Ljubomudreishago kir* “Agapita Diakona blazhenneishemu i blagochestiveishemu tzaryu Ioustinianu, pache zhe vsem” *pravedno khotyashchim nad strast’mi tzarstvovati glavizny pouchitelny* (Kiev, 1628). Reproduced in I. ev’enko, *Ljubomudrějšij kyr* “Agapit Diakon: On a Kiev Edition of a Byzantine Mirror of Princes, with a facsimile reproduction. Recenzija. A Review of Soviet Ukrainian Publications V (1974), no. 1, Supplement, XV.

⁴ ev’enko, “A Neglected Byzantine Source,” 169, note 100; *Ljubomudreishago kir* “Agapita Diakona, XV.

⁵ See *Sochineniya prepodobnogo Maksima Greka*, 2 (Kazan, 1860), 351; N. V. Sinitsyna, “Poslanie konstantinopol’skogo patriarkha Fotiya knyazyu Mikhailu Bolgarskomu v spiskakh XVI v.,” *Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoi literatury* (hereafter TODRL) 21 (1965): 98.

rible to his foes and to those who act unjustly. Yet, with Photius, just as with Agapetus, the prince's majesty (*groza*) does not signify arbitrary rule. According to Photius, any plan of the emperor must be examined with his counsellors: "Any business must be prepared with advice, since matters for which no provision has been made are mostly unreliable." Photius affirms that advice can bring greater benefit than hasty actions, with the aid of good advice, a variety of difficulties can be foreseen and eliminated in time. Photius closely links the concepts of "friendship" (*druzhba*), "power" (*vlast'*) and "advice" (*sovet*). The prince must use friendship, power and advice to run his state.⁶ The notions of the close association between the concepts of friendship and advice are developed in the Hortatory Chapters ascribed to the Byzantine Emperor Basil I (867–886), but compiled, in all probability, with Photius' participation. The Hortatory Chapters became known in Muscovy not later than the 1550s.⁷ This work indicates that the emperor must consult with his friends. In his work, the Pseudo-Basil develops the antithesis of "friends–relatives." He notes that the emperor ought to draw close to himself true friends rather than relatives. Close relations between relatives emerge by nature, and not by the will of God. Often, the emperor's relatives have evil intentions towards their ruler-relative owing to grievances and envy. The love of friends is of a higher origin, it originates out of virtue and free will, and so true friends will always be faithful to their emperor, regardless of any circumstances.⁸ Similar categories were applied in Muscovy to relations between the tsar and his immediate circle. In one biographical tale of the 16th century, the people surrounding the tsar were referred to as his "close friends" (*blizhnie priyateli*).⁹ This expression is highly reminiscent of the "emperor's friends" mentioned in the work of the Pseudo-Basil. The Muscovite authors interpreted the concept of "closeness" using the writings ascribed to St. Paul's disciple, the first Bishop of Athens,

⁶ Sinitsyna, "Poslanie," 114–117; Chichurov, *Politicheskaya ideologiya*, 40, 54, 58.

⁷ Sinitsyna, "Poslanie," 99.

⁸ Chichurov, *Politicheskaya ideologiya*, 92–93. Kollmann points out that relations of friendship, of mutual disposition, played a key role in the Muscovite political system. At the same time, the admonitions of the Hortatory Chapters against the emperor's relatives contradict Kollmann's assertion that magnate kinship counted for virtually everything in top-level decisions (Kollmann, *Kingship and Politics*). Though kinship was essential for the system of precedence, on the whole the category of loyalty obviously prevailed over that of kinship in Muscovite political culture. Kinship did not prevent Ivan IV from accusing his nephew, Prince Vladimir Staritskii of treason and executing him in 1569. Furthermore, the tsar's ideologists artfully manipulated the notions of kinship in the monarch's interests. After the execution of Prince Vladimir Staritskii, the editor of the Book of Tsardom removed references to the ties of kinship between the tsar and Vladimir from this official chronicle. See Kloss, *Nikonovskii svod*, 258.

⁹ M. N. Tikhomirov, *Rossiiskoe gosudarstvo XV–XVI vekov* (Moscow, 1973), 76.

Dionysios the Areopagite. Modern-day scholars refer to this author as the Pseudo-Dionysios. In his letter to Prince Kurbskii Ivan IV cited a fragment from the Pseudo-Dionysios, devoted to the reflection of energy emanating from God:

Each order of those who are about God is more Godlike than that which stands further away, and those which are nearer to the true light are at once more luminous and more illuminating. And do not interpret nearness in terms of place but rather worthy imitation.¹⁰

Drawing on the ideas of Agapetus, Photius, and the Pseudo-Dionysios, the Muscovite writers assimilated the following conceptions about the tsar's power. The tsar was likened to God, and so the tsar, like God, was a source of the light of truth and higher revelation. A close counsellor effectively reflected the divine light emanating from the tsar and passed it on to others. This peculiarity of Muscovite political culture was pointed out by Fletcher, who wrote that Muscovites made "unapt and foolish comparison betwixt God and a monarch or prince of this world that must be sued unto by mediators about him."¹¹ The idea that the relations between the tsar and his trusted counsellors were sanctified by divine blessing is expressed in the writings of Ermolai-Erazm (mid-16th century). Addressing a boyar who had fallen into disgrace, he points out that all the saints surrounding Christ were subjected in this world to severe trials and persecutions – John the Baptist, Saint Paul, and so on.¹² Consequently, if the tsar is represented as Christ, then his counsellors are his disciples, his close aides. The image of the wicked counsellor also has an analogy with the Gospel texts. In the same way as the traitor Judas appeared among the true disciples surrounding Christ, so it was that in the council of devout grandees surrounding the Orthodox tsar, there could be an evil counsellor. Just like Judas, an evil counsellor acts for mercenary reasons, for his own gain he will betray his lord.

In Old Russian literature the topos of "sovereign and counsellors" incarnated the divine essence of the tsar's power and the divine essence of friendship, concord and harmony between the ruler and his advisors. One of the earliest Russian works devoted to the relationship between the

¹⁰ J. L. I. Fennell, ed. and trans., *The Correspondence between Prince A. M. Kurbsky and Tsar Ivan IV of Russia, 1564–1579* (Cambridge, 1955), 164. Cf. Hunt, "Ivan IV's Personal Mythology," 773, note 15; G. M. Prokhorov, "Korpus sochinenii Dionisiya Areopagita." In SKK, II, part 2: 491–493.

¹¹ Berry, *The English Works*, 283

¹² A. I. Klibanov, "Sbornik sochinenii Ermolaya-Erazma," *TODRL* 16 (1960): 206–207.

prince and his close counsellors was the Discourse (Slovo) of Daniil Zatochnik. The Discourse was written in the 12th or 13th century, and Daniil Zatochnik is also recalled in the chronicles of the 14th century.¹³

The Discourse informs us that Daniil was in the prince's entourage, carrying out the duties of counsellor, envoy and court writer. These were not three different professions, but three functions of one and the same person, which required him to have the same qualities: wisdom, the gift of eloquence, the capacity to convince.¹⁴ Such a combination was possible thanks to the sacral understanding of the counsellor's role in relation to the prince. Daniil served the prince with zeal, but began to display undue self-confidence, pride and impertinence. For this, he was expelled from the prince's entourage, his career was in ruins and his entire life in disarray. In the Discourse, Daniil decides to approach the prince with a request for pardon. Daniil complains that he is now living in poverty. Having forfeited the ruler's trust, he has also lost all his friends, because he can no longer offer them lavish entertainment as had been his wont. Daniil asks the prince to reinstate him in his entourage: "Show me your face, how sweet is your voice, and beautiful your image, your lips pour forth honey and your message is like heaven with fruit."¹⁵ Thus, Daniil depicts his closeness to the prince in concrete terms, he desires to see the prince's face and hear his voice. Such a concrete conception of closeness to the sovereign was preserved for a long time in Muscovite literature. In 16th-century works, "removal from the tsar's eyes" was understood to mean expulsion from the Privy Council.¹⁶

According to Daniil, the prince should be to his servants like a generous father. People will come to serve such a prince, even leaving their own parents. The Discourse also includes admonitions to the prince on the necessity of listening to good counsellors (dumtsy): "By conferring with good counsellors, the prince will obtain a prestigious domain, but by conferring with evil counsellors, the prince will be deprived of even a small domain."¹⁷ Deprived of the prince's protection, Daniil feels entirely

¹³ L. V. Sokolova, "K kharakteristike Slova Daniila Zatochnika (Rekonstruktsiya i interpretatsiya pervonachal'nogo teksta)," *TODRL* 46 (1993): 241. The Discourse was written in the first person, and so from now on I shall refer to the hero of the work as Daniil. By this name I am referring to the author's persona as it appears in the Discourse rather than to a concrete historical person, about whom we have virtually no information.

¹⁴ Sokolova, "K kharakteristike," 240.

¹⁵ Sokolova, "K kharakteristike," Appendix, 249, 250.

¹⁶ Cf. D. P. Golokhvastov, and Archimandrite Leonid, "Blagoveshchenskii ierei Sil'vestr i ego pisaniya," *Chteniya v Imperatorskom obshchestve istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh* (hereafter ChOISR), 1874, bk. 1, section *Issledovaniya*, 100.

¹⁷ Sokolova, "K kharakteristike," Appendix, 252, 253. Cf. I. U. Budovnik, *Obshchestvenno-politicheskaya mysl' Drevnei Rusi, XI-XIV vv.* (Moscow, 1960), 283-287.

defenceless. Addressing the prince, he says: "I am offended by everyone, for I am not enclosed by the fear of your majesty (groza)." And so, a person close to the prince could be calm and carefree only under the ruler's protection. This idea is elaborated upon by Daniil with reference to the Biblical image of carefree birds living under God's protection: "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, but they hope for God's mercy; likewise we, Lord, look for your mercy."¹⁸ Thus, the prince's protection is compared with the fatherly concern of God himself. The prince should be kind and generous to his servants, and at the same time inculcate them with fear; he must be awesome. Fear before the prince's groza is equated with the fear of God; servants are supposed to be afraid of the prince's punishments just like God's punishments.

And so, as early as the 12th and 13th centuries, the topos "prince and counsellors" was linked with the theme of the groza of princely power. The concept of groza was employed in a whole range of literary works in the 13th and 14th centuries. In particular, the Russian princes living at the beginning of the 14th century are described by the Old Russian authors with the aid of concepts relating to the word groza.¹⁹ Thus it was that even before the rise of Moscow the medieval Russian political culture included the idea that the ruler must be awesome and, at the same time, must listen to his good counsellors, defend them and enclose them with the fear of his groza.

The "sovereign-counsellors" topos was developed further in works associated with the victory over the Tartars on the Kulikovo Pole. The battle of Kulikovo Pole became the catalyst for the formation of early Muscovite ideology. A particular place in this ideology was assigned to Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich and his close aides. In particular, the "sovereign-counsellors" model is used in the *Zadonshchina* (Battle beyond the Don), a work which scholars date to the period between the 1380s and the 1470s. It ought to be noted that the author of the *Zadonshchina* attaches extraordinary importance to the theme of the Kievan heritage. In this work, Dmitrii Ivanovich conceives himself to be the successor and recipient of the glory of the Kievan princes being depicted as the defender of the "Russian land." In earlier works of literature, the concept "Russian land" was associated with Kiev, but in the *Zadonshchina* it is already taken to mean

¹⁸ Sokolova, "K kharakteristike," Appendix, 249, 250.

¹⁹ See M. Szeftel, "The Epithet *Groznyi* in Historical Perspective." In *Russia and Orthodoxy: Essays in Honor of Georges Florovsky*, ed. A. Blane, vol. II, *The Religious World of Russian Culture* (The Hague, Paris, 1975), 102–104.

Moscow.²⁰ The relationship between the Muscovite Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich and the boyars is also built up in line with the traditions of Kievan Rus'. In the times of Kievan Rus', the boyars were, first and foremost, the military comrades-in-arms of their prince. During the battle, Dmitrii Ivanovich also refers to his boyars as "brothers," and the relationship between Dmitrii and the boyars is likened in the *Zadonshchina* to that between comrades-in-arms fighting against a common foe. The grand prince addresses the boyars with the following words: "Here you will obtain places for yourselves and your wives. Here, brothers, the old man should grow younger, and the young man gain honour."²¹ It is interesting that in this address, there are none of the traditional appeals to defend the Christian faith or the Russian land. As is known, the boyars attached the greatest importance to an esteemed place in the prince's court. This is why in his appeal, the grand prince resorts to criteria which were comprehensible to the boyars. The position of a boyar's closest relatives also directly depended on his position, and it is not by chance that the grand prince reminds the boyars about their wives. Finally, the battle acts as a leveller between all its participants: the prince fights side by side with the boyars, the old boyars forget their age, and the young ones have the chance to attain military glory.

In the *Zadonshchina*, Dmitrii Ivanovich refers to some of his boyars by name. The first of them to be mentioned is Dmitrii Mikhailovich Volynskii, a privy counsellor of the grand prince (for more on him, see Chapter II). Dmitrii Ivanovich, addressing his cousin, Prince Vladimir Andreevich, says that his faithful boyars are ready to a man to "lay down their lives for the Russian land and the Christian faith."²² It is typical that the *Zadonshchina* concludes with a dialogue between Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich and the Muscovite boyar Mikhail Ivanovich. The grief-stricken boyar informs the prince of the number of fallen boyars from various towns and territories. In reply, Dmitrii Ivanovich says that all the boyars perished for the holy churches, the Russian land and for the Christian faith. By their death, the

²⁰ Ch. J. Halperin, "The Russian Land and the Russian Tsar: The Emergence of Muscovite Ideology, 1380–1408," *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte* 23 (Berlin, 1976): 14, 15.

²¹ *Pamyatniki literaturny Drevnei Rusi* (hereafter PLDR), XIV–seredina XV veka, 102–106.

²² PLDR, XIV–seredina XV veka, 104 (*Zadonshchina*), 125 (the Chronicle Tale about the Battle of Kulikovo Pole). Works of literature devoted to the battle of Kulikovo Pole include martyrologies of the boyars who perished during this conflict. For more on the martyrologies of those that died in the battle of Kulikovo Pole, see A. N. Kirpichnikov, "Velikoe Donskoe poboishche." In *Skazaniya i povesti o Kulikovskoi bitve* (Leningrad, 1982), 302–304.

boyars obtained honour and glory for Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich and his cousin Vladimir Andreevich.²³

Dmitrii Ivanovich's boyars are frequently referred to in another work on the battle of Kulikovo Pole, the *Skazanie o Mamaevom poboishche* (Tale of the Battle with Mamai). Specialists have established that this work was written in the period between the first quarter of the 15th century and the early 16th century.²⁴ In the *Skazanie* just as in the *Zadonshchina*, Dmitrii Ivanovich always acts in agreement with Prince Vladimir Andreevich and all the boyars. At the same time, the *Skazanie* describes the boyars' actions and their relations with the grand prince in greater detail than the *Zadonshchina*. For example, the *Skazanie* relates that the grand prince and the boyars together decided upon the organisation of the border guard and reconnaissance against the Tartars.²⁵ Prior to the battle, the grand prince's military commander Dmitrii Bobrok Volynets uses the fortune-telling ritual to predict the outcome of the conflict. He foretells that the prince will gain victory but his troops will incur heavy losses. On the advice of the "strong commander" Dmitrii Volynets, the grand prince arranges the Russian regiments on the eve of the battle. And so, the privy counsellor serves as a connecting link between the prince and the highest Pagan force, Mother Earth.²⁶ Through the counsellor, the prince learns of the prediction of victory, and in order to bring about the prediction, the grand prince follows the wise counsels of his trusted military commander.

One of the episodes in the *Skazanie* is of particular interest for the study of the "sovereign-counsellors" theme. Prior to the battle, Dmitrii Ivanovich swapped clothes with his privy boyar, Mikhail Andreevich Brenok and handed him the princely standard. Thinking that the grand prince himself was under the standard, the Tartars hurled all their forces forward to attack the man dressed in the grand prince's armour, and ulti-

²³ PLDR, XIV-seredina XV veka, 104, 110.

²⁴ L. A. Dmitriev dated the *Skazanie o Mamaevom poboishche* to the first quarter of the 15th century. B. M. Kloss has recently argued that the *Skazanie* was written in the period between 1513 and 1518. See L. A. Dmitriev, "Skazanie o Mamaevom poboishche." In SKK, II, part 2: 371–384; B. M. Kloss, "Ob avtore i vremeni sozdaniya Skazaniya o Mamaevom poboishche." In *In Memoriam. Sbornik pamyati Ya. S. Lur'e* (St. Petersburg, 1997), 253–262.

²⁵ PLDR, XIV-seredina XV veka, 142. One of the manuscripts of the *Skazanie* states that Dmitrii Ivanovich decided on the organisation of the border guard at a feast held by one of his privy boyars. See S. K. Shambinago, *Skazaniya o Mamaevom poboishche* (St. Petersburg, 1907), 21. Documents are extant about how the tsar's counsellors organised the border guard in 1571. For more details, see Chapter IV.

²⁶ PLDR, XIV-seredina XV veka, 155, 166, 168. See also M. N. Tikhomirov, "Kulikovskaya bitva 1380 goda." In *Povesti o Kulikovskoi bitve* (Moscow, 1959), 354–356. The fortune-telling ritual referred to in the *Skazanie* was of a pagan character. This is why Dmitrii Ivanovich, as a Christian ruler, could not personally take part in it.

mately Mikhail Brenok was killed. Dmitrii Ivanovich himself took part in the battle in the garment of a simple soldier. After the conflict, he could not be found for a long time, and everyone thought that the prince had perished. However, he was subsequently found, beaten and wounded, lying in the shade of a tree.

Scholars have interpreted the subject of Dmitrii Ivanovich's change of clothes as a manifestation of caution, military cunning or the personal prowess of the prince, who was not afraid to take part in the battle himself.²⁷ I think that these interpretations fail to take into account the dualism of the prince's image in the *Skazanie*. In a way, the figure of Dmitrii Ivanovich has two faces: one pointing towards the people, and the other turned towards God.²⁸ It is very important that, having given Brenok the armour and the standard, Dmitrii Ivanovich kept the life-giving cross with a piece of the tree on which Christ was crucified. M. Plyukhanova suggests that in the *Skazanie* this cross of Dmitrii Ivanovich serves only as a symbol of the Christian faith, but does not express the idea of an earthly Christian power. As is known, the symbol and instrument of power in the medieval consciousness was the cross of the Emperor Constantine.²⁹ Although the image of Constantine's cross is not thoroughly elaborated in the *Skazanie*, nonetheless the *Skazanie* stresses that the Lord's cross appeared to the Emperor Constantine in exactly the same form as it was seen by Dmitrii Ivanovich during the change of clothing with his boyar. Hence, the image of Dmitrii Ivanovich in the *Skazanie* approaches that of Constantine as a bearer of earthly Christian power. Without this power, Dmitrii could not have organised and led the campaign of the Christians against the infidels.

Thus it was that Dmitrii Ivanovich placed upon Brenok the regalia of his earthly power, yet retained the symbol of supreme divine power. The author of the *Skazanie* sought above all to show that, as the bearer of the divine essence, Dmitrii Ivanovich was left unharmed in the conflict with the infidels. If the vice-regent of God had perished, victory, too, would have been devoid of all sense. According to the *Skazanie*, the commanders dis-

²⁷ See M. N. Tikhomirov, "Kulikovskaya bitva 1380 goda," 369; L. A. Dmitriev, "K literaturnoi istorii Skazaniya o Mamaevom poboishche," *ibid.*, 429; Kirpichnikov, "Velikoe Donskoe poboishche," 294. In the opinion of A. N. Robinson, by changing clothes, Dmitrii Ivanovich was released from the norms of grand princely behaviour and gained a free hand in the battle. A. N. Robinson, "Evolyutsiya geroicheskikh obrazov v povest'yakh o Kulikovskoi bitve." In *Kulikovskaya bitva v literature i iskusstve* (Moscow, 1980), 22.

²⁸ M. Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People: Studies in Russian Myths* (New York, 1969), 27–29; Gail Lenhoff, "Unofficial Veneration of the Danilovichs in Muscovite Rus'." In *Culture and Identity in Muscovy*, 402–411.

²⁹ PLDR, XIV–seredina XV veka, 172; M. Plyukhanova, *Syuzhety i simvoly Moskovskogo tsarstva* (St. Petersburg, 1995), 132–133.

suaded Dmitrii Ivanovich from taking part in the battle, pointing out that if he were to perish, they would be left like a “flock of sheep without a shepherd... You, Sovereign, ought to save yourself, and us, too.”³⁰ In the *Skazanie*, the commanders compare Dmitrii Ivanovich to a shepherd, i.e., to Jesus Christ. Consequently, they address him as the vice-regent of God, under whose command they will gain victory over the non-Christians. At the same time, Plyukhanova emphasises that the “traditions of spiritual literature did not allow a simple victory or a simple death.”³¹ Therefore, in his reply to the commanders’ address, Dmitrii declares that he wants to die together with his troops “for the holy Christian faith.”³² Here, Dmitrii acts as a man-saint. According to the canons of hagiographical literature, a saint could die in the name of the Christian faith. Moreover, a martyr’s death was an important element in the biographies of many saints, since it was one of the signs that he was chosen by God. In particular, the *Skazanie* repeatedly mentions Saints Boris and Gleb, who died martyrs’ deaths, and who act as Dmitrii’s protectors in the battle. The *Skazanie* stresses that Dmitrii was their relative, and Dmitrii’s opponent, the Ryazan’ Prince Oleg, is referred to in the *Skazanie* as the “new Svyatopolk.”³³ Thus it was that the reader of the *Skazanie* was supposed to associate Dmitrii’s actions with the feats of Saints Boris and Gleb. In order for such an association to be complete, Dmitrii was supposed to suffer a martyr’s death, just as Boris and Gleb had done in their day. Without such a death, the image of Dmitrii as a princely saint would have been incomplete.

Yet, in reality, Dmitrii Ivanovich remained alive after the battle of Kulikovo Pole. This is why the *Skazanie* shows Dmitrii’s symbolical death through the demise of his privy counsellor. At a critical moment, the counsellor becomes endowed with some of the traits of the grand prince’s image, although the divine essence of the grand princely power remains with Dmitrii Ivanovich himself. Thus, the dualism of the prince’s figure is realised in the *Skazanie* through the figure of the close counsellor. Only the most worthy of the boyars can become the prince’s double, and so the *Skazanie* stresses in particular that Dmitrii Ivanovich loved Brenok dearly and regarded him as his “confidant” and “brother.”³⁴ After the battle, Dmitrii Ivanovich finds the bodies of Brenok and others of his close aides

³⁰ PLDR, XIV–seredina XV veka, 172. Cf. *ibid.*, 180.

³¹ Plyukhanova, *Syuzhety*, 77.

³² PLDR, XIV–seredina XV veka, 174.

³³ PLDR, XIV–seredina XV veka, 138. Svyatopolk was the murderer of Saints Boris and Gleb.

³⁴ PLDR, XIV–seredina XV veka, 172, 184. Cf. Plyukhanova, *Syuzhety*, 77; L. A. Abramyan, “Ob idee dvoichestva po nekotorym etnograficheskim i fol’klornym dannym,” *Istoriko-filologicheskii zhurnal*, 1977, no. 2: 186–190.

fallen in battle. Over Brenok's corpse he utters words full of tears and the bitterness of loss: "What a servant can thus serve his lord like this man, who voluntary went to his death for my sake!"³⁵ In order to underline the loyalty of the boyars to the Muscovite prince even more forcefully, the author of the *Skazanie* employs examples from translated literary works. The commanders that perished for Dmitrii Ivanovich are compared to Avissa, the faithful servant of the Persian King Darius.³⁶

Thus, the chief hero of the *Skazanie*, Dmitrii Ivanovich, is surrounded by loyal counsellors who help him prepare for the decisive battle with the Tartars, actively take part in that battle and are not afraid to sacrifice their lives for their sovereign. On the other hand, the negative character in the work, the Ryazan' Prince Oleg Ivanovich cannot reach agreement with his boyars. These boyars are afraid to pass on to their master the important information that Dmitrii Ivanovich is being supported by the authoritative monk Sergei of Radonezh. When Oleg belatedly learns of this, he comes down on his privy counsellors with furious reproaches.³⁷ This evil ruler's counsellors are thus afraid to speak openly and directly. Bereft of worthy advice, the wicked ruler commits more and more mistakes.

In Muscovite political ideology, the image of Dmitrii Ivanovich was represented as that of the Russian Tsar, Tsar of the Russian Land. Such an interpretation was particularly clearly evident in the *Vita* of Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich (*Slovo o zhitii i o prestavlenii velikogo knyazya Dmitriya Ivanovicha*). As Ch. Halperin has pointed out, the words "the tsar of the Russian Land" mean that "the ruler was the supreme power in his own domain." Dmitrii Ivanovich held the plenitude of power over the Russian Land, and brought it peace. Thus the myth of the Russian land was subsumed to the myth of the ruler, with the image of the loyal counsellors being one of the essential parts of the Russian Tsar myth.³⁸ In the *Vita*, among Dmitrii Ivanovich's numerous merits, reference is made to the fact that "he united the Russian princes in his land, was peaceful and polite towards his grandees, offended no one, but loved everyone equally."³⁹ Before his death,

³⁵ PLDR, XIV-seredina XV veka, 170, 184, 187.

³⁶ The story of Avissa was preserved in the southern Slavonic reworking of the Greek tale of Alexander the Great (known as the Serbian *Aleksandriya*). For the sake of his master, Avissa wanted to carry out the assassination of Alexander the Great, but his plan was not crowned with success. Alexander the Great learnt of the planned attack and ordered Avissa to be seized. Nevertheless, Alexander forgave the courageous Persian. Serbian *Aleksandriya* was translated by the southern Slavs no later than the 14th century. This work appeared in Muscovy in the 15th century. See PLDR, XIV-seredina XV veka, 558; PLDR, Vtoraya polovina XV veka, 80, 82.

³⁷ PLDR, XIV-seredina XV veka, 156.

³⁸ Halperin, "The Russian Land," 76, 80.

³⁹ PLDR, XIV-seredina XV veka, 214.

Dmitrii Ivanovich gives the following admonitions to his successor Vasili: "Love your boyars, give them worthy honours according to their deeds, do nothing against them, be affable to all..." Dmitrii also addresses the boyars:

With you I have ruled, I have held the grand principality, my patrimony, twenty seven years, I have great honour and great love for you ... and I have committed no evil to any of you. I have not taken anything from you by force, not vexed you, nor reproached you, not looted you(r property), nor dishonoured you, but honoured and loved all, but acted in great honour, rejoiced and mourned with you; you should not be called my boyars, but the princes of my land.⁴⁰

The boyars, promising to serve Dmitrii Ivanovich faithfully, are prepared to die for the great prince: "Lord Russian Tsar! we have promised to lay down our lives serving you; and now, for your sake, we will shed our blood and with it gain a second baptism."⁴¹ As is known, baptism constitutes an outward act of acceptance into the church community. There also existed what was known as a "baptism of blood," which signified the suffering of those that died a martyr's death, and were not able to be baptised with holy water. For the boyars, to shed blood for Dmitrii Ivanovich signified being baptised, i.e., to once again enter the church community, to be purged spiritually. Consequently, the prince is presented here as the incarnation of Christ, and his boyars as martyrs ready to suffer for the Master. Thus, readiness to die for the prince signified at the same time a willingness to die *pro fide*.

Researchers have tried to link the depiction of the boyars in the Vita of Dmitrii Ivanovich with the concrete political situation of one or another period of Russian history. It has been considered that the high assessment of the boyars given in the Vita could only have emerged in circumstances where the boyars played a particularly important role in the politics of the Muscovite state. Depending on various dates of composition, it has been considered that the image of the boyars in the Vita reflects the practice at the end of the 14th century or the period of intestine war in the mid-15th century. In recent years, the dating of the Vita has been brought forward to the 16th century.⁴² Such a broad chronological framework, from the end

⁴⁰ PLDR, XIV–seredina XV veka, 216. Translated by Ch. Halperin. See his "The Russian Land," 71.

⁴¹ PLDR, XIV–seredina XV veka, 212; Cherniavsky, Tsar and People, 26–27; Halperin, "The Russian Land," 77.

⁴² See V. P. Adrianova-Perets, "Slovo o zhitii i o prestavlenii velikogo knyazya Dmitriya Ivanovicha, tsarya Rus'skogo," TODRL 5 (1947): 73–96; M. A. Salmina, "Slovo o zhitii i o prestavlenii velikogo knyazya Dmitriya Ivanovicha, tsarya Rus'skogo: pamyatnik XVI veka?" In Problemy izucheniya kul'turnogo naslediya (Moscow, 1985), 159–162; Halperin, "The Russian Land," 71.

of the 14th century to the 16th century, shows that the relations between the prince and the boyars depicted in the Vita must not be directly associated with any events of political history. Thanks to its ideological flexibility, the ideas expressed in the Vita could be used in a wide range of political situations.⁴³ Using the image of the privy counsellor, the authors of literary works reveal the dualism of the prince's image. The behaviour of the counsellors is used to depict the divine essence of the prince. The boyars are the indispensable companions and aides of the chief, the positive hero and holy prince.

Throughout the 15th century, Muscovite writers developed the image of the true Christian ruler and the collective image of his privy counsellors. The theme of the counsellors often came up in connection with stories about the Tartar invasions. The Old Russian authors endeavoured to show in their works that the positive hero can suffer or endure failure if his counsellors do not display unity and agreement. An example of this can be found in the Tale of the Invasion of Tokhtamysh (*Povest' o nashestvii Tokhtamysha*). The Tale of Tokhtamysh relates the destruction of Moscow by the Tartar Khan Tokhtamysh in 1382. When he learnt of Tokhtamysh's invasion, the recent victor, Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich, left his capital and decided not to fight the enemy. Such behaviour by the grand prince must have had some kind of explanation. The early versions of the Tale of Tokhtamysh appearing in 1408 still did not mention anything about the counsellors, and so Dmitrii's decision to abandon Moscow seemed to be poorly justified. Later, probably by 1418, a new, expanded version of the Tale of Tokhtamysh was made.⁴⁴ The indecisive behaviour of the grand prince was now tied to discord among his counsellors. When he received news of Tokhtamysh's approach, Dmitrii Ivanovich convened a meeting of princes, commanders, counsellors, grandees and elder boyars. The counsellors deliberated for a long time, but, in the end, the princes did not want to help each other. Seeing the disagreement among his counsellors, Dmitrii Ivanovich did not have the courage to encounter the Tartars. Thus, on this occasion, the grand prince failed to receive the assistance of his counsellors. After the grand prince's departure from Moscow, power in the city

⁴³ See H. Goldblatt, "Confessional and National Identity in Early Muscovite Literature: The Discourse on the Life and Death of Dmitrii Ivanovich Donskoi." In *Culture and Identity in Muscovy*, 86–87; Bushkovitch, "The Formation," 364–366.

⁴⁴ See *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* (hereafter PSRL), XV, columns 143–147; XXIII, 128; XXV, 207; V. P. Grebenyuk, "Bor'ba s ordynskimi zavoevatel'nykh posle Kulikovskoi bitvy i ee otrazhenie v pamyatnikakh literatury pervoi poloviny XV veka." In *Kulikovskaya bitva v literature*, 56–60.

passed into the hands of a townspeople's assembly (veche). This assembly is described by the author of the Tale of Tokhtamysh in negative tones. The principal role in the assembly is played by the "rebellious people," "bad people" and "plotters," who do not want to listen to either the metropolitan or the "best boyars."⁴⁵ The main reason for the devastation of Moscow, according to the author of the Tale of Tokhtamysh lies in the absence of unity among the grand prince's counsellors and in the reluctance of the townspeople to listen to the counsels of the metropolitan and the wise boyars.

The "sovereign-counsellors" topos can also be found in literary works critical of the Muscovite princes. An example of this kind can be found in the Tale of the Invasion of Moscow by the Tartar Khan Edigei in 1408 (Povest' o nashestvii Edigeya). A version of the Tale of Edigei made in Tver' in about 1413 has been preserved to the present day. In this version, the author criticises the Muscovite Grand Prince Vasili I for the union with Edigei, concluded not long before the Tartar khan's invasion of Moscow. Thanks to this union, the Tartars obtained valuable information about the Russian army and were able to prepare their raid well. In order to make an assessment of Vasili I's actions, the author of the Tale of Edigei enlists a variety of opinions expressed by the grand prince's boyars. The boyars are divided into two categories, the elder and the young. In the Tale of Edigei the elder boyars pronounce: "Can anything be good that did not exist in our days and was not heard of in ancient times?"⁴⁶ The elder boyars thereby serve as the preservers of tradition, they are regarded as being the wisest, they possess immense experience, and remember the days of the Kievan princes. Such an understanding of the role of the elderly can be traced back to Biblical tradition. The people of the Bible looked upon longevity as the special blessing of God, and an abundance of elderly people in any country served as a sign and proof of peace and prosperity. Many years' experience endowed elderly people with a special capacity to fulfil a variety of responsible duties.⁴⁷

The Tale of Edigei contrasts the elder boyars with the young boyars. According to the tale, it was precisely the young boyars who advised Vasili I to conclude a union with the Tartars for the battle against Lithuania. Such

⁴⁵ PLDR, XIV-seredina XV veka, 192.

⁴⁶ PLDR, XIV-seredina XV veka, 248.

⁴⁷ For a collection of corresponding references to the Bible, see Nikifor, Archimandrite, *Illyustrirovannaya polnaya bibleiskaya entsiklopediya* (hereafter *Entsiklopediya*) 2 (Moscow, 1891; reprint, Moscow, 1990), 183.

advice (*duma*) from young boyars provoked the disapproval of the elder boyars. When this decision was taken in Moscow there were no elder boyars present, and the young boyars acted entirely against tradition, and “not according to the established procedure.”⁴⁸ The Tale of Edigei concludes with an admonition that the young ought to respect the elders. In particular, the young must not act without authorisation (*samochinstvovat'*) in the governing of the land. Each person must remember the Holy Scriptures, where the advice of the elders is equated with the advice of a father. It is not by chance that in Jerusalem it was an elder and one of the counsellors who was regarded as a prophet. These admonitions by the author of the Tale are addressed to “our sovereigns” (*k vlastitelyam nashim*), i.e., to the grand prince himself. Worthy of note is the fact that Grand Prince Vasili I is referred to in the Tale of Edigei as an Orthodox autocrat (*pravoslavnyi samoderzhets*).⁴⁹ Consequently, the author of the Tale of Edigei considered that the concept of autocratic power incorporated an obligation to listen to the elder counsellors in just the same way as people in Biblical times listened to the prophets.

The concept of “elder boyars” only partly referred to their age. Naturally, in order to merit the particular trust of the prince, a boyar had to serve at the court for many years. Particularly valued were those boyars who had served under the father of the grand prince (in a way, such boyars brought about the continuity of power). However, of no less importance was the other, hierarchical meaning of the concept “elder boyars,” that is, experienced counsellors. The elder boyars were those counsellors, who, thanks to long and faithful service, had gained profound knowledge and experience of state affairs. The division between “elder” and “junior” boyars had occurred not only on the basis of political and social categories but on account of the sacral understanding of advice. Whoever gave the ruler unsuitable advice was a “junior” boyar because only a new, young person could give such a worthless piece of advice.⁵⁰

In my view, the fact that the Tale of Edigei stresses the youth of some of the counsellors can be seen as an exoneration of these counsellors. The

⁴⁸ PLDR, XIV-seredina XV veka, 248.

⁴⁹ PLDR, XIV-seredina XV veka, 244, 255.

⁵⁰ See V. Val'denberg, “Ponyatie o tirane v drevnerusskoi literature v sravnenii s zapadnoi,” *Izvestiya po russkomu yazyku i literature* 2 (1929): 214; Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 122. Cf. L. V. Cherepnin, *Obrazovanie Russkogo tsentralizovannogo gosudarstva v XIV-XV vekakh* (Moscow, 1960), 546, 720–729. The political position of the elder boyars on concrete issues is expounded in the sources in a contradictory manner. See Ya. S. Lur'e, “Povesti o nashestvii Edigeya.” In SKK, II, part 2: 197–201.

bad advice of the young boyars can be explained, and therefore partly be excused by their youth. The evil committed by the young counsellors is akin to a physical evil, like illnesses and other ailments. The young counsellors can deliver themselves from this evil if they are able to obtain wisdom and experience, if they start listening to their elder comrades. Yet, on the whole, such justifications were not typical of medieval Russian culture, and so the image of the young counsellors was not developed in early Russian literature. Usually, the medieval Russian texts presented the characters either as righteous men performing deeds pleasing to God or as miscreants through whom the Devil worked. These diametrically opposed categories were also employed in the depiction of the prince's counsellors. In particular, this approach is used to relate one of the most dramatic episodes of the intestine war of the mid-15th century, the blinding of Grand Prince Vasilii Dmitrievich (1456). In the chronicle tale devoted to this event, the prince-conspirators planning to blind the grand prince are acting at the suggestion of the Devil. They are assisted by evil counsellors, "boyars with evil intentions toward their sovereigns and all Christendom."⁵¹

Wicked counsellors are also frequently mentioned in the epistle of the Rostov Archbishop Vassian Rylo to Grand Prince Ivan III (after 1480).⁵² Vassian approached the grand prince in connection with the confrontation of the Russian and Tartar troops on the border river Ugra. Judging by Vassian's epistle, some counsellors urged the grand prince to make concessions to the Tartar Khan Akhmat. These counsellors regarded the Tartar khan as a tsar. They said that their ancestors vowed to Ivan III not to resist the power of a tsar, even that of a Tartar khan, since any tsar's power is bestowed by God. Vassian was a resolute opponent of such views and convinced the grand prince not to listen to such advice. In his dispute with the "evil counsellors," Vassian employed the traditional model of relations between the sovereign and his privy advisors. The arguments used by Vassian are particularly interesting, since his epistle was very popular in the 16th century. It was included in the chronicle and used in many epistles addressed to Ivan IV.⁵³

When referring to the arguments of Vassian and his opponents, it must be noted that all those involved in the polemics appealed for confirmation of their views to the image of Dmitrii Ivanovich Donskoi. The "evil coun-

⁵¹ PLDR, XIV–seredina XV veka, 504.

⁵² PLDR, Vtoraya polovina XV veka, 522–537.

⁵³ I. M. Kudryavtsev, "Poslanie na Ugru Vassiana Rylo kak pamyatnik publitsistiki XV v.," TODRL 8 (1951): 182.

sellors” convinced Ivan III to refrain from conflict with the Tartars, in the same way as Dmitrii Ivanovich did during the invasion of Tokhtamysh. Vassian reminds Ivan III of other actions of Dmitrii Ivanovich, of his victory on the Kulikovo Pole, of his readiness “to suffer unto death for the faith and the holy churches,” and of his willingness to “emulate the ancient martyrs.” According to Vassian, Grand Prince Ivan III, as a descendant of Dmitrii Donskoi, has also been appointed by the Holy Spirit to preserve “Christ’s flock.”⁵⁴ In the exposition of his epistle, Vassian recalls that, at a difficult time, Grand Prince Ivan III came to Moscow to the “virtuous princes and God-fearing boyars” for help, “for good advice and counsel on how to stand firm for Orthodox Christianity, for one’s fatherland against the godless infidels.” Having listened to good advice, the grand prince promised to defend the Orthodox faith and fatherland. It ought to be emphasised that in Vassian’s epistle, Ivan III is referred to as “crowned by God ... the highest among tsars and the glorious sovereign of all Rus’” (Bogom venchannyi, ... samyi presveteishii sredi tsarei i preslavnyi gosudar’ vseya Rusi).⁵⁵ And so, Vassian’s notion is that the head of state, appointed by God himself, must nevertheless keep to his promise made to the good counselors.

Who can prevent the grand prince from fulfilling his high mission? It is people that offer stupid advice, “flatterers” (l’stetsy) whispering their “deceitful words” (obmannye slova) in the grand prince’s ears. It is precisely they who want to betray Christianity, “to betray the articulate flock of Christ’s sheep to the plundering of enemies” (predat’ na raskhishenie vragam slovesnoe stado Khristovyykh ovets). Developing the Biblical images of the shepherd and his flock, Vassian introduces a new simile, comparing the evil counsellor to a “spiritual wolf” (myslennyi volk).⁵⁶ This image, undoubtedly, can be traced back to the Gospel denunciation of false prophets, of whom Christ says: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves.”⁵⁷ Using the Holy Scriptures, Vassian admonishes the prince on how to deal with the intimate counsellors. Vassian enlists a quotation from St. Paul’s Epistle to

⁵⁴ PLDR, Vtoraya polovina XV veka, 529, 531, 673. By “the articulate flock of Christ” Vassian means “God’s chosen Russian people.” See Kudryavtsev, “Poslanie na Ugru Vassiana Rylo,” 170.

⁵⁵ PLDR, Vtoraya polovina XV veka, 522, 524.

⁵⁶ PLDR, Vtoraya polovina XV veka, 530. The expression “spiritual wolf” is encountered in one of the ancient manuscripts, the Izbornik of Svyatoslav (11th century). In the 16th century, Prince A. M. Kurbskii employed a similar expression, “spiritual lion” (myslennyi lev). See Fennell, *The Correspondence*, 203, note 4.

⁵⁷ Matthew, 7: 15.

the Romans, aimed “against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.” These people “became vain in their imaginations,” “professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,” because “they did not like to retain God in their knowledge.”⁵⁸ Vassian explains how such people are to be dealt with, using the words of the Sermon on the Mount:

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee.⁵⁹

Vassian’s commentary to these words is particularly important for his understanding of relations between the sovereign and the counsellor. Vassian indicates that the quoted words need to be understood in a figurative sense: the hand, leg or eye are the privy counsellors who advise on committing an incorrect action. The sovereign should decisively banish such people from his presence, as it were, cut them off, and not listen to their counsels. Vassian’s idea that wicked counsellors ought to be shunned was not new to early Russian literature. Something else was of far greater importance: for Vassian the sovereign and his counsellor are so close to each other that they can be suitably described using the Biblical metaphor of the human body. To banish a close person is equivalent to severing one’s own hand and gouging out one’s eye. Such a step can be taken only in the most extreme case, if the counsellor willingly or unwillingly begins to harm his sovereign, for example, if he forces the ruler to renege on his promise or on the fulfilment of his duties to defend the faith and fatherland.

It is worthy of note that, in his epistle, Vassian still does not directly associate the actions of wicked counsellors with the intrigues of the Devil. For Vassian, the evil perpetrated by bad counsellors bears kind of dual character. On the one hand, it is still a physical evil, akin to illness, infecting one of the organs of the human body. On the other hand, Vassian refers to evil counsellors as “flattering spirits” (*l’stivye dukhi*). Flattery was associated with the Devil and the highest form of evil, namely sin and immorality.⁶⁰ The chroniclers drawing on Vassian’s epistle develop both conceptions of the evil caused by the counsellors. The Rostov Chronicle Compilation of 1484

⁵⁸ Romans, 1: 18, 21, 22, 28; PLDR, Vtoraya polovina XV veka, 526.

⁵⁹ Matthew, 5: 29, 30; PLDR, Vtoraya polovina XV veka, 526.

⁶⁰ See V. V. Kalugin, *Andrei Kurbskii i Ivan Grozny: Teoreticheskie vzglyady i literaturnaya tekhnika drevnerusskogo pisatelya* (Moscow, 1998), 176.

stresses the mercantile interests of evil counsellors, and they are referred to as “money-lovers,” “rich” and “big-bellied” (*srebrolyubtsy, bogatye, bryukhatye*). At the same time, the chronicler develops the theme of supreme evil. He writes that the Devil acts through the utterances of wicked counsellors as he did in Biblical times when he tempted Adam and Eve by means of the serpent.⁶¹ The actions of wicked counsellors are similarly described in official chronicle compilations from the end of the 15th century. In particular, some additions were made to the story of events on the Ugra river in the Muscovite Grand-Princely Compilation (*Moskovskii velikoknyazheskii svod*) from the first half of the 1490s. In these additions it was stressed that evil counsellors “render the sovereign evil counsel against Christianity” (*sovetuyut gosudaryu na zlo khristianskoe*). A direct link between Mammon and the Devil was also indicated.⁶² The theme of supreme evil received its final visual form in the miniatures of the Illustrated Chronicle Compilation (*Litsevoi letopisnyi svod*) produced under Ivan IV. One of these miniatures depicts a detachment led by Ivan III, with the Devil drawn in the front rows.⁶³ Thus, the evil borne by unworthy counsellors has finally taken the form of sin committed under the Devil’s delusion.

The bloodless victory over the Tartars on the Ugra in 1480 together with the council on church union in Florence (1439) and the taking of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 influenced the conceptions of the Russian ruler’s power. After the Council of Florence and the fall of Byzantium, Russia was the only independent Orthodox state, with the exception of the politically weak Georgia. When the ideas proposed by the Council of Florence about the reunification of the Orthodox and Catholic churches were decisively rejected in Muscovy, Orthodox ideologists began to regard Moscow as the new Constantinople, i.e., the sole stronghold of Orthodoxy. Against the background of these new ideas, the conceptions of the Muscovite sovereign as the defender of Orthodoxy against any outside influence were significantly strengthened. After the collapse of the power of the Byzantine emperor and of the Tartar khan, i.e., the rulers who had been treated by the Russians as tsars, the Russian writers began to regard the Muscovite sovereign as the tsar. In Russia, calling the monarch the tsar

⁶¹ PSRL, XXIV, 200. The publication in PSRL is based on the Synod manuscript copy of the chronicle. In this manuscript the evil counsellors are incorrectly referred to as Christian *predstateli* (i.e., leaders). The correct reading of *predateli* (betrayers) is found in the Tolstoi manuscript (*ibid.*, note 55). For more on the connection between the Rostov Chronicle Compilation and Vassian’s epistle, see Ya. S. Lur’e, *Ideologicheskaya bor’ba v russkoi publitsistike kontsa XV–nachala XVI veka* (Moscow, 1960), 373.

⁶² PSRL, XXV, 328. Cf. *ibid.*, XVIII, 263.

⁶³ See Kudryavtsev, “Poslanie na Ugru Vassiana Rylo,” 173.

had primarily a religious implication: in his relations with his subjects, the tsar took on the role of God, and only in his relations with God does the human nature of the tsar come to the fore. Yet it took a relatively long time for this concept of the tsar's power to be established in Muscovy. The process of assimilating these ideas began in the mid-15th century and culminated in Ivan IV's coronation as tsar in 1547.⁶⁴ Worthy of note is that by this time, the mid-16th century, the genre of admonitions and teachings addressed to the sovereign by spiritual and secular persons had become extraordinarily popular in Muscovy.⁶⁵ This was no coincidence, of course. Creating the ideology of autocracy, the Muscovite writers actively drew on the ideas about the relationship between the sovereign and his counsellors borrowed from Byzantine and Old Russian literary works.

The literary tradition provided the Muscovite ideologists with a ready topos of "sovereign-counsellor." By means of this topos, they were able to reveal the mystical character of the tsar's power, to show the dual nature of the monarch, incorporating a human and a divine essence. As 16th-century Muscovy was not yet familiar with special theories on the governing of the state, the "sovereign-counsellor" topos was employed in the Muscovite authors' discourses for practically all themes associated with statecraft. In the 16th century, when the ideologists elaborated the conception of the tsar's power, and functionaries created the state administration, the theme of "sovereign and counsellor" became particularly topical. The universal nature of the "sovereign-counsellor" model ensured its uncommon popularity with a whole range of 16th-century authors. It was referred to by publicists, who tend to be associated with a variety of, sometimes opposed, ideological trends – Maksim the Greek, Ivan Peresvetov, Ermolai Erazm, the author of the *History of Kazan'*, Ivan the Terrible, A. M. Kurbskii and numerous others. I shall endeavour below to show that all these authors share common ideas about the relationship between the sovereign and his counsellors. The 16th-century Muscovite publicists developed individual aspects of the "sovereign-counsellor" model inherited from authors of earlier periods, and skilfully used this model for their own particular purposes. Thus, the "sovereign-counsellors" topos gradually became the ideological model employed in literary works and in political practice.

⁶⁴ See Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People*, 36–43; B. A. Uspenskii, V. M. Zhivov, "Tsar' i Bog: semioticheskie aspekty sakralizatsii monarkha v Rossii." In B. A. Uspenskii, *Izbrannye trudy* 1 (Moscow, 1994), 112–122; N. V. Sinitsyna, "Itogi izucheniya kontseptsii 'Tret'ego Rima' i sbornik Ideya Rima v Moskve." In *Nasledie*, 16–42.

⁶⁵ See N. V. Sinitsyna, *Maksim Grek v Rossii* (Moscow, 1977), 212.

At the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century, the well-known literary text *Secretum Secretorum* (Tainaya Tainykh) was translated in Muscovy. W. F. Ryan has convincingly shown that the Tainaya Tainykh was one of the sources of Muscovite political ideas.⁶⁶ The Tainaya Tainykh is constructed as a cycle of teachings, supposedly given by Aristotle to Alexander the Great. Aristotle's teachings concern a great range of issues, but one of the principal themes of the Tainaya Tainykh is the art of statecraft. Thus, the issue of the relationship between the ruler and his counsellors occupies a significant place in this work. In particular, in the Tainaya Tainykh Aristotle says that the ruler must not take decisions under the influence of anger and without conferring with the boyars. He ought to act with circumspection, asking worthy people for advice. One section of the work is devoted to the figure of the steward whom the sovereign needs to confer with on every "minor and major matter." The ruler must be able to determine the steward's disposition, and attention ought to be drawn not to the steward's age but to the correctness of his acts. Aristotle quotes a whole list of qualities which a worthy steward ought to possess, and these include both moral and physical requirements. In particular, the steward is obliged to be judicious and wise, to quickly grasp what he is told, have a pleasant appearance, dress well, be familiar with the sciences, love the truth, refrain from drunkenness and other excesses, despise money and not take bribes, direct all his thoughts to strengthening the prince's honour, be able to write quickly, and be aware of past events and of the customs of other nations. Aristotle warns Alexander that if the steward's advice contradicts the sovereign's wish that means that it is correct advice. Like Photius' writings, the Tainaya Tainykh stresses that a relative or person in a similar position to the ruler himself must not be appointed steward. Besides the steward, the Tainaya Tainykh presents a description of other privy servants and counsellors of the sovereign. One of them is the keeper of the seal, who preserves the sovereign's honour, runs the court and is familiar with the laws. A place of honour in the sovereign's entourage is also ascribed to the secretaries (pisari) who keep the sovereign's secrets and put the ruler's thoughts on paper. Referring to the ruler's council, Aristotle warns that foreigners must not be admitted to the council, apart from those that are well known to the ruler.⁶⁷ The Tainaya Tainykh

⁶⁶ W. F. Ryan, "The *Secretum Secretorum* and the Muscovite Autocracy." In *Pseudo-Aristotle. The Secret of Secrets: Sources and Influences*, ed. W. F. Ryan and Ch. B. Schmitt. Warburg Institute Surveys 11 (London, 1982), 118–119.

⁶⁷ PLDR, Konets XV–pervaya polovina XVI veka, 544, 552, 562, 564, 566

emphasises that the privy counsellors had to be of the same faith as the ruler and must believe in the Holy Scriptures.

Admonitions concerning the privy counsellors in no way limit the ruler's power. The *Tainaya Tainykh* quotes the words of a Persian tsar addressed to his son: "You must consult, because you are alone among people." And so, precisely because of his exceptional position, the ruler must consult "with whoever is experienced, and humble, and the best in terms of his mind and behaviour," with whoever "has not been found guilty of carelessness towards the worthy and just tsardom."⁶⁸ According to the *Tainaya Tainykh*, the desire to consult is a quality of a worthy and just autocratic tsar.

The qualities of a worthy tsar featured frequently in the works of the well-known church publicist Joseph of Volok (died 1515). He was the first Muscovite author to use in his writings the complete Slavonic translation of Agapetus. In his epistle to the grand prince (probably in 1507), Joseph employs quotations from Agapetus about the dual nature of the tsar: "by his nature, the tsar is like a man, but by his power he is like almighty God." At the same time, Joseph quotes another excerpt from Agapetus, which states that the tsar should adhere firmly to good laws.⁶⁹ In another epistle to Prince Yurii Ivanovich, written after 1505, Joseph emphasises that if the sovereign wants to merit the merciful attitude of God, he must himself treat his servitors (*podruchniki*) with mercy.⁷⁰ Joseph's works contain the admonitions traditionally found in Old Russian literature that the tsar must keep "his flock" from the wolves, i.e., malicious people.⁷¹ Referring to the grand prince's actions, Joseph approvingly stresses that the sovereign has decided to take Joseph's monastery under his control after consultation with his princes and boyars.⁷² Joseph also touches upon the issue of consultations in his Monastic Rule (completed by 1514/15). David Goldfrank has justly proposed the analogy of monastic council–abbot relations as they are described in Monastic Rule to the political structure of the Muscovite state.⁷³ When describing these relations, Joseph admonishes his spiritual

⁶⁸ PLDR, Konets XV–pervaya polovina XVI veka, 560.

⁶⁹ *Poslaniya Iosifa Volotskogo*, ed. A. A. Zimin, Ya. S. Lur'e (Moscow, Leningrad, 1959), 184. See also Ya. S. Lur'e, "Iosif Volotskii kak publitsist i obshchestvennyi deyatel'," *ibid.*, 90–93; ev'enko, "A Neglected Byzantine Source," 158–159.

⁷⁰ *Poslaniya Iosifa Volotskogo*, 232, 233.

⁷¹ *Poslaniya Iosifa Volotskogo*, 230 (Joseph's epistle to Vasilii III on heretics, written in 1510/11).

⁷² *Poslaniya Iosifa Volotskogo*, 220.

⁷³ D. Goldfrank, "Old and New Perspectives on Iosif Volotsky's Monastic Rules," *Slavic Review* 34 (1975), no. 2: 294.

brothers to model themselves upon the imitation of God. He clarifies this idea through the following quotation from Basil the Great: "If the superior carries out God's legislation with precision, he is nothing less than someone with the persona of our Lord." According to Joseph, the pre-eminent brothers under Basil the Great carefully imitated the life of the Apostles and the Lord: "In the place of the Lord Christ, they have the persona of the superior, and in place of the twelve apostles they have chosen twelve brothers pre-eminent in worthiness and intelligence."⁷⁴

According to Joseph's conceptions, subjects were meant to serve the tsar with humility. The concepts of humility and pride played a highly important ethical role in the political behaviour of medieval Russians. Yet humility was not identified with blind obedience. According to the medieval Russian conception, the hierarchy of the universe was crowned by God, and so when serving the earthly ruler one must not overlook service to God.⁷⁵ And there had to be a limit to service. According to Joseph of Volok, the tsar was to be served "with the body, but not with the soul."⁷⁶

It ought to be noted that in the works examined above, the topos of the "sovereign and his counsellors" was not the basic theme of the tale, but was touched upon during the authors' other discourses. Yet in order to interpret the ideas of the medieval authors correctly, the researcher must have at his disposal works which are directly devoted to the theme under examination.⁷⁷ The issue of the relations between the ruler and his counsellors was so important for Muscovite authors that in the 16th century they began producing works specially devoted to this theme. Probably the first writer to produce a separate work on the theme of "sovereign-counsellor" was the well-known publicist and translator Maksim the Greek (ca. 1470–1555).⁷⁸ He was the author of numerous polemical works directed

⁷⁴ D. Goldfrank, ed., trans., *The Monastic Rule of Iosif Volotsky* (Cistercian Studies Series, no. 36; Kalamazoo, 1983), 156, 167. I am grateful to David Goldfrank for bringing this source to my attention.

⁷⁵ O. V. Ryabov, "Gordynya i smirenje v eticheskoi motivatsii podchineniya vlasti v sredn-evekovoi Rusi." In *Mentalitet i politicheskoe razvitie Rossii*, ed. A. A. Gorskii and others (Moscow, 1996), 28–30. Cf. Lur'e, "Iosif Volotskii kak publitsist," 46–47.

⁷⁶ "Istochniki po istorii ereticheskikh dvizhenii XIV–nachala XVI v." In N. A. Kazakova, Ya. S. Lur'e, *Antifeodal'nye ereticheskie dvizheniya na Rusi XIV–nachala XVI v.* (Moscow, Leningrad, 1955), 346.

⁷⁷ See P. Bushkovitch, "The Life of Saint Filipp: Tsar and Metropolitan in the Late Sixteenth Century." In *Medieval Russian Culture*, II, 31.

⁷⁸ Prior to his arrival in Russia, Maksim the Greek lived for a while in Italy, where he conversed with many Renaissance intellectuals. He then became a monk at the Mount Athos monastery, and in 1518 arrived in Moscow to translate the Psalter at the invitation of Grand Prince Vasili III. In Moscow, a circle of educated people gathered around Maksim. He took an active part in examining many issues of Russian life. For his polemical writings, Maksim was twice tried.

against Catholicism, astrology and monastery land-ownership. Maksim's bibliography contains ten works devoted specifically to matters of statecraft.⁷⁹ Among them is one small piece which is specially devoted to the sovereign's privy counsellors:

The eagle is the most glorious among birds because it rises to an immense height by the great force of its wings; on the earth, among all those holding power, the worthiest is the tsar who always rules his kingdom and fights with his enemies with the aid of good and wise (blagokhytrennye) counsellors and of military commanders with strong spirits.⁸⁰

As was shown above, Vassian Rylo regarded the sovereign and his counsellors as a single organism. Maksim the Greek develops this conception with the aid of the eagle image, which in Biblical symbolism has several connotations. Its best-known interpretation is as a symbol of the force and might of tsars and heroes. At the same time, the eagle often serves as a model of pride, arrogance and conceit, and so it is often portrayed in the Bible as a symbol of rapid fall, destruction and oblivion.⁸¹ A similar duality in the image of the eagle is also reflected in the *Tainaya Tainykh*, where it is said that the "best tsar is like an eagle, and around him there is nothing but carrion, and a bad tsar is like carrion, and around him there is nothing but eagles."⁸² And so, an eagle can quickly turn into carrion. Who can guard the tsar-eagle from falling into the abyss from a great height? According to Maksim the Greek, this can only be done by wise counsellors. Maksim the Greek writes about the important role of the council in the life of the state. The writer calls upon the tsar to hear the counsels of the clergy, he refers to the boyars and the princes as "joint rulers with the tsar" (*sopravyashchie tsaryu*), his "co-rulers" and "companions" (*sonachal'niki, spospeshniki*). At the same time the evidence in Maksim's writings concerning the counsellors must not be construed as a call for the establishment of a limited representative monarchy. According to Maksim, anyone who possessed the required qualities was entitled to give advice, regardless of his social origins.⁸³ The counsellors' role is revealed in Maksim the

⁷⁹ A. I. Ivanov, *Literaturnoe nasledie Maksima Greka: Kharakteristiki. Atributsii. Bibliografiya* (Leningrad, 1969), 146–153.

⁸⁰ *Sochineniya prepodobnogo Maksima Greka*, 3 (Kazan, 1862), 237–238.

⁸¹ See Nikifor, *Entsiklopediya*, 2: 41.

⁸² PLDR, *Konets XV–pervaya polovina XVI veka*, 548.

⁸³ V. F. Rzhiga, "Opyty po istorii russkoi publitsistiki XVI veka. Maksim Grek kak publitsist," *TODRL* 1 (1934): 111; *Sochineniya prepodobnogo Maksima Greka*, 2: 157–158, 162, 338, 352; Cf. N. A. Kazakova, "Maksim Grek i ideya soslovnoi monarkhii." In *Obschestvo i gosudarstvo*, 156–157; L. E. Morozova, "Ivan Groznyi i publitsisty XVI veka o predelakh i kharaktere tsarskoi vlasti." In *Nasledie*, 236–251.

Greek's work *Instructive Chapters for Just Rulers* (*Glavy pouchitel'ny nachal'stvuyushchim pravoverno*). This work was written in the form of an admonition to the young Tsar Ivan IV in about 1547 or 1548.⁸⁴ Addressing the tsar with admonitions, Maksim reinforces his words with references to a psalm which calls man not to depend on untruth nor long for riches. Maksim stresses that the tsar ought to follow the Biblical commandments, rather than the counsels of some "vain, worldly counsellor" (the author does not refer to him by name). Quoting Psalm 100 (101), Maksim emphasises that communion with good and righteous people enlightens, but conversation with bad people darkens and corrupts the ruler's soul. The *Instructive Chapters* also makes reference to a certain marvellous and good counsellor (*divnyi dobryi sovetnik*), who advised the tsar to keep peace and avoid wars with all the neighbours of his state. Thus, Maksim deems that the actions of a good counsellor are supported by sound foreign policies. Maksim's active political position is here made manifest. In his view, each person should give the sovereign sensible advice, which is of benefit to society and suitable for the time.⁸⁵

Maksim the Greek stresses that the tsar should generously reward his *grandees* and servants. Maksim was, perhaps, the first Russian author to tie the theme of the "sovereign and his counsellors" to that of the fall of Constantinople. In the epistle to Ivan IV (ca. 1545), Maksim affirms that the cause of Byzantium's fall lay in the fact that its last tsars stole the property of their servitors (*podruchniki*) and held their boyars in contempt.⁸⁶

Thus, Maksim the Greek frequently urged the princes and boyars towards unanimity. He wrote that the tsar must display mercy, truth and meekness towards his servitors, and then the subjects will love the tsar like their own father.⁸⁷ Maksim the Greek created his model of the ideal ruler with reference to the popular image of Alexander the Great. In the words of the erudite monk, Alexander the Great unhesitatingly bestowed all his estates to the princes and *grandees* because he was certain that with the help of his trusted servants he would acquire many other riches. Following Alexander's example, each sovereign should love his soldiers, strive to

⁸⁴ *Sochineniya prepodobnogo Maksima Greka*, 2: 157–184. See also Rzhiga, "Opyty po istorii russkoi publitsistiki," 62–72; Sinitsyna, *Maksim Grek v Rossii*, 211–217.

⁸⁵ Rzhiga, "Opyty po istorii russkoi publitsistiki," 111.

⁸⁶ *Sochineniya prepodobnogo Maksima Greka*, 2: 351; Sinitsyna, *Maksim Grek v Rossii*, 212, note 201; Ivanov, *Literaturnoe nasledie*, 148, no. 217. In the 15th-century *Tale of the Capture of Constantinople* (*Povest' o vzyatii Konstantinopolya v 1453 g.*) the relations between the emperor and his close counsellors are portrayed in a spirit of complete concord. See PLDR, *Vtoraya polovina XV veka*, 216–266.

⁸⁷ *Sochineniya prepodobnogo Maksima Greka*, 2: 338–346; 3: 236–237.

commit feats, strengthen his power and subdue enemies.⁸⁸ At first sight, this admonition of Maksim the Greek contradicts his pacifist appeals in the Instructive Chapters. However, in fact, Maksim's work displays the dual approach to the figure of the tsar that was typical of Old Russian literature. Drawing on Agapetus' ideas, the Muscovite writer considered that the tsar must be, at one and the same time, awesome and merciful, strict and meek.⁸⁹ For Maksim, there is nothing more important for a true tsar than truth (*pravda*), i.e., justice, as understood in the spirit of the Old Testament.

The ideas about justice, in addition to those about combining the tsar's *groza* with the liberty (*vol'nost'*) of a person in service were developed in the writings of the soldier-of-fortune Ivan Peresvetov, a native of Lithuania. Like other publicists of the time, Peresvetov admonished the tsar on how he ought to rule the kingdom. To corroborate his words, Peresvetov referred to the example of Byzantium, paying particular attention to the seizure of Constantinople by the Turkish Sultan Muhammad II. For Peresvetov, the ideal arrangement of the world is defined by the concepts of "justice" (*pravda*) and "faith" (*vera*). "Justice" was understood by Peresvetov as the universal harmony of the external world: the state and the law court, justice and God's commandments. "Faith," in turn, signified outward holiness and purity, understood in an external, physical sense.⁹⁰ As Peresvetov saw it, Byzantium had faith but lacked justice, and so God had the Turkish sultan attack the Greeks until they learnt to live "by justice." "Justice" was introduced into Constantinople by the Turkish sultan, and it was precisely upon justice that the state created by Muhammad II was founded. Yet the Turkish sultan, from the Orthodox point of view, was a pagan, and so the sultan's state lacked faith. The ideal for Peresvetov would have been a combination of Turkish justice and Christian faith. It is specifically towards such an ideal that the Russian sovereign must strive.⁹¹

The concept of "justice" is elaborated by Peresvetov through the relationship between the sovereign and his counsellors, the *grandees*. The absence of justice in Byzantium was expressed in the wilfulness of Byzantine Emperor Constantine's *grandees*, who controlled the whole kingdom, broke oaths, and became rich through injustice. The greatest offence of the Greek counsellors lay in the fact that they were afraid to take part in military campaigns and so

⁸⁸ Rzhiga, "Opyty po istorii russkoi publitsistiki," 119–120.

⁸⁹ Cf. *Ljubomudreishago kir* Agapita Diakona, XV, XXII.

⁹⁰ For details, see A. L. Yurganov, "Idei I. S. Peresvetova v kontekste mirovoi istorii i kul'tury," *Voprosy istorii* (hereafter *VIS*), 1996, no. 2: 15–27.

⁹¹ *Sochineniya I. Peresvetova*, ed. D. S. Likhachev, A. A. Zimin (Moscow, Leningrad, 1956), 161.

restricted the emperor's willingness to go to war. The Byzantine emperor's weakness was due to the fact that he lacked "the tsar's groza."⁹² For Peresvetov, without groza it is impossible to introduce justice into the state. This idea is expressed by Peresvetov in the well-known aphorism: "The tsar must not be devoid of groza; like a horse under the tsar without a bridle, so is tsardom without groza."⁹³ Thus, in Peresvetov's conception, groza and justice prevent the despotism of the grandees and counsellors in the state. Yet this does not mean that the sovereign must rule entirely without counsellors. This is evident from the very way in which Peresvetov's works are constructed. For example, the ideas about the just arrangement of the state are developed by the author in the form of a talk between the Turkish sultan and his privy counsellors. Peresvetov insists that the grandees of the tsar must not be enslaved, otherwise they will not be able to defend him in a moment of danger. He stresses that a wise tsar must surround himself with warriors and place his grandees in the first rows of troops. A true grandee, says Peresvetov, is one who displays great wisdom, the man who loves justice above all else. Finally, it should be noted that Peresvetov was one of the few publicists to give some definition for the council surrounding the ruler. Such a council is referred to by the author as the "faithful Duma" (*vernaya Duma*).⁹⁴

Studying the conceptions of 16th-century Russian publicists about the just state structure, researchers often contrast Peresvetov's views with the ideas of Maksim the Greek.⁹⁵ Yet the conceptions about the relationship between the sovereign and his counsellors expressed by these authors are found to have a lot in common. Above all, in line with literary traditions, both authors recognised the necessity for there to be counsellors around the sovereign. In this, they were following the ideas set forth in the *Tainaya Tainykh*.⁹⁶ They both considered that a counsellor can be anyone, irrespective of his origins, who commands wisdom and is full of justice. Maksim the Greek, like Peresvetov, wanted to see the tsar strong and able to defend his kingdom and subdue his foe.

At the same time, Peresvetov's works contain far more critical attacks on the grandees than Maksim's do. Paradoxically, it was precisely the secular writer Peresvetov, rather than the monk Maksim the Greek, who associated the actions of wicked grandees with the intrigue of the Devil.⁹⁷ What is the

⁹² Sochineniya I. Peresvetova, 166, 175, 178, 180.

⁹³ Sochineniya I. Peresvetova, 153.

⁹⁴ Sochineniya I. Peresvetova, 147, 151, 156, 168.

⁹⁵ Cf. Sochineniya I. Peresvetova, 306–307 (comments by Ya. S. Lur'e).

⁹⁶ Cf. A. A. Zimin, *I. S. Peresvetov i ego sovremenniki* (Moscow, 1958), 351.

⁹⁷ Sochineniya I. Peresvetova, 181.

cause of this dissatisfaction with the *grandees* displayed by Peresvetov? In my view, the answer to this question needs to be sought not in Peresvetov's adherence to the ideas of unlimited autocracy, as historians have usually done. On the whole, Peresvetov's ideas about the counsellors do not contradict the generally received views of the day concerning the nature of the state. Peresvetov took up arms against the *grandees* because of his own setbacks in Russia. When he was in Muscovy, he enjoyed the protection of one of the grand prince's counsellors, the boyar Mikhail Yur'evich Zakhar'in (see the following chapter). Hoping for Zakhar'in's assistance, Peresvetov recommended a plan for arming the Russian army with special shields of the Macedonian type. Yet following Zakhar'in's death at the end of the 1530s, all of Peresvetov's plans were forgotten, even though he repeatedly sought to remind the tsar of his recommendations. In Peresvetov's opinion, it was precisely the *grandees* who prevented him from gaining access to the tsar. Peresvetov considers the greatest shortcoming of the *grandees'* rule in Byzantium and Russia to be that, once in power, they do not allow anyone to approach the tsar with complaints. Peresvetov lends such actions of the *grandees* a fateful significance. Guarding the emperor against petitioners, the Greek *grandees* thereby repelled God's mercy, which ultimately led to the demise of the entire kingdom.⁹⁸ Peresvetov thus insists that the tsar should surround himself with people not according to their nobility but to their military merits and wisdom.

The idea of the tsar's *groza* was also expressed in the polemical text of the mid-16th century, the *Valaam Discussion* (*Valaamskaya beseda*) and in its supplement *Another Discourse* (*Slovo inoye*). This work considers that the ideal structure for the state is "autocracy" and "humble *groza*" (*smirennaya groza*). The concept of "humble *groza*" certainly incorporated the custom whereby the "tsar and the boyars and close companions discussed absolutely everything, and consulted the divine and holy books above all counsels." The trusted companions meant "various laymen," "intelligent men," "good and close" commanders, but under no circumstances would monks take part. The inadmissibility of their participation in worldly affairs was particularly stressed in the *Valaam Discussion*. The possibility of convening a council of a broader composition, a "unanimous universal council," was also considered.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Sochineniya I. Peresvetova, 172, 180.

⁹⁹ G. N. Moiseeva, *Valaamskaya beseda* (Moscow, Leningrad, 1958), 162, 165, 174, 176, 191, 192. See also V. Val'denberg, *Drevnerusskie ucheniya o predelakh tsarskoi vlasti* (Petrograd, 1916), 302–309; J. Lehtovirta, "Terrible Ideas – Some Sources of the *Groza* of Ivan IV," *Faravid. Acta Societatis Historicae Finlandiae Septentrionalis*, 17 (Rovaniemi, 1995), 124–125.

The concepts of *groza* and justice were very important for the idea of the tsar's power. Yet in the mid-16th century, the very concept of the tsar's power was only just being established in Muscovy. This was a long process which did not end with Ivan IV's coronation as tsar in 1547. After that, Muscovite politicians and ideologists took a series of measures to promote the international prestige of the Muscovite tsar. A decisive step in this direction was the conquest of Kazan', since Kazan' was conceived of as the capital of a tsardom, and the khan of Kazan' was regarded as a tsar. It was not by chance that the Muscovite ideologists based Ivan IV's right to the title of tsar not only upon his coronation in Moscow (1547) but also on the fact that he had overrun Kazan' (1552).¹⁰⁰ After the fall of Kazan', Kazan' khan Ediger became one of Ivan the IV's privy counsellors and even retained his royal title (see Chapter II). The significance of the seizure of Kazan' is unfolded in the extensive and complex literary work, the *History of Kazan'* (*Kazanskaya istoriya*) written in the late 16th and early 17th centuries and subsequently reworked during the course of the 17th century. The profound symbolical significance of this work is expounded in Plyukhanova's study.¹⁰¹ In my work, I shall dwell solely on the image of the counsellors created by the author of the *History of Kazan'*.

As in other works of literature, in the *History of Kazan'* the Russian sovereign's decisions are taken after the performance of the ritual of consultation with the trustworthy military commanders. Like the ideal tsar depicted by Maksim the Greek, the grand prince in the *History of Kazan'* is capable if necessary of replacing "a lion's fury" (*l'vinaya yarost'*) with "a sheep's meekness" (*ovech'ya krotost'*). Ivan IV is portrayed as a wise and Orthodox tsar and autocrat: he astounds and terrifies his neighbours with his force and, at the same time, rules his tsardom in full agreement with his *grandees*. Yet, occasionally, owing to his youth, the tsar fails to listen to his old, faithful counsellors and succumbs to the cunning persuasions of "evil traitors to Christianity."¹⁰² The principal decision on the campaign against "godless and infidel Kazan'" is taken by the tsar in consultation with his brothers, local princes, the supreme military commanders and all the noble *grandees*. The act of the tsar's consultation with his *grandees* is described in detail in two chapters of the *History of Kazan'*.¹⁰³ The consultation took

¹⁰⁰ See V. I. Savva, *Moskovskie tsari i vizantiiskie vasilyevsy: K voprosu o vliyaniy Vizantii na obrazovanie idei tsarskoï vlasti moskovskikh gosudarei* (Kharkov, 1901; reprint, The Hague, Paris, 1969), 297.

¹⁰¹ Plyukhanova, *Syuzhety*, 171–202.

¹⁰² PLDR, *Seredina XVI veka*, 356, 360, 374.

¹⁰³ PLDR, *Seredina XVI veka*, 444–448. See also Bushkovitch, "The Formation," 366–368.

place in the “great golden chamber” of the grand prince’s palace. Addressing the counsellors, the tsar refers to the exploits of earlier Russian princes who went on campaigns to Constantinople and received from Byzantium the regalia of royal power. Tsar Ivan IV wants to be a worthy inheritor of the glory of his ancestors and so must subjugate the Kazan’ people who have caused his state such constant injuries. Ivan also calls the grandees to suffer for the Christian faith, in the same way as the holy apostles and martyrs did earlier. The discussion of the forthcoming campaign is held “wisely, in a royal manner” (*mudro, po-tsarski*). In order to emphasise the gravity of the decision taken, the author of the work points out that after a speech by the tsar a moment’s silence reigned in the council. This dramatic pause concludes the chapter containing the tsar’s speech, and the grandees’ response is given in the next chapter of the *History of Kazan’*. The pause, which keeps the reader in suspense, reinforces the effect of the counsellors’ affirmative reaction. They all reply “with a gay heart in one voice, literally with united lips.” The grandees fully support the sovereign’s decision. For him, the great autocrat, the grandees are prepared to die and forget their wealth, homes, wives and children. The tsar was gratified by the good advice and wise words of the grandees, whom he calls “my beloved counsellors.” The unity of the autocratic tsar and his privy counsellors before the campaign against Kazan’ reminds us of the cohesion of Dmitrii Donskoi and his boyars in the works on the Kulikovo Battle. The *History of Kazan’* culminates with an extensive panegyric to Tsar Ivan IV. In the long list of his countless benefactors it is noted that “throughout his life, the tsar consulted with his wise counsellors.”¹⁰⁴

Thus, throughout the 16th century, the Muscovite ideologists actively worked on the conception of autocratic power. In the eyes of writers of the day, following the seizure of Kazan’ the Russian sovereign’s right to the title of tsar received its final confirmation. The tsar was appointed by God himself, he must be awesome, he defends his kingdom against the enemy and instils fear and respect in his neighbours. Yet the tsar must rule with justice, his kingdom must be justly organised. In his solemn speech given in 1547 at the coronation of Ivan IV, Metropolitan Makarii exhorted Ivan to take pity on and respect his boyars.¹⁰⁵ The version of the *Chronicle of the Beginning of the Tsardom* (*Letopisets nachala tsarstva*) from the late 1550s states that a just tsar nurtures equal love towards everyone in his power, to

¹⁰⁴ PLDR, *Seredina XVI veka*, 562.

¹⁰⁵ PSRL, XXVI, 159; *Dopolneniya k aktam istoricheskim* (hereafter DAI), 1 (St. Petersburg, 1846), no. 39: 48.

the grandees and to people of middle and low position. The Book of Steps of the Imperial Genealogy (*Stepennaya kniga tsarskogo rodosloviya*) written between 1560 and 1563 notes that a true autocrat confirms justice among people, he is a defender (*pobornik*) of the princes, boyars and other grandees before God.¹⁰⁶

The old Russian cultural tradition employed a united collective image of the ruler and his privy counsellors. This image is of the close collaboration between the tsar and his counsellors, based on personal relationships and moral principles. The main objective of such cooperation was to preserve stability and consensus at the court and in the state as a whole. That is why at public ceremonies the tsar always appears surrounded by boyars. Harmony between the tsar and his counsellors was regarded as an important element in the formation of the image of a good ruler. The sovereign and his subjects had some mutual obligations defined by tradition and custom. One of these traditions foresaw that the tsar must discuss matters with his immediate counsellors. The ruler had to have enough sense to heed the advice of the intelligent grandees. The grandees, for their part, were obliged to have the courage to tender advice to their sovereign.¹⁰⁷ The Lithuanian magnates, addressing the Muscovite boyars, stated: "You, the council of your ruler, preserve the honour of your ruler."¹⁰⁸

Basing his argument on literary works of the 17th century, Daniel Rowland has demonstrated that such conceptions about the counsellors were an important feature of the Muscovite political culture. Primarily, the material in these literary works allows us to judge how people in Muscovy understood the essence of the state and to evaluate the role of the tsar and his counsellors in the state. Muscovites never perceived the state as a set of consciously organised institutions. The state was entirely incarnated in the person of its ruler; the will and desire of the ruler is equivalent to the will of the state. Consequently, the state was good or bad depending on what kind of person the ruler himself was, relations between the tsar and his subjects being established in the same way as those between Adam and his Creator in Biblical times. The main thing was the fulfilment of the divine commandments. That is why the tsar was assigned the role of maintaining order, as a guarantor of stability and order, and as a preserver of tradition.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ PSRL, XIII, part 1, 268; *ibid.*, XXI, part 1, 610–611. The ideas of the Book of Steps about autocratic power can be traced back to Agapetus' work. See *ev'enko*, "A Neglected Byzantine Source," 159–163.

¹⁰⁷ Rowland, "Muscovite Literary Ideology," 153.

¹⁰⁸ AZR, I, no. 110: 129.

¹⁰⁹ Rowland, "The Problem of Advice," 266, 278.

Generally speaking, it is not difficult to notice a great deal in common between the conception of advice in medieval Europe and Muscovite Rus'. This unity is based on the common ideological origins of the Christian world, on Biblical tradition. According to Christian theology, man was invested not only with a variety of blessings but also with the gift of counsel. This similarity in the conception of the essence of advice was clearly manifested in the complex semantic meaning of the words signifying the process of consultation. In the 14th- and 15th-century sources written in French and Latin, the words *conceil* and *consilium* signify judgement or meditation, decision, wisdom, admonition, appeal to another person, help or support, meeting or organ of collective government.¹¹⁰ A similar range of semantic concepts can be found in dictionaries for the old Russian word *duma*: council, meeting (including a council of the closest counsellors of the sovereign), advice, admonition, intelligence, thinking capacities, thought, intention, opinion, a group of people who have jointly taken a decision, like-minded people.¹¹¹

2. THE VISUAL IMAGE OF THE SOVEREIGN AND HIS COUNSELLORS

The "sovereign-counsellors" topos examined above was reproduced in many works of Muscovite fine art, and in particular in the miniatures of the *Radziwiłł* Chronicle (*Radzivillovskaya letopis'*). The *Radziwiłł* Chronicle has come down to us in a 15th-century copy. Some specialists have assumed that the *Radziwiłł* Chronicle is based upon the hypothetical Vladimir Chronicle Compilation of 1206. Numerous miniatures in the *Radziwiłł* Chronicle were produced at the end of the 15th century. It is possible that the artist who created them used the miniatures in the Vladimir Chronicle Compilation as models. Thus, the visual images in the miniatures from the *Radziwiłł* Chronicle reflect the views of people from different eras. On the one hand, they were created by a man who was able to observe the emergence of autocratic power under Ivan III. At the same time, the miniatures

¹¹⁰ Malinin, "Srednevekovyi dukh 'soveta'," 177. See also W. Weber, "'What A Good Ruler Should Not Do': Theoretical Limits of Royal Power in European Theories of Absolutism, 1500–1700," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, XXVI (1995), no. 4: 904–905.

¹¹¹ *Slovar' drevnerusskogo yazyka XI–XVII vv.*, 4 (Moscow, 1977), 373.

in the *Radziwiłł* Chronicle might reflect even older ideas of the prince and his counsellors dating back to Daniil Zatochnik's day.¹¹²

The 613 miniatures in the chronicle depict the princes' military campaigns, victories over enemies, triumphal entries into the city, scenes of an investiture, feats of the princes, receptions of envoys, diplomatic negotiations, etc. The theme of consultation between the prince and his boyars or members of his armed retinue (*druzhinniki*) is reflected in 21 miniatures, including three portraying the council of the Byzantine emperors.¹¹³ Most of the miniatures show the act of consultation with the aid of a profile representation: the prince and his counsellors are to be found on various sides of the space which separates them, drawn facing each other or addressing each other with a variety of gestures. In the symbolic language of miniatures, representations in profile usually correspond to subjects associated with dynamic, developing action.¹¹⁴ By means of such profile portrayals of the council, the artist effectively emphasises the action, the process of deliberation. In the profile depictions of the council, the prince and his advisors do not form a single ceremonial image of power. The profile depictions represent the actual mechanism of power: the prince is sitting on the throne, the counsellors are standing, or, more commonly, are sitting in front of him. The figures of the prince and his counsellors are portrayed on a single scale, and so the figure of the prince does not dominate the counsellors. If all the participants in the meeting are seated, then, as a rule, the figures of the prince and counsellors are on one level. Usually, the prince is depicted on the throne, but in a few miniatures the prince and counsellors are seated on the same bench (miniature 119); in miniature 131 the prince is sitting on the throne without a backrest, and the boyar on a bench with a cushion; in a few cases the prince and other participants in the meeting are seated on a single, long bench (miniatures 308, 330).

Some of the miniatures show the council not in profile but *en face* (miniatures 6, 93, 308, 491, 553). Unlike the depictions of the council in

¹¹² See B. A. Rybakov, "Miniatury Radzivillovskoi letopisi i russkie litsevye rukopisi X–XII vekov." In *Radzivillovskaya letopis'. Tekst, issledovaniya, opisanie miniatur*, ed. M. V. Kukushkina, G. M. Prokhorov (Moscow, 1994), 281–301. The miniatures are reproduced in the following publications: *Radzivillovskaya ili Kenigsbergskaya letopis'.* Vol. 1. *Fotomekhanicheskoe vosproizvedenie rukopisi. Obshchestvo lyubiteli drevnei pis'mennosti*, issue 118 (St. Petersburg, 1902); *Radzivillovskaya letopis'.* [Faksimil'noe vosproizvedenie rukopisi] (Moscow, 1994).

¹¹³ Miniatures nos. 6, 30, 59, 77, 90, 93, 108, 114, 119, 126, 131, 152, 160, 289, 308, 330, 379, 456, 491, 506, 553. The numbers are given according to the catalogue of the miniatures: M. V. Kukushkina and others, "Opisanie miniatur Radzivillovskoi letopisi." In *Radzivillovskaya letopis'. Tekst*, 304–397.

¹¹⁴ See Likhachev, *Poetika*, 43.

profile, the portrayals en face reflect not so much the process of consultation as the condition of the state under the ruler. Portrayals en face were employed to show a worthy kingdom, where the awesome tsar rules together with wise counsellors, as in miniature 6. A miniature en face could also be used to depict the state with an infant ruler, where power was exercised by the boyars (miniatures 491, 553). When the prince and his counsellors are portrayed en face, the composition of the miniature is divided into three sections: in the centre the figure of the prince on the throne, and on both sides groups of counsellors. The portrayals en face were associated with static, permanent phenomena and objects, and so the composition en face acquired a majestic, monumental character. Depiction en face corresponded most fully to the ideal model of the powerful sovereign surrounded by loyal counsellors. It is not by chance that it was precisely in this way that the artist depicted the rule of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (miniature 6). Of all the miniatures in the chronicle, this miniature most completely conveys the ideal of the sovereign's power. The emperor is drawn en face, bearing a crown and holding a sword, and clad in red apparel. Heraclius is sitting on the throne, below which the counsellors are seated. The emperor's counsellors are bearded, and behind one of them stands a man without a beard, a sign of a lower social status. The ceremonial character of the portrayal is underscored by the fact that the emperor does not look at any of his counsellors and does not address them with any kind of gesture. Miniature 6 may be regarded as an illustration of the writings by Agapetus, Photius and other Byzantine authors concerning the nature of the tsar's power.

The drawings devoted to Russian princes do not create such a solemn image of power. Of the miniatures representing the Russian princes, miniature 93 is distinguished by its solemnity. It shows en face the ritual of consultation between Prince Svyatoslav Igorevich and his armed retinue. Svyatoslav is seated on an opulent throne, and the artist even painted in a few elements of the decor. The armed retinue are sitting on benches on both sides of the throne. Like the counsellors of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, Svyatoslav's armed retinue are divided into two categories. One of the counsellors has a beard and sword, and he dominates the other counsellors who are not bearded. Notwithstanding the similarity of composition with miniature 6, the image of Svyatoslav presented in miniature 93 does not have such a declarative character as the portrayals of the Byzantine emperor. In particular, unlike the Byzantine emperor in miniature 6, Svyatoslav is talking to his counsellors, and so his face is depicted

as being turned a quarter to the side.

As a rule, the miniatures in the *Radziwiłł Chronicle* show the prince dressed in red, which was associated with imperial power, while the counsellors are depicted in blue or green garments or in armour. However, the colouring of clothing was not preserved consistently by the artist. Sometimes, the prince was drawn wearing turquoise attire, and the counsellors were in red (miniatures 308, 379, 456). The artist is far more consistent in his use of such attributes of power as head-dresses, beards and swords. If the artist sympathises with the prince or is neutrally disposed towards him, then the prince is portrayed in his special prince's cap, and there was often a sword in his belt. In the event that the miniaturist condemns a decision taken by the prince and his privy advisors, the image of the prince underwent a marked transformation. Miniature 308 shows Prince Svyatopolk Izyaslavich deciding with his boyars to blind his opponent, Prince Vasilyok of Terebovl'. Svyatopolk is drawn in this case bereft of his prince's cap, and in blue clothing that is shorter than that worn by the boyars.

One may note that the prince's counsellors are frequently portrayed as bearded, which was a sign of their dignity. Sometimes only the worthiest counsellor was drawn bearded, and it is precisely towards him the prince is looking, while the remaining beardless counsellors have secondary roles (miniature 93). In this case, the artist stressed that the prince and his counsellors were complying precisely with the established etiquette: the most important person on the council was an old boyar, while the young counsellors respectfully pay heed to his discussion with the prince. Disorders and quarrels among the counsellors were represented by the artist as a violation of the ritual ceremony of consultation. Thus, in miniature 553, which depicts the boyar quarrels in Vladimir under the young Prince Yaroslav Rostislavich, the roles of the counsellors are changed: alongside the small prince are the beardless counsellors, while the bearded counsellors are pushed aside into the background. The self-will of the boyars is portrayed by means of gestures untypical of counsellors: they are drawn with raised hands, and they are holding objects which look like scrolls.

On the whole, the miniatures in the *Radziwiłł Chronicle* reflected various aspects of the "sovereign-counsellors" model. The artist expressed his conception of the sovereign's power through the image of the ruler surrounded by counsellors. The worthiest and most devout counsellors are highlighted, and the ruler talks with them during the ceremony of consultation. The actual process of consultation is depicted at a calm pace, with the prince and his counsellors addressing each other with ritual gestures.

The wicked and worthless counsellors were drawn motionless and busy-looking, and their gestures (raised hands) were not in keeping with the measured ceremony of consultation.

The sovereign surrounded by his counsellors is often portrayed in the miniatures of the Book of Tsardom (Tsarstvennaya kniga), probably created in the 1570s. This chronicle glorifies the tsar's dynasty and affirms his autocratic power. As has already been noted, the text and miniatures of the Book of Tsardom were subjected to tendentious correction to uncover the boyars' plots and betrayals. Several miniatures in the chronicle are devoted to the dramatic events of 1546, when, owing to the lying calumny of the privy counsellor, the secretary V. G. Zakharov-Gnil'ev, the sovereign placed some of his counsellors in disgrace. Two of them, Prince I. I. Kubenskii and F. S. Vorontsov were executed.¹¹⁵ All the miniatures devoted to these events show the sovereign and the counsellors in profile, thus underscoring the dynamic of the unfolding events. In the first miniature (folio 273), the young grand prince is talking to the privy counsellor Zakharov-Gnil'ev. The grand prince is shown seated on the throne, wearing a prince's cap, and clean shaven. The counsellor is standing in front of him without a head-dress, and in more modest attire than that worn by the ruler. The figure of the grand prince is portrayed in a pose typical for the ceremony of consultation: he addresses the counsellor with a gesture signifying conversation. The image of the counsellor is more expressive. One of his hands repeats the prince's gesture. This combination of gestures is similar to that in the miniatures of the *Radziwiłł Chronicle*. However, with his other hand, Zakharov-Gnil'ev is pointing to a group of boyars by way of warning. Thus, the artist stresses the duality of the image of Zakharov-Gnil'ev: he is a privy counsellor, and so his conversation with the prince corresponds to the norms of the ceremony of consultation between the sovereign and his privy grandees.¹¹⁶ At the same time, Zakharov-Gnil'ev slanders the boyars, i.e., gives wicked advice, having been incited to do so by the Devil. This is why he is portrayed as moving and as fussing somewhat. The following miniature (folio 273v) depicts a scene of the trial and punishment of the boyars. The prince is drawn in the pose of a judge and master of ceremonies, his

¹¹⁵ The text of the chronicle was published in PSRL, XIII, part 2: 447–449. The miniatures are reproduced in S. O. Shmidt's study "Iz istorii redaktirovaniya Tsarstvennoi knigi: Izvestiya ob opale boyar letom 1546 g." In *Rossiia na putyakh tsentralizatsii. Sbornik statei*, ed. D. S. Likhachev and others. (Moscow, 1982), 227, 232, 233, 236, 237.

¹¹⁶ The editor of the chronicle made a special interpolation to stress that the secretary Zakharov-Gnil'ev was close to the grand prince. See Shmidt, "Iz istorii," 224, 230.

finger is raised, a sign that he is issuing a command, and he is holding a staff in his hand. The figure of the prince is placed in the top left corner of the miniature. The top space of the miniature was associated with the upper spheres of the universe, and it was where the motives for actions, historical parallels and heavenly visions were commonly shown.¹¹⁷ By placing the figure of the prince-judge in the upper part of the miniature, the artist underscored the divine nature of the tsar's wisdom. In contrast with the top of the miniature, the lower part is devoted to a naturalistic scene showing the execution of the disgraced boyars. The secretary Zakharov-Gnil'ev is shown in the upper part of the miniature, but he appears to be on his way towards the lower world at the sovereign's command. With one hand, the secretary repeats the grand prince's instructing gesture, thereby underscoring the fact that the counsellor is carrying out the ruler's order. The counsellor acts as a link between the upper and lower spheres of the universe, between the sovereign as the bearer of divine wisdom and the executioners carrying out the awesome ruler's harsh sentence. Like a chastising angel, the counsellor is sent down from heaven into the earthly domain to fulfil the will of the Master. Typically, the disgraced boyars, drawn in the lower tier of the miniature, are shown without beards. It was the habitually negative characters from the lower tier of the universe – demons and fallen angels – that were depicted without beards.¹¹⁸

After the chronicle had been edited, the tsar's masters drew up new pictures devoted to the events of 1546. The new miniatures are to be found in folios 680–681. They were executed by another artist who possessed, according to S. O. Shmidt, greater virtuosity than the previous master. This new artist places a noticeably greater emphasis on the ceremonial aspect in his portrayal of the prince conferring with his privy people. The prince is depicted wearing a royal crown and seated on a throne. The figure of the prince, drawn in full, is not in the least hidden from the onlooker, but is turned somewhat more towards the onlooker than in the miniatures in folios 273–274. Unlike the old miniatures, in these new portrayals of the prince his figure noticeably dominates the counsellors surrounding him. This is particularly evident in the miniature in folio 680, where the secretary Zakharov-Gnil'ev is drawn in a pose of submission, stooping slightly and looking at the sovereign from below.

¹¹⁷ See Likhachev, *Poetika*, 48.

¹¹⁸ Shmidt, "Iz istorii," 239.

The “sovereign–counsellors” model was frequently reproduced in wall-paintings, icons and portrayals created in the Moscow Kremlin in the mid-16th century. The Kremlin was conceived as the centre of the ruling city, the abode of the bearer of divine power. The interior of the Kremlin apartments was strictly subjected to the idea of glorifying the tsar’s power. In particular, the sovereign surrounded by his faithful counsellors was shown in the wall-paintings created after the fire of 1547.¹¹⁹ The internal space of the Cathedral of the Dormition in the Moscow Kremlin, where Ivan IV was crowned, was also imbued with ideological symbols of the tsar’s power. Inside the cathedral was a massive icon entitled Blessed is the Host of the Heavenly Tsar. It was located opposite the Tsar’s throne (*tsarskoye mesto*) and contained a series of images that showed the continuity of authority between the Muscovite sovereigns and the Byzantine emperors. These two works formed a single semiotic entity embodying the conception of autocratic power. The images of the icon and throne glorified the *groza* of the tsar. At the same time, these images convey the single ceremonial image of the sovereign and his privy counsellors. The icon Blessed is the Host of the Heavenly Tsar advanced the idea that the Muscovite sovereign and his army are an earthly incarnation of the Archangel Michael and his heavenly troops. At the same time, the principal warriors were also the counsellors of their leader. Such an interpretation also corresponded to Byzantine notions of the imperial court as a reflection of the heavenly court of Jesus and his angels.¹²⁰ Thus, the structure of supreme power in Muscovy was conceived by the tsar and his counsellors as the earthly incarnation of the heavenly city, where God or the Archangel rules surrounded by their trusted aides.

The throne in the Cathedral of the Dormition, made in 1551, has twelve carved bas-reliefs devoted to the legendary coronation of Grand Prince Vladimir Monomakh, including an interesting depiction of a joint meeting of the sovereign with his counsellors.¹²¹ The basis for the illustrations was the Tale of the Installation of the Russian Rulers on the Grand Princely Throne (*Postavlenie*). The *Postavlenie* contains a legend about how the

¹¹⁹ See Zimin, I. S. *Peresvetov*, 62; O. I. Podobedova, *Moskovskaya shkola zhivopisi pri Ivane IV: Raboty v Moskovskom Kreml'e 40-kh–70-kh godov XVI v.* (Moscow, 1972).

¹²⁰ See Rowland, “Biblical Military Imagery,” 182–212.

¹²¹ Tracings of the drawings and the signatures on them are reproduced in F. G. Solntsev’s album *Drevnosti rossiiskogo gosudarstva 2* (Moscow, 1851) [Plates], nos 67–73; *ibid.*, [Text], 106–110. On the throne, see T. V. Tolstaya. *Uspenskii sobor Moskovskogo Kremlya. K 500-letiyu unikal'nogo pamyatnika russkoi kul'tury* (Moskva, 1979), 34; I. M. Sokolova, “Tsarskoe mesto pervogo russkogo tsarya: zamysel i formy.” In *Rossiia i khristianskii Vostok 1* (Moscow, 1997), 135–146.

Kievan Prince Vladimir Monomakh (12th century) acquired the royal regalia from the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Monomakh. This legend was actively employed in the official political doctrine of Ivan IV, who stressed the derivation of his power from Vladimir Monomakh, and through him from the Byzantine emperors.¹²²

Two of the bas-reliefs on the throne are devoted to a meeting of the council. The first of them (bas-relief no. 1 according to F. G. Solntsev) has the following inscription: "The good, faithful and grand Prince Vladimir Monomakh of Kiev convened a meeting with his princes and boyars telling them about the bravery of their ancestors, and how they received tribute from Constantinople." Vladimir Monomakh is depicted sitting on his throne in his grand prince's crown, with a scroll in his left hand. Evidently, this is a scroll of the chronicle which tells of the conquests of his ancestors over Constantinople. Alongside the grand prince is a man whose status is lower than that of the remaining participants in the meeting. His figure is smaller than that of the others. It is most likely the secretary of Monomakh who obtained the chronicle for him or his bodyguard. On the basis of the chronicle, Monomakh describes the events of the past to his close counsellors. At their head are the princes, who sit on chairs on both sides of the throne; behind the princes stand the boyars.

The following bas-relief (no. 8 according to Solntsev) portrays the council of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Monomakh, as related by the following inscription: "The good and faithful Tsar Constantine Monomakh gathers his wise royal council and sends his envoys to the Grand Prince Vladimir Vsevolodich in Kiev [...]." R. O. Crummey has drawn attention to the following important features of bas-relief no. 8: the ruler's council is attended by the main representatives of worldly and spiritual power; the ruler himself bears a staff in his hand and is seated on a throne somewhat elevated above the floor.¹²³ The council of the Russian sovereign in bas-relief no. 1 appears more business-like and not as solemn. Monomakh is in the midst of his counsellors but is not raised above them; his throne is not as magnificent as that of the Byzantine emperor and is at floor level. Unlike

¹²² The *Postavlenie* is in its turn based on the literary work *Skazanie o knyaz'yakh vladimirskikh* (Tale of the Vladimir Princes). See R. P. Dmitrieva. *Skazanie o knyaz'yakh vladimirskikh* (Moscow, 1955), 44–54; eadem, "Skazanie o knyaz'yakh vladimirskikh." In *SKK*, II, part 2: 370–371.

¹²³ R. O. Crummey, "Court Spectacles in Seventeenth-Century Russia: Illusions and Reality." In *Essays in Honor of A. A. Zimin*, 138. Crummey does not take into consideration that bas-relief no. 8 is not devoted to the council of the Russian prince, but to that of the Byzantine emperor.

the Byzantine emperor's council, Vladimir Monomakh's counsellors consisted solely of representatives of secular power. His counsellors are clearly divided into several groups. Seated closest to the ruler are the most experienced and oldest princes; their beards are long and one of them has his head bare. Seated alongside the elderly grandees, but further away from the prince, are other counsellors, younger in age. Finally, the third group of counsellors stands behind the seated ones.¹²⁴

Bas-relief no. 1 corresponds to the basic principles of depicting the images of the Muscovite sovereign and his counsellors. On the basis of miniatures of Russian chronicles and illustrations in European publications, Crummey has pinpointed the following typical features of these images. The tsar is presented as the principal character at court ceremonies, although he is always shown together with his boyars. In addition, the illustrations of the tsar and his counsellors create the impression that they act together, with the tsar effectively being the first among equals (*primus inter pares*). Although the figure of the tsar is sometimes depicted above his courtiers, he never overwhelms his counsellors, and forms a kind of entity with them. Even the illustrations of Ivan the Terrible do not produce an impression of a despot or tyrant who settles all governmental affairs on his own. In the illustrations of the 16th and 17th centuries, and including the throne bas-reliefs, the tsar and his boyars appear to the outside world as a single ceremonial image, and they act jointly in unity and complete agreement.¹²⁵

In works of art, the archaic topos of "sovereign-counsellors" acquires visible forms, and becomes accessible to a wide circle of observers. In order to depict the ritual process of consultation, the Old Russian masters made use of various versions of spatial composition, all kinds of symbolic elements (gestures, beards, head-dress), as well as colour effects. When an artist wanted to present the observer with a conceptual image of the ruler, he employed a composition *en face*, like, for example, the depiction of the Byzantine emperor and some Russian princes in the miniatures of the *Radziwiłł Chronicle*, and the image of Vladimir Monomakh on the Tsar's throne. The actual process of consultation was designated by means of compositions in profile, which were more dynamic than ceremonial compositions *en face*.

¹²⁴ Worthy of note is the fact that the *Postavlenie*, which the inscriptions on the throne are based on, also refers to three categories of counsellors: the princes, boyars and grandees. See Dmitrieva, *Skazanie o knyaz'yakh vladimirskikh*, 182.

¹²⁵ Crummey, "Court Spectacles," 137–139.

3. THE “SOVEREIGN-COUNSELLORS” TOPOS AND MUSCOVITE POLITICAL PRACTICE

Thanks to its flexibility, the model of “sovereign-counsellors” proved to be a suitable tool that was often applied in political and administrative practice. During ritualised consultations between the sovereign and his privy advisors, the main goal was to reach agreement between all those involved in the discussion. If a decision by the sovereign is completely supported by his counsellors, that means it is a true decision, pleasing to God and one which will bring benefit to the kingdom. The united will of the ruler and his counsellors is a myth of etiquette which long subsisted in Russian political practice. Even in the Soviet era, it was not the mechanism of voting that was deemed most important at Politburo sessions. The main goal of discussions in the Politburo was to achieve the united opinion of good friends, comrades-at-arms in the revolutionary struggle.¹²⁶

The practical work of the Muscovite officials was aimed at the reproduction of the collective image of the ruler surrounded by his faithful counsellors. The decisions of the council were certified with the formula “the tsar ordered and the boyars decided.” This formula was even used during the unrestrained Oprichnina terror. The law of the state had to be approved by the united will of the tsar and his boyars. Virtually the only direct reference in 16th-century laws to the role of the council in the state system is contained in article 98 of the 1550 Law Code. Strictly speaking this article does not mention the council itself but the boyars in corpore (*vse boyare*), upon whose consultations new laws had to be approved.¹²⁷ The provision that the laws had to be approved by a decision of all the boyars ought not, of course, to be taken literally. A medieval ruler’s subjects were supposed to perceive the law as an emanation descending from the heights of the social hierarchy, where the sovereign was to be found, encompassed by a flock of faithful counsellors. Nobody ever thought of asking the question as to whether there was a quorum of boyars when the law was

¹²⁶ See N. N. Pokrovskii, “Istchnikovedenie sovetskogo perioda: Dokumenty Politbyuro TsK RKP(b)–VKP(b) pervoi poloviny 1920-kh godov.” In *AE* za 1994 g. (Moscow, 1996), 30.

¹²⁷ *Sudebniki XV–XVI vekov*, ed. B. D. Grekov, R. B. Myuller, L. V. Cherepnin (Moscow, Leningrad, 1952), 176 (text), 334–337 (corresponding comments by B. A. Romanov). Cf. comments in other publications of the same Law Code by A. G. Polyak (*Pamyatniki russkogo prava*, 4 [Moscow, 1956], 337–340), and by S. I. Shtamm (*Rossiiskoe zakonodatel'stvo X–XX vekov*, 2 [Moscow, 1985], 170–172).

approved. In reality, the Law Code reinforced the custom whereby the privy advisers took part in decision-making.¹²⁸ Between 1550 and 1572, out of 38 legislative acts, at least 16 laws were approved with the participation of the boyars.¹²⁹ The official diplomatic papers stated that the boyars asked the tsar to conclude peace with his foes, and the tsar graciously consented to such proposals, not wishing to see Christian blood shed.

A counsellor was not obliged to belong to any state institution or social class. This became evident from the foreword to the Book of Degrees, which explains the Greek names for the tsar's high officials. The Russian equivalents mentioned in the Book of Degrees include "great counsellor" (bol'shoi sovetnik), "counsellor" (sovetnik) and also "chairman on the council" (predsyadai v sovete). Typically, there are no references to the court ranks of boyar and okol'nichii in these commentaries. As it was considered that politics was defined by divine commandments, its implementation did not call for any strict organisational structures. It is characteristic that the rules of precedence were frequently ignored in the work of the Privy Council (see Chapter IV). Thus, the activities and composition of the Privy Council were based on the categories of Muscovite political culture that were expressed in the "sovereign-counsellors" *topoi*.

In real life, relations between the sovereign and his counsellors were frequently far from harmonious. Frequently, the tsar's privy counsellors fell into disgrace, and this happened particularly often during political crises and the aggravation of the struggle between various boyar factions. The response to such a situation took the form of the emergence in Muscovite literature of distinctive consoling epistles sent by the leaders of the church to the disgraced grandees. The appearance of such epistles is linked to the fact that in Muscovy the metropolitans had the right to appeal to the sovereign on behalf of those in disgrace. An example of such an epistle is the Address to a Certain Person (*Slovo k nekoemy cheloveku*) written by the famous writer Metropolitan Daniil (1522–1539). Describing the state of a disgraced person, Daniil notes that his addressee is suffering from grief and sorrow, he has lost wisdom and "the temple of reason has been destroyed."

¹²⁸ Smirnov has convincingly demonstrated that the article in question did not affect the way in which new laws were passed in the second half of the 16th century. See I. I. Smirnov, "Sudebnik 1550 g.," *IZ* 24 (1947): 351–352.

¹²⁹ See *Zakonodatel'nye akty Russkogo gosudarstva vtoroi poloviny XVI–pervoi poloviny XVII veka: Teksty* (Leningrad, 1986). In fact, the boyars approved a larger number of laws since some acts are referred to only briefly without any indication of how they were approved. Moreover, the publication *Zakonodatel'nye akty* does not take into account decrees on foreign policy issues. In this sphere, the boyar council played a particularly active role.

Daniil advises the person in disgrace to cease raging against his enemies and dwell upon his own behaviour. If he is not guilty of anything before the sovereign, he must take disgrace as a divine trial. If the disgraced person has really sinned before the sovereign, he needs to repent and confess.¹³⁰

In the mid-16th century, similar admonitions were written by the publicist Ermolai-Erazm. We know very little about him as a person, but he was probably one of the priests of the Kremlin cathedrals. Ermolai-Erazm's works of an edifying nature include the Chapters about the Consoling Approach to Tsars and Grandees (*Glavy o uveshchaniu uteshitel'nym tsarem, ashche khoshcheshe i vel'mozh*). One of the chapters of this work is devoted to boyars and grandees overjoyed at being granted a rank. The author emphasises that the happy bearer of a rank must strive for virtue and truth with an eagle's or lion's indefatigability. As regards wrongdoing, he must, on the contrary, be as passive as a calf. If the grandee abides by these injunctions he will obtain not only the highest earthly rank but also the highest heavenly rank, God's grace. In another chapter of this work, Ermolai-Erazm consoles a boyar who is in disgrace and has forfeited his rank. Ermolai urges the disgraced boyar to bear his misfortunes steadfastly, just as Christ's disciples did when they suffered for their Teacher.¹³¹

Absence of harmony and unity in the ruling circles met with strong criticism from the Muscovite writers. In the same way as Peresvetov judged the wilfulness of the Byzantine grandees, many authors criticised the boyars' rule during the minority of Ivan IV (1530s–end of 1540s). During this period, a fierce struggle developed at court between boyar groups, involving many secular and church political players. The literature reflected the feeling of uncertainty which gripped Russian society in the absence of a strong sovereign. The most outstanding image of a kingdom suffering from power seekers was created by Maksim the Greek in the early 1540s. In his *Extensive Discourse Presenting with Sorrow the Disarray and Disorder of Tsars and Authorities of Recent Time* (*Prostrannoe slovo, izlagayushchee s pechal'yu nestroeniya i bezchinie tsarei i vlastei nedavnego vremeni*), the erudite monk depicted Russia as a woman sitting by the road in black attire and surrounded by predatory beasts. Russia is weeping because the vainglorious people that rule her are deaf to all that is good,

¹³⁰ V. G. Druzhinin, "Neskol'ko neizvestnykh literaturnykh pamyatnikov iz sbornika XVI veka," *Letopis' zanyatii Arkheograficheskoi komissii za 1908 g.* 21 (1909): 104.

¹³¹ Klibanov, "Sbornik sochinenii Ermolaya-Erazma," 206–207.

are concerned only with themselves, take up arms against each other and torment each other like savage beasts.¹³² The boyars' intrigues, mutual distrust, insincerity, pride and arbitrariness were criticised in the works penned in the 1530s by Metropolitan Daniil. He stressed that in the absence of Christian love, liars, slanderers and informers seized their chance.¹³³

As has been pointed out by commentators, in their accounts of historical events, the Old Russian writers usually availed themselves of established ceremonial forms. Among such forms, there are formulae of etiquette for the presentation and self-recommendation of heroes, speeches, meditations, formulae for obituaries required by behavioural etiquette, etc.¹³⁴ Such ceremonial forms also include the "sovereign-counsellors" topos. Many events in political history were interpreted by the Old Russian writers in the traditional categories of the good and evil counsellor. The most interesting thing is that such views were expressed not only by the writers but also by people far removed from literary creativity. An example of this is the well-known dialogue between Maksim the Greek and the Russian diplomat Ivan Bersen' Beklimishev.¹³⁵ The dialogue is of particular interest since its main subject was the grand prince's practice of holding meetings with his close counsellors. In the dialogue, Ivan Bersen' complained that Grand Prince Vasilii III had altered the old customs. According to Bersen', the sovereign did not respect the old people, he was stubborn, and did not like it when people argued with him; he decided all state affairs only through the members of his immediate entourage in his personal apartments. For Bersen', the change in the old customs was of apocalyptic significance: "The country which alters its customs is a country which will not survive for long." Maksim the Greek's reaction is significant as the opinion of a man of Renaissance Western culture. Maksim displayed the well-defined conception, characteristic of Western political life, of the difference between godly law, natural law, and human law. He responded: "The country which transgresses the commandments of God will be punished by God, but the customs of the ruler and the country are altered by the tsars for the good of their state." No less typical is Bersen's reply: "Yet it is better to keep to the old customs."

¹³² Sochineniya prepodobnogo Maksima Greka, 2: 319–337.

¹³³ V. Zhmakin, *Mitropolit Daniil i ego sochineniya* (Moscow, 1891), 585–588, 592.

¹³⁴ See Likhachev, *Poetika*, 89.

¹³⁵ Records of the dialogue are preserved in the materials relating to the investigation against Bersen' in 1525. See *Akty, sobrannye v bibliotekakh i arkhivakh Rossiiskoi imperii Arkheograficheskoyu ekspeditsieyu imp. Akademii nauk* (hereafter AAE), I (St. Petersburg, 1836), no. 172: 142–144. See also Sinitsyna, *Maksim Grek v Rossii*, 130–139.

Depending on the time and place they were compiled, the Russian chronicles explain the causes of the political collisions in the Kremlin in a variety of ways. The chronicles produced in Moscow during the boyars' rule in the 1530s and 1540s, for example, are limited to a dry statement of the facts about changes in the ruling elite without any extensive commentaries. The provincial chroniclers were not as well informed about the real causes of events and so they depicted political life in a traditional light. According to local chronicles, all the executions and disgraces were at the will of the grand prince, who in fact was only eight years old at that point.¹³⁶ A reinterpretation of the boyars' rule was made after Ivan IV's coronation in 1547. At the beginning of the 1550s, Ivan IV began to be surrounded by a stable Privy Council headed by the influential favourite A. F. Adashev. Thus, the regime acquired political stability in a form that was in keeping with the Russian political culture. That is why the official chronicle produced under Adashev between 1553 and 1555, the *Letopisets nachala tsarstva*, set forth the struggle at the court in a new light. The fall of the court factions' leaders was now presented by the chronicler as the machinations of enemies against the privy counsellors of the grand prince. The role of such enemies was ascribed by the chronicler to the Shuiskii princes. The official chronicle stated that each influential grandee who suffered because of the Shuiskii princes was a privy counsellor of the grand prince. According to the chronicle, the grandees were executed because they were prime counsellors and were "close" to the grand prince. One of the main accusations of the chronicler against Prince I. A. Shuiskii was that he had not bothered to travel to the meetings of the boyars' council to discuss state affairs. Thus it was that the struggle between the court factions began to be described in its usual form, that is, as a battle of evil counsellors against the good counsellors close to the grand prince.¹³⁷

On the whole, the ideological model of "sovereign-counsellors" was frequently employed by Muscovite authors for a retrospective assessment of political events, actions of the grand princes, and their military conquests and defeats. It is not difficult to notice that in works written soon after the events described, the image of the evil counsellor is usually not resorted to. As a rule, the author of such a work limits himself to stating the facts and

¹³⁶ Cf. PSRL, XXXIV, 26 (a chronicle penned by one of the informed Kremlin officials, a witness to the events of the 1530s and 1540s). The provincial chronicles: *Pskovskie letopisi*, I (Moscow, Leningrad, 1941), 108; PSRL, XXVI, 318. Cf. S. O. Shmidt, *U istokov rossiiskogo absolyutizma* (Moscow, 1996), 185.

¹³⁷ PSRL, XXIX, 32, 40, 42, 45. Cf. Zimin, I. S. *Peresvetov*, 35.

abstains from extensive commentaries. However, the longer the time passes from the moment of the event described, the more forcefully the role of the sovereign's counsellors in this event is emphasised. The sovereign's successful actions are explained by the wise advice given by good counsellors. On the other hand, failures, downfalls and mistakes are ascribed to a wicked counsellor.

An evil counsellor inspired by the Devil would be guided solely by his own interests. If the tsar listened to evil counsellors it might ultimately lead to the fall of the Russian kingdom, in the same way as Man fell when Eve listened to the advice of the tempter-snake. Evil counsellors were responsible for the many troubles and miseries of the Russian people. Ivan the IV's contemporaries blamed the misdeeds he committed on the influence of bad counsellors. In particular, the idea for establishing the Oprichnina was ascribed to the advice of "evil men" – V. M. Yur'ev and A. D. Basmannov.¹³⁸ The early 17th-century writer Ivan Timofeev considered that the intrigues of evil counsellors forced Ivan the Terrible to bring down his wrath on Novgorod in 1570. The mistaken, disloyal behaviour of the tsar was retribution for sins: the sins of a tsar who had started to listen to malevolent counsellors, and the sins of the very counsellors whose advice had become evil and perfidious.¹³⁹

The nature of the wrong caused by bad counsellors can also alter in literary works. Sometimes the wrong bears an earthly character, and such evil is due to young, inexperienced counsellors. The greatest danger comes from an evil counsellor inspired by the Devil. Such a counsellor is the bearer of the highest form of evil. In the 16th century, arguments about evil counsellors acting on the Devil's incitement were tied to the theme of witchcraft and magic. By means of magic, the evil counsellor could pervert a weak, vacillating man so that he joined the Devil's side. Influencing the tsar by magic, the evil counsellor broke the link between the tsar and his subjects and won the sovereign over to unjust actions.¹⁴⁰ Ideas about the magic of evil counsellors can be examined as an individual case of the conceptions of the counsellor as a binding link between the sovereign and forces in the next world. In order to commune with God, the tsar had no need for any mediators because he himself possessed divine traits. At the

¹³⁸ PSRL, XXXIV, 190. These grandees really were Ivan IV's privy counsellors (see Chapter III).

¹³⁹ Vremennik Ivana Timofeeva, 13; Rowland, "The Problem of Advice," 268–269.

¹⁴⁰ See V. S. Kivelson, "Political Sorcery in Sixteenth-Century Muscovy." In *Culture and Identity in Muscovy*, 272–277.

same time, the highest dark forces of Christian cosmology (Satan) influenced the tsar through his immediate counsellors. So did the supreme pagan force, Mother Earth, as the Tale of the Battle with Mamay bears out.

Conceptions about the Devil's influence on the tsar through the mediation of an evil counsellor were clearly reflected in the correspondence between Ivan IV and Andrei Kurbskii. Researchers usually interpret the ideas expressed in the correspondence as the opposition of two views on the tsar's power: Kurbskii as the boyars' ideologist considered that the tsar must listen to wise counsellors, while Ivan IV was in favour of autocratic power without any limitations.¹⁴¹ How fair is such an opposition? According to Kurbskii, earlier, when the tsar had worthy counsellors, Ivan IV gained victories over his enemies, primarily over Kazan'. The tsar was surrounded by courageous commanders, among whom Kurbskii includes himself. Yet the tsar mercilessly destroyed the commanders who had been sent by God and were prepared to sacrifice their lives for him. In their place, the tsar now had in his entourage a counsellor well known to all, who had been sent by the Devil (Kurbskii did not provide the counsellor's name). This counsellor whispered deceit in the tsar's ears and forced him to shed Christian blood. In support of his words, Kurbskii cited a case where the Emperor Constantine carried out unjust acts on the advice of "toadies and foul flatterers." Like Constantine, Ivan IV heeded the advice of his "cunning" counsellor, Joseph of Volok's cousin Archbishop Vassian Toporkov, who advised the tsar not to keep at his side counsellors wiser than himself.¹⁴² Generally speaking, Kurbskii's epistles contain the arguments about the fatal role of the evil counsellor traditionally found in Old Russian literature.

Worthy of note is the fact that in his replies to Kurbskii, Ivan IV also expressed generally received views on the role of the counsellors. In his letters, Ivan never denied the idea that the tsar ought to listen to good advice and beware of evil counsellors. In order to describe Ivan's position

¹⁴¹ For more on the political views of Ivan IV and Kurbskii, see I. Auerbach, "Die politischen Vorstellungen des Fürsten Andrei Kurbskij," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 17 (1969), 4: 170–172; Ya. S. Lur'e, "Perepiska Ivana Groznogo s Kurbskim v obshchestvennoi mysli Drevnei Rusi," *Perepiska Ivana Groznogo s Andreem Kurbskim*, ed. Ya. S. Lur'e and Yu. D. Rykov (Leningrad, 1979; reprint, Moscow, 1993), 214–249; Yu. D. Rykov, "Knyaz' A. M. Kurbskii i ego kontseptsiya gosudarstvennoi vlasti." In *Rossiia na putyakh tsentralizatsii*, 193–197; Morozova, "Ivan Groznyi i publitsisty," 236–251; Halperin, "Edward Keenan," 399. Cf. Hunt, "Ivan IV's Personal Mythology," *passim*. Kalugin points out a number of similarities between Ivan IV and Kurbskii as writers. Kalugin, Andrei Kurbskii, 238.

¹⁴² Fennell, *The Correspondence*, 9, 11, 233, 237. Discourse on good advice and how this advice was spurned by Ivan IV are the main theme of another work by Kurbskii, *The History of the Grand Prince of Moscow*. See Fennell, *Prince A. M. Kurbsky's History*, 18, 20, 78, 87. See also Kalugin, Andrei Kurbskii, 176–177.

in the dispute with Kurbskii, researchers often quote the well-known words from the tsar's epistle: "But as for the Russian autocracy, they themselves [i.e., the autocrats] from the beginning have ruled all the[ir] dominions, and not the boyars and not the grandees."¹⁴³ Yet these words do not contain a denial of the significance of the counsellors. In the Muscovite literary tradition, the counsellors were quite definitely not meant to aspire to the autocrat's power. Many authors, including the tsar's opponent, Prince Kurbskii, and Kurbskii's mentor, Maksim the Greek, argued that evil and power-seeking counsellors may cause the tsardom harm.

According to Ivan, the true autocrat must not be brutal and must not resign himself dumbly to circumstances. The main thing is for the tsar to be circumspect, i.e., sometimes meek, but sometimes severe. And meekness is intended for good people, severity for evil ones, otherwise the tsar would not be the tsar.¹⁴⁴ Circumspection also calls for an attentive attitude towards advice. Ivan IV writes: "I saw in the Holy Scriptures that it is right to submit to good preceptors without any consideration."¹⁴⁵ Moreover, Ivan upbraids Kurbskii for not having given the tsar wise advice:

If you are good and just, then why, when you saw a fire burning in the tsar's council (singlit), did you not extinguish it but kindled it still further? Where you ought by means of sensible advice to have put a stop to the villainous scheme, you even scattered weeds.¹⁴⁶

Thus, Ivan recognised the existence of the tsar's council, and emphasised that the grandees on the council should provide the sovereign with sensible advice. What then was the subject of the dispute between Ivan and Kurbskii? The polemic between them was essentially about who was a good counsellor and who an evil one. In his dispute with Kurbskii, Ivan used the same model of "sovereign-counsellor" relations as his opponent, but imbued it with an opposite content. Kurbskii regarded Adashev, Sylvester and other people surrounding the tsar in his youth as good counsellors. From Ivan's standpoint, these people were evil counsellors, "the servants of Satan," who gave evil advice and, under various pretexts, drove

¹⁴³ Fennell, *The Correspondence*, 27.

¹⁴⁴ Fennell, *The Correspondence*, 37, 41. *Perepiska*, 18, 19. This excerpt from the tsar's epistle can be traced back to the work by Agapetus. See Ev'enko, "A Neglected Byzantine Source," 165; *Ljubomudreishago kir* "Agapita Diakona, XXII.

¹⁴⁵ Fennell, *The Correspondence*, 87.

¹⁴⁶ Fennell, *The Correspondence*, 40, 41. The singlit (from the Greek *sygkletos*, council) mentioned in Ivan's epistle refers to the tsar's council. Thus, when translating this extract, I availed myself of the interpretation by Ya. S. Lur'e and O. V. Tvorogov (*Perepiska*, 19, 129). Fennell translated singlit as "your council," that is Kurbskii's council.

away true well-wishers.¹⁴⁷ The tsar protested against such a state of affairs, where, whenever he gave any good advice, Adashev and his confederates did not avail themselves of it, but “if they were to give any refractory or corrupt advice, then they were acting for the common weal!” Thus, Ivan banished the evil counsellors, and now these men surround not the tsar but Kurbskii himself.¹⁴⁸ After the expulsion of the evil counsellors, there was no-one left among the tsar’s boyars who would not have agreed with his actions. Thus, Ivan did what a true autocrat must do: he removed from his entourage evil counsellors who served the Devil, and restored harmonious relations with his privy counsellors.

In Muscovite political ideology, the counsellor could act not only in a heavenly but also in an earthly hypostasis. In his earthly form, the counsellor was neither a prophet nor an apostle, but the slave of an earthly ruler. The counsellor was obliged to assist the sovereign in the routine running of the state. It is well known that all the inhabitants of Muscovy were regarded as the grand prince’s slaves. This perception emerged at the time of Ivan III, who probably considered that he had won Russia from the Tartar khan.¹⁴⁹ And so in the Tale of the Subjugation of Novgorod, Ivan III declared that he could have pity on and defend his subjects. At the same time Ivan III said that he could also execute them if they did not submit to the sovereign’s will.¹⁵⁰ During the reign of Ivan III’s son, Grand Prince Vasili III, all the inhabitants of Russia called themselves slaves of the grand prince. Herberstein noted that by his power over his subjects, Vasili III far surpassed all the monarchs of the world. According to Herberstein, none of Vasili III’s councillors had ever dared to gainsay his lord’s opinion.¹⁵¹ Like all Muscovites, the counsellors were deemed to be their sovereign’s slaves. In daily practice, all the boyars referred to themselves as slaves (kholopy) of the sovereign. This is not to say that counsellors had a legal status of slaves. The “counsellor-slave” conception assigned the counsellor

¹⁴⁷ Fennell, *The Correspondence*, 19, 21, 95, 97, 153.

¹⁴⁸ Fennell, *The Correspondence*, 15, 17, 91.

¹⁴⁹ Of interest is the fact that in the year of the victory on the Ugra, Ivan III began minting coins with the legend of his name in Arabic script. See M. Cherniavsky, “Khan or Basileus: An Aspect of Russian Medieval Political Theory,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* XX (Oct.–Dec. 1959), no. 4: 474–475; I. O. Knyazevskii, “Vysshaya vlast’ v Kievskoi i Moskovskoi Rusi,” *Slavyane i ikh sosedi: Imperskaya ideya v stranakh Tsentral’noi, Vostochnoi i Yugo-Vostochnoi Evropy*, ed. G. G. Litavrin and others (Moscow, 1995), 61–62; Ostrowski, *Muscovy*, 164–198; M. Poe, “What Did Russians Mean When They Called Themselves ‘Slaves of the Tsar?’” *Slavic Review* 57 (1998), no. 3: 590–591.

¹⁵⁰ PLDR, *Vtoraya polovina XV veka*, 380.

¹⁵¹ Sigmund von Herberstein, *Description of Moscow and Muscovy*, ed. B. Picard, trans. J. B. C. Grundy (London, 1969), 43, 44.

the symbolic social role of slave as it was understood in Muscovite political culture. It is important to emphasise that in Muscovite Russia, the relations of slavery were a complicated system which had various social, political and cultural connotations. As A. I. Yakovlev points out, “the basis for the conception of serfdom incorporated the idea of internal solidarity between both participants in this dualistic system.”¹⁵² According to M. Poe, “it was difficult within contemporary Muscovite culture to serve ‘the state’; one could only serve ‘the master’ in his realm.”¹⁵³

It is no surprise that Ivan IV entirely adopted his ancestors’ attitude towards the privy counsellors as serfs. Thus, in his letters to Kurbskii, he quaintly confused the perceptions of the counsellor’s various hypostases, the counsellor-apostle and the counsellor-slave. In Ivan’s words, in Adashev’s and Sylvester’s time “slaves ruled over the heads of their masters,” while he, the tsar, was unable to object to even the least of the counsellors. Here, the tsar was referring to the earthly hypostasis of the counsellor, the counsellor-slave. Like his grandfather, Ivan III, Ivan IV expressed the usual views on the relationship between the Muscovite sovereign and his slaves: “And we are free to reward slaves (kholopy), and we are also free to execute them.”¹⁵⁴ Ivan accused his slaves, Kurbskii, and his supporters of appropriating a priestly and royal office. Ivan contrasted admonitions given him by slaves with God’s mercy descending on him as the true tsar:

Yet you always wish[ed] to be rulers and teachers, as it were to a child. But we trust in the mercy of God, for we have reached the grade of the age of Christ’s fulfilment, and, apart from the mercy of God and of the most pure Mother of God and of all the saints, we ask for no teaching from men, for it is not befitting, when ruling a multitude of people, to ask for instruction from others.¹⁵⁵

Thus, Ivan’s letters united the notions of the counsellor’s various hypostases. The theme of the counsellor’s earthly hypostasis is linked with the image of the evil counsellor. The evil counsellor was not only an envoy/servant of the Devil, but also, in a sense, a rebellious slave. The dual perception of the counsellor’s figure was a mirror image of the dual image of the tsar. Whenever the tsar was presented as the incarnation of the

¹⁵² A. I. Yakovlev, *Kholopy i kholopstvo v Moskovskom gosudarstve XVII veka* (Moscow, Leningrad, 1943), 28. On slavery in Muscovy, see also R. Hellie, *Slavery in Russia, 1450–1725* (Chicago, 1982).

¹⁵³ Poe, “What Did Russians Mean?” 590.

¹⁵⁴ Fennell, *The Correspondence*, 66, 90, 104. My translation.

¹⁵⁵ Fennell, *The Correspondence*, 153, 155.

divine source, the counsellors were represented in categories from Christian cosmology – as apostles surrounding Christ, or as fallen angels that had become the tools of the Devil. If the Muscovite writers spoke of the earthly essence of the tsar, then his privy counsellors, just like other Russians, became the slaves of their master. The notions about the counsellor-apostles and counsellor-slaves relate the dual position of the counsellor in Muscovite political culture. The Valaam Discussion demonstrates that the issue of consultation was treated at two levels, the practical and the sacred. All worldly matters had to be decided with the trusted counsellors but “above all counsels” were the commandments of Holy Scripture.

* * *

Concluding our analysis of the “sovereign and counsellors” theme in literary works, we may note that the general notions about the relationship between the sovereign and his privy counsellors were established in the 12th–13th centuries, even before the rise of Moscow. Daniil Zatochnik was already of the view that the prince must be awesome and, at the same time, gather worthy counsellors around his person. Elaborating the ideology of autocracy, the Muscovite writers employed an existing model for the relations between the ruler and his immediate circle. In the 15th–16th centuries, interpretations of these relations were based on various Biblical images reflecting the unity of the sovereign and his good counsellors. The 16th-century authors supplemented this outline by introducing into their deliberations the concept of “justice” (*pravda*), i.e., the just state structure under which the tsar rules his country in consultation with wise grandees. In order to introduce justice into his state, the tsar must be awesome, he must eradicate evil. These ideas were expressed through the “sovereign–counsellors” topos which is encountered in many literary works and various documents. Judging by these sources, in Muscovite political culture, consultations between the ruler and his privy advisors were assigned a ritualised character. For performing consultations, the sovereign and the elite developed certain ceremonial forms which reproduced the myth of harmony and unity in the ruling circles. Muscovite ideologists and administrators perceived these consultations as a highly important act which guaranteed the prince the protection of heavenly forces and also ensured him victory over his enemies and the success of his plans. Ritualised consultations between the sovereign and his counsellors thereby validated decisions taken by the ruler.

In the Muscovite ideologists' view, the sovereign and the counsellors could not exist on their own. Neither the sovereign nor the counsellors could rule the country separately from each other; the ruler and the privy counsellors must exist in perfect harmony. Occasionally, a counsellor might even take on some of the ruler's ritual functions. These notions of the sovereign and his counsellors were based on general ideas about the world being constructed harmoniously. The various essences of the tsar's image were an expression of the divine origin of his power.¹⁵⁶ Thus, the autocrat's *groza* and his readiness to listen to good advice constituted, from the standpoint of the Muscovite writers, inalienable qualities of a true tsar.

Daniel Rowland particularly dwelt on how the problem of advice related to the activity of state institutions such as the Duma. This historian pointed out in particular that works of literature pay very little attention to these organs of state. In particular, the early Russian authors quite seldom referred to the Duma. Rowland has concluded that in itself, the Duma hardly played any active role.¹⁵⁷ In my opinion, Rowland's conclusions fail to take account of an important feature of early Russian literary works. The literary texts of Muscovite Russia were not characterised at all by conceptual and philosophical utterances. According to M. Plyukhanova, the Muscovite writer employed a word "not in order to name an object, but in order to signify an idea, and therefore the object, the lowest form of signifying that idea, is in a contradictory position in the text: its name does not belong to it, its uniqueness is ignored, its concrete properties as an object are subject to oblivion."¹⁵⁸ Thus, Old Russian literature was distinguished by a tendency towards abstraction. The Old Russian writer sought to see symbols of the eternal, the divine in everything earthly, in all manifestations of human and social life. Consequently, every attempt was made to exclude everyday, political, military and economic vocabulary from works of literature. If there was a need to examine concrete manifestations of life, the writer preferred to refer to them with abstract concepts and paraphrases, instead of "city governor" (*posadnik*) they would talk of "a certain grandee," instead of "prince" they would say "the sovereign of that land," etc.¹⁵⁹ Thus, early Russian literary works cannot testify about the existence

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Klibanov, "Sbornik," 186.

¹⁵⁷ Rowland, "The Problem of Advice," 277. The expression *Izbrannaya Rada* (Chosen Council) employed by Kurbskii must apparently be regarded as signifying not a state organ but a sacred concept linked to Christian theology. See A. N. Grobovsky, *The "Chosen Council" of Ivan IV: A Reinterpretation* (New York, 1969); Filyushkin, *Istoriya*.

¹⁵⁸ Plyukhanova, *Syuzhety*, 110. Cf. Malinin, "Srednevekovyi dukh 'soveta'," 182–183.

¹⁵⁹ Likhachev, *Poetika*, 104.

of the Duma nor about its absence. They merely relate the supreme principles by which the sovereign and his counsellors were supposed to be guided in their mutual relations.

To interpret the practice of consultation, the Muscovite ideologists resorted to categories from Christian theology (the tsar – incarnation of God, counsellors – apostles) and categories from Muscovite political practice (tsar – master, counsellors – slaves). And so in the Muscovite literary tradition, the concept of counsellor had two aspects, depending on the double character of the functions carried out by him. Firstly, the counsellor must support the piety of the sovereign and check that the ruler's actions conformed to the will of the Lord. That is why in the literary works, the close advisors provided the sovereign with advice of a moral rather than political nature.¹⁶⁰ Secondly, the counsellor provided the ruler with advice on affairs of state. The twofold character of the relationship between the sovereign and his counsellors is presented in the following table:

The structure of the “sovereign–counsellors” topos

Image of the sovereign	Image of the good counsellor	What the sovereign should do	Image of the evil counsellor	What the sovereign should do
Christ	apostle	deliberate with apostles	envoy of the Devil	banish the envoy of the Devil
master of slaves	faithful slave	protect and reward his faithful slave	rebellious slave	punish his rebellious slave

The flexible structure of the “sovereign–counsellors” topos provided the ruler with a powerful instrument in playing off against each other various groups of his servitors. The opposition “good counsellor vs. evil counsellor” enabled the ruler to involve in consultations only those boyars who were considered to be loyal or competent. The case of Mikhail Glinskii in 1533 reveals that even a deadly sick ruler had enough authority to insist on involving his favourite in consultations regardless of other boyars’ discontent (see Chapter II). For the same reasons, representatives of other court ranks could also be summoned on the council. Muscovite political culture thereby defined the role of the counsellor rather than his status.¹⁶¹ This is

¹⁶⁰ Rowland, “The Problem of Advice,” 277.
¹⁶¹ According to Parsons, a role is what the actor in question does in his relations with others, seen in the context of its functional significance for the social system. Status describes

why the role of the counsellor was not allocated to any particular rank of the Sovereign's Court.¹⁶²

It is also important to notice that the sovereign's obligation to consult with good counsellors was counterbalanced by his other duty, to expel and punish the evil counsellor. This repressive element of the "sovereign-counsellors" topos justified disgraces and executions as a radical means of conflict resolution in Muscovite political culture. In this sense the "sovereign-counsellors" topos incorporated not only tranquil deliberations, but also the Oprichnina terror unleashed by Tsar Ivan IV.

where the actor is "located" in the social system relative to other actors. Status is thereby the actor's place in the relationship system considered as a structure. See T. Parsons, *The Social System* (London, 1991), 25.

¹⁶² This suggests we should reject Kollmann's assertion that all boyars had a right to consult with the grand prince. Cf. Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 151.

Plate 1. The consultation between Prince Vladimir Svyatoslavich and the boyars concerning the place and time for Rus' acceptance of Christianity (*Radziwiłł Chronicle*, miniature 131)

Plate 2. Prince Svyatoslav Izyaslavich's consultation with the boyars concerning the blinding of Prince Vasilyok of Terebovl' and Prince David Igorevich's agreement with this decision (*Radziwiłł Chronicle*, miniature 308)

Plate 3. The rule of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (*Radziwiłł Chronicle*, miniature 6)

Plate 4. The consultation between Prince Svyatoslav Igorevich and his armed retinue (*Radziwiłł Chronicle*, miniature 93)

Plate 5. The boyar feuds in Vladimir under the young Prince Yaropolk Rostislavich (*Radziwiłł Chronicle*, miniature 553)

Plate 6. Ivan IV and privy secretary V. Zakharov-Gnil'ev (The Book of Tsardom, f. 273)

Plate 7. The trial and execution of boyars (The Book of Tsardom, f. 273v.)

Plate 9. The council of the Russian grand prince (the Tsar's throne in the Cathedral of the Dormition in the Moscow Kremlin. Bas-relief no. 1)

Plate 10. The council of the Byzantine emperor (the Tsar's throne in the Cathedral of the Dormition in the Moscow Kremlin. Bas-relief no. 8)

CHAPTER II

FROM THE INNER CIRCLE
OF COUNSELLORS TO
THE PRIVY COUNCIL

From the 14th to the 16th century a special group existed among the boyars which for our purposes may be referred to as the inner circle of counsellors. The boyars within the inner circle possessed the highest prestige, held great powers and were the most trusted counsellors to the grand prince. In order to enter this circle, a boyar had to obtain the confidence of the grand prince and the support of influential courtiers.¹ The evolution of the inner circle was an important factor of the political system in Russia. This evolution progressed from an amorphous gathering of trusted counsellors of the grand prince to the Privy Council, which took shape in the 16th century. Unlike the inner circle, the Privy Council was able to function separately from the sovereign (albeit under his control), because the Privy Council had a definite procedure of work and a developed administrative chancellery apparatus for achieving its decisions. The chief representatives of this apparatus gained admission to the Privy Council and began actively participating in its meetings. Their presence lent the work of the council a certain order and organisation.

From the very earliest times, a special group of the most experienced and trusted counsellors of the grand prince existed among the boyars. The counsellors enjoyed the confidence of the ruler and took part in meetings with him. It is typical that the first reference to the word "boyar" (in 912) is accompanied by the epithet "grand."² This means that at the court of the Kievan prince there were also other "lesser" boyars. In the 13th century, the distinction between grand and lesser boyars can already be clearly traced in the sources, and the social status of the former was considerably greater. In the 14th century, these trusted grand boyars were referred to as "elder" (*starye*, *stareishie boyare*). The elder boyars advised the grand prince on how state affairs had been handled in the past, were responsible for dealings with the Golden Horde and travelled there as envoys.³

In order to determine the circle of particularly trusted counsellors of the Muscovite princes, the grand princes' wills (*dukhovnye gramoty*) need to

¹ Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 8, 122–123, 128 and following. Recognising the existence of the inner circle, Kollmann considers that it does not "denote permanent and primary aspects of Muscovite politics" (*ibid.*, 122).

² The grand boyars along with Grand Prince Oleg sent their envoys to Byzantium. PLDR: XI–nachalo XII veka (Moscow, 1978), 46; H. *ownia...ski*, "O proiskhozhdenii russkogo boyarstva." In *Vostochnaya Evropa v drevnosti i srednevekov'e* (Moscow, 1978), 93. Cf. S. M. Kashtanov, *Iz istorii russkogo srednevekovogo istochnika: Akty X–XVI vv.* (Moscow, 1996), 43.

³ PSRL, XI, 210; SGGD, II (Moscow, 1819), 16; B. N. Florya, "Formirovanie soslovnogo statusa gosподstvuyushchego klassa Drevnei Rusi (Na primere materiala statei o vozmeshchenii za beschestie," *Istoriya SSSR*, 1983, no. 1: 63–65. For more on the elder boyars, see Chapter I.

be enlisted. When these wills were being compiled, the closest, or, as they were then called, “most faithful of all” boyars were usually present. Their names were usually mentioned in the wording of the wills. The wills of the grand princes were comprehensive documents with a variety of contents, and contained detailed analyses of political issues and of the administration of the state, land and ownership relationships. In order to compile such documents the sovereign had to consult with his counsellors and obtain the necessary information from them. There is reliable evidence that around the bed of a dying sovereign there was always a fierce battle between rival court factions. In reality, under the Muscovite political system the grandees had only two opportunities for fundamentally and quickly altering their position in the hierarchy, either the marriage of a grand prince or the moment when power was transferred with the illness or death of a grand prince. For the boyars, involvement in the composition of the grand princes’ wills was an acknowledgement of their high position in the social and court hierarchy, and also an evident opportunity to strengthen their position with the heir, especially if he was still a minor. Nobody was prepared to miss such a rare opportunity. It is no coincidence that the chronicles scrupulously record the composition of those present at the last meetings of the grand princes, prior to their deaths. Special retrospective lists of the boyars who helped draft the wills of the grand princes were also produced.⁴ And so the boyars who were present when wills were being compiled were the most active participants in the life of the court. Klyuchevskii suggested that the boyars present at the compilation of wills fulfilled a double function. On the one hand, they were the prince’s counsellors, on the other, they appeared as responsible witnesses (*poslukhi*) at the preparation of a legal act. This double function arose because the running of the state had still not been separated from the management of the prince’s personal household.⁵ Furthermore, the presence of the boyars during the composition of the grand prince’s testament was a distinctive ritual, one which reproduced the collective image of the sovereign and his counsellors. Obedience to the will of the dying man was imbued with immense moral, political and juridical significance in Muscovite political culture.⁶ Through their attendance at the drawing-up of the will, the boyars thereby expressed their readiness to fulfil the will of the sovereign after his death. It was

⁴ PSRL, XXIV, 232.

⁵ Klyuchevskii, *Boyarskaya дума*, 147. Cf. A. L. Yurganov, “*Politicheskaya bor’ba v 30-e gg. XVI veka*,” *Istoriya SSSR*, 1988, no. 2: 109.

⁶ Collins, “Early Russian Topoi,” 148.

through the attending boyars that the succession of power within the ruling dynasty was implemented. The dramatic process of handing over power and appointing guardians for an infant successor unavoidably led to numerous frictions between the leaders of the court factions. These conflicts were settled during consultations between the sovereign and his privy counsellors. The consultation with the dying sovereign thereby served as a means for resolving the conflicts that started up during the transfer of power, i.e., at the moment when stability in society was subjected to the greatest danger.

The trusted boyars were also present at the conclusion of agreements between the princes of Moscow and the princes from other Russian territories. Unfortunately, the leading boyars are often referred to without their surnames. Therefore, in order to identify these boyars correctly, we have to employ information from a variety of sources and the results of special studies.

The first definite information about the composition of the trusted boyars dates from the time of the reign of Grand Prince Semen Ivanovich the Proud (1340–1353). In his will, Semen ordered his younger brothers to obey the exhortations of the metropolitan and elder boyars, who had always wanted what was best for Semen's father, Ivan Danilovich Kalita and for Semen himself. The succession of power was expressed by Semen in a delicate political metaphor: the brothers had to fulfil his exhortations in order that "the memory of our parents and of us may not die and so that the candle may not go out."⁷ Some idea of the composition of the trusted boyars of Semen the Proud can be gained from the wording of the agreement between this prince and two of his brothers (in about 1350–1351).⁸ Although the text of the agreement is severely damaged, the names of six counsellors who were present at its conclusion are preserved. They included boyars of all three princes who concluded the agreement. Grand Prince Semen the Proud was represented by three prominent boyars – Vasilii

⁷ R. C. Howes, trans. and ed. *The Testaments of the Grand Princes of Moscow* (New York, 1967), 192. Cf. Kashtanov, *Iz istorii*, 79, 123. Concern about a break in the princely line was caused by an epidemic of the plague, which led to the deaths of Semen's relatives and Semen himself (Alef, *The Origins*, 24). Kuchkin dates Semen the Proud's will to 24th–25th April 1353. V. A. Kuchkin, "K datirovke zaveshchaniya Simeona Gordogo." In *Drevneishye gosudarstva na territorii SSSR. Materialy i issledovaniya: 1987 god* (Moscow, 1989), 99–106.

⁸ Zimin dates the agreement to the end of the 1340s–early 1350s. A. A. Zimin, "O khronologii dukhovnykh i dogovornykh gramot velikikh i udel'nykh knyazei XIV–XV vv.," *Problemy istochnikovedeniya* 6 (1958): 279–280. Kuchkin dates the agreement to the period between spring 1347 and 26th April 1354. V. A. Kuchkin, "Dogovor Kalitovichei: K datirovke drevneishikh dokumentov Moskovskogo velikoknyazheskogo arkhiva." In *Problemy istochnikovedeniya istorii SSSR i spetsial'nykh istoricheskikh distsiplin* (Moscow, 1984), 16–23.

Vel'yaminovich Protas'evich, Vasilii Okat'evich Valuev and Mikhail Aleksandrovich.⁹

At that time, Vasilii Vel'yaminovich (died in 1356) held the post of the chiliarch (*tysyatskii*) of Moscow, which was the top position in the grand prince's administration. The chiliarch administered judicial power over the town population, allocated duties and implemented the commercial court, and the post of chiliarch was passed on by inheritance within the Vel'yaminov family. The second trusted boyar of Semen the Proud, Vasilii Okat'evich Valuev was descended from a powerful boyar clan which owned extensive properties around Moscow. Vasilii Okat'evich's father was a major figure during the era of Ivan Kalita, the father of Grand Prince Semen the Proud. It is important to note that Vasilii Okat'evich's son was later one of the trusted boyars of Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich (see below).¹⁰ The boyars close to the grand prince also included Mikhail Aleksandrovich, whose daughter was married to a son of the chiliarch Vasilii Vel'yaminovich. In 1357, Mikhail Aleksandrovich defended the town of Lopasnya against the forces of the Ryazan' prince, who was an opponent of the prince of Moscow. It is clear that these people constituted that circle of old boyars on whom Semen was relying when he handed over power to his brothers. It is possible that the old boyars also included Vasilii Vel'yaminovich's son Vasilii, who inherited the post of chiliarch of Moscow from his father. Evidently, it was precisely Vasilii Vasil'evich Vel'yaminov and Mikhail Aleksandrovich who are referred to in the chronicle as the great boyars who in 1357 went over from the grand prince of Moscow to his political rival, but then returned to their patron.¹¹

⁹ *Dukhovnye i dogovornye gramoty velikikh i udel'nykh knyazey XIV-XVI vv.* (hereafter DDG), ed. L. V. Cherepnin, S. V. Bakhrushin (Moscow, Leningrad, 1950), no. 2: 13; V. A. Kuchkin, "Spodvizhnik Dmitriya Donskogo," *VIS*, 1979, no. 8: 105-106. Cf. S. B. Veselovskii, *Issledovaniya po istorii klassa sluzhilykh zemlevladel'tsev* (hereafter IPIK) (Moscow, 1969), 489; H. Paszkiewicz, *The Rise of Moscow Power* (New York, 1983), 325 note 151, 328 note 173; N. Sh. Kollmann, "The Boyar Clan and Court Politics: the Founding of the Muscovite Political System," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* 23 (Jan.-March 1982), no. 1: 16.

¹⁰ *Redkie istochniki po istorii Rossii*, comp. Z. N. Bochkareva and M. E. Bychkova, 2 (Moscow, 1977), 135; Veselovskii, IPIK, see index. In connection with Vasilii Valuev's prominent role, it is hardly rightful to include him among the prince's secondary and rank-and-file collaborators, as Veselovskii does.

¹¹ Howes, *The Testaments*, 189. See also *Drevnyaya rossiiskaya vivliofika* (hereafter DRV). 2nd ed., VI (Moscow, 1788), 450; PSRL, XV, 1: 66; X, 230; S. M. Solov'ev, *Sochineniya*, II (Moscow, 1988), 253, 257; Paszkiewicz, *The Rise of Moscow Power*, 325 note 151. On Vasilii Vasil'evich Vel'yaminov, see also Kollmann, "The Boyar Clan," 28 note 57, 29 note 67. There exist indistinct reports that the elder boyars of Grand Prince Semen the Proud included Fedor Vasil'yevich Vel'yaminov (a brother of Vasilii Vasil'evich), yet these reports have not inspired confidence among modern scholars. See V. A. Kuchkin, "Sergei Radonezhskii," *VIS*, 1992, no. 10: 77, 90 note 15. Cf. Veselovskii, IPIK, 215; Cherepnin, *Obrazovanie*, 550.

A great deal of evidence has survived concerning the trusted counselors of Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich Donskoi (1350–1389). A whole series of circumstances meant that Dmitrii was constantly in need of the assistance of authoritative advisors. Dmitrii was only nine when his father, Grand Prince Ivan Ivanovich, died, and so the real power lay with his adult mentors. Dmitrii's reign was marked by a number of highly important events in domestic and foreign policy, the most famous of which was the victorious battle with the Tartars on the Kulikovo Pole (1380). Since Dmitrii never learnt to read or write, he could only deal with responsible political tasks with the aid of his counsellors. They often helped him to determine his policy towards other Russian princes and the Tartar khans, and headed his army's formations during campaigns. Among Dmitrii Ivanovich's boyars there was also a special group of elder boyars, who were the closest counsellors to the grand prince. It was specifically the elder boyars who took part in taking the most important state decisions. Dmitrii Ivanovich obviously esteemed his boyars highly. As was shown in Chapter I, works of Muscovite literature portrayed the relations between Dmitrii Ivanovich and the elder boyars in a spirit of concord and mutual cooperation.

In 1366, Dmitrii Ivanovich discussed with his first cousin Vladimir Andreevich and all the elder boyars the issue of reinforcing the defensive installations around Moscow, and it was the counsellors who took the decision to surround the town with stone walls.¹² Furthermore, it is probable that the elder boyars provided funds for the construction of some fortifications. In any case, among the fortifications of the Moscow Kremlin are towers and gates bearing the names of boyars: the Sviblo tower (one of Dmitrii Ivanovich's trusted boyars was Fedor Andreevich Sviblo); the Sobaka tower (the boyar Ivan Fedorovich Sobaka); the Cheshka gates (named after Danila Cheshka, a boyar in 1425); and the Timofeevskie gates (one of Dmitrii Ivanovich's key counsellors was Timofei Vasil'evich Vel'yaminov). It is quite likely that these people were among the elder boyars who took part in the decision to build the Kremlin. Historians have drawn attention to the following point: the chronicler emphasises that the decision of the boyars' meeting was clearly and quickly put into effect: "no sooner decided than

¹² "Toe zhe zimy knyaz' velikyi Dimitrei Ivanovich, pogadav s bratom svoim s knyazem s Volodimerom Andreevichem i s vsemi boyary stareishimi i sdumasha staviti gorod kamen Moskvu, da ezhe umyslisha, to i sotvorisha. Toe zhe zimy povezosha kamenie k gorodu" (PSRL, XV, 1: 83). See also M. N. Tikhomirov, *Drevnyaya Moskva, XII–XV vv. Rossiya na mezhdunarodnykh putyakh, XIV–XV vv.* (Moscow, 1992), 131; For more on the 1366 decision, see also V. A. Kuchkin, "Dmitrii Donskoi," *VIS*, 1995, no. 5–6: 66; idem, "Zabytyi dokument XIV v. iz nakhodki 1843 g. v Moskovskom Kreml'e," *Istoricheskii arkhiv* (hereafter IA), 1997, no. 3: 15.

done,” and the transport of building materials began in that very winter.¹³ And so, as early as the 14th century, we have clear evidence that the grand prince was surrounded by a close circle of advisors who were actively involved in the affairs of state.

The composition of the elder boyars of Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich can be determined on the basis of the trilateral agreement between Dmitrii Ivanovich, his first cousin Vladimir Andreevich and the Lithuanian Prince Ol'gerd (1371) and by means of two of the grand prince's wills (circa 1375 and 1389). Involved in concluding the agreement with Ol'gerd were the boyars Dmitrii Mikhailovich Bobrok Volynskii and probably Ivan Fedorovich Sobaka Fominskii (the surname is not mentioned in the wording of the agreement).¹⁴ Dmitrii Mikhailovich went out to the court of the grand prince from Volyn' accompanied by his sons. He was one of the most outstanding military leaders of his day, and thanks to his decisive actions, the Russian forces gained victory on Kulikovo field. The chronicles call Dmitrii Mikhailovich a purposeful commander, an elegant and daring military leader of uncommon bravery, and Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich could not have coped without the advice of such an experienced and authoritative commander. It is no coincidence that Dmitrii Mikhailovich Volynskii even married Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich's sister.¹⁵ As to Ivan Fedorovich Sobaka Fominskii, his father, Fedor Konstantinovich Fominskii was the first of the Fominskii princes to appear at the court of the Muscovite prince in 1338/39.¹⁶ It was I. F. Fominskii who was probably involved in the decision of 1366 to build the Moscow Kremlin.

Information on the composition of Dmitrii Ivanovich's trusted counselors is contained in his wills. These documents were brilliantly analysed by S. B. Veselovskii, who established the names of the trusted counsellors of the mid-1370s and late 1380s.

¹³ Tikhomirov, *Drevnyaya Moskva*, 131. According to M. N. Tikhomirov, this provocative phrase of the chronicler was meant to emphasise that the words of the Muscovite princes were not detached from action.

¹⁴ DDG, no. 6: 22. The agreement also mentions the boyar Dmitrii Aleksandrovich. This is probably D. A. Vsevolozhskii, who served at that time under Prince Vladimir Andreevich, and subsequently became a close boyar of Grand Prince Vasilii Dmitrievich (Veselovskii, IPIK, 332, 489).

¹⁵ Redkie istochniki, 2: 148; PSRL, XI, 56.

¹⁶ Redkie istochniki, 2: 165. Ivan Sobaka's wife held a very high position at the court of Grand Prince Vasilii Dmitrievich I (Dmitrii Donskoi's son). For more on D. M. Volynskii and I. F. Sobaka, see Veselovskii, IPIK, index.

The first will of Dmitrii Ivanovich Donskoi (circa 1375):¹⁷

1. Timofei Vasil'evich Vel'yaminov, okol'nichii, son of Vasilii Vel'yaminovich Protas'evich
2. Ivan Rodionovich Kvashnya
3. Ivan Fedorovich Sobaka Fominskii (presumably)
4. Fedor Andreevich Sviblo (presumably)

The second will of Dmitrii Ivanovich Donskoi (1389):

1. Dmitrii Mikhailovich Volynskii
2. Timofei Vasil'evich Vel'yaminov (= 1)¹⁸
3. Ivan Rodionovich Kvashnya (= 2)
4. Semen Vasil'evich Valuev, son of Vasilii Okat'evich Valuev
5. Ivan Fedorovich Vorontsov
6. Aleksandr Andreevich Ostei, brother of Fedor Andreevich Sviblo¹⁹
7. Fedor Andreevich Sviblo (= 4)
8. Fedor Andreevich Koshka
9. Ivan Fedorovich Sobaka Fominskii (= 3)
10. Ivan Andreevich Khromoi, brother of Fedor Andreevich Sviblo

Judging by these documents, the group of trusted boyars was fairly stable as early as the 14th century. All the people referred to in the first will are mentioned in the wording of the second will, and it is these people (apart from Kvashnya) who were probably involved in the construction of the Kremlin, and were consequently among the elder boyars even at that time. Finally, many ancestors of the trusted boyars had been counsellors to Dmitrii Ivanovich's forefathers. Thus Semen the Proud's will concerning the succession of power had been fulfilled.

One of the references to the elder boyars of Dmitrii Ivanovich date from the very end of his rule. In 1387, Dmitrii Ivanovich sent his elder boyars to meet his son Vasilii, who was returning from captivity among the Tartars. One of the elder boyars was Daniil Feofanovich Byakontov. In the chronicle record of his death (13th February 1392), it is clearly stated that he was the principal elder boyar, the prince's most trusted counsellor.²⁰ Daniil was from a family that had moved to Moscow from Chernigov, and his uncle was Metropolitan Aleksii, a prominent political figure from the time of Dmitrii Ivanovich. At the end of the reign of Grand Prince Dmitrii

¹⁷ For the wording of the wills, see Howes, *The Testaments*, 204–217. For an analysis of the wills, see Veselovskii, *IPIK*, 493–504; Kollmann, "The Boyar Clan," 16. Zimin dates Donskoi's first will to between 1371 and 1374 (Zimin, "O khronologii," 285–286).

¹⁸ The names are followed by their positioning in the list of 1375.

¹⁹ Kollmann identifies this person as Aleksandr Andreevich Beleut. See Kollmann, *Kinships and Politics*, 204. Cf. *idem*, "The Boyar Clan," 16. This is unlikely because Aleksandr Beleut was a new man at the court of Grand Prince Dmitrii Donskoi. Aleksandr's descendants did not inherit boyar status. See Veselovskii, *IPIK*, 219; Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 219.

²⁰ M. D. Priselkov, *Troitskaya letopis'. Rekonstruktsiya teksta* (Moscow, Leningrad, 1950), 432, 441.

Ivanovich, Daniil was actively involved in foreign policy. It is usually considered that Daniil was one of Dmitrii Ivanovich's closest counsellors. At the same time, researchers have noted that this name is nowhere mentioned in Dmitrii Ivanovich's wills, though when a grand prince was compiling his will, all his trusted counsellors were usually present. It is interesting that all the few testimonies about Daniil are in one way or another linked to Dmitrii Ivanovich's son, Vasilii Dmitrievich I (1389–1425). As has already been noted, the boyar Daniil went to meet Vasilii when he fled from Tartar captivity. When Vasilii I inherited the grand prince's throne after the death of his father, Daniil remained among the trusted counsellors. He was among the grand prince's boyars at the exchange of lands between the grand prince and the metropolitan.²¹ It is evident that Daniil acquired his greatest power precisely during the reign of Vasilii I rather than that of Dmitrii Ivanovich. Daniil was buried in the Kremlin alongside his famous uncle, Metropolitan Aleksii, and Daniil's name is included among those who are to be remembered in prayer in the memorial register of the Cathedral of the Dormition. Yet despite all of Daniil's merits, his numerous descendants ceased being boyars for some reason and were no longer members of the boyars' inner circle.²²

Generally speaking, the above-mentioned record of the exchange of lands between Grand Prince Vasilii I and Metropolitan Kiprian is an important piece of evidence about the grand prince's inner circle at the beginning of the 1390s. The first of the grand prince's boyars recorded is Dmitrii Aleksandrovich Vsevolozhskii, a descendant of the Smolensk princes, who served as a commander during the battle of Kulikovo. Shortly after being involved in the exchange of lands with the metropolitan, he was appointed to a highly responsible position as the governor of Nizhnii Novgorod, which had only just been acquired by the prince of Moscow. Also involved in the exchange was the boyar Semen Vasil'evich Okat'evich, who was already a member of the boyars' inner circle in Dmitrii Ivanovich's day. The next boyar mentioned is Ivan Fedorovich Koshkin, the undoubted favourite of Grand Prince Vasilii I. Ivan Fedorovich Koshkin enjoyed the right to order documents to be written on behalf of the grand prince, and he signed

²¹ Akty feodal'nogo zemlevladieniya i khozyaistva XIV–XVI vekov (hereafter AFZKh), I, no. 1: 24. The exchange of lands took place between 6th March 1390 and 13th February 1392. V. A. Kuchkin, *Formirovanie gosudarstvennoi territorii Severo-Vostochnoi Rusi v X–XIV vv.* (Moscow, 1984), 273–274.

²² For more on D. F. Byakontov, see Veselovskii, IPIK, index.

all three wills of Grand Prince Vasilii I.²³ Also involved along with Ivan Koshkin in the process of exchanging the lands was his father, Fedor Andreevich Koshka, who was already present at the preparation of Dmitrii Ivanovich's second will. By all accounts, Fedor died in 1407.²⁴ The record of the exchange of lands also refers to Fedor Andreevich Sviblo, who is referred to in the wills of Dmitrii Ivanovich.²⁵

Throughout the 15th century, as before, power in the Muscovite state did not belong to all the boyars but only to some of them, known as the "senior boyars" (*vvedennye boyare*, lit. "introduced" boyars). The first references to the senior boyars date back to the 1430s, though there have been disputes about this term among experts. Some researchers have considered that "senior boyar" meant a boyar introduced into the council, while to other specialists, "senior" referred to those boyars who had received some office or commission.²⁶ In actual fact, these points of view do not exclude each other. Having received some office in the administration, a boyar had to liaise constantly with the grand prince in order to discuss current issues. Furthermore, this boyar became an expert in his field and could therefore provide the ruler with practical advice if necessary. The

²³ V. A. Vodov, "Zarozhdenie kantselyarii moskovskikh velikikh knyazei," *Istoricheskie zapiski* (hereafter *IZ*), 103 (1979): 345. I. F. Koshkin's closeness to the ruler is pointed out in an apocryphal epistle from the Emir Edigei to Vasilii I dating back to the first half of the 15th century. The unknown author of this document referred to Koshkin as the "treasurer," "lover" and "elder" of the grand prince. See SGGD, II, 16; Halperin, "The Russian Land," 56. According to the epistle, before Koshkin arrived on the scene, included among the elder boyars were Il'ya Ivanovich Kvashnin, Petr Konstantinovich Khromoi Dobrynskii and a certain Ivan Mikitich (by all accounts, a boyar from Dvina). See Veselovskii, *IPIK*, 267, 507, 508; L. V. Cherepnin, *Russkie feodal'nye arkhivy*, I (Moscow, Leningrad, 1948), 397; S. V. Rozhdestvenskii, "Dvinskii boyare i dvinskoe boyarstvo XIV–XVI vekov. Part 1. Vosstanie 1397 g. i bor'ba za Dvinu," *Izvestiya Akademii Nauk SSSR. Otdelenie gumanitarnykh nauk* 1 (1929): 49–71. Cf. Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 218.

²⁴ In the above-mentioned letter attributed to Edigei, Fedor Koshka is described as a wise and prudent diplomat, who knew how to deal with the Tartars. See SGGD, II, 15. For more on the Koshkin boyars, see V. K. Trutovskii, "Fedor Koshka," *Letopis' Istoriko-rodoslovno-go obshchestva v Moskve* 1–4 (1915): 290–299; V. D. Nazarov, "The Genealogy of the Koshkins–Zakharyins–Romanovs and the Legend about the Foundation of the Georgievskiy Monastery," *Istoricheskaya Genealogiya=Historical Genealogy* (hereafter *HG*) 1 (1993): 22–31; Editor's note in *HG*, 2 (1993): 3; L. I. Ivina, *Krupnaya feodal'naya votchina Severo-Vostochnoi Rusi kontsa XIV–pervoi poloviny XVI v.* (Leningrad, 1979), 53.

²⁵ For more on the boyars who took part in the exchange of lands, see Redkie istochniki, 2: 139, 153; Veselovskii, *IPIK*, index. The *Typografskaya* chronicle also states that involved in the exchange was yet another boyar, Fedor Andreevich. The compiler of the chronicle also added this name to the list of boyars who were present when Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich's will was being compiled. This interpolation was made after the body of the chronicle text had been completed. Evidently, the compiler of the chronicle added Fedor Andreevich to the record of the lands exchange by analogy with the list of boyars in Dmitrii Ivanovich's will. See PSRL, XXIV, 232, 233.

²⁶ See Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 308. Cf. V. B. Kobrin, *Vlast' i sobstvennost' v srednevekovoi Rossii* (Moscow, 1985), 168–170; Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 37; Paneyakh, "Rus' v XV–XVII vv.," 24.

senior boyars were the grand prince's permanent advisors, and carried out judicial functions and various commissions relating to the state administration. The senior boyars could come out with an initiative to compile acts on behalf of the grand prince, the *jussio* right, and be present when they were ratified, the *recognitio* right.²⁷ The lists of the names of senior boyars can be found in the wills of the grand princes. Senior boyars, in particular, are mentioned in all three wills of Grand Prince Vasiliï I.

The first will of Grand Prince Vasiliï Dmitrievich I (September 1406–June 1407):²⁸

1. Prince Yurii Ivanovich Vsevolozh-Kisleevskii Menya
2. Konstantin Dmitrievich Sheya
3. Dmitrii Afineevich
4. Ivan Dmitrievich Vsevolozhskii
5. Vladimir Danilovich Krasnyi Snabdyä (probably)
6. Ivan Fedorovich Koshkin
7. Fedor Fedorovich Koshkin

The first person mentioned in the will is Yurii Ivanovich Kisleevskii, who held the high post of equerry at the court of Grand Prince Vasiliï I. He was descended from Smolensk princes and was related as a first cousin to the well-known boyar Ivan Dmitrievich Vsevolozhskii, who is also referred to in the will (see below). As is apparent from the wording of the will, unlike I. D. Vsevolozhskii, the Kisleevskii retained their princely title as late as the beginning of the 15th century. Nevertheless, the descendants of Prince Yu. I. Kisleevskii did not subsequently hold their ground at the court, and by the beginning of the 16th century this line had become extinct.²⁹ The second place in the hierarchy was taken by Konstantin Dmitrievich Sheya, who hailed from a family of landowners in the town of Kostroma. He was already a boyar under Dmitrii Ivanovich, yet he only entered the circle of senior boyars at the end of his life under Grand Prince Vasiliï I. Shortly after taking part in the composition of the first will of Grand Prince Vasiliï, the boyar Konstantin Dmitrievich died. The boyar Dmitrii Afineevich mentioned in the will was, by all accounts, a representative of a separate

²⁷ Vodov, "Zarozhdenie," 344–346.

²⁸ Howes, *The Testaments*, 224.

²⁹ For more on Yu. I. Kisleevskii, see Redkie istochniki, 2: 140–141; Akty sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi istorii Severo-Vostochnoi Rusi kontsa XIV–XVI v. (hereafter ASEI), 1: 552; S. P. Bartenev, *Moskovskii Kreml' v starinu i teper'*, II (Moscow, 1912), 65, no. 123; Veselovskii, *IPIK*, 352–353; Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 224, 225. Howes incorrectly identified the boyar Prince Yurii Ivanovich with Prince Yu. P. Patrikeev. Yu. P. Patrikeev's father came to Moscow in 1408, i.e., already after the compilation of the will. Prince Yu. P. Patrikeev himself only received the title of boyar in 1417. See Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 225.

dynasty which had been quite influential at the beginning of the 15th century. At the end of the 14th century, Dmitrii Afineevich served under the Moscow metropolitan, and then went over to the service of the grand prince. Most probably, he did not have any sons and his dynasty soon came to an end.³⁰ The will later refers to Ivan Dmitrievich Vsevolozhskii, one of the most outstanding figures of Russian history in the 15th century. As has already been noted, his father, Dmitrii Aleksandrovich, was one of the trusted boyars of Grand Prince Vasilii I. Ivan was born about 1370, and at the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries he gained the rank of boyar. From about 1415, I. D. Vsevolozhskii had the right of jussio, to order documents to be written on behalf of the grand prince.³¹ The apotheosis of I. D. Vsevolozhskii's political activity occurred after the death of Grand Prince Vasilii I, when Vsevolozhskii together with I. F. Koshkin became the actual head of the government. I. D. Vsevolozhskii was actively involved in the struggle for the grand prince's throne between the under-age Prince Vasilii II (Vasilii Dmitrievich I's son) and his uncles. Although it was thanks to Vsevolozhskii that Vasilii II became the grand prince, the boyar was later slandered and blinded, after which Vsevolozhskii moved over to the camp opposing Vasilii II.³²

The fifth of the boyars mentioned in the will was most likely Vladimir Danilovich Krasnyi Snabdyia (due to damage to the text, the name is not entirely legible). His dynasty hailed from the town of Murom. Vladimir, who became a boyar under Dmitrii Ivanovich, possessed some administrative experience, for there are references to his service as a representative of the grand prince in the towns of Pskov and Nizhnii Novgorod.³³ The list of boyars in the first of Vasilii I's wills ends with the names of the Koshkin brothers. Their father, Fedor Koshka, who had previously been a member of the boyars' inner circle, had already withdrawn from active life because of old age by the time the will was compiled. Now his place was finally transferred to his sons, Ivan and Fedor.

³⁰ For details see Veselovskii, IPIK, index.

³¹ ASEI, I, no. 30: 41; Vodov, "Zarozhdenie," 345.

³² See Redkie istochniki, 2:139; Veselovskii, IPIK, index; Ya. S. Lur'e, "Rasskaz o boyarine I. D. Vsevolozhskom v Medovartsevskom letopistse." In Pamyatniki kul'tury: Nove otkrytiya (Moscow, 1977), 7–11. Kollmann, Kinship and Politics, 132, 240; M. S. Cherkasova, Zemlevladienie Troitse-Sergieva monastyrya v XV–XVI vv. (Moscow, 1996), 65, 72, 219. Veselovskii suggested that Vasilii I's first will referred not to Vsevolozhskii but to Ivan Dmitrievich Krasnyi Saburov. Yet the sources used by Veselovskii are of later origin and not very reliable. It is doubtful whether the little-known boyar I. D. Krasnyi Saburov, about whom we have virtually no information, was involved in compiling the will of the grand prince.

³³ Veselovskii, IPIK, 458–459.

Thanks to the chronicles, we are in a good position to compare the composition of the trusted boyars with the names of the remaining boyars at the beginning of the 15th century. The chronicles state that in 1408, during the attack on Moscow by the Tartar Khan Edigei, all that remained in the city were the “young” boyars, who did not behave “according to the established custom.”³⁴ If the composition of these boyars is examined, it can be noticed that they were predominantly such little-known people that it is sometimes even difficult to identify them. Perhaps the only well-known person among them was the boyar Konstantin Andreevich Sheya, who remained in Moscow due to his very advanced age, and the chronicler mechanically included him among the “young” boyars. Another of the “young” boyars was Konstantin Ivanovich, a boyar of one of the appanage princes. Also remaining in Moscow was the boyar Dmitrii Vasil'evich, the representative of a special family, who did not have any sons. The chronicle also refers to a certain Mikhail Fedorovich Morozov, who is not known in other sources. It is possible that the person who is meant here is Semen Fedorovich Morozov or Mikhail Fedorovich Durnoi, the childless son of Fedor Koshka, mentioned in the will of Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich (according to some sources, M. F. Durnoi had the rank of boyar). The next person in the list of “young” boyars is a certain Ivan Fedorovich. This may have been I. F. Koshkin. The chronicler referred to him as “young,” i.e., a politically inexperienced boyar, since many people were disgruntled about I. F. Koshkin's political actions. It is also possible that this was I. F. Uda-Fominskii, who had no children. Generally the representatives of this line did not advance at the court due to their appanage links. The following “young” boyar, a certain Filipp Vasil'evich, is completely unknown to the sources. Was it in fact Filimon Vasil'evich Tushin? Finally, the last “young” boyar was Aleksandr Fedorovich Bezzubets, the brother of the above-mentioned M. F. Durnoi.³⁵ And so, among the “young” boyars there were many people with no offspring or who belonged to collateral branches of well-known families. Consequently, they did not possess enough connections at the court and could not penetrate into that group of elder boyars, who usually provided the grand prince with advice on a variety of matters, including the compilation of wills. Let us continue our analysis of the wills.

³⁴ PLDR: XIV–seredina XV vv. (Moscow, 1981), 248; PSRL, XV, 483. See also Ya. S. Lur'e, “Iz nablyudenii nad letopisaniem pervoi poloviny XV v.,” *TODRL* 39 (1985): 296–297.

³⁵ See Veselovskii, *IPIK*, 490 (Konstantin Ivanovich), 433 (Dmitrii Vasil'evich); Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 236; idem, *Vitayz' na rasput'e*, 58, 59 (Morozov); Bartenev, *Moskovskii Kreml'*, II, 65 (M. F. Durnoi); Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 207 (Fominskii); Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 229 (Fominskii), 241 (Tushin).

The second will of Grand Prince Vasilii Dmitrievich I (1417):³⁶

1. Prince Yurii Patrikeevich Patrikeev
2. Ivan Dmitrievich Vsevolozhskii (= 4)
3. Mikhail Andreevich Chelyadnya
4. Ivan Fedorovich Koshkin (= 6)³⁷
5. Fedor Ivanovich Sabur³⁸

If the wording of the first and second wills are compared, it is obvious that two of the most influential boyars, I. D. Vsevolozhskii and I. F. Koshkin, continued to be among the senior boyars of the grand prince. At the same time, by 1417 noticeable changes had occurred in the make-up of the grand prince's principal counsellors. The main position among them was taken by Prince Yurii Patrikeevich Patrikeev, a descendant of the Lithuanian royal dynasty. His father, Patrikii Narimontovich, entered the service of Grand Prince Vasilii Dmitrievich in 1408. This Muscovite grand prince devoted a great deal of attention to relations with Lithuania, and he was married to the Lithuanian ruler Vitovt's daughter. At that time, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania appeared on the international arena as a representative of the interests of all Russian lands. The leading role played by Lithuania in international affairs was recognised even by Muscovy. Grand Prince Vasilii Dmitrievich was aware that the passing of influential Lithuanian princes into Muscovite service could become an important means of furthering relations with the influential neighbouring state. The Patrikeev princes were thus met in Muscovy with particular respect. Grand Prince Vasilii Dmitrievich immediately assigned them high posts in his entourage. He gave his daughter in marriage to Prince Yurii Patrikeevich. Moreover, Yurii Patrikeevich became one of the Muscovite grand prince's key counsellors. Another new face in the grand prince's entourage was Mikhail Andreevich Chelyadnya, who had only recently acquired the rank of boyar and the right of jussio.³⁹ He was a member of the Akinfovich family, which had served the grand prince's family for many years. Mikhail Chelyadnya became the founder of the famous boyar clan of the Chelyadnins, who held

³⁶ Howes, *The Testaments*, 234. The names are followed by their relationship to the people in the list contained in Vasilii I's first will. Zimin dates Vasilii I's second will to the period between winter 1417/18 and winter 1419/20 (Zimin, "O khronologii," 292–93).

³⁷ For more on Ivan Fedorovich Koshkin, see Veselovskii, *IPIK*, 149.

³⁸ Howes mistakenly considers that the wills of Vasilii I refer to Fedor Ivanovich Vel'yaminov, the son of Ivan Vasil'evich Vel'yaminov. Yet after Ivan Vasil'evich had betrayed the grand prince in the 1370s, his descendants lost any influence at court. There can be no doubt that it was Fedor Ivanovich Sabur who is being referred to. See Veselovskii, *IPIK*, 188, 218.

³⁹ *Redkie istochniki*, 2: 58; *ASEI*, III, no. 481: 466; Vodov, "Zarozhdenie," 345.

very prominent positions among the Muscovite boyar class. The last person mentioned in the 1417 will was the boyar Fedor Ivanovich Sabur, nephew of Konstantin Dmitrievich Sheya, who had signed the grand prince's first will. It is possible that Fedor took part in the battle of Kulikovo, and during the rule of Vasilii Dmitrievich he became an influential and fairly well-to-do man.

The third will of Grand Prince Vasilii Dmitrievich (circa 1423):⁴⁰

1. Prince Yurii Patrikeevich Patrikeev (= 1)
2. Ivan Dmitrievich Vsevolozhskii (= 2)
3. Mikhail Andreevich Chelyadnya (= 3)
4. Ivan Fedorovich Koshkin (= 4)
5. Mikhail Fedorovich Koshkin⁴¹
6. Fedor Ivanovich Sabur (= 5)

In the period between the grand prince's second and third wills, the composition of the trusted boyars hardly changed at all. The only new face was Mikhail Fedorovich Koshkin. By all accounts, M. F. Koshkin had the right to attend the court of the grand prince.⁴² His entry into the circle of trusted counsellors is explained by the fact that at the end of Vasilii I's reign, his brother Fedor Koshkin, who had been a senior boyar, had died from the plague.⁴³ Thus it was that from the days of Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich, the Koshkins had firmly kept their places among the trusted counsellors of the grand prince. As soon as any one of the senior Koshkin boyars died, his place was immediately taken by a younger relative.

The role of the boyars increased noticeably during the rule of Grand Prince Vasilii II the Blind (1425–1462). The boyars provided the grand prince with considerable support in his struggle with political opponents,

⁴⁰ Howes, *The Testaments*, 240. The names are followed by their relationship to the people in the list contained in Vasilii I's second will. Zimin dates Vasilii Dmitrievich's third will to the period between winter 1419 and January or February 1423 (Zimin, "O khronologii," 293–294).

⁴¹ For this identification, see the following studies: Howes, *The Testaments*, 240, note 19; Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 213. This boyar could not have been Mikhail Fedorovich Saburov, who by 1447 was in the service of the appanage prince Dmitrii Shemyaka (Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 191). On the basis of the chronological calculations, it is also very improbable that the will from the early 1420s refers to M. F. Fominskii Kryuk. He must have entered the arena prior to his younger brothers. At the same time his youngest brother Ivan Sobaka became a close boyar as early as during the rule of Dmitrii Ivanovich, i.e., almost 50 years before the compilation of this will. By the beginning of the 1420s, M. F. Fominskii's sons were already boyars (Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 207). Therefore, M. F. Fominskii must have been active in an earlier period, in the second half of the 14th century. Generally speaking, no reliable information about his status as a boyar has been preserved. Cf. Veselovskii, *IPIK*, 368; Vodov, "Zarozhdenie," 345.

⁴² ASEI, III, no. 31: 53–54. On M. F. Koshkin, see also Redkie istochniki, 2: 46.

⁴³ For more on the death of F. F. Koshkin, see Veselovskii, *IPIK*, 148.

headed the Sovereign's Court, took part in the administration, and dealt with legal proceedings. The names of Vasilii the Blind's leading boyars have been preserved in his will:

The will of Grand Prince Vasilii Vasil'evich the Blind (1461/62):⁴⁴

1. Prince Ivan Yur'evich Patrikeev
2. Ivan Ivanovich Koshkin
3. [Prince] Vasilii Ivanovich Obolenskii
4. Fedor Vasil'evich Basenok
5. Fedor Mikhailovich Chelyadnya

As before, at the head of the senior boyars was a representative of the distinguished Patrikeev family. This time it was Prince Ivan Yur'evich Patrikeev, son of the chief senior boyar of Grand Prince Vasilii Dmitrievich. Ivan was born in about 1430, and his military service began in the 1450s. At the same time, he began to take part in court examinations. His involvement in compiling the will of Grand Prince Vasilii the Blind is the first piece of evidence referring to Prince Ivan Yur'evich Patrikeev as a boyar. Once he had received the rank of boyar, I. Yu. Patrikeev immediately became one of the sovereign's trusted counsellors, and like many trusted boyars he was entitled to engage in direct diplomatic dealings with Lithuania. I. Yu. Patrikeev's career continued after the death of Grand Prince Vasilii the Blind.⁴⁵

The presence of the Koshkin family among the senior boyars declined somewhat. Only one boyar, Ivan Ivanovich Koshkin, was present at the compilation of Vasilii the Blind's will.⁴⁶ It is probable that prior to that he served as governor at Kostroma and Bezhetskii Verkh. Generally speaking, during the civil war in the second half of the 15th century, the Koshkins somehow withdrew to secondary roles and were possibly biding their time. Their removal from active political activity led to a decline in the number of Koshkins among the trusted counsellors of the grand prince.

⁴⁴ Howes, *The Testaments*, 261 (the basic text of the will), 266 (codicil to the will). Cf. PSRL, XXIV, 232. See also A. A. Zimin, *Rossiia na poroge novogo vremeni* (Moscow, 1972), 393. S. M. Kashtanov dates this will to the second half of March 1462. See S. M. Kashtanov, "K izucheniiu formulyara velikoknyazheskikh dukhovnykh gramot kontsa XIV–nachala XVI vv.," *Vspomogatel'nye istoricheskie dissipliny* (hereafter VID) 11 (1979): 247.

⁴⁵ AZR, I, no. 110: 129; Redkie istochniki, 2: 89; Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 31–32; N. A. Soboleva, *Russkie pečati* (Moscow, 1991), 181, no. 131. I. Yu. Patrikeev's status as a senior boyar has been described by V. B. Kobrin. See his *Vlast'*, index.

⁴⁶ The long-standing presence of representatives of the Koshkin dynasty among the senior boyars confirms the conclusion that this is Ivan Ivanovich Koshkin rather than a member of the Vsevolozhskii dynasty, as Alef and Kollmann have suggested. See G. Alef, "Reflections on the Boyar Duma in the Reign of Ivan III," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 45 (1967): 82; Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 136; cf. Solov'ev, *Sochineniia*, II, 436; Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 183, 224. On I. I. Koshkin, see also Cherkasova, *Zemlevladienie*, 205.

The name of the third boyar is determined by experts in a variety of ways. Some researchers consider that it was Vasilii Ivanovich Kitai-Novosil'tsev, a member of a not particularly ancient boyar dynasty. In my view, closer to the truth is the opinion of S. B. Veselovskii, who considered that it is Prince Vasilii Ivanovich Kosoi Obolenskii who is being referred to here. It is quite evident that a boyar could only enter the circle of trusted counsellors after long service. The first references to service by Prince V. I. Obolenskii date back to as early as 1443, when he dealt the Tartars a shattering defeat on the River Lopasnya. Two years later, he gained yet another victory over the Tartars and captured a Tartar prince. During the internecine struggle with the opponents of the grand prince, V. I. Obolenskii decisively defeated Dmitrii Shemyaka, who was the principal opponent of the grand prince. Prince Obolenskii held the title of grand commander (*bol'shoi voevoda*), the concept of "grand" often signifying special closeness to the grand prince. Finally, specifically at the turn of the 1450s and 1460s, Prince V. I. Obolenskii was present when reports on land disputes were made to the grand prince.⁴⁷

The next senior boyar, Fedor Vasil'evich Basenok, was also a major military leader. To some extent, his career is reminiscent of the path taken by Prince V. I. Obolenskii. They took part together in the battle on the river Lopasnya and in the struggle with Dmitrii Shemyaka. Fedor Basenok was referred to as a "daring commander," a faithful and energetic supporter of the grand prince. For his military exploits performed on behalf of the grand prince, Fedor was rewarded with a number of villages, and in his will, Vasilii the Blind reconfirmed this bestowal. Fedor Basenok also possessed solid administrative experience, and on several occasions served as a governor in various towns, and examined land issues and legal disputes. After the death of Grand Prince Vasilii the Blind, the boyar Fedor Basenok unexpectedly fell from grace, he was blinded and exiled to the St. Cyril monastery, where he died seven years later.⁴⁸

The name of the fifth senior boyar, Fedor Mikhailovich Chelyadnya, is found in the supplement to the will compiled shortly after the composition of the basic text of the document. Fedor Chelyadnya was probably enlist-

⁴⁷ For more details, see Veselovskii, *IPIK*, 435; Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 48. Reliable references to the service of V. I. Novosil'tsev only begin to appear in the mid-1470s. Some doubt must be cast on the identification made by Kollmann, who considers that Vasilii Ivanovich Sobakin Fominskii is intended here. This line of the Fominskiis did not flourish at the Muscovite court due to the appanage associations of their ancestors (Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 136, 207, 211; cf. Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 48, 229, 253, 276 note 12).

⁴⁸ See Veselovskii, *IPIK*, 438–439; Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 252–253; Alef, "Reflections," 82; Cherkasova, *Zemlevladienie*, 89.

ed to compose the will since it concerned the lands owned by the Starkov boyar family. Fedor Chelyadnya had earlier been involved in handing over their properties to the monastery, and he was able to provide the grand prince with necessary information on the Starkovs' patrimony. Fedor was the son of one of Grand Prince Vasilii I's senior boyars. The first references to Fedor Chelyadnya's administrative service date back to as far as the 1430s, while at a later date, between 1447 and 1455, he signed a large number of land acts. Thus, at the beginning of the 1460s, he appeared in the entourage of Grand Prince Vasilii the Blind, with solid administrative experience under his belt. Fedor Chelyadnya also undertook responsible diplomatic missions during the talks between the grand prince and Novgorod. For several years after the death of Vasilii the Blind, the boyar Fedor Chelyadnya continued to take part in the state administration, in particular frequently examining land disputes.⁴⁹

Of interest is yet another person who took part in compiling Vasilii the Blind's will, namely the secretary Vasilii Beda, who wrote the text of the will. Generally speaking, the secretaries who wrote the wills are constantly referred to in the documents, starting from the time of Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich. Specifically in the case of Vasilii Beda, however, there is reliable evidence of his particular closeness to the grand prince. In 1453, it was precisely he who informed his master about the demise in Novgorod of his chief opponent, Dmitrii Shemyaka (evidently poisoned by order of Moscow). For this important news, Vasilii Beda immediately received a rise in status; previously he had been a clerk (*pod'yachii*), now he was invested with the rank of secretary (*d'yak*). From this time onwards, Beda became a trusted counsellor of the grand prince, and his presence among the counsellors was entirely necessary. To begin with, he possessed the required skills of clerical work. Moreover, as he was unable to see, Grand Prince Vasilii the Blind needed a literate and experienced assistant to be constantly at his side, and such an assistant was the secretary Vasilii Beda. After the death of Vasilii the Blind, Beda served under his widow and son.⁵⁰

Vasilii the Blind's trusted boyars retained their high position also after the death of their patron. Their influence at the court of Vasilii the Blind's successor, Grand Prince Ivan III is described in one document on a dispute

⁴⁹ See Redkie istochniki, 2: 59; Veselovskii, IPIK, 408; Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 172, 205; Alef, "Reflections," 82; S. M. Kashtanov, *Ocherki russkoi diplomatiki* (Moscow, 1970), 359–360. F. M. Chelyadnya's status as a senior boyar is also referred to by Kobrin in his *Vlast'*, 171.

⁵⁰ ASEI, 1, no. 330: 240. For more on V. Beda, see A. A. Zimin, "D'yacheskii apparat v Rossii vtoroi poloviny XV–pervoi treti XV veka," *IZ* 87 (1971): 225–226.

over precedence, which took place in the 1460s and early 1470s. This matter was examined personally by Ivan III in the presence of his trusted boyars: Prince Ivan Yur'evich Patrikeev, Ivan Ivanovich Koshkin and Prince Vasilii Ivanovich Obolenskii. Also with them was the boyar Fedor Davydovich Khromogo, who was married to a representative of the influential Koshkin family. Khromogo's service began after the death of Vasilii the Blind, and throughout the 1470s and 1480s, he enjoyed the right to report to the grand prince, which clearly testifies to his closeness to the sovereign. Yet Khromogo entered the circle of senior boyars at an advanced age, as he died before 1492. F. D. Khromogo and Prince I. Yu. Patrikeev attended the court sessions held by the grand prince together.⁵¹

The rule of Vasilii the Blind's son, Grand Prince Ivan III (1462–1505) was a time which saw the emergence of autocracy and when the central administrative apparatus began to take shape. These factors brought new demands to the supreme power: the expansion of the area of the grand prince's possessions, increasing foreign contacts, the increasingly complicated structure of the court, and changes in the nature of court service. The grand prince more and more often had to resort to the assistance of his advisors. As in the preceding cases, summary information on Ivan III's circle of trusted counsellors can be found in the wording of his will.

The will of Grand Prince Ivan Vasil'evich III (end of 1503–June 1504):⁵²

1. Prince Vasilii Danilovich Kholmskii
2. Prince Danila Vasil'evich Shchenya-Patrikeev
3. Yakov Zakhar'ich Koshkin
4. The Treasurer Dmitrii Vladimirovich Khovrin

Prince Vasilii Danilovich Kholmskii was the principal boyar at the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries. Vasilii's father, Prince Danila Dmitrievich Kholmskii moved from Tver' to the court of the Muscovite prince in the 1460s, when Tver' was still an independent principality. Prior to the introduction of the Kholmskiis into the circle of counsellors, Ivan III took a whole series of steps designed to ensure the loyalty of this family. From 1495, Prince Vasilii Danilovich Kholmskii began serving at

⁵¹ Razryadnaya kniga 1475–1605 gg. (hereafter RK 1475–1605), 1: 82–83, 85–86. AFZKh, 1, no. 249: 215. Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 168–169.

⁵² Howes, *The Testaments*, 298. Zimin dates Ivan III's will to about March or April 1504, while Kashtanov dates it to December, 1503. Zimin, "O khronologii," 320; S. M. Kashtanov, *Sotsial'no-politicheskaya istoriya Rossii kontsa XV–pervoi poloviny XVI v.* (Moscow, 1967), 202.

Ivan III's court. In order to strengthen the family ties with Prince Kholmetskii, Ivan gave his daughter to him in marriage. Shortly after this event, Prince V. D. Kholmetskii received the rank of boyar, evidently in 1500, immediately after the wedding to the grand prince's daughter.⁵³ Having become a boyar, Kholmetskii began to take part in the running of the state as a trusted counsellor of the grand prince. In 1502, Prince V. D. Kholmetskii and other senior boyars, Prince Danila Vasil'evich Shchenya-Patrikeev and Yakov Zakhar'ich Koshkin, placed their seals on a diplomatic document dispatched to Lithuania. Although the document was officially sent on behalf of "all the princes and from the boyars and okol'niche," at the order of the grand prince, only the senior boyars placed their seals on the document. Moreover, the grand prince (or his chancellery) compiled the text of the document, and so the senior boyars only had to legalise a decision taken by the monarch. In June 1504, Prince V. D. Kholmetskii and Yakov Zakhar'ich examined a dispute over precedence between the grand prince's courtiers. After the death of Ivan III, Prince Kholmetskii continued to be occupied with state and military activity.⁵⁴

The second person mentioned in Ivan III's will is Prince Danila Vasil'evich Shchenya-Patrikeev, the most talented military leader of his time. The first references to him in the sources date back to as early as the beginning of the 1450s. In the 1470s he began his military service by entering the court of the grand prince. Danila Shchenya frequently participated in victorious campaigns against the Lithuanians and Swedes. Besides military campaigns, Shchenya was enlisted to administrative work (service as a governor in a number of towns) and to diplomatic activity. On several occasions, he held talks with foreign delegations and, as was pointed out above, took part in diplomatic correspondence together with other senior boyars. He continued military and administrative service under Ivan III's successor.⁵⁵

Another great administrator was the senior boyar Yakov Zakhar'ich Koshkin. He also served as a governor, and often reported on judicial matters to members of the grand princely family. The senior boyars were often engaged in affairs connected with the family life of the ruler, and Yakov

⁵³ V. D. Kholmetskii's receipt of the boyar rank is dated variously: 1500 (Alef, "Reflections," 106), 1502 (Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 209), 1504 (Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 112). Before becoming a privy counsellor a courtier had to serve for some time among the boyars, and so in this case the year 1500 seems to be the more probable date.

⁵⁴ RK 1475–1605 gg., 1: 86; *Sbornik RIO*, XXXV, 335–336. See also Bogatyrev, "Gramoty," 21, 32 note 14.

⁵⁵ Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 32–33.

Zakhar'ich was no exception to the rule. Starting in 1492, he conducted talks for several years with the Lithuanian grandees on an armistice and on the marrying of Ivan III's daughter to the Lithuanian grand prince. In 1500, he helped the above-mentioned Danila Shchenya to gain a decisive victory over the Lithuanians on the river Vedrosh.⁵⁶

The last person referred to in the will is a representative of the central administrative apparatus and a professional bureaucrat, the Treasurer Dmitrii Vladimirovich Khovrin. He was the scion of a family of well-to-do Greek merchants who had moved to Rus' from the Crimea. For such foreigners the surest way of making a career for themselves was to enter service in the central administrative organs, in particular the Treasury. At that time the Treasury performed the most important tasks relating to the running of the state: it was responsible for foreign policy, the preservation of archives and material valuables, and judicial functions. Dmitrii Khovrin was treasurer from autumn 1491 to the late 1509 or early 1510. He was frequently involved in receptions and talks with foreign envoys, specialising primarily in relations with the Crimea. Khovrin also represented the grand prince in his dealings with the head of the Russian church. References are extant to his judgements on land matters. Some sources refer to Dmitrii Khovrin as one of the boyars, although it is difficult to say whether he held the rank of boyar in the narrow sense. Generally speaking, representatives of the administrative apparatus were often referred to as boyars in the sense of "head of department," "principal judge."⁵⁷ It is therefore possible that Dmitrii Khovrin did not hold the rank of boyar, but nevertheless he was undoubtedly among the closest counsellors of the grand prince. From as early as the days of Vasilii the Blind, the representatives of the bureaucracy had steadily increased their influence in the inner circle of the grand prince's boyars. By the end of Ivan III's rule, the significance of the treasurer had grown considerably. At the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, the Russian state significantly stepped up its international contacts, something which, in its turn, led to an increase in the volume of corresponding documents (diplomatic correspondence, treaties, instructions, reports). Dmitrii Vladimirovich Khovrin was just such a specialist who was fully acquainted with all these complicated issues.

⁵⁶ Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 183–184; Kobrin, *Vlast'*, 172. Cf. S. O. Shmidt, "Prodolzhenie khronografa redaktsii 1512 g.," *IA* 7 (1951): 272.

⁵⁷ See Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 272 (he did not consider that D. V. Khovrin was a boyar); Alef, "The Origins," 305, note 4 (polemic with Zimin); Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 210. V. B. Kobrin established that in the 15th century the majordomos and the treasurers were frequently judges in their capacity as "senior boyars" (Kobrin, *Vlast'*, 173–175).

Working closely with the Treasurer Khovrin was the secretary Danila Kipriyanov Mamyrëv, who penned the text of the will in question. He travelled as an envoy to Venice, held talks with Lithuanians, kept state documents and some caskets from the grand prince's Treasury (these caskets are mentioned in Ivan III's will).⁵⁸ In 1504, Mamyrëv signed the above-mentioned document concerning a matter of precedence, which was judged by the grand prince and his trusted counsellors. Generally speaking, the presence of the treasurer and his secretary became common practice for the Privy Council of 16th-century Russian sovereigns.

By the end of the second decade of the 16th century, the word *duma* had established itself as the name for the grand prince's council. According to V. M. Paneyakh, the first reference to the Duma as a council in the sources dates to 1517.⁵⁹ In the mid-1520s, the grand prince's council acted as a court for political crimes. In particular, in 1525 the council investigated the case of Maksim the Greek and I. Bersen'-Beklimishev, who were charged with high treason.⁶⁰

Some ideas on the make-up of the Duma of the day can be received from a verdict by the counsellors on a matter concerning a certain priest Ivan from Korela (13th February 1520). Though the term *duma* is not encountered in this document, it is the first definite evidence of a large group of boyars, *okol'nichie*, and officials carrying out a decision without the sovereign. This priest had brought actions against representatives of the local authorities, as he was opposing the results of a court examination held there. Priest Ivan advanced accusations immediately against a number of people: a certain Matvei had pillaged the village in his absence, and the deacon Spiridon Pavlov had stolen rye from him. On the strength of these accusations, the local authorities carried out two court examinations. The accusation against Matvei was investigated by the assistant of the lieutenants (*tiun*), and the following action against Spiridon Pavlov was examined by the lieutenants themselves. The judges twice issued corresponding

⁵⁸ For more details, see V. I. Savva, comp., *D'yaki i pod'yachie Posol'skogo prikaza v XVI v.* (Moscow, 1983), 18–21.

⁵⁹ Paneyakh, "Rossiya v XV–XVII vv.," 24; *Sbornik RIO*, LIII, 40.

⁶⁰ Whereas the council dealt with political accusations against Maksim, the assembly of the church leaders condemned his criticism of the Russian Orthodox church. See *Sudnye spiski Maksima Greka i Isaka Sobaka*, ed. S. O. Shmidt, N. N. Pokrovskii (Moscow, 1971), 53, 54. The council and the assembly worked in close co-operation with each other. This is why the Metropolitan Daniil ordered all information on Maksim's behaviour in exile to be forwarded to "the holy assembly and the council of the Orthodox and pious autocrat grand prince" (*svyashchennyi sobor s sovetom pravoslavnogo i blagochestivogo samodershtsa velikogo knyazya*). See Daniil's letter to the abbot of Joseph of Volok's monastery from 24th May 1525 in *Sudnye spiski*, 123.

verdicts, which were confirmed in the judgement charters. Present at both court sessions were the men of court (*sudnye muzhi*), that is the village elder and his assistants. The men of court usually served as witnesses and gave advice to the judge concerning customary law. In this case, the actions of the men of court were a source of dissatisfaction for priest Ivan and he complained about them to a higher court. It was precisely for this reason that the case was transferred to the boyars' council, and it was later kept in the royal archives.⁶¹ The council decision is extant in a 16th-century copy, the end of which has been lost. The copy is accompanied by an imprecise heading "a decision of the boyars, who gave their verdict on the rye stolen by deacon Spiridon Pavlov from a Korela priest." Due to such a heading, researchers have been given the false impression that the grand prince's council dealt with petty thefts taking place in distant Korela. However, as was noted, the affair of priest Ivan was not simply about a banal theft. It was about the ruin of an entire village and, most importantly, the priest was bringing actions against the local authorities. That is why the council's involvement in the matter does not seem surprising.

Of interest is the list of the counsellors who examined the case of the priest. The verdict was given by the following people: Prince Vasilii Vasil'evich Shuiskii, Prince Mikhail Danilovich Shchenyatev, Prince Boris Ivanovich Gorbatiy, Semen Ivanovich Vorontsov, Ivan Grigor'evich Morozov, Andrei Vasil'evich Saburov, Ivan Vasil'evich Khabar, Mikhail Yur'evich Zakhar'in, Ivan Ivanovich Tret'yakov, the secretaries Ivan Teleshev, Afanasii Kuritsyn, Vasilii Teterin.

In the second half of Vasilii III's reign, the position of the Suzdal' princes strengthened considerably. And so in 1520, at the head of the boyars stood one of the most prominent representatives of this princely line, Prince Vasilii Vasil'evich Shuiskii. He first appeared at the Sovereign's Court in 1500, and for many years he served as a governor in such key towns as Novgorod and Smolensk. Not long before the issuing of the verdict in question, he was the governor of Vladimir (this was one of the most important court titles). He also participated in diplomatic negotiations and in military campaigns. In 1521, V. V. Shuiskii was blamed for the intrusion by the Tartars into the central areas of Russia and he fell out of favour. A

⁶¹ N. P. Likhachev, *Razryadnye d'yaki XVI veka* (St. Petersburg, 1888), 176–177; N. P. Voskoboinikova, *Opisanie drevneishikh dokumentov arkhivov moskovskikh prikazov XVI–nachala XVII vekov*: RGADA, F.141, *Prikaznye dela starykh let* (Moscow, 1994), 37; *Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossii* I, 203; Shmidt, *Rossiiskoe gosudarstvo*, 106; Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 307.

new advance in his career came in 1538, when he became the leading member of the boyars' government after the death of Grand Princess Elena Glinskaya.⁶²

Another person involved in carrying out the council verdict, Prince Mikhail Danilovich Shchenyatev, hailed from the Patrikeev lineage, representatives of which had long been members of the boyars' inner circle. One of Ivan III's trusted boyars was Mikhail's father, Danila Vasil'evich Shchenya (see above). Mikhail also took his first steps in service under the guidance of his father. Almost all of M. D. Shchenyatev's service appointments were linked to military activity. In the second half of the 1520s, he was in disgrace.⁶³

The third boyar mentioned in the verdict, Prince Boris Ivanovich Gorbatyi, was also a member of a dynasty of Suzdal' princes. Prior to entering the council of the grand prince, B. I. Gorbatyi served for a long time in a variety of posts. The first references to his service date from as early as the time of Ivan III, during the military campaigns of the 1480s. He frequently commanded army formations, was a governor in Novgorod and Smolensk, and took part in talks with Swedish and Lithuanian envoys. In the second half of the 1520s he was in disgrace, but subsequently restored his positions and re-entered the sovereign's council. He died shortly after January 1537.⁶⁴

In the 1520s the inner circle of boyars again included members of the ancient boyar clan, the Vorontsov's. Semen Ivanovich Vorontsov was great-great-grandson to Fedor Vorontsov and great-grandson to Ivan Fedorovich Vorontsov, who was one of the eldest boyars of Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich. The boyar S. I. Vorontsov began service in 1493 as a military governor in Mozhaisk, and was a member of Ivan III's entourage. He entered the grand prince's council when already of advanced age, and died in 1521/22.⁶⁵

The fifth person involved in making the council decision, Ivan Grigor'evich Poplevin Morozov, passed through all the levels of the court career. Prior to becoming boyars, members of non-princely families such as the Morozovs had to serve for a time in the lower ranks. I. G. Morozov served as master of the table (*stol'nik*), then as an *okol'nichii*; it was in this rank that he took part in the meeting of the council in 1520. I. G. Morozov

⁶² Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 70–71.

⁶³ Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 35.

⁶⁴ Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 72–73.

⁶⁵ *Redkie istochniki* 2: 136; Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 157–158.

was particularly frequently enlisted into diplomatic service. He was involved in negotiations with Lithuania, Kazan', and the Hanseatic towns. The Morozovs had very close links with Novgorod, I. G. Morozov serving as governor there. After the ill-starred 1521 Tartar raid, he was for some time in disfavour but again returned to the council. In 1547, at the very beginning of the reign of Ivan IV, I. G. Morozov headed the council. He was subsequently retired due to old age, and died in 1554.⁶⁶

Thanks to the marriage of Grand Prince Vasiliï III to Solomoniya Saburova, her relatives held a high position at court. Solomoniya's father's cousin, Andrei Vasil'evich Saburov, entered the council with the rank of okol'nichii. His career is reminiscent to some extent of the path taken by I. G. Morozov. Saburov also began his service with the court position of master of the table. By the autumn of 1509, A. V. Saburov had received the rank of okol'nichii both for his military successes and thanks to his blood ties with the ruling family. With this rank he took part in the work of the council. We shall see later that many relatives of Ivan IV's wives also became privy okol'nichie. It must be noted that A. V. Saburov's ancestors had already at an earlier date been in the inner circle, and in particular, his uncle, Fedor Sabur, was one of Vasiliï the Blind's senior boyars. The last reference to A. V. Saburov in the sources dates from 1531, by which time he had already become a boyar.⁶⁷

The following participant in the decision of 1520, Ivan Vasil'evich Khabar, was a scion of the old Redegya family. His father was involved in reporting to Grand Prince Ivan III. Ivan Vasil'evich was himself a talented military leader, and on more than one occasion successfully defended Russian towns against Tartar raids. He was married to the daughter of the Treasurer D. V. Khovrin, who had been close to Grand Prince Ivan III. I. V. Khabar's service continued until 1533.⁶⁸

The career of Mikhail Yur'evich Zakhar'in, nephew to Ya. Z. Koshkin, a senior boyar in Ivan III's day, was not a straightforward one either. He began to serve as early as 1495. Fifteen years later, he was still a junior member of the grand prince's retinue (syn boyarskii) and was sometimes allowed to hold the position of okol'nichii. M. Yu. Zakhar'in's ascent dates from November 1510 to March 1511. He began to take part in diplomatic dealings with Lithuania, Prussia, the Holy Roman Empire, Turkey and

⁶⁶ Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 234–235; Cherkasova, *Zemlevladienie*, 153, note 292.

⁶⁷ A. V. Saburov's father, Vasiliï Fedorovich Saburov also had the right to report personally to the grand prince (ASEI, I, no. 524: 402, II, no. 381: 380). For more on A. V. Saburov, see Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 193–194.

⁶⁸ Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 220–221.

Kazan'; he probably had something to do with the poisoning of Abdul-Letif, a Kazan' diplomat and an influential opponent of Muscovy. Zakhar'in's military career was not a brilliant one, but by all accounts he ranked among the other commanders as one of the grand prince's trusted men. M. Yu. Zakhar'in's activity was subsequently associated with the grand princely household administration. By 1520, he had apparently become the principal majordomo. A well-informed foreign diplomat referred to M. Yu. Zakhar'in as an important counsellor who held a post that was roughly equivalent to that of the Lord Chamberlain (Marschalch) of the German princes.⁶⁹ Zakhar'in's closeness to the grand prince is demonstrated by the fact that he fulfilled important ceremonial functions at the sovereign's wedding in 1526. M. Yu. Zakhar'in took part in the grand prince's judicial proceedings and in political trials against religious apostates. Having worked for many years in the Royal Court Chancellery, Zakhar'in acquired important experience in economic and organisational work. Moreover, he became an expert on the artillery, which was run by this chancellery.

The next person mentioned in the council verdict is Ivan Ivanovich Tret'yakov, nephew to Ivan III's trusted man, the Treasurer D. V. Khovrin. At that time, Tret'yakov was keeper of the seal and he later (1538–1549) served as treasurer. References to his usurious operations are extant.⁷⁰

One characteristic of the 1520 verdict is the immediate presence at the council session of several secretaries. The first of them, the secretary Ivan Teleshev, began his service in the late 1490s. He was frequently enlisted for talks with foreign delegations, and not long before the 1520 decision he travelled with a responsible political mission to Kazan' together with the influential member of the council, M. Yu. Zakhar'in. After his trip to Lithuania in 1522–1523, he fell into disgrace. Teleshev returned to the court in 1530, after the birth of the successor to Vasilii III, though the secretary was no longer a member of the council.⁷¹ Another secretary involved in the decision, Afanasii Kuritsyn, was the son of the important official and well-known free-thinker Fedor Kuritsyn. Evidently, Afanasii made a very rapid career and became a member of the council using his father's old contacts.⁷² The last of the secretaries mentioned in the verdict, Vasilii Borisov

⁶⁹ Herberstein, *Description*, 74. For more on M. Yu. Zakhar'in, see Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 185–187.

⁷⁰ Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 272–273.

⁷¹ Zimin, "D'yacheskii apparat," 271–272.

⁷² See A. A. Bulychov, *Potomki "muzha chestna" Ratshi: Genealogiya dvoryan Kamenskikh, Kuritsynykh i Volkovykh-Kuritsynykh* (Moscow, 1994), 17–19. Cf. Zimin, "D'yacheskii apparat," 245–246.

Teterin, was the offspring of land owners from Suzdal' and Nizhnii Novgorod. Unlike A. Kuritsyn, he found his way into the council after long service, and his role in the 1520 decision is the final reference to him in the sources. Up until then, he had examined land disputes, taken part in land surveys and also been enlisted in diplomatic work.⁷³

The 1520 verdict is the earliest surviving document in which the privy counsellors act separately from the sovereign, though Vasilii III most likely approved their decision. The composition of the participants of the 1520 session differs structurally from that of the individuals who compiled the wills of the grand princes. By 1520, the percentage of okol'nichie had noticeably increased, and there were far more people linked to the central administrative apparatus. It is typical that the secretaries, who had previously performed the functions of clerks, were now competent participants in the meeting. In the 16th century, the secretaries inherited from the senior boyars the right to confirm state acts of the grand princes.⁷⁴ The growths in the percentage of okol'nichie and officials were closely linked to each other since the link between the okol'nichie and the administration was very strong. There can be no doubt that these were all various manifestations of the same general tendency, which researchers describe as the expansion of the administrative structure of the Muscovite state.⁷⁵ On the whole the composition of the session of 1520 was much nearer to the structure of the Privy Council reflected in the sources from the second half of the 16th century. One may therefore assume that by 1520 a quite definite switch from the inner circle to the Privy Council can be detected.

Attention ought to be paid to the fact that by no means all the boyars and okol'nichie were involved in the 1520 decision. In that year there were just six boyars and seven okol'nichie. The decision refers to four boyars (V. V. Shuiskii, M. D. Shchenyatev, B. I. Gorbatyi and S. I. Vorontsov), and to three or four okol'nichie (I. G. Morozov, A. V. Saburov, I. V. Khabar, and M. Yu. Zakhar'in whose status as an okol'nichii is disputed). Thus it was that in 1520, 54–62% of those people with the rank of boyar and okol'nichii were members of the council. The council of 1520 was an aristocratic one, and the majority of princes with the rank of boyar at that time were members of the council (three out of the four titled boyars were in the council).⁷⁶

⁷³ Zimin, "D'yacheskii apparat," 273.

⁷⁴ Vodov, "Zarozhdenie," 346.

⁷⁵ See Kleimola, "Patterns of Duma Recruitment," 235, 237; Poe, "Elite Service Registry," 363–366.

⁷⁶ There were no okol'nichie with princely titles in 1520. The calculations given are based on statistical information from A. A. Zimin (Formirovanie, 291, 307).

The last time the council was convened during the rule of Vasiliï III was during the fatal illness of the grand prince in 1533. Thanks to the extensive account of the final days of Vasiliï III preserved in the chronicle, we can infer how the will of the grand prince was compiled inasmuch as the actual will has not survived. When the lists of participants of the sessions in different chronicles are compared, it can be noted that the earliest versions of the events described are extant in the Sofia II Chronicle (*Sofiiskaya II letopis'*, hereafter S2) and in the Postnik's Chronicle (*Postnikovskii letopisets*, hereafter P). Dubrovskii's Novgorod Chronicle (*Novgorodskaya letopis' Dubrovskogo*, hereafter ND) contains information adapted with literary and court etiquette in mind. Thus in ND, one of the participants of the meetings, M. V. Tuchkov, is incorrectly referred to as having a princely title; he was in fact not a prince, as is correctly stated in S2 and P. Moreover, in S2 and P, the names of the secretaries attending the meetings near Moscow are referred to in accordance with their position at the court when the meetings took place, while in ND their names are already regrouped in accordance with the new position emerging after the death of Vasiliï III.⁷⁷

Thus it was that in the autumn of 1533, Grand Prince Vasiliï III set off with his family on the traditional tour of the monasteries. Vasiliï also intended to go hunting, his favourite recreation. During the journey, the grand prince unexpectedly began to feel ill, and he began to develop a blood infection, probably caused by a chance injury. In deep secrecy from his family and courtiers, preparations were made for the very worst. The grand prince began to summon his trusted counsellors from Moscow, and gradually, as the condition of the sovereign grew worse, more and more counsellors began to be called to him. One of the first to be summoned from Moscow was Prince Mikhail L'vovich Glinskii, the grand princess' uncle.⁷⁸ When Vasiliï's condition deteriorated, unbeknown to his family and courtiers, including Glinskii, the sovereign ordered the wills of his grand-

⁷⁷ These observations relate solely to the lists of participants in the meetings, and not to the entire text of the Account of the Death of Vasiliï III. The relationship between the various versions of the Account remains the subject of debate. The subsequent reworking of the version of the Account kept at ND has been described by H. Rüss. Ya. S. Lur'e suggested very tentatively that the text in ND is of a primary nature. This point of view is decisively supported by M. M. Krom. See H. Rüss, "Dmitrij F. Bel'skij," *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte* 38 (1986): 173–177; Ya. S. Lur'e, "Letopis' Novgorodskaya Dubrovskogo." In SKK, II, part 2: 53–54; M. M. Krom, "Sud'ba regentskogo soveta pri maloletnem Ivane IV. Novye dannye o vnutropoliticheskoi bor'be kontsa 1533–1534 g.," *Otechestvennaya istoriya* 5 (1996): 39. For more on the account of the final days of Vasiliï III, see Ya. S. Lur'e, "Povest' o smerti Vasiliya III." In SKK, II, part 2: 277–279 and N. S. Demkova's commentaries to the Account in PLDR: *Seredina XVI veka* (Moscow, 1985), 569–576.

⁷⁸ PSRL, VI, 267.

father and father to be brought from Moscow. When the requested documents had been acquired, the grand prince arranged a closed session with his privy counsellors about how best to organise the meeting of his council. Present at the closed session was the Majordomo of the Tver' Court Chancellery, Ivan Yur'evich Shigona Podzhogin and the secretary G. M. Putyatin. Subsequently, at the end of October and early November, two meetings were held with the council. Meetings with the trusted courtiers continued in Moscow, where the grand prince arrived on 23rd November.

A total of 15 people took part in the meetings near Moscow and in the Kremlin, excluding members of the grand prince's family. Given the fact that in 1533 there were just 13 people holding the rank of boyar or okol'nichii, it becomes evident that, prior to his death, Vasiliï III consulted with a very broad circle of courtiers. The reasons for such a state of affairs lay in the fact that the grand prince was leaving an infant successor on the throne, and he was highly concerned about the composition of the regents' council. That is why practically all the grandees and high officials with influence at the court appeared in Vasiliï III's entourage prior to his death. In fact, the meetings Vasiliï III held just before he died combined his privy council and the future government council, which was to rule the state after the death of the grand prince. Below is summary information on the composition of the said meetings with Vasiliï III.

Present at the meeting near Moscow prior to Vasiliï's death were three old members of the council who gave the verdict in 1520: Prince V. V. Shuiskii, M. Yu. Zakhar'in and the secretary A. Kuritsyn. The first two also kept their positions at the court after the death of the sovereign, and entered the government council. Regarding the secretary Kuritsyn, in the struggle for places in the government council, he was unable to compete with other influential courtiers, and so he no longer took part in the Moscow meetings. The same applies to the secretary Elizar Ivanovich Tsyplyatev, who began to serve as early as Ivan III's day and specialised primarily in internal administration.⁷⁹ A participant in the meetings near Moscow, the secretary Tret'yak Rakov frequently took part in affairs relating to the family life of the sovereign. For example, he was involved in the arrangements for the grand prince's wedding. Like the other secretaries, he contributed to the work of the internal administration and the foreign office.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ In his time, Tsyplyatev was regarded as a "great secretary." *Sbornik RĬO*, XXXV, 858 (1532).

⁸⁰ For more on these secretaries, see Zimin, "D'yacheskii apparat," 245–246, 267–268, 277–278.

Meetings in late October, early November at Volok Lamskoi near Moscow ⁸¹	23rd November (the Kremlin bedchamber) ⁸²	3rd December (the Kremlin) ⁸³
Prince D. F. Bel'skii Prince I. V. Shuiskii M. Yu. Zakhar'in Prince M. L. Glinskii Prince I. I. Kubenskii I. Yu. Shigona secretary E. Tsyplyatev ⁸⁴ secretary A. Kuritsyn secretary G. M. Putyatin secretary T. Rakov	Prince I. V. Shuiskii M. Yu. Zakhar'in Prince M. L. Glinskii I. Yu. Shigona secretary G. M. Putyatin M. S. Vorontsov Treasurer P. I. Golovin secretary F. Mishurin Prince V. V. Shuiskii M. V. Tuchkov	Prince I. V. Shuiskii M. Yu. Zakhar'in Prince M. L. Glinskii I. Yu. Shigona secretary G. M. Putyatin M. S. Vorontsov Treasurer P. I. Golovin secretary F. Mishurin Prince V. V. Shuiskii M. V. Tuchkov

Despite their solid administrative experience, Kuritsyn, Tsyplyatev and Rakov did not enter the government council. It is quite probable that a serious conflict occurred among Vasilii III's influential secretaries for places on the government council. This is demonstrated by the lists of secretaries participating in the meetings prior to the sovereign's death. In these lists, the names of the courtiers were arranged in relation to their importance. As has already been noted, in the early chronicles the lists of secretaries were headed by Tsyplyatev and Kuritsyn. In the later versions of the chronicle, the first place was taken by their competitor, the secretary G. M. Putyatin.⁸⁵

It is evident that the meeting near Moscow reflected the original, supposed composition of the government council. That is why among the participants in this meeting people appeared who de jure held important positions at the court but did not have enough support in court circles. Present

⁸¹ Two meetings were held at Volok. The first meeting took place on 26th October prior to the arrival of the urgently summoned M. Yu. Zakhar'in. He was actually present at the second meeting, and the composition of this session is best reflected in ND. See PLDR: *Seredina XVI veka* (Moscow, 1985), 24, 25. See also H. Rüss, "Der Bojar M. Ju. Zakhar'in im Chronikbericht über die Letzten Tage Vasiliis III," *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte* 27 (1980): 168–176.

⁸² In order to facilitate comparison, the names of the participants in the Kremlin meetings have been correlated with the composition of the meetings held near Moscow. In the chronicle, the participants are recorded in the following order. Meeting of 23rd November: Prince V. V. Shuiskii, M. Yu. Zakhar'in, M. S. Vorontsov, P. I. Golovin, I. Yu. Shigona, G. M. Putyatin, F. Mishurin. Summoned later to the council were Prince I. V. Shuiskii, M. V. Tuchkov and Prince M. L. Glinskii. Meeting of 3rd December: Prince V. V. Shuiskii, Prince I. V. Shuiskii, M. S. Vorontsov, M. Yu. Zakhar'in, M. V. Tuchkov, Prince M. L. Glinskii, I. Yu. Shigona, P. I. Golovin, G. M. Putyatin, F. Mishurin (PSRL, VI, 270, 272).

⁸³ PSRL, VI, 270, 272.

⁸⁴ The names of the secretaries are given according to S2 and P (PSRL, VI, 268; XXXIV, 19).

⁸⁵ Cf. PSRL, VI, 268; XXXIV, 19; PLDR: *Seredina XVI veka*, 24, 25. See also Akty istoricheskie, sobrannye i izdannye Arkheograficheskoyu komissieyu (hereafter AI), I, no. 125: 181–182.

at this meeting was, for example, Prince Dmitrii Fedorovich Bel'skii, a member of the Gedimin dynasty. Prince Dmitrii's father, Fedor Ivanovich Bel'skii, moved to Rus' from Lithuania as early as 1481/82, following an unsuccessful attempt to raise a revolt against the Lithuanian grand duke. Prince Dmitrii Fedorovich Bel'skii held a high position at Vasilii III's court and was assigned important military and diplomatic appointments. Owing to his high noble origins, Bel'skii was sometimes forgiven even manifest blunders in his command of troops. On the other hand, Prince Bel'skii's position at the Muscovite prince's court was nonetheless unstable, and he was thus unable to establish himself among Vasilii's privy boyars. At the beginning of the 1530s, Bel'skii fell into disgrace and was kept under guard. Though he participated in the first meeting at Volog Lamskoi, he was no longer involved in the Moscow meetings of the governmental council. He was summoned only when the grand prince prior to his death wanted to address all his boyars together.⁸⁶ Another participant in the meeting near Moscow, Prince I. I. Kubenskii, also found himself in disgrace at one point, on account of failed military manoeuvres against Kazan'. By the time of the grand prince's illness, he was a major-domo. So, he was involved in the compilation of the will as an expert, but he did not become a member of the government council.

Generally speaking, the composition of the government council remains a subject of dispute among experts to this day, since the extant sources are incomplete and sometimes quite tendentious. That is why it is of the utmost importance to understand correctly the basic principles whereby such a council was formed. R. G. Skrynnikov justly pointed out that Vasilii III "intended to preserve the administrative procedure which had developed by the end of his life, whereby the most important issues were settled by a narrow circle of the grand prince's trusted counsellors." M. M. Krom recently cast doubt on whether Vasilii III followed the political tradition of his day in all respects.⁸⁷ Krom rightly criticises the terminology employed by Skrynnikov in his study of the regents' council. Nevertheless, Skrynnikov's general approach to the study of the government of 1533–1534 is quite justified. The chronicle clearly shows that when he compiled his will, Vasilii III sought to follow in his predecessors' footsteps. It is precisely for this reason that with the first signs of illness, the grand prince demanded to see the wills of his ancestors.

⁸⁶ PSRL, XXXIV, 20. See also Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 125–126; Rüss, "Dmitrij F. Bel'skij," 173–177; Krom, "Sud'ba," 38–39.

⁸⁷ Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 83; Krom, "Sud'ba," 35–36.

Using the 1520 verdict, it has been shown that by that time the council had acquired a quite definite internal structure, which was essentially preserved throughout the 16th century. After the death of Vasiliï III, power was transferred to the government council which was similar in structure to the council existing during Vasiliï's lifetime. The composition of the ruling council can be determined from the list of participants in the sessions held in Moscow on 23rd November and 3rd December. On the whole, the administration of the state continued to be based on the earlier tradition: power had to remain in the hands of the ruling dynasty, which enjoyed the support of the privy boyars. Vasiliï III wanted by all means to preserve the appearance of harmonious relations between the boyars and the ruling dynasty. In Vasiliï III's view, the boyars and officials were supposed to take care of the state (*o ratnykh delakh i zemskom stroenii*). For as long as the heir remained a minor, the dynasty was represented by his mother, the widowed Grand Princess Elena Glinskaya.⁸⁸ The main question was how the boyars were going to interact with the dynasty in the absence of a powerful monarch. This is why Vasiliï paid considerable attention to those people among the boyars, who might have access to the grand princess. Krom has established that three participants in the Moscow meetings, M. Yu. Zakhar'in, M. L. Glinskii and I. Yu. Shigona-Podzhogin, were appointed as regents.⁸⁹ In appointing three regents, the grand prince was hoping to preserve the traditional political structure. The dying sovereign ordered the regents to care for the grand princess and act as mediators between her and the other boyars. Mediatory duties of this kind were normally performed by the prime counsellor (*pervosovetnik*), who also announced the monarch's final decision at the council (see Chapter IV). However after the death of Vasiliï III, not one boyar could lay claim individually to that post, and so the functions of the prime counsellor were handed over immediately to three people.

The Moscow meetings were headed by the Princes I. V. and V. V. Shuiskii. As was noted, the latter of the two was a member of the grand prince's council as early as 1520. He was a regular participant in all the meetings of Vasiliï III prior to his death. It is quite probable that it was precisely Vasiliï Shuiskii who insisted that his brother Ivan should be included in the government council.⁹⁰ Participating alongside the Shuiskii's in the

⁸⁸ For more on the role of Elena Glinskaya during the illness of the grand prince and on her subsequent political moves, see Yurganov, "Politicheskaya bor'ba," 105–106, 109–112; Krom, "Sud'ba," 40, 46.

⁸⁹ Krom, "Sud'ba," 37–39.

⁹⁰ Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 83. For more on I. V. Shuiskii, see Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 72.

meetings was the boyar Mikhail Semenovich Vorontsov, son of the privy counsellor S. I. Vorontsov. He began to receive army appointments in 1512, and for a long time held secondary posts in the army command. Changes in Vorontsov's career begin to be apparent from 1531. By that time he had received the rank of boyar, and he begins to be invited more and more often to court ceremonies.⁹¹ It is possible that S. I. Vorontsov enjoyed the support of the influential favourite, Prince M. L. Glinskii (see below). The following participant in the meetings, Mikhail Vasil'evich Tuchkov, began to serve in 1500. He was later sent as an envoy to the Crimea and Kazan', and acted as governor in Novgorod, where he signed a treaty with Livonia. He entered the council thanks to the patronage of his relative M. Yu. Zakhar'in.⁹²

Another privy counsellor, Prince Mikhail L'vovich Glinskii, was one of the most striking and outstanding personalities of his day. According to legendary genealogical tales, the Glinskii's could trace their origins back to descendants of the Golden Horde ruler Mamai. Later the Glinskii's went to live in Lithuania and converted to Orthodoxy. For a long time, Mikhail Glinskii travelled through Europe and served a large number of rulers. In 1498, after prolonged wanderings, Glinskii returned to his native land where he enjoyed considerable influence and held high posts under King Alexander, so that the latter resolved all complicated issues in accordance with his opinion and judgement.⁹³ Yet after the death of King Alexander, Glinskii's enemies slandered him, and the prince lost his position under the new king Sigismund I. After unsuccessful attempts to vindicate himself, Glinskii opted for open revolt in 1508. Yet Glinskii's escapade was a disaster, and he went off to Russia with only a handful of supporters.

Glinskii was welcomed with open arms in Moscow, and he was presented with opulent gifts and with land. For the grand prince, M. L. Glinskii became an invaluable source of information on international affairs. Taking into consideration Glinskii's extensive contacts and his reputation in Europe, the grand prince gave him considerable independence in the diplomatic sphere. Prince Glinskii was of great assistance to Vasili III during the war with Lithuania for Smolensk, which the former hoped to obtain. Yet M. L. Glinskii's hopes proved futile, since after the seizure of Smolensk

⁹¹ Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 158–160.

⁹² Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 240. Cf. A. N. Nasonov, "Materialy i issledovaniya po istorii russkogo letopisaniya," *Problemy istochnikovedeniya* 6 (1958): 274.

⁹³ For more on M. L. Glinskii, see M. M. Krom, "'Chelovek na chas': Avanturnaya kar'era Mikhaila Glinskogo," *Rodina*, 1996, no. 5: 45–49; M. E. Bychkova, "The ancestry of kniazes Glinskiy," *HG* 3 (1994): 25–27.

he only received fresh promises from the grand prince. Glinskii then renewed his ties with the Polish king. He made an attempt to return to Sigismund's service, but he was captured by Russian commanders and cast into prison. Glinskii spent 12 years in confinement and was only released in 1526, after the wedding of his niece Elena Glinskaya to Grand Prince Vasiliï III. During the meetings he convened prior to his death, Vasiliï insisted on having M. L. Glinskii included in the regent's council. The idea of this occurred to the grand prince, when the first signs of illness became apparent. It was not by chance that Glinskii was one of the first courtiers to reach the sovereign, and he consulted with the doctors on how the grand prince was to be treated. However, the other boyars protested against such an appointment, because they regarded him as a foreigner. The grand prince in particular stressed that Glinskii had been a loyal servant and therefore the boyars ought to accept him in their circle.

Another clear favourite of the grand prince was the following member of the regent's council, Ivan Yur'evich Shigona Podzhogin, who was present at all the meetings of the grand prince prior to his death. He hailed from the same dynasty as I. V. Khabar, who was a council member in 1520. Ivan Shigona was in diplomatic service from 1505/6. In 1517 he received a special rank of "a squire who attends the sovereign in the Duma" (*syn boyarskii, kotoryi u gosudarya v Dume zhivet*). This rank signified a person of not particularly noble origins who was especially close to the grand prince. In the diplomatic documents, Shigona is directly referred to as a "counsellor" of the sovereign. He frequently took part in responsible talks with Lithuania, as well as with Crimean, Turkish, Livonian and Holy Roman envoys. Ivan Shigona often fulfilled the functions of a mediator between the grand prince and his political opponents. He was also drawn into the secret family affairs of the grand prince. In 1525, Shigona, on orders from the grand prince, forced his first wife, Solomoniya Saburova, to take monastic vows. By 1532, Shigona held an important position in the administrative system, when he received the post of majordomo of the Tver' Court Chancellery. Shigona maintained close ties with the influential Tret'yakov family. Treasurer Ivan Ivanovich Tret'yakov, who was a member of the council in 1520, is referred to as Shigona's executor in his will compiled in 1541.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ As early as 1523–1524, on orders from the grand prince, Shigona and another privy boyar, M. Yu. Zakhar'in, examined the case of the rank and file noblemen who had attempted to flee to Lithuania. See A. A. Zimin, "Iz istorii tsentral'nogo i mestnogo upravleniya v pervoi polovine XVI v.," *IA* 3 (1960): 148. For more on Shigona, see also Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 222–223, Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, index; A. V. Mashtafarov, "Dukhovnaya Ivana Yur'evicha Podzhogina 1541 goda," *Russkii diplomatarii I* (1997): 25–37.

The following member of the governmental meeting was Treasurer Petr Ivanovich Golovin, who inherited a place on the sovereign's council after his uncle, D. V. Khovrin. When around 1510 Khovrin left the administration of the Treasury, the running of this important department was transferred to P. I. Golovin. Golovin arranged close relations with other counsellors; in particular he had close links with the Shuiskii.⁹⁵ The government council also included the two most influential secretaries, Grigorii Men'shik Putyatin and Fedor Mishurin. These secretaries attended meetings at the Kremlin, and wrote the will of the grand prince. Not long after the death of the sovereign, Putyatin and Mishurin and the boyars received a Lithuanian delegation.⁹⁶ Of these two secretaries, the leading role was undoubtedly played by Grigorii Men'shik Putyatin. He was promoted, thanks to close ties with the administration of the royal household. Putyatin was constantly involved in diplomatic talks, and concentrated all dealings with Lithuania in his own hands. In the diplomatic papers, Putyatin is called a "counsellor" and "great secretary."⁹⁷ Of particular importance is the fact that Putyatin was personal secretary to Grand Prince Vasiliï III; it was precisely Putyatin who penned the grand prince's letters to his wife and Vasiliï's will. The second secretary in the government council, Fedor Mikhailov Mishurin, was also one of Vasiliï III's most trusted secretaries. He began his career in the 1520s, and was engaged in the internal administration and diplomatic activity. Subsequently, Ivan IV referred to Mishurin as "privy d'yak of our father and of us."⁹⁸

Thus it was that when he died, Grand Prince Vasiliï III transferred power to the same people who had for so long helped the monarch govern the state. Among them were the most influential boyars and principal officials, the treasurer and two secretaries. The majority of the members of the government council had experience of practical involvement in the running of the state; some of them had been members of the grand prince's council long before he fell ill. Thus, after the death of Grand Prince Vasiliï III, power for one year was in the hands of the government council. This is clearly demonstrated by the report made by a Pole who fled captivity in Moscow on 2nd July 1534. He reported that at least prior to July 1534 the main rulers were Prince V. V. Shuiskii, M. V. Tuchkov, M. Yu. Zakhar'in, I. Yu. Shigona and Prince M. L. Glinskii, who were to govern the state until Vasiliï III's successor, the future

⁹⁵ Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 22–273.

⁹⁶ *Sbornik RIO*, LIX, 2.

⁹⁷ *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh snoshenii drevnei Rossii s derzhavami inostrannyimi*, I, 227; *Sbornik RIO*, XXXV, 858; Zimin, "D'yacheskii apparat," 263–264.

⁹⁸ Fennell, *The Correspondence*, 75. For more on F. Mishurin, see Zimin, "D'yacheskii apparat," 253–254.

Ivan IV, had come of age. According to the report, *de jure*, Prince D. F. Bel'skii, Prince I. F. Ovchina-Obolenskii and Prince F. M. Mstislavskii remained the most distinguished boyars at the Muscovite court, although apart from their position of honour they had no power whatsoever.⁹⁹

The government council revealed signs of collapse as early as August 1534, when an inquiry into the attempted flight to Lithuania of a number of *grandees* was instigated.¹⁰⁰ It was at that point that Prince D. F. Bel'skii, M. Yu. Zakhar'in and the secretary G. M. Putyatin and other influential courtiers were arrested, and they had to find people to declare that they would remain faithful to the sovereign. As soon as power slipped out of Yur'ev's and Putyatin's hands, it was immediately snatched by those courtiers who had laid claims on control of the government at the death of the grand prince. All state affairs now began to be decided by Prince I. V. Shuiskii, M. Tuchkov, I. Shigona, Prince I. I. Kubenskii and the secretaries E. Tsyplyatev, A. Kuritsyn, F. Mishurin and G. Zagryazhskii.¹⁰¹ Worthy of note is the fact that this list contains the names of many counsellors, who had attended the meetings near Moscow with the grand prince, and who were subsequently not allowed access to the council session in the Kremlin. The ultimate fall of the governmental council took place on 19th August 1534, when Prince M. L. Glinskii was again incarcerated. The cause of his demise were the intrigues of rivals headed by Prince I. F. Ovchina-Obolenskii, who by then had become a favourite of the widowed Grand Princess Elena Glinskaya. From that time onwards, power was transferred to a variety of court groupings and factions. A general description of the new political regime was made by a foreign architect who attempted to flee Russia in 1539: "The present sovereign is still a child, and the boyars live as they wish, and are responsible for a great deal of violence, and no one could obtain justice in the country, and there is great dissension between the boyars."¹⁰² Modern studies show that in the years of boyar rule, the life of the state did not stand still for one moment, important reforms were implemented in the fields of finance and local government, and large-scale land surveys were carried out.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, political instability led to the frequent change of the boyar groupings holding power.

⁹⁹ AZR, II, no. 179: 331.

¹⁰⁰ For more details, see Yurganov, "Politicheskaya bor'ba," 107, note 38.

¹⁰¹ AZR, II, 333. Grigorii Zagryazhskii was a secretary from a service cavalryman's family. His career as a secretary began as it happens in 1534, and he had previously travelled to Poland and Lithuania and been involved in receiving foreign envoys (Zimin, "D'yacheskii apparat," 237; Likhachev, *Razryadnye d'yaki*, 90).

¹⁰² AI, I, no. 140: 203.

¹⁰³ See S. M. Kashtanov, *Finansy srednevekovoi Rusi* (Moscow, 1988), 22–40.

It needs to be said that during the years of the boyars' rule, the concept of the *duma* did not disappear from political use. At that time, the courtiers were already distinctly divided into those entitled to sit on the *Duma* and those who were not admitted to it; the diplomatic documents even include lists of those excluded.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, at that time the principles whereby the *Duma* operated differed fundamentally from the usual practice of joint activity between the sovereign and the counsellors. According to A. L. Khoroshkevich, the boyars "during the infancy of the grand prince were wont to pronounce royal 'decisions' themselves."¹⁰⁵ The diplomatic records clearly testify that during the boyars' rule, all power belonged to the boyars and influential officials. Thus, the compiler of the diplomatic records noted in particular that in 1536, talks with envoys were conducted by Prince V. V. Shuiskii, since Grand Prince Ivan was still a small child. During official receptions, the experienced secretary Men'shik Putyatin explained to the infant ruler the contents of the diplomatic documents.¹⁰⁶

After the fall of the government council in 1534 and right up until the coronation of Ivan IV in 1547, power in Russia was invested in various boyar governments. The composition of these governments changed in the following manner. After the arrest of M. L. Glinskii in 1534, the Shuiskii princes came to power. Their rule saw the first public execution for political activity under Ivan IV. In 1538, as the struggle between the Shuiskiis and the Bel'skiis grew fiercer, one of the members of the governmental council, the secretary Fedor Mishurin, was executed. At the same time, another supporter of the Bel'skiis, M. V. Tuchkov, was sent into exile (he died by 1550).¹⁰⁷ The rule of the Shuiskiis began to slacken in 1542 following the death of one of their leaders, Prince V. V. Shuiskii. His brother Ivan made desperate attempts to preserve the dominance of their family. Yet power slipped out the hands of the Shuiskiis, and in December 1543, Prince I. V. Shuiskii was executed. It was now the turn of the Vorontsov and Kubenskii princes to take power, and their faction also included I. P. Fedorov, the Obolenskiis (Telepnev-Ovchinin), the Dorogobuzhskii princes and the Yaroslavl' princes (the Kubenskii, Kurbskiis, possibly the Ushatyis). Between 1544 and 1546, disgrace rained down on this group. By all accounts, the disfavour was due not only to conflict within the faction but

¹⁰⁴ Sbornik RIO, LIX, 43, 147.

¹⁰⁵ A. L. Khoroshkevich, "Tsarskii titul i boyarskii 'myatezh' 1553 goda," *Otechestvennaya istoriya*, 1994, no. 3: 31.

¹⁰⁶ D'yaki i pod'yachie Posol'skogo prikaza, 75; Sbornik RIO, LIX, 44.

¹⁰⁷ For more details, see Shmidt, *Rossiiskoe gosudarstvo*, 223–239; Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 240.

also to a restructuring of the central administration, for all the disgraced grandees ran the bodies of the royal household. Change in the competence of these bodies and the formation of new administrative organs, the chancelleries, led to rearrangements in the ruling elite. After 1546, the Glinskii princes were firmly ensconced in the Kremlin, supported by the Yaroslav' princes, the Penkovs, and possibly by Prince I. F. Mstislavskii.¹⁰⁸

As has already been noted, important events took place in 1547. Society was considerably affected by the magnificent court ceremonies, the coronation of Ivan IV and his marriage to Anastasia Zakhar'ina.¹⁰⁹ These occasions were arranged under the aegis of the Glinskiis, although after the Moscow uprising of 1547, the ruling M. V. Glinskii was arrested and power was taken by the relatives of the tsarina, the Yur'ev-Zakhar'in boyars. They took over the running of the most important departments of the royal household. The composition of the government of 1548 has been studied in I. I. Smirnov's work.¹¹⁰ The government of that time was dominated by the Zakhar'ins and their supporters, D. R. Yur'ev, G. Yu. Zakhar'in, I. G. Morozov, G. V. Morozov and I. P. Fedorov. The government also included influential princes (D. F. Bel'skii, M. I. Kubenskii, D. F. Paletskii, I. F. Mstislavskii and A. D. Rostovskii) and heads of the central apparatus (the treasurers I. I. Tret'yakov and F. I. Sukin). Some members of this government kept their posts in the 1550s as well and entered the Privy Council (D. R. Yur'ev, D. F. Paletskii and I. F. Mstislavskii).

The main task of the new government was to re-establish stability at the court, and to confirm "peace and calm" in the country. To this end, a whole series of extended sessions of the council were held at the turn of the 1540s and 1550s, involving not only the boyars, but also Metropolitan Makarii and other leaders of the church, and also members of the service class (*dvoryanstvo*).¹¹¹ These meetings are referred to by historians as "state assemblies" or "assemblies of the land" (*zemskie sobory*). Specialists have advanced a wide range of hypotheses in respect of the origin of the *zemskii sobor* and its place in the Muscovite political system. The most recent attempt has been made by Daniel Ostrowski who rejects the idea that the

¹⁰⁸ O. G. Lizunova, "Delo Vorontsovykh i I. I. Kubenskogo. Iz istorii politicheskoi bor'by 40-kh gg. XVI v." In *Spornye voprosy*, 154–155.

¹⁰⁹ D. B. Miller, "Creating Legitimacy: Ritual, Ideology, and Power in Sixteenth-Century Russia," *Russian History* 21 (1994): 289–315.

¹¹⁰ Smirnov, *Ocherki*, 170–179. Cf. Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 97. See also Kashtanov, *Iz istorii*, 172–174.

¹¹¹ The exact dates of the assemblies are the subject of debate by experts. There is no doubt that an assembly was convened in February 1549. It is possible that other meetings of a similar kind were held. See Shmidt, *U istokov*, 144–301; Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 95.

zemskii sobor was an institution of indigenous origin. In his view, the zemskii sobor was a copy of the Mongol quriltai. According to Ostrowski, “no quriltai-like zemskii sobors were called before 1549 in Muscovy, because it was only in 1547 that the grand prince laid claims to being a tsar/khan.” If the zemskii sobor was entirely indigenous or based on Kievan precedents, then that does not explain why no “assemblies of the land” were called earlier.¹¹²

Before looking for a model for an institution, one should gain a more or less precise picture of this institution as such. At the same time, few historians have posed a simple question: what is the zemskii sobor? Specialists have made attempts to distinguish between different types of assemblies (zemskii sobor, osvyashchennyi sobor, dumnyi sobor) depending on the composition of their participants.¹¹³ But it is important to stress that the term zemskii sobor is not encountered in the sources. In this sense the zemskii sobor had never been convened in Muscovy, since this notion is an invention of 19th-century Slavophiles.

At the same time, a concept of sobor did exist in Muscovite political culture long before the 16th century. This term denoted a meeting of bishops and abbots called to discuss vexing ecclesiastical affairs.¹¹⁴ It is important to note that the grand prince and his administration always took an active part in the work of sobors.¹¹⁵ Thus, the officials of the grand prince were perfectly familiar with the way of how the church sobors operated. And so they could have adopted the church practice of convoking assemblies for the needs of the state administration. It is highly likely that it was Metropolitan Makarii, a key politician and the mentor of the tsar, who advanced the idea of bringing the tradition of church sobors into running the state. The church had ample experience of holding such meetings, and Makarii was also the head of the church at that time and one of the leading states-

¹¹² Ostrowski, *Moscow*, 185.

¹¹³ For more on the state assemblies, see S. O. Shmidt, *Stanovlenie rossiiskogo samoderzhavstva* (Moscow, 1973); L. V. Cherepnin, *Zemskie sobory Russkogo gosudarstva v XVI-XVII vv.* (Moscow, 1978); P. B. Brown, “The Zemskii Sobor in Recent Soviet Historiography,” *Russian History* 10 (1983), part 1: 77–90; H. J. Torke, “Tak nazyvaemye zemskie sobory v Rossii,” *VIS*, 1991, no. 11: 3–10. I suggest that it would be more correct to talk about the general concept of the assembly (sobor) as a meeting with a broader composition compared to the *Blizhnyaya Duma*. This is exactly how the assembly was described by Giles Fletcher. See Berry, *The English Works*, 196. Cf. J. Horsey, *Zapiski o Rossii, XVI-nachalo XVII vv.*, ed. V. Ya. Yanin, trans. A. A. Sevast'yanova (Moscow, 1990), 145, 146, 170.

¹¹⁴ I. I. Sreznevskii, *Slovar' drevnerusskogo yazyka*, 3 (Moscow, 1989), part 1: 647.

¹¹⁵ See above on the role of the grand princely council in the trial of Maksim the Greek. The tsar's administration was also involved in the work of the 1550s sobors, which condemned a number of heretics. The original records of these sobors were kept in the royal archives. See *Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv*, I, 81, 94.

men.¹¹⁶ The work of the meetings devoted to state policy was closely intertwined with the church assemblies, which examined matters of religious life. It is no coincidence that the meetings of the mid-16th century were construed primarily as an act of Christian reconciliation between all the participants in the political process. The tsar pronounced penitential speeches in front of the boyars, promised not to get angry with them, and guaranteed strict and just judgement.

The meetings discussed and developed a programme of profound reforms of many aspects of life in Muscovite society, i.e., reform of the courts, the preparation of a new code of laws, the regulation of service relations in the army, and so on. Many fundamental questions were presented to the meetings by the tsar himself. There is a whole list of such questions concerning church and temporal land ownership, taxation, regulation of the distribution of estates, and a general land census.¹¹⁷ In order to implement this programme, profound rearrangements were made to the central organs of government. To this end, the government enlisted new, talented administrators. A leading role among them was played by the tsar's favourite, Aleksei Fedorovich Adashev, and his close assistant, secretary Ivan Mikhailovich Viskovatyi.

Aleksei Adashev hailed from a well-heeled family, and his father Fedor enjoyed the trust of Grand Prince Vasilii III. As early as 1533, Vasilii III referred to the dispatch to Kazan' of his "trusted man" Fedor Adashev. Aleksei Adashev began his career at the court in 1547. For some time, he served as a bodyguard to the sovereign, then became treasurer and headed the Petitions' Chancellery created for examining petitions addressed to the tsar.¹¹⁸ The secretary I. M. Viskovatyi represented a new type of state

¹¹⁶ The chronicles contain direct indications that after the fire of 1547, the tsar went "for counsel" (*na dumu*) to Metropolitan Makarii. In this case the word *duma* naturally means "counsel" or "advice" rather than "council." Cf. M. N. Tikhomirov, "Zapiski o regentstve Eleny Glinskoi i boyarskom pravlenii 1533–1547 gg.," *IZ* 46 (1954): 282, 288.

¹¹⁷ Stoglav, ed. D. E. Kozhachnikov (St. Petersburg, 1863). See also E. B. Emchenko, "Svyashchenstvo i 'tsarstvo' na Stoglavom sobore." In *Nasledie*, 303–317.

¹¹⁸ Concerning Adashev, see also S. O. Shmidt, "Pravitel'stvennaya deyatel'nost' A. F. Adasheva," *Uchenye zapiski MGU* 167 (Moscow, 1954): 25–53; D. M. Bulanin, "Adashev, Aleksei Fedorovich." In *SKK*, II, part 1: 8–10. A. I. Filyushkin has recently argued that Adashev did not play any outstanding role in the government in the 1550s (Filyushkin, *Istoriya*, 281–308). Filyushkin's assertion is based exclusively on the chancellery documents, though these sources do not reflect all aspects of Adashev's activities. In his study Filyushkin tends to disregard the testimonies of the genealogical books and the inventories of the Royal Archives. At the same time, the genealogical books reveal that Adashev was so influential at court that he modified the official version of genealogical records (*Gosudarev Rodoslovet*) in favour of his family. See N. P. Likhachev, *Gosudarev rodoslovet i rod Adashevykh* (St. Petersburg, 1897), 5. The inventories of the Royal Archives show Ivan IV's particular concern about the causes of Adashev's death and papers left after him. Taken in conjunction with the testimonies of literary works, these facts corroborate the traditional view that Adashev was a favourite of the tsar.

servant. By the end of the 1540s, the representatives of the cast of old secretaries who had served under Ivan III and Vasilii III began to vacate the political scene. They were replaced by officials of a new mentality, possessing specialised professional knowledge and relying on precise organisational structures. Viskovatyi was one of the first Muscovite officials whose abilities and personal links allowed him to penetrate to the height of power. A recent biography of Viskovatyi posits that he hailed from a family of landowners with close ties to the royal court. The earliest reference to Viskovatyi is encountered in 1542, when he was still serving as a clerk. During the boyars' rule, Viskovatyi was in obscurity, and his further advance began after Ivan IV acquired independent power. The secretary's patrons were the influential Zakhar'in boyars. In 1549, Ivan Viskovatyi was placed at the head of the entire foreign office; he already had his own chancellery and had direct access to the sovereign. Over the next twenty years, he served as a regular advisor to the tsar. Even Viskovatyi's opponents acknowledged that in the royal council there was no better expert on Duma affairs than he was.¹¹⁹

Adashev and Viskovatyi formed the basis of the new government, which is known in the sources by the name "Privy Council" (Blizhnyaya Duma). With their appearance in the tsar's entourage, the Privy Council acquired the form of a distinctly functioning formation with its own policy. In 1549, the Privy Council took an important decision in relation to Lithuania, and the decision in itself partly contradicted the tsar's position. Ivan IV was very proud of his royal title and stubbornly insisted that it be employed in diplomatic practice. Yet the Privy Council accepted the demands of the Lithuanians, who agreed to prolong the truce only if the treaty did not include Ivan IV's royal title. In these talks, the role of the secretary Viskovatyi is particularly noticeable.¹²⁰ In the course of the 1550s, the Privy Council, headed by Adashev and Viskovatyi, became a highly important factor in state life.

* * *

¹¹⁹ Grala, Ivan, 12–90, 257.

¹²⁰ Sbornik RIO, LIX, 291; M. D'yakov, *Vlast' Moskovskikh gosudarei* (St. Petersburg, 1889), 140–141; Khoroshkevich, "Tsarskii titul," 28–29; Grala, Ivan, 65–66.

The Muscovite grand princes introduced into the act of consultation the most influential representatives of the court elite. Together with the counsellors, the grand prince composed wills and other documents. The counsellors also took part in the exchange of lands, served as commanders in the principal towns of the Muscovite principality, and participated in diplomatic negotiations. The counsellors usually included the most prominent military leaders of the time. The Muscovite princes sought to stabilise the make-up of their counsellors. Often, the tradition of participation in the consultations with the grand prince was effectively passed on by inheritance within a particular clan. For example, from the time of Dmitrii Donskoi, the Koshkin boyars invariably took part in consultations with the grand prince. Their descendants were to become counsellors throughout the 15th and 16th centuries. At the same time, the composition of the counsellors altered as the Muscovite prince's court took shape. Between the 14th and mid-15th centuries, when the make-up of the Muscovite princes' court had not yet been stabilised, the counsellors sometimes left the service of the Muscovite ruler and went over to other princes. Under Semen the Proud and Dmitrii Ivanovich Donskoi, influential representatives of the Vel'yaminov and Valuev families constantly took part in the consultations, although subsequently their descendants were not granted places among the grand princes' counsellors. At the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries, individuals with close family ties to the metropolitans, the boyars D. F. Byakontov and Dmitrii Afin'evich, were to be found for a while among the counsellors. In the 16th century, a similar experiment was repeated by Ivan IV, who included in his council F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev, the first cousin of Metropolitan Filipp. Nevertheless, on the whole, the Muscovite sovereigns did not generally summon the relatives of the leaders of the church.

The Muscovite princes paid particular attention to counsellors from other Russian principalities and neighbouring states. Consequently, the Patrikeev princes became the counsellors of the Grand Prince Vasiliï Dmitrievich almost immediately after their entry into Muscovite service from Lithuania. The Patrikeevs retained their places among the counsellors despite the stormy events of the civil war in the mid-15th century. The descendants of their clan, the Shchenyatevs and Bulgakovs also sat on the council in the 16th century. From the end of the 15th century, access to the council for princes originating in Lithuania began to be restricted, and it was particularly difficult for the Bel'skii princes of Lithuania to enter the council. Their promotion was opposed by the influential clan of the Shuiskii princes. Although under Vasiliï III the Bel'skii princes held the

highest place in the hierarchy of the Sovereign's Court, the principal role in the grand prince's council was not played by them but by the Shuiskii princes. The struggle for the leadership between the Bel'skiis and the Shuiskii was sharply exacerbated following the death of Vasilii III. The Bel'skii princes finally gained a foothold in the council in the second half of the 1550s and early 1560s (see Chapter III).

From the beginning of the 16th century, the positions of professional administrators among the counsellors began to be noticeably strengthened. When Ivan III's will was composed, the treasurer was present for the first time. By 1520, a number of secretaries were on the council. Evidently, during Vasilii III's illness, a fierce contest arose among the influential secretaries for the right to sit on the government council. The role of the administrators on the council grew particularly by the late 1540s, when Ivan IV's counsellors now included the master of the bedchamber, Aleksei Adashev, and the secretary, Ivan Viskovatyi. The administrators employed the practice of consultation to resolve their professional tasks relating to the state administration. It follows that they developed the organisational function of ritualised consultations. Under their influence, the amorphous inner circle of senior boyars acquired more clear-cut forms of work. The council began to actively interact with administrative organs, thereby turning into a kind of organisational centre for the Sovereign's Court and chancellery system. By appointing the most influential courtiers, talented military commanders and gifted administrators as counsellors, the Muscovite grand princes underpinned the consolidating image of autocratic power. The sovereign resorted to the practice of consultations each time a threat to stability arose among the ruling elite or in the state as a whole. On the basis of the verdict of 1520, it was demonstrated that consultations were also employed for settling conflicts which emerged on the periphery of the state. However, the role of the counsellors was particularly important at the moment when power was passed on from a dying monarch to his successor. It was no coincidence that Vasilii III spent his last days in constant consultations with his counsellors. The ritualised consultations was also a means of consolidating the ruling circles after Ivan IV's coronation in 1547.

CHAPTER III

THE PRIVY COUNCIL
UNDER
IVAN THE TERRIBLE

1. THE PRIVY COUNCIL DURING THE PERIOD OF REFORMS (1550s)

In the mid-16th century, the ruling circles took a whole series of steps designed to strengthen the autocratic power of the Muscovite sovereign. The most significant of these measures were the coronation in the Kremlin and the conquest of Kazan'. The ideological formation of the conception of autocracy coincided in time with profound structural changes in the organisation of the Sovereign's Court and central administration. In such conditions, the ideological and organisational significance of the ritualised consultations between the sovereign and his counsellors grew considerably. These consultations constantly involved the most influential political figures and favourites of the tsar. The council gradually becomes a distinctive coordinating centre uniting the top levels of the Sovereign Court and the heads of the administrative apparatus.¹

The codicils to The Book of Tsardom (*Tsarstvennaya kniga*) help us to form a picture of the Privy Council in March 1553, when the sick tsar compelled his counsellors to swear allegiance to the infant Tsarevich Dmitrii. According to the chronicle, the first counsellors to take the oath by kissing the cross were the privy boyars Prince I. F. Mstislavskii, Prince V. I. Vorotynskii, I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi, M. Ya. Morozov, Prince D. F. Paletskii, the secretary I. M. Viskovatyi, followed by the boyars D. R. Yur'ev and V. M. Yur'ev, and also the counsellor *dvoryane*, including the tsar's favourite A. F. Adashev and the Master of the Bedchamber I. M. Veshnyakov. Later the oath was taken by the boyar Prince D. I. Kurlyatev and the Keeper of the Seal N. A. Funikov.²

Noteworthy amongst the privy advisors of that period is the appearance of the boyars D. R. Yur'ev and V. M. Yur'ev. The position of the Yur'evs was determined by their family ties with Ivan IV. The Yur'ev family increased in status following the wedding of Ivan IV with Anastasia

¹ The growing role of the council in the mid-16th century is testified to by the re-distribution of powers between the "elder boyars" and the members of the Privy Council. At the beginning of the 1550s, there were still "elder boyars" at the court, but they no longer played an essential role in the government. See PSRL, XIII, part 2, 518.

² PSRL, XIII, part 2: 523, 524. The biographies of the counsellors who swore allegiance to Dmitrii are studied in detail in the work of S. V. Bakhrushin. See his "Izbrannaya Rada' Ivana Groznogo." In *Nauchnye trudy*, 2 (Moscow, 1954), 329–352. Concerning Veshnyakov, see also N. E. Nosov, *Stanovlenie soslovno-predstavitel'nykh uchrezhdenii v Rossii* (Leningrad, 1969), 495. V. D. Nazarov considers that Funikov was not the treasurer in 1553, as stated in the codicil to the chronicle, but the keeper of the seal and secretary (V. D. Nazarov, "Iz istorii tsentral'nykh gosudarstvennykh uchrezhdenii v Rossii XVI v.," *Istoriya SSSR*, 1976, no. 3: 92–93).

Romanova in 1547.³ Danila Romanovich was a blood brother of the Tsarina Anastasia, and Vasili Mikhailovich was her nephew. As a rule, marriage ties with the family of the tsar gave the boyars access to the councillors privy to the ruler. And so D. R. Yur'ev and V. M. Yur'ev occupied an important position in the government right up until 1555.⁴

The dynastic crisis of 1553 signified a mass of contradictions between the various groups of courtiers. Nevertheless, the privy counsellors who supported the tsar noticeably strengthened their position at court. The growth in their activity was evident as early as the autumn. In September 1553, Viskovatyi insisted that the council alter its decision on the tactics for talks with the Lithuanian delegation. In the following month, Adashev and Viskovatyi took a final decision to send Russian troops to Astrakhan'. The chronicle notes that the counsellors made their decision on the basis of the tsar's decision, and so Adashev and Viskovatyi appear as participants in the political process on an equal footing with the tsar.⁵ In autumn 1553, Viskovatyi expressed sharp criticism of the new frescos in the Kremlin cathedrals and the tsar's residence. Viskovatyi's declaration coincided with a new round of persecutions of heretics. The investigation into the views of the heretics and Viskovatyi's complaints was carried out by the most prominent members of the Privy Council, A. F. Adashev and V. M. Yur'ev.⁶

In the following year, the Privy Council took part in an inquiry into the affair involving the Lobanov-Rostovskii princes, who had attempted to flee to Lithuania.⁷ By that time, one of the prominent members of the council, Prince V. I. Vorotynskii, had died (sometime between June 1553 and 7th February 1554). It appears that he was able to prepare for his decease, for not long before his death he carried out a survey of his properties adjoining the lands of the St. Cyril monastery. After Prince V. I. Vorotynskii's death, his widow handed over some of her deceased husband's belongings to this monastery. Vorotynskii was interred at the monastery and a stone

³ See S. B. Veselovskii, *Issledovaniya po istorii oprichniny* (Moscow, 1963); 280–281; Smirnov, *Ocherki*, 193; A. A. Zimin, *Reformy Ivana Groznogo* (Moscow, 1960), 319 note 4; Grobovsky, *The "Chosen Council"*, 67; Kollman, *Kinship and Politics*, 123, 124, 175; H.-W. Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma unter Ivan IV: Studien zur altmoskauer Herrschaftsordnung* (Erlanger Historische Studien, Bd. 9; Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, New York, 1985), 226. The issue of the rise of the Yur'evs has also been treated in L. M. Savelov-Savelkov's work *Boyare Romanovy* (Athens, 1933). For more on this work, see S. N. Bogatyrev, "The Historical and Genealogical Journal Novik in the Years from 1934 to 1963," *HG* 2 (1993): 87.

⁴ Nazarov, "Iz istorii," 82–87.

⁵ *Sbornik RIO*, LIX, 404; PSRL, XIII, part 1: 235; Khoroshkevich, "Tsarskii titul," 32; Grala, Ivan, 118–119.

⁶ AAE, I, no. 238: 241; see also Grala, Ivan, 127–131.

⁷ PSRL, XIII, part 1: 238; see also Bakhrushin, "Izbrannaya Rada' Ivana Groznogo," 335–336.

church was erected over his grave. Ivan IV would subsequently reproach the monks for having erected the church on top of Vorotynskii's grave.⁸

The following information on the composition of the Privy Council refers to 1555. Several sources from that period have survived, allowing us to ascertain who was in the circle of counsellors closest to the tsar. The main source is a letter sent by Ivan IV in July 1555 to Metropolitan Makarii in connection with the arrival in Moscow of a Lithuanian delegation. According to this source, the tsar, who was at that time in Kolomna, and was accompanied by the "sovereign's boyars" (*gosudar'skie boyare*) from his Privy Council (*Blizhnyaya Duma*).⁹ Furthermore, the military service registers contain detailed lists of people who had received various military appointments during the Kolomna campaign.¹⁰

Smirnov has correctly suggested that not all the participants in the Kolomna campaign can be regarded as members of the Privy Council. Therefore, in order to pinpoint the counsellors closest to the tsar, he compared the information in the military service register with the decision (*prigovor*) on brigandage of 18th January 1555.¹¹ This decision was signed by the boyars, Prince Yu. M. Bulgakov, Prince D. I. Kurlyatev, V. M. Yur'ev, Prince I. I. Pronskii, I. M. Vorontsov, Prince V. S. Serebryanyi, I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi, the *okol'nichii* A. F. Adashev and the Master of the Bedchamber I. M. Veshnyakov.¹² Five of these people (Prince Yu. M. Bulgakov, Prince D. I. Kurlyatev, I. M. Vorontsov, A. F. Adashev, I. M. Veshnyakov) were members of the Sovereign's Regiment (*Gosudarev polk*) during the Kolomna campaign, i.e., immediately alongside the tsar himself.¹³ Two of the boyars, Prince V. S. Serebryanyi and Prince I. I. Pronskii, were appointed as commanders (*voevody*) to the troops.¹⁴ Thus, seven of

⁸ *Opisanie dokumentov XIV–XVI vv. v kopiinykh knigakh Kirillo-Belozerskogo monastyrya, khranyaschikhsya v Otdel' rukopisei Rossiiskoi natsional'noi biblioteki* (St. Petersburg, 1994), nos. 920, 921, 930: 156–157. *Poslaniya Ivana Groznogo*, 173, 635; PLDR: *Vtoraya polovina XVI veka* (Moscow, 1986), 152, 595. The earliest date for Vorotynskii's death is defined in Kollmann's work (*Kinship and Politics*, 240). On 7th February 1554, the St. Cyril monastery had already received official documents entitling it to the possession of the lands of the deceased Vorotynskii.

⁹ *Sbornik RIO*, LIX, 469. See also Smirnov, *Ocherki*, 151–152.

¹⁰ These lists have been preserved in the Sovereign's Military Records and also in the expanded version of the military service registers. See *Razryadnaya kniga 1475–1598 gg.* (hereafter RK 1475–1598) (Moscow, 1966), 150 (the Sovereign's Military Records); RK 1475–1605, I, part 3: 493 and following (the expanded version). The list in the expanded version is more comprehensive than the Sovereign's Military Records. Smirnov employed only the Sovereign's Military Records in his work.

¹¹ See Smirnov, *Ocherki*, 33. A recent publication on the decision on brigandage: *Zakonodatel'nye akty. Teksty*, 33–34.

¹² *Zakonodatel'nye akty. Teksty*, 34.

¹³ RK 1475–1598, 150. See also Smirnov, *Ocherki*, 153.

¹⁴ RK 1475–1598, 150; RK 1475–1605, I, part 3: 495. See also Smirnov, *Ocherki*, 153.

those who signed the January decision received high appointments in the army which marched towards Kolomna. They were all undoubtedly members of the Privy Council. Other participants at the meeting of 16th January, I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi and V. M. Yur'ev were also members of the Privy Council.¹⁵

The decision of 18th January 1555 does not, however, reflect the full composition of the Privy Council. Above all, the circle of privy councillors should also include I. M. Viskovatyi, who took part in the summer campaign and was the chief secretary to the Foreign Affairs Chancellery.¹⁶ There is no doubt that Viskovatyi was at that time a member of the Privy Council, since he was one of the tsar's closest counsellors throughout the 1550s and 1560s. According to the evidence in the list of members of the Sovereign's Court (Dvorovaya tetrad'), I. M. Viskovatyi was a member of the chancellery elite – who were known as the “great secretaries” (bol'shie d'yaki). Judging from the diplomatic records, the term “great” often referred to one's particular closeness to the tsar.¹⁷ It is evident that the Privy Council also included another three participants in the campaign, the commander of the Right Wing Regiment, Prince I. I. Pronskii, the commanders of the Great Regiment, Prince I. F. Mstislavskii and M. Ya. Morozov, who were members of the tsar's council prior to and after 1555.¹⁸

On the basis of the Sovereign's Military Records, Smirnov determined that fifteen boyars and five okol'niche were sent on the Kolomna campaign of 1555.¹⁹ The number of boyars needs to be defined more precisely, since the expanded version of the military service registers also refers to the court commander-in-chief, Prince I. D. Bel'skii, as a boyar.²⁰ As early as the 1550s, Prince I. D. Bel'skii occupied the highest position within the system

¹⁵ RK 1475–1598, 149; 150. Cf. Smirnov, *Ocherki*, 154, 156.

¹⁶ RK 1475–1598, 150. It ought to be noted that both the Sovereign's Military Records and the expanded version of the military service records preserved the defective lists of the secretaries who participated in the Kolomna campaign. Who these secretaries were can be ascertained by comparing both wordings of the military service registers referred to.

¹⁷ *Tsyachnaya kniga 1555 g. i Dvorovaya tetrad'* 50-kh gg. XVI v. (Moscow, Leningrad, 1950), 115. Cf. RGADA, F. 79, Op. 1, D. 16, ff. 60v., 61, 104v. For more details about the term “great” (bol'shoi), see S. N. Bogatyrev, “Kak nazyvalas' prikaznaya elita v posol'skikh knigakh XVI – nachala XVII vv.” In *40 let Nauchnomy studencheskomy kruzhku istochnikovedeniya istorii SSSR* (Moscow, 1990), 90.

¹⁸ RK 1475–1598, 151.

¹⁹ Smirnov, *Ocherki*, 152.

²⁰ RK 1475–1605, I, part 3: 495; RK 1475–1598, 164. Zimin has suggested that Bel'skii became a boyar prior to 1560. Zimin's view has influenced the works of subsequent historians. See A. A. Zimin, *Oprichnina Ivana Groznogo* (Moscow, 1961), 91; idem, “Dvorovaya tetrad' 50-kh gg. XVI v. i formirovanie sostava Boyarskoi dumy i dvortsovykh uchrezhdenii,” *VID 12* (Leningrad, 1961): 30; Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 204; Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 257.

of precedence. The swift ascent of Bel'skii began after his wedding to Princess Marfa Vasil'evna Shuiskaya in November 1554. Thanks to this marriage, I. D. Bel'skii became related to the grand-prince's lineage, because Princess Shuiskaya's great-grandfather was the Grand Prince Ivan III. It is noteworthy that in April 1555, Prince I. D. Bel'skii's wife Marfa occupied the first place amongst the boyars' wives at Prince V. A. Staritskii's wedding.²¹ Therefore, in this case the expanded version of the military service records on Prince I. D. Bel'skii's boyar status in 1555 ought to be relied upon. From 1555 onwards, I. D. Bel'skii occupied the chief commanding posts in Ivan IV's army. For many years to come, right up until his death in 1571, Bel'skii commanded the troops on numerous occasions, as the chief commander of the Great Regiment. I. D. Bel'skii was referred to in the sources as a "great boyar" and "great commander" alongside Princes I. F. Mstislavskii and I. M. Vorotynskii.²² The fact that the court and army career of Prince I. D. Bel'skii began in 1555, together with his presence amongst the privy councillors at Kolomna, gives us grounds to assert that he was a member of Ivan IV's Privy Council.

The Privy Council of 1555 included two other participants in the Kolomna campaign, the Khan (tsar' in Russian records) of Kazan' Simeon (Ediger) Kasaevich and the Astrakhan' Tsarevich Kaibula (Abdula) Akhkubekovich.²³ The Tartar princes always occupied a very important position at Ivan IV's court. The Muscovite tsars sought to make the Tartar princes into their service people, encouraging baptism and marriages of Tartar immigrants to female representatives of old Moscow families.²⁴ Taken prisoner by Ivan IV after the seizure of Kazan', Tartar ruler Ediger Kasaevich (baptised Simeon) was granted in February 1553 the status of an appanage prince in the service of the Russian tsar. At the same time Simeon was ordered to "see the eyes of the tsar," i.e., henceforth he had to be present alongside the tsar amongst the closest counsellors during marches and solemn ceremonies.²⁵ After entry into the Privy Council, Simeon accompa-

²¹ DRV, XIII (Moscow, 1790), 81–82.

²² RK 1475–1598, 153, 162, 167, 178, 197, 208, 217, 220, 229, 234.

²³ RK 1475–1598, 150. In the index to this publication Tsarevich Simeon Bekbulatovich is incorrectly referred to instead of Tsar Simeon as a participant in the Kolomna campaign of 1555.

²⁴ See Veselovskii, *Issledovaniya po istorii oprichniny*, 297; M. N. Tikhomirov, *Rossiia v XVI stoletii* (Moscow, 1962), 487; M. Khodorkovsky, "Four Degrees of Separation: Constructing Non-Christian Identities in Muscovy." In *Culture and Identity in Muscovy*, 248–266.

²⁵ PSRL, XIII, part 1: 229, 230; part 2: 528. As regards Simeon Kasaevich and his court, see also M. Khudyakov, *Ocherki po istorii Kazanskogo khanstva* (Moscow, 1991), 147, 148, 154, 172, 179; *Savvin-Storozhevskii monastyr' v dokumentakh XVI v.*, comps. S. N.

nied Ivan on many of his military campaigns. In 1553, the marriage of Simeon Kasaevich and M. A. Kutuzova took place. It is characteristic that the celebrations in honour of this event were held in the tsar's dining room (stolovaya izba), where he normally held important talks with foreign delegations. In 1555, Simeon was present at the church assembly convened to nominate the archbishop of Kazan'.²⁶ In the first half of the 1560s the sources often mention Simeon as one of the chief commanders of the Russian army.

The Astrakhan' Tsarevich Kaibula Akhkubekovich departed for Rus' in 1552, being granted governorship of the town of Yur'ev-Povol'skii. Kaibula showed himself to be a brave fighter at the beginning of 1556, when, while commanding Tartar troops, he came to the aid of the Russian army, which had been ambushed near Vyborg. After the military campaigns of 1555–1556, Kaibula was frequently entrusted with the command of the tsar's troops.²⁷

Some courtiers left the Privy Council in the mid-1550s. In 1555, Prince D. F. Paletskii and the Keeper of the Seal, N. A. Funikov were removed from the Privy Council. The removal of the latter was explained by the disgrace which befell him precisely at that time.²⁸ After 1555, the Yur'ev boyars also fell into disgrace.

Thus the Privy Council of 1555 consisted of 16 privy counsellors in all: signatories to the decision on brigandage of 18th January (Prince Yu. M. Bulgakov, Prince D. I. Kurlyatev, V. M. Yur'ev, Prince I. I. Pronskii, I. M. Vorontsov, Prince V. S. Serebryanyi, I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi, A. F. Adashev, I. M. Veshnyakov), and also the boyars, Prince I. D. Bel'skii, Prince I. F. Mstislavskii, D. R. Yur'ev, M. Ya. Morozov, the secretary I. M. Viskovatyi, the former Kazan' ruler Simeon Kasaevich and the Astrakhan' Tsarevich Kaibula Akhkubekovich. It may be noted that in 1555 the Privy Council grew in size compared to preceding years because of a general increase in the men of counsellor rank during the first half of the 1550s.²⁹

Kisterev, L. A. Timoshina (Moscow, 1992), 42; *Materialy dlya istorii Zvenigorodskogo kraya*, comps. S. N. Kisterev, L. A. Timoshina, I (Moscow, 1992), 56–58, 60, 91, 109; V. B. Pavlov-Sil'vanskii, *Pistoverye knigi Rossii XVI v.* (Moscow, 1991), 132.

²⁶ RK 1475–1598, 12–13, 140 (1553), 150 (1555), 156 (1556), 181 (1559), 197 (1562). PSRL, XIII, part 1: 230, 235. Cf. Savva, *O Posol'skom prikaze*, 208–210.

²⁷ See PSRL, XIII, part 1: 177; XX, part 2: 567; DAI, I (St. Petersburg, 1846), no. 70; RK 1475–1598, 162, 170, 196, 209. Concerning Kaibula, see also Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 363; Khudyakov, *Ocherki*, 148, 171.

²⁸ See Nazarov, "Iz istorii," 92, 93. In 1553/54, Prince D. F. Paletskii was Prince V. I. Osipovskii's executor (see Cherkasova, *Zemlevladienie*, 137). In 1555, Prince D. F. Paletskii was governor in Novgorod (RK 1475–1598, 152).

²⁹ See A. A. Zimin, "Sostav Boyarskoi Dumi v XV–XVI vv." In *AE za 1957* (Moscow, 1958), 62.

Eight of the privy councillors of 1555 with the rank of boyar or *okol'nichii* were granted these ranks prior to the dynastic crisis of 1553: Prince Yu. M. Bulgakov, Prince D. I. Kurlyatev, M. Ya. Morozov, Prince I. F. Mstislavskii, Prince V. S. Serebryanyi, I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi, V. M. Yur'ev, D. R. Yur'ev.³⁰

At the time the tsar was at Kolomna with his Privy Council, the boyars Prince I. M. Shuiskii, Prince I. F. Shuiskii, G. Yu. Zakhar'in, I. I. Khabarov, V. Yu. Trakhaniotov, the two *okol'nichie*, V. V. Morozov and A. A. Kvashnin and also the secretary Ugrim L'vov, head of the Chancellery of the Grand Revenue stayed behind at Moscow. The boyars left at Moscow by the tsar fairly seldom participated in the campaigns of the 1550s, evidently due to their advanced age.³¹ At the same time the members of the Privy Council were frequently given appointments to the army in the field. Furthermore, some of the privy councillors were actively drawn into conducting diplomatic negotiations (V. M. Yur'ev, I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi, M. Ya. Morozov, I. M. Vorontsov, A. F. Adashev, and I. M. Viskovatyi).³² During the second half of the 1550s, some privy councillors were posted abroad with diplomatic missions. Thus, in 1554, the boyar V. M. Yur'ev was sent to Poland, and two years later King Sigismund II was again visited by a member of the Privy Council, the boyar I. M. Vorontsov. His embassy colleague, the Treasurer F. I. Sukin, slandered him in some way after returning to Moscow and so Vorontsov was forced to leave Ivan IV's privy circle for a long time.³³ Thus, the Privy Council of Ivan IV consisted of those courtiers who were actively involved in political and military life.

There is very little evidence about the Privy Council during the second half of the 1550s. The instructions issued in 1563 to the ambassador A. F. Nagoi, at the time of his posting to the Crimea, refer to the privy councillors I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi, A. F. Adashev and I. M. Viskovatyi. This information undoubtedly relates to the 1550s, when Adashev had not yet

³⁰ See Zimin, "Sostav," 56, 59, 61, 62. Cf. Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 217, 226, 231, 233, 234, 243, 246.

³¹ See RK 1475–1598, 152; *Sbornik RIO*, LIX, 468–469; Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 295.

³² See S. A. Belokurov, *O Posol'skom prikaze* (Moscow, 1906), 104–105; Savva, *O Posol'skom prikaze*, 393. On the participation by privy councillors in court ceremonies in the middle of the 1550s, see also M. E. Bychkova, *Sostav klassa feodalov Rossii v XVI v.* (Moscow, 1986), 115–130.

³³ *Sbornik RIO*, LIX, 420–446, 516–531. On I. M. Vorontsov, see also N. Pushkareva, "Vnuka moya za Ivana ne pokhotela," *Rodina*, 1996, no. 10: 80; Likhachev, *Razryadnye d'yaki*, 215. In the diplomatic instructions (*nakaz*) issued to I. M. Vorontsov and F. I. Sukin, it was the latter who had to set forth the history of Russian–Polish relations. It is possible that Sukin was involved in the composition of these instructions, as he is referred to in the first person in its text (*Sbornik RIO*, LIX, 524).

fallen into disfavour.³⁴ In 1556, three privy councillors, M. Ya. Morozov, I. M. Vorontsov and I. M. Viskovatyi, carried out negotiations with the Lithuanian ambassador.³⁵ In 1557, during other negotiations held in Moscow, the Swedish diplomats referred to A. F. Adashev and I. M. Viskovatyi as “privy and great members of the Duma” (*blizhnie i velikie dumtsy*), while the Russian side called these Russian diplomats “councillors” (*sovetniki*).³⁶ The closeness of the former Kazan’ Khan, Simeon Kasaevich, to the tsar is indirectly indicated by the fact that the second half of the 1550s saw the active formation of Simeon’s own court, with a special entourage of boyars, secretaries and servants. Simeon had his own chancellery apparatus as early as 1555, and was granted estates in the Zvenigorod district prior to 1558–1559. In 1558–1559, the taxes from this district, which had previously been paid to the Chancellery of the Grand Court (*Bol’shoi dvorets*), were now benefiting Simeon.³⁷ On the whole, the composition of the Privy Council in the second half of the 1550s was relatively stable, owing to its important role in the political system of Muscovy and the steady policies of the government at that time.

2. THE PRIVY COUNCIL IN THE 1560s

By the close of the 1550s, a disagreement arose in Ivan IV’s government over issues of foreign policy. Adashev spoke out in favour of active military action against the Crimea. With regard to relations with Livonia, he counted primarily on the annexation of this state through diplomatic talks. After the start of the war with Livonia, Adashev sought to avoid the escalation of the conflict on the western frontiers.³⁸ However, Ivan IV went for the option of waging a wide-scale war against Livonia. To begin with, vic-

³⁴ See Bakhrushin, “*Izbrannaya Rada’ Ivana Groznogo*,” 336. As Ya. S. Lur’e and A. N. Grobovsky have shown, the information concerning the disgrace of Sheremetev-Bol’shoi and Viskovatyi given in the instruction was simply diplomatic subterfuge. See *Poslaniya Ivana Groznogo*, 637 note 16 – commentary by Lur’e; Grobovsky, *The “Chosen Council”*, 47–51.

³⁵ *Sbornik RIO*, LIX, 495.

³⁶ *Sbornik RIO*, CXXIX, 32, 47. These were well-known talks in which the key figure in the Finnish Reformation, Bishop Mikael Agricola, took part. For more details, see J. Forsman, *Ruotsin ja Venäjän väliset suhteet: 1497–1560* (Helsinki, 1895), 127–132; H. Pohjolan-Pirhonen, *Suomen historia, 1528–1617* (Porvoo, Helsinki, 1960), 214–217; Grala, Ivan, 211–213.

³⁷ See *Materialy dlya istorii Zvenigorodskogo uezda*, I, 56–58, 60, 91, 109. Pavlov-Sil’vanskii, *Pistsovyie knigi*, 135, 209–211.

³⁸ On the activity of A. F. Adashev during the second half of the 1550s, see S. O. Shmidt, “A. F. Adashev i Livonskaya voina.” In *Spornye voprosy*, 303–306; Grala, Ivan, 200–236.

tory in the west appeared to be easily within his grasp. Livonia was an amorphous state formation unable to resist the onslaught of the Muscovite army. However, Poland, Lithuania, Denmark and Sweden soon became embroiled in the events in the Baltic region, and despite the hopes of the Russian tsar, the Livonian war was to become a protracted affair.

Conflicts within the government were a burden in addition to the personal crisis faced by Ivan IV. The tsar was acutely perturbed by the state of his family affairs. The death of his first wife Anastasiya Romanova and concerns about who would succeed him on the throne had a marked effect on relations between the tsar and his counsellors. Adashev's main rivals at the court, the boyars Zakhar'in, availed themselves of the tsar's unbalanced state and slandered Adashev, accusing him of having poisoned Anastasiya. Adashev was removed from Ivan IV's entourage in 1560.³⁹ In the following year, Ivan established a regents' council in case the throne was transferred to an infant successor. This council, reflecting the composition of the Privy Council of 1561, included Prince I. F. Mstislavskii, D. R. Yur'ev, V. M. Yur'ev, I. P. Yakovlev, F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev, Prince A. P. Telyatevskii, Prince P. I. Gorenskii and the secretary A. Vasil'ev.⁴⁰

Just as in the preceding decade, the head of the privy advisors was Prince I. F. Mstislavskii. By 1561, the tsar removed his disfavour from the Yur'evs, who entered the Privy Council together with their relative, I. P. Yakovlev. Another member of the Zakhar'in-Yur'ev clan was F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev, who received the rank of *okol'nichii* in 1559.⁴¹ The young representatives of the princely families, Telyatevskii and Gorenskii, had no links whatsoever with Adashev, and therefore a place was found for them amongst the tsar's counsellors after the fall of the omnipotent favourite. A. P. Telyatevskii was even given the task of investigating the causes of Adashev's death. The diplomatic records state that Ivan IV regarded P. I. Gorenskii with "great favour and kept him privy to himself" (*italics – S.B.*).⁴²

As for the secretary Andrei Vasil'ev, from 1550 onwards he frequently accompanied the tsar on military campaigns. He was also invited to wed-

³⁹ Another privy councillor, I. M. Veshnyakov was also expelled from the tsar's council along with Adashev. As late as 1559, the tsar conferred special decorations on Veshnyakov for faithful service on the Don (PSRL, XX, part 2 [St. Petersburg, 1914], 614–615), but his name disappears from the military service registers by the end of the 1550s.

⁴⁰ SGGD, I (Moscow, 1813), 474–475. See also Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 88 note 3; R. G. Skrynnikov, *Nachalo oprichniny* (Leningrad, 1966), 148; *idem*, *Tsarstvo*, 142.

⁴¹ RK 1475–1598, 181; DRV, XIII (Moscow, 1790), 293. See also Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 230.

⁴² On Telyatevskii, see Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 88, 89; Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 143; V. B. Kobrin, "Sostav oprichnogo dvora Ivana Groznogo." In *AE* za 1959 g. (Moscow, 1960), 76. On Gorenskii, see *Sbornik RIO*, LXXI, 322.

ding ceremonies at the court.⁴³ A comparison of the composition of the regents' council with the make-up of the Privy Council in the 1550s shows that two members of the latter, Prince I. I. Pronskii and I. M. Viskovatyi, were not included in the regents' council of 1561. Probably, this was due to their ties with Adashev. Nevertheless, Pronskii's and Viskovatyi's position in the tsar's close entourage did not considerably alter after the fall of Adashev. Prince I. I. Pronskii held important army posts at the end of the 1550s and early 1560s.⁴⁴ As to Viskovatyi, his position at court was considerably strengthened at that time. In 1561, he received the rank of keeper of the seal and secretary (*pechatnik i d'yak*). Therefore, he ought not to be excluded from the Privy Council. Even with the changed alignment of forces in the council, Viskovatyi kept his position as principal expert on foreign policy thanks to his professionalism and loyalty.⁴⁵

In 1561, Prince I. D. Bel'skii, D. I. Kurlyatev, M. Ya. Morozov, I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi, I. M. Vorontsov, and probably Prince V. S. Serebryanyi, Tsar Simeon Kasaevich and Tsarevich Kaibula were excluded from the Privy Council.⁴⁶ The removal of these people from the tsar's entourage in 1561 signified the disfavour which was approaching them. That same year saw the death of the former member of the Privy Council, Prince D. F. Paletskii.⁴⁷

In the autumn of 1562, the Privy Council included Prince I. D. Bel'skii, D. R. Yur'ev and "other boyars from the Blizhnyaya Duma."⁴⁸ Their names can be ascertained from the correspondence between the military governor of Yur'ev, the boyar I. P. Fedorov, and the Lithuanian hetman, A.

⁴³ As early as the autumn of 1551 Andrei Vasil'ev met the Nogai ambassadors, who had arrived in Moscow. See RGADA, F. 127, Op. 1, D. 4, ff. 89, 92, 93; SGGD, II (Moscow, 1819), 49–50. On the activity of Vasil'ev, see also RK 1475–1605, (Moscow, 1977), part 2: 390; part 3 (Moscow, 1978), 451, 457, 481, 486, 495, 511; (Moscow, 1981), part 1: 9, 54; DRV, XV, 15–19 (1551); DAI, I, no. 104, 105 (1556); Likhachev, *Razryadnye d'yaki*, 237–239. A. Vasil'ev's surname remains unknown. See the review of the opinions of researchers on this issue in *D'yaki i pod'yachie Posol'skogo prikaza*, 137–138.

⁴⁴ RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 90.

⁴⁵ See *Sbornik RIO*, LXXI, 25–26; CXXIX, 85; Grala, Ivan, 235.

⁴⁶ On Prince I. D. Bel'skii in 1561, see Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 143; RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 90. The military service registers remain silent concerning D. I. Kurlyatev's services in 1561, he was probably a military governor in Kaluga. See RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 75. From 20th July 1561, M. Ya. Morozov was military governor at Smolensk, and supervision under him was carried out by the future oprichniki I. I. Ochinnikov and N. I. Ochinnikov (see *ibid.*, 92; Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 152). Prince V. S. Serebryanyi and I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi were expelled from the circle of "great boyars" as early as 1560. See RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 65; cf. *ibid.*, 63. There is no information whatsoever about the activities of Simeon Kasaevich and Kaibula in 1561.

⁴⁷ See DRV, XX, 34, 44. The last reference to his service dates back to 1559/60. See RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 86; cf. *ibid.*, 89.

⁴⁸ See references to them in the inscription of a letter to the Lithuanian counsellors in *Sbornik RIO*, LXXI, 94–98.

Chodkiewicz. The names of the privy councillors are also mentioned in the letters of the Privy Council, sent to Lithuania on 28th November 1562. Judging by these sources, the Privy Council included the boyars, Prince I. D. Bel'skii, D. R. Yur'ev, Prince V. M. Glinskii, Prince I. F. Mstislavskii and V. M. Yur'ev.⁴⁹ In the course of 1562, other members of the Privy Council carried out a variety of responsible missions ordered by the tsar. In the autumn of 1562, the tsar charged F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev with the task of investigating the complaints of the Nogai ambassadors about having unnecessary taxes levied on them. In 1561/62, Prince I. I. Pronskii carried out an inspection of service people at Meshchera. In the same year, he was the chief commander in the army of Simeon Kasaevich and Kaibula Akhkubekovich.⁵⁰

The campaign by the Russian forces against Polotsk in 1562–1563 was to be one of the most important military actions of the Livonian War. Ivan IV saw the taking of Polotsk as the achievement of a lofty mission assigned to him by God. These ideas are expressed in the notice of victory (*seunch*) sent by the tsar to the metropolitan and to members of the royal family. As Ivan IV perceived it, victory over the foe had been granted him by the mercy of God and the Virgin Mary and by the prayers of all Russian miracle-workers, royal ancestors and the metropolitan.⁵¹ Ivan portrayed the campaign against Polotsk in categories relating to the myth of the tsar's power. In the eyes of ideologists of the day, the Russian tsar's military campaigns enjoyed the protection of the leaders of the Kingdom of Heaven. Ivan obviously identified himself with Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords going out to fight the forces of evil at Armageddon.⁵²

In the final battle with the forces of evil, Christ sets off surrounded by martyrs for the faith and the righteous. For the Muscovite authors describing the campaign against Polotsk, the theme of closeness to the tsar was tied to the concept of "chosen men." According to the chronicler, the tsar left on the Polotsk campaign "with his chosen people" (*s izbrannymi svoimi*).⁵³ It was the members of the Privy Council accompanying Ivan on his

⁴⁹ Sbornik RIO, LXXI, 74, 102.

⁵⁰ SGGD, I, 483; *Prodolzhenie DRV*, X, 217; Likhachev, *Razryadnye d'yaki*, Appendix, 58; RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 105.

⁵¹ V. I. Buganov, "Vz'yatie polotskoe Litovskie zemli – opisaniye pokhoda 1563 g. v razryadnoi knige Muzeinogo sobraniya," *Zapiski Otdela rukopisei Gosudarstvennoi biblioteki im. Lenina* 31 (1969): 213.

⁵² Rowland, "Biblical Military Imagery," 187–186; Hunt, "Ivan IV's Personal Mythology," 772, 786–787. Hunt notes that Wisdom iconography identified sacred "power" with combat and provided a paradigm of sacred violence that could be used to justify the tsar's military aggression.

⁵³ PSRL, XIII, part 2: 350. Cf. Revelation, 19: 11–16.

campaign who were portrayed as the chosen righteous surrounding the Heavenly Tsar. A member of Ivan IV's suite in the campaign, Prince P. I. Gorenskii, was directly referred to by the tsar as his "privy commander" (*blizhnii voevoda*). The tsar's confidence was also enjoyed by I. P. Yakovlev, F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev, Prince I. I. Pronskii, Prince A. P. Telyatevskii and other privy advisors.⁵⁴

As he prepared for the campaign against Polotsk, the tsar restored to his entourage counsellors who had earlier been removed from the Privy Council. In particular, the tsar once more established closer relations with Prince V. S. Serebryanyi. Prior to the start of the campaign, Prince V. S. Serebryanyi served as a military governor at Kholm; during the campaign, in his capacity as the military commander of the Great Regiment, he showed himself a talented military leader.⁵⁵ Tsar Simeon Kasaevich and Tsarevich Kaibula Akhkubekovich had similarly returned to Ivan IV's entourage by the end of 1562. Simeon held one of the highest positions in Ivan IV's suite. After the seizure of Polotsk, Simeon addressed Ivan IV with a salutation glorifying the victory of the Orthodox tsar. In his reply, Ivan declared his desire to avoid bloodshed and stressed that prior to the outbreak of the war he had on numerous occasions begun talks with the aim of securing peace with the Lithuanians. According to Ivan IV, Simeon was well aware of the Muscovite sovereign's reluctance to shed blood. The tsar thereby emphasised that Simeon was a member of his closest entourage and was kept informed of state business. The degree of Simeon's closeness to the tsar is testified by the fact that in his address Ivan referred to Simeon as his brother.⁵⁶ In spring 1563, Simeon Kasaevich and Kaibula Akhkubekovich were serving in the Right and Left Wing Regiments respectively during the march of Russian troops from Polotsk to Moscow. In the summer, the tsar put them in charge of Western Russia's fortified garrisons. Simeon went to Rzhev Vladimirov and Kaibula to Dorogobuzh.⁵⁷

Representatives of the Muscovite secretary rank continued to be present in the Privy Council in the period from 1562 to 1563. From the spring of 1562, A. Vasil'ev headed the royal archives and compiled a new inventory of its documents. From the autumn of 1562 onwards, Vasil'ev received the rank of counsellor secretary (*dumnyi d'yak*) and was charged with secret affairs relating to the diplomatic service. He also accompanied the

⁵⁴ See PSRL, XIII, part 2: 358; RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 109 and following.

⁵⁵ PSRL, XIII, part 2: 349, 358, 360; RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 105, 113, 110, 133–134.

⁵⁶ RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 133.

⁵⁷ See RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 137, 143, 145.

sovereign on the campaign to Polotsk.⁵⁸ At the camp near Polotsk in February 1563, Andrei Vasil'ev together with the main court commanders, the privy councillors I. P. Yakovlev and Prince P. I. Gorenskii received a Lithuanian delegation in the sovereign's tent. In 1563, Andrei Vasil'ev continued to carry out his duties as head of the Foreign Affairs Chancellery. The confidence the tsar had in Vasil'ev is shown by his constant presence at audiences given by the tsar to foreign envoys and his participation in the commissions negotiating a truce with the Poles.⁵⁹

From August 1562 until November 1563, I. M. Viskovatyi was with an embassy in Denmark. This expedition was the first independent journey overseas by the head of the Russian diplomatic service, and was a milestone in Muscovite diplomatic practice. Skrynnikov and Grala consider that Viskovatyi was dispatched to Denmark on some kind of formal pretext, with the aim of removing him from the Foreign Affairs Chancellery.⁶⁰ Grala has attempted to link the embassy to Denmark with the disgrace of the Princes Bel'skii and Glinskii, though Grala does not take into account the fact that the disgrace of Bel'skii and Glinskii occurred one year before the embassy. By the time Viskovatyi was sent off, Prince I. D. Bel'skii and Prince V. M. Glinskii had already returned to the Privy Council. In Grala's view, the repressive nature of the mission to Denmark is also confirmed by another fact: when Viskovatyi was assigned to the mission, he forfeited the post of secretary of the Foreign Affairs Chancellery. Perhaps, prior to the journey, Viskovatyi had simply received a higher post. Prior to the embassy to Denmark, he evidently went through a distinctive trial period as "keeper of the seal and secretary" (*pechatnik i d'yak*). This is how officials aiming for the post of keeper of the seal were generally known.⁶¹ When the embassy was being sent in August 1562, the tsar commanded Viskovatyi to be registered as the keeper of the seal (*pechatnik*), i.e., the sovereign officially granted him this post, which remained with Viskovatyi for life.

Finally, the rise in Viskovatyi's status is clearly demonstrated by certain rituals which he had to follow. In medieval political culture, a person's status was expressed through ritual behaviour, by means of conventional gestures. When they were dispatched to Denmark in 1562, Viskovatyi and his fellow travellers received the following instructions concerning diplomatic

⁵⁸ See *Sbornik RIO*, LXXI, 90–93; *RK 1475–1605*, II, part 2: 111; Shmidt, *Rossiiskoe gosudarstvo*, 35.

⁵⁹ *RK 1475–1605*, II, part 1: 131; *Sbornik RIO*, LXXI, 133, 209.

⁶⁰ See Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 176; Grala, Ivan, 249, 250, 259. Cf. Shmidt, *Rossiiskoe gosudarstvo*, 155, 160.

⁶¹ *RGADA*, F. 53, Op. 1, D. 1, ff. 286v., 387v.

ritual: (1) if the members of the embassy were met at the Danish court by “good [i.e., distinguished] people,” then all the members of the Russian delegation were supposed to raise their caps and shake hands; (2) if the meeting was with “middle-ranking people,” only Viskovatyi and the junior member of the embassy, Petr Sovin, were to remove their headwear; (3) while if the meeting was an ordinary one, without any pomp, then only Sovin was meant to take off his hat, and there was no need for anyone to shake hands.⁶² Thus, in some cases Viskovatyi was already entitled to remain with his head covered. Viskovatyi’s promotion after receiving the post of keeper of the seal was reflected in his ritual behaviour. Taken together with other testimonies on Viskovatyi’s position at the court, these instructions clearly show that this high-ranked official was anything but a mere *d’yak*, as Keenan seeks to present him.⁶³

After his return from Denmark in the autumn of 1563, I. M. Viskovatyi, still in his capacity as keeper of the seal, was once more drawn into diplomatic affairs. Consequently, in December, he took part in the reception of the Lithuanian envoys, Chodkiewicz and Wołłowicz. In the description of these talks, we also find reference to a new member of the Privy Council, a high-ranking court servitor (*yasel’nichii*), P. V. Zaitsev. He was “a member of a tribunal assisting the boyars” (*v sude u boyar*) in the Polotsk campaign and was a member of Ivan IV’s entourage. Zaitsev was also directly involved in the siege works, ordering the mounting of the siege machines.⁶⁴

In spring 1563, the diplomatic correspondence contains the names of the following privy councillors: Prince I. D. Bel’skii, Prince P. I. Shuiskii, D. R. Yur’ev, V. M. Yur’ev, I. P. Yakovlev and Prince I. I. Pronskii.⁶⁵ Besides these, the Privy Council also included Prince V. M. Glinskii and F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev, who received a courier delivering a letter from the Lithuanian magnates to the privy councillors, at the Russian camp near Polotsk.⁶⁶ Throughout 1563, the tsar continued to regard with favour the Princes I. F.

⁶² RGADA, F. 53, Op. 1, D. 1, ff. 286v., 300v., 387v. Cf. Grala, Ivan, 112.

⁶³ E. L. Keenan, review of Ivan Mikhailov Viskovatyi, by I. Grala. In *Russia Mediaevalis* IX (1997), no. 1: 158.

⁶⁴ RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, D. 10, f. 98; Sbornik RIO, LXXI, 196; RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 111, 119, 127. For more details about Zaitsev, see Kobrin, “Sostav oprichnogo dvora,” 38–39.

⁶⁵ Sbornik RIO, LXXI, 121–123, 140, 141, 147–149. Savva and Zimin included Prince I. D. Bel’skii, D. R. Yur’ev, V. M. Yur’ev and Prince I. I. Pronskii in the Privy Council of 1563 (Savva, *O Posol’skom prikaze*, 212; Zimin, “Sostav,” 81). Grobovsky added to these Prince P. I. Shuiskii (The “Chosen Council”, 121). The rise of Prince Shuiskii is linked to his victory at Livonia in September 1560 (PSRL, XIII, part 2: 323).

⁶⁶ Sbornik RIO, LXXI, 121. In the summer of 1563, F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev escorted to Beloozero the disgraced Princess Efrosinia, mother of the tsar’s nephew, Vladimir Staritskii, whom Ivan suspected of wanting to seize the throne (PSRL, XIII, part 2: 368).

Mstislavskii, V. S. Serebryanyi and A. P. Telyatevskii, giving them important positions of command in his army.⁶⁷

The composition of the Privy Council on the eve of the introduction of the Oprichnina is indicated by a boyars' decision of 29th February 1564, taken by the boyars, Prince I. D. Bel'skii, Prince I. F. Mstislavskii, Prince V. M. Glinskii, Prince V. S. Serebryanyi, Prince P. S. Serebryanyi, I. P. Fedorov, V. M. Yur'ev, I. P. Yakovlev, A. D. Basmanov, F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev, L. A. Saltykov; by the Treasurer N. A. Funikov; and by the counsellor dvoryane, Prince A. P. Telyatevskii, Prince P. I. Gorenskii, P. V. Zaitsev, I. S. Cheremisinov and Sh. V. Kobryakov.⁶⁸

Noteworthy amongst the privy councillors of that period is the appearance of individuals who, within a short time, were at the very centre of political events. The boyar, I. P. Fedorov, holder of the post of equerry (*konyushii*), held the highest place in the official hierarchy of the day. In the absence of the tsar, he was left the chief governor of Moscow with supreme judicial powers, and, furthermore, ran the Treasury and the tsar's chancellery. Another privy councillor, A. D. Basmanov, became one of the most prominent members of the Oprichnina in the second half of the 1560s.⁶⁹ For the Arms Bearer (*oruzhnicii*) Lev Andreevich Saltykov, who controlled everything at the sovereign's palace, 1564 was to prove his last successful year prior to his removal from the tsar's entourage.⁷⁰

On the eve of the Oprichnina, the counsellor dvoryane began to play a special role in the Privy Council.⁷¹ Many of them later became prominent oprichniki. The names of the privy dvoryane are recorded in the text of the decision in question. One of them, Prince P. I. Gorenskii, at one time held the post of *kravchii*, a high-ranking royal court servitor who ran the sovereign's household in collaboration with the majordomo. He was removed

⁶⁷ See RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 137, 144 (Mstislavskii); 115, 137 (Telyatevskii). Prince V. S. Serebryanyi was left in command in conquered Polotsk (*ibid.*, 135).

⁶⁸ RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, D. 10, ff. 369v.–370. See also Savva, *O Posol'skom prikaze*, 201. Zimin included the Princes I. D. Bel'skii, I. F. Mstislavskii and V. M. Glinskii in the Privy Council of 1564 (Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 90).

⁶⁹ For more details on Fedorov, see Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 276–283. The rise of the Basmanovs is investigated in detail in the works of V. B. Kobrin and R. G. Skrynnikov (see Kobrin, “Sostav,” 58–60; Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, index).

⁷⁰ See Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 150. After 1564, Saltykov, stripped of the rank of Arms Bearer, was sent as a military governor to the border towns of Polotsk and Smolensk (see Veselovskii, *Issledovaniya po istorii oprichniny*, 441; Kobrin, “Sostav,” 71, 72).

⁷¹ According to the chronicle, it was precisely the privy dvoryane who accompanied the tsar on his journey to Aleksandrovskaya Sloboda at the end of 1564 (PSRL, XIII, part 2: 391). This journey signified the beginning of the Oprichnina. It is known for certain that the tsar was accompanied by one of the privy dvoryane referred to in the February decision, P. V. Zaitsev (see Kobrin, “Sostav,” 38). It is evident that the tsar's retinue included other privy dvoryane who had taken the decision referred to (except the disgraced Prince P. I. Gorenskii).

from the tsar's entourage in the autumn of 1564 and was executed several months later for attempting to flee to Lithuania.⁷² Another privy dvoryanin, I. S. Cheremisinov, being an accomplished diplomat and military commander, was with the tsar as early as the time of the Polotsk campaign and held key talks with the besieged.⁷³

In comparison with the remaining members of the Privy Council, Shiryai Vasil'evich Kobyakov was a less colourful figure, although long and conscientious service allowed him to enter the chosen circle of the tsar's counsellors. Significantly, his kinsmen were at one time privy boyars of the Grand Prince Ivan Ivanovich of Ryazan'.⁷⁴ In the period between 1552 and 1555, Sh. Kobyakov, as a syn boyarskii, collected tribute from the tribes living in the middle section of the Volga and took part in a successful raid by a Russian detachment on a transport of Crimean Tartars. In 1554, he took part in the Astrakhan' campaign in the Great Regiment under the Master of the Bedchamber and member of the Privy Council, I. M. Veshnyakov. In the second half of the 1550s, Kobyakov is also frequently mentioned in the military service registers amongst the minor leaders of the Great Regiment in the Muscovite army.⁷⁵ Most probably, Sh. V. Kobyakov attracted the attention of the tsar in 1558, when the latter presented Kobyakov with a gold coin for his role in the raid against the Crimean Tartars near Perekop.⁷⁶ During the Polotsk campaign in the winter of 1562/63 we already see Sh. V. Kobyakov in the tsar's entourage together with other courtiers. The apogee of his career was to be the year 1564, when, as a counsellor dvoryanin, he took part in a session of the Privy Council on an equal footing with the tsar's other counsellors, although after this period, Shiryai Kobyakov left Ivan IV's Privy Council for good.

After the successful Polotsk campaign, the tsar brought back to the Privy Council Prince V. S. Serebryanyi, who had distinguished himself during that campaign. He then was joined in the council by his brother Petr, and also by the Treasurer N. A. Funikov. In the summer of 1564, the privy councillors who were absent from the February council meeting, including Tsar

⁷² For more about P. I. Gorenskii, see Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 88, 138; idem, "O sostave dvortsovykh uchrezhdenii Russkogo gosudarstva kontsa XV–XVI v." *IZ* 63 (Moscow, 1958), 196.

⁷³ See RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 119 and following; Kobrin, "Sostav," 84–85; Buganov, "Vzyatie," 213–224.

⁷⁴ ASEI 3, nos. 377, 394. See Nosov, *Stanovlenie*, 428, 452.

⁷⁵ RK 1475–1598, 144, 161, 179, 187; PSRL, XX, part 2: 539, 561.

⁷⁶ PSRL, XIII, part 1: 296. For more on this military operation, see Skrynnikov, *Nachalo*, 134. Kobyakov was sent to the army in the field along with Prince D. I. Vishnevetskii in December 1557, and after Vishnevetskii was recalled to Moscow, Kobyakov remained behind at the Dniepr as the commander-in-chief of the army (PSRL, XX, part 2: 588, 595).

Simeon Kasaevich, Tsarevich Kaibula, and Prince I. I. Pronskii, participated in the great campaign against the Lithuanians. In the autumn Tsar Simeon, Prince I. I. Pronskii and Prince V. S. Serebryanyi sent the tsar a letter about the taking of the Ozerishche fortress. In the Ozerishche campaign, Tsar Simeon was appointed “without status” (*bez mest*), i.e., without taking into consideration precedence. It will be shown later that the rules of precedence were often ignored amongst the members of the Privy Council.⁷⁷

Prior to the very start of the Oprichnina, the tsar continued to trust the head of the foreign office, the secretary Andrei Vasil'ev, which is confirmed by a letter from the Nogai prince sent to Vasil'ev in the autumn of 1564. Addressing the secretary, the Nogai Prince, Tinekhmat, emphasised: “Your white sovereign considers you a good man” (*ty u svoego belogo gosudarya v dobrykh esi*). In 1564, Vasil'ev continued to be entrusted with the secret affairs of foreign policy.⁷⁸ In 1564, responsible diplomatic missions were carried out by the Keeper of the Seal, I. M. Viskovatyi, who was also a member of Ivan IV's Privy Council. Together with the other privy councillors, F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev and A. Vasil'ev, Viskovatyi concluded a treaty with the Swedes and also participated in the reception of Danish ambassadors.⁷⁹

The year of 1564 saw the departure from the Privy Council of the boyars D. R. Yur'ev and Prince V. M. Glinskii, both of whom died, and of Prince P. I. Shuiskii, who perished at the battle on the River Ula.⁸⁰ In the spring of the same year, the boyar I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi also fell into extreme disfavour. Thus it was that on the eve of the introduction of the Oprichnina, the Privy Council was composed of two Tartar princes, twelve privy boyars, five counsellor *dvoryane*, the treasurer, the keeper of the seal and the counsellor secretary. The future leaders of the Oprichnina were also to be found amongst the privy councillors.⁸¹

⁷⁷ See RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 158, 161–163, 170; PSRL, XIII, part 2: 391.

⁷⁸ RGADA, F. 127, Op. 1, D. 7, ff. 7, 7v.; *Prodolzhenie DRV* XI, 77–78; RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, D. 11, f. 13. The term “white sovereign” obviously had a directional meaning (white = west). See Ostrowski, *Muscovy*, 182.

⁷⁹ See V. I. Gal'tsov, comp., *Opis' arkhiva Posol'skogo prikaza 1626 g.*, ed. S. O. Shmidt. 1 (Moscow, 1977), 247; RGADA, F. 53, Op. 1, D. 1, f. 407.

⁸⁰ See RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 200 – a record of D. R. Yur'ev's death, dated in that very year, 1564, as Skrynnikov has shown (*Tsarstvo*, 205). Nevertheless, the date of D. R. Yur'ev's decease is ultimately unclear (cf. Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 227). Prince V. M. Glinskii died a respected man before August 1564, when the tsar made an endowment in his honour to the Holy Trinity – St. Sergius Monastery. See *Vkladnaya kniga Troitse-Sergieva monastyrya* (Moscow, 1987), 50. For more about Prince P. I. Shuiskii, see Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 108.

⁸¹ Filyushkin contends that 1564 saw the most dramatic changes in the immediate entourage of Ivan IV in the period between 1546 and 1564 (Filyushkin, *Istoriya*, 194, 201, 202). Filyushkin's assertion is unconvincing since it is based on a limited number of sources. In particular, he does not take into consideration the council judgement of 29th February 1564.

Outwardly, the Oprichnina expressed itself in the splitting up of state territory, administration and the Sovereign's Court into two sections. The first of these, the Zemshchina, remained formally under national jurisdiction, while the other, the Oprichnina (from the Old Russian word *oprich*, meaning "separate," "beside"), was transformed into the tsar's personal domain. The division of the state was accompanied by social demagoguery, collective accusations of treachery against the tsar, and mass terror. However, the division of the state should not be interpreted literally in accordance with 16th-century sources. In reality, the Oprichnina and Zemshchina were closely linked by a host of family and service ties. Furthermore, it is clear that during the Oprichnina years, the tsar remained the supreme ruler throughout the realm.

Though from 1564 onwards, many governmental bodies were divided into the Zemshchina and the Oprichnina, the Privy Council, like some chancelleries, probably escaped splitting of this kind.⁸² The diplomatic records preserved an official description of those people who had enjoyed Ivan IV's favour during the Oprichnina. In 1566, the tsar's entourage was presented to foreigners as follows: "Our sovereign does not have any kind of Oprichnina [...]. Those courtiers who serve the sovereign truthfully live close to the sovereign and those who have committed an offence live further away from the sovereign."⁸³ A similar description can be found in a diplomatic document written three years later: "Whomever the sovereign allows to live near him, lives near him, and whomever the sovereign does not allow to live near him, lives far away; wherever the sovereign allows a person to live, that is where he lives: all people are below God and the sovereign."⁸⁴ Thus, faithful service ensured that a courtier had access to those who were privy to the person of the sovereign, and its embodiment, the Privy Council, and the existence of the Oprichnina did not have a noticeable effect on the principles whereby the council was formed. It is important to note that the quotations referred to are taken from orders to Russian diplomats. Orders of this kind were prepared under the personal control of the tsar, and they therefore reflected Ivan IV's personal view about his privy entourage. P. A. Sadikov has correctly pointed out that such

⁸² Following in Klyuchevskii's footsteps, Camphausen suggests that the functions of the Privy Council were carried out by the Oprichnina Boyar Duma (Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 49). Klyuchevskii's ideas about the connection between the Oprichnina and the Privy Council are of the utmost importance, yet they are in need of some closer definition. For more on connections between the Oprichnina and the Privy Council, see Chapter IV.

⁸³ *Sbornik RIO*, LXXI, 331.

⁸⁴ *Sbornik RIO*, LXXI, 593.

descriptions constitute the “official government view on the Oprichnina.”⁸⁵ The twentieth-century researcher must not consider that the said documents were simply a naive trick of medieval diplomacy. Of course, we cannot entirely trust these records and deny the existence of the Oprichnina as such. Nevertheless, the quoted fragments clearly demonstrate that Ivan IV himself understood the principles whereby his privy counsellors were selected. The main principle was not formal membership of a class or rank but personal allegiance to the tsar. The Blizhnyaya Duma was Ivan IV’s personal council and its composition depended entirely on the sovereign’s preferences. In that case, Ivan had no need to create any additional councils.

The decree on the establishment of the Oprichnina states that the Zemshchina boyars had to consult with the tsar on the most important military and state issues. The management of such affairs was ultimately decided by the tsar and the boyars; the decree nowhere noted that they were specifically Zemshchina or Oprichnina boyars.⁸⁶ Extant documents show that in the administrative sphere the Zemshchina and Oprichnina counsellors often worked closely with each other. The members of the Privy Council from the Zemshchina were actively involved in diplomatic talks with foreign delegations.⁸⁷ Diplomatic correspondence during the Oprichnina years often referred to the oprichnik V. M. Yur’ev, who was well known abroad as the close relative of the Tsarina Anastasia.⁸⁸ The Zemshchina and Oprichnina privy counsellors were involved together in receiving foreign ambassadors; people close to the Oprichnina were present at the “state assembly” (*zemskii sobor*) in 1566, while privy secretaries from the Zemshchina had the opportunity to visit the sovereign in his Oprichnina palace. The boyars’ decision, taken jointly by Zemshchina and Oprichnina members of the Privy Council in 1570 (when the Oprichnina had not yet been abolished), has been preserved.

Of course, all the work of the Zemshchina and Oprichnina counsellors proceeded under the personal control of Ivan IV. This is evidenced by the correspondence between the tsar and his boyars during his absence from the capital. The sovereign demanded an account of everything, sometimes about the most insignificant matters. He even sought to coordinate the

⁸⁵ P. A. Sadikov, *Ocherki po istorii oprichniny* (Moscow, Leningrad, 1950), 67, 68.

⁸⁶ PSRL, XIII, part 2: 395.

⁸⁷ This information can be found in V. I. Savva’s work (*O Posol’skom prikaze*, 212–215).

⁸⁸ I agree with Zimin’s view on V. M. Yur’ev’s involvement in the Oprichnina (Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 197–198; cf. Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 268).

activity of the Zemshchina and Oprichnina administrations. Thus it was that at the end of 1569, the tsar actively discussed with his counsellors the impending exchange of prisoners between Russia and Poland and the arrangements for receiving ambassadors. The official documents on these matters were dispatched from the tsar's field office to the Zemshchina boyars and heads of the Oprichnina administration.⁸⁹

Ivan IV's endeavour to intervene in all administrative matters was caused by his diseased suspiciousness. According to A. Schlichting, a German in the service of the Russian tsar, Ivan IV specifically appointed two people to each post as he did not trust one man in office. The diplomatic records confirm Schlichting's statement. It is a fact that during diplomatic ceremonies the same functions were sometimes carried out simultaneously by secretaries from the Zemshchina and the Oprichnina, and diplomats sent to embassies abroad came from both the Oprichnina and the Zemshchina.⁹⁰ Given such suspiciousness, Ivan could not allow the existence of several councils at his court.

Generally speaking, the idea of the close interaction between the Oprichnina and Zemshchina has already been expressed by authors in the field. S. F. Platonov has written that in the period of the Oprichnina "while there was a unity of offices, there existed a dual service staff," that of the Zemshchina and that of the Oprichnina.⁹¹ To a certain extent, these words are applicable to the Privy Council, which included both Zemshchina and Oprichnina counsellors. Of course, the relationship between the Zemshchina and Oprichnina structures was far from harmonious. The issue of the integrity of the Privy Council ought not to be confused with the problem of the influence of the Oprichnina and Zemshchina counsellors on the sovereign in the period of the Oprichnina. There can be no doubt that the members of the Oprichnina at this time enjoyed considerable preference. As Heinrich von Staden states, all the documents signed in the Oprichnina were unquestioningly accepted for execution by the Zemshchina officials.⁹²

⁸⁹ RGADA, F. 79, Op. 1, D. 2 (1569), f. 9.

⁹⁰ H. F. Graham, "A Brief Account of the Character and Brutal Rule of Vasil'evich, Tyrant of Muscovy: Albert Schlichting on Ivan Grozny," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* IX (1975), no. 2: 268; *Sbornik RIO*, LXXI, 395, 406; A. A. Zimin, "Preobrazovanie tsentral'nogo gosudarstvennogo apparata v gody oprichniny," *Istoricheskie nauki. Nauchnye doklady vysshei shkoly* 4 (1961): 124–125.

⁹¹ S. F. Platonov, *Ocherki po istorii Smuty v Moskovskom gosudarstve XVI–XVII vv.* (Moscow, 1937), 177.

⁹² Heinrich von Staden, *The Land and Government of Muscovy: A Sixteenth-Century Account*, ed. and trans. Th. Esper (Stanford, 1967), 49.

Plate 11. The structure of the supreme power in Muscovy in the Oprichnina period (1564-1572)

On the other hand, the tsar held the Zemshchina boyars, Prince I. D. Bel'skii and Prince I. F. Mstislavskii, in very high esteem. Ivan regarded himself and these boyars as the three pillars upon which stood the entire state. Prince I. D. Bel'skii and later Prince I. F. Mstislavskii held the highest post in the council, that of prime counsellor (*pervosovetnik*). According to English sources, the prime counsellor or the great boyar possessed exclusive access to the tsar and proclaimed the final decision in the council.⁹³ Thus, during the Oprichnina, Ivan IV trusted certain people regardless of whether they belonged to the Zemshchina or the Oprichnina.

In May 1565, the Privy Council consisted of the boyars Prince I. D. Bel'skii, Prince I. F. Mstislavskii, Prince I. I. Pronskii, I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi, I. P. Fedorov, N. R. Yur'ev, V. M. Yur'ev, the Treasurer N. A. Funi-

⁹³ Graham, "A Brief Account," 225-227; Maksimovich, "Pervosovetnik," 149, 150; M. S. Arel, "The Lawes of Russia Written: An English Manuscript on Muscovy at the End of the Sixteenth Century," *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, n. s., 23 (1990): 26.

kov and the Keeper of the Seal I. M. Viskovatyi. V. M. Yur'ev was absent from the session due to illness.⁹⁴ In 1565, the leading privy counsellors of the Oprichnina, A. D. Basmanov, P. V. Zaitsev and Prince A. I. Vyazemskii carried out a recruitment of service people into the Oprichnina court.⁹⁵ Like many other counsellors, the last of these, Afanasii Ivanovich Vyazemskii, saw a rise in status after the Polotsk campaign. Hardly anyone could compare with him as regards his influence on the tsar in the second half of the 1560s. A. Schlichting called Prince A. I. Vyazemskii the tyrant's closest advisor, and Ivan IV himself referred to this Prince as his "privy man."⁹⁶ A member of the Oprichnina and privy councillor, Prince A. P. Telyatevskii, was repeatedly appointed commander-in-chief in the regiments in 1565.⁹⁷

Despite the establishment of the Oprichnina, the privy councillors from the Zemshchina, I. P. Yakovlev, the Princes V. S. and P. S. Serebryanyi continued throughout 1565 to receive high command posts during military campaigns. Prince V. S. Serebryanyi was even granted a military decoration by the tsar for his successful military actions against the Lithuanians. This means that Serebryanyi's position at the court had not altered in 1565, although he had been stripped of the written guarantee of loyal service.⁹⁸ The Tartar aristocrats from the Privy Council, Tsar Simeon and Tsarevich Kaibula, were also placed in command of military formations.⁹⁹ The privy secretary, Andrei Vasil'ev, was commissioned by the tsar to proclaim the appeal sent from the Oprichnina residence, in which Ivan explained to the Muscovites the reasons why he had departed from the capital. As a privy person, Vasil'ev had access to Ivan IV's Oprichnina residence in the Aleksandrovskaia Sloboda, where he took part in receiving the Crimean ambassadors.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ RGADA, F. 127, Op. 1, D. 7, ff. 70, 70v. Zimin also considered these people to have been members of the Privy Council (Zimin, "Sostav," 81). Cf. Savva, *O Posol'skom prikaze*, 201. The names of Prince I. D. Bel'skii, I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi and N. R. Yur'ev are mentioned in the diplomatic correspondence in the summer of 1565 (Sbornik RIO, LXXI, 308, 310).

⁹⁵ M. G. Roginskii, "Poslaniya Ioganna Taube i Elerta Kruze," *Russkii istoricheskii zhurnal* 8 (1922): 35.

⁹⁶ Graham, "A Brief Account," 239; Sbornik RIO, XXXVIII, 109. For more on Vyazemskii, see Kobrin, "Sostav," 32–33.

⁹⁷ See Kobrin, "Sostav," 76.

⁹⁸ RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 181, 183, 192, 195, 196. See also Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 151.

⁹⁹ RK 1475–1605, II, part 2: 191, 192, 199. Thus it was that, right up until his death, Simeon Kasaevich constantly enjoyed the favour and trust of Ivan IV. Simeon died in August 1565 (PSRL, XIII, part 1: 170). On Simeon's widow, see S. Z. Chernov, "The Kutuzovs and Their Land Possessions in Volok Lamsky in the 15th–16th c.," *HG* 4 (1994): 55; Kashtanov, *Ocherki russkoi diplomatiki*, 226.

¹⁰⁰ PSRL, XIII, part 2: 392; RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, D. 11, f. 310v.

The following people were removed from the Privy Council in 1565. The future oprichnik F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev was posted as the second military governor to Smolensk, which leads one to suspect that his relationship with the tsar had grown somewhat colder. It is also possible that at the beginning of the Oprichnina the tsar dismissed I. S. Cheremisinov. He even forfeited his estates in the Suzdal' district.¹⁰¹ In the winter and spring of 1565, the boyar I. P. Yakovlev was in disfavour, while M. Ya. Morozov, removed from the court as early as 1562, acted as before as military governor in far-flung border fortresses.¹⁰²

In 1566, Ivan IV made an attempt to be reconciled with various sections of society. The tsar had to obtain approval for the continuation of the Livonian War, and so he undertook a whole series of demonstrative steps to show his intentions to restore stability in his realm.

Consequently, some prominent representatives of the elite were brought back from exile. To deliberate on the issue of the war, the tsar summoned a broad meeting in Moscow. This meeting, known in historiography as the state assembly (*zemskaia sobor*), comprised prominent members of the Sovereign's Court, people from the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the townspeople, and rank and file servitors. In particular, many of the privy councillors attended the state assembly.

The composition of the Privy Council in 1566 can be reconstructed mainly on the basis of a boyar's decision made in June. This decision was made by the following boyars: Prince I. D. Bel'skii, Prince I. F. Mstislavskii, I. P. Fedorov, N. R. Yur'ev, Prince I. I. Pronskii, I. V. Sheremetev-Men'shoi, Prince V. S. Serebryanyi, Prince M. I. Vorotynskii, I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi, M. Ya. Morozov, I. P. Yakovlev and I. M. Vorontsov.¹⁰³ All these privy boyars attended sessions of the 1566 state assembly. Thus it was that in an attempt to reach a compromise between the various groups and factions at the court, the tsar brought back to the Privy Council people who had long since been removed from his entourage, M. Ya. Morozov, I. M. Vorontsov, and Prince M. I. Vorotynskii.

In 1566, several of the privy councillors, the boyar V. M. Yur'ev, Prince A. I. Vyazemskii, the dvoryanin from the Privy Council P. V. Zaitsev and the secretary Andrei Vasil'ev held important talks with a Polish delegation.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 177 (F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev); Kobrin, "Sostav," 85 (I. S. Cheremisinov).

¹⁰² See Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 150–151 (I. P. Yakovlev); RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 173 (M. Ya. Morozov – military governor in Yur'ev, Livonia).

¹⁰³ *Sbornik RIO*, LXXI, 380. See also Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 196.

¹⁰⁴ *Sbornik RIO*, LXXI, 354–421.

Characteristically, both Zemshchina and Oprichnina counsellors worked on this commission for negotiations on a truce. Other members of the Privy Council well acquainted with foreign policy, the Treasurer N. A. Funikov and the Keeper of the Seal I. M. Viskovatyi, were admitted to the state assembly of 1566. As an expert diplomat, the latter was even granted the right to express his own opinion on the issue of continuing the Livonian War. The privy counsellor Prince P. S. Serebryanyi was absent from the State Assembly, having been appointed to the responsible post of commander-in-chief to the army in the field near Smolensk. In the same year, Ivan IV re-established warmer relations with F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev, with the intention of sending him on a diplomatic mission to Poland, although subsequent events will reveal that the tsar never learnt to fully trust Umnoi-Kolychev.¹⁰⁵

The tsar's closest councillors in 1567, Prince I. D. Bel'skii, I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi, N. R. Yur'ev, N. A. Funikov, and I. M. Viskovatyi, are mentioned in the decision made in November. Savva has justly surmised that the secretary Andrei Vasil'ev also took part in this session.¹⁰⁶ Meanwhile, the remaining members of the Privy Council were to be found in the army alongside the tsar, who was planning a large campaign to Livonia. However, a meeting between the tsar and his counsellors was held on 12th November at Rshanoi Yam, where it was decided to postpone the planned campaign owing to serious mistakes in organising it. A decision (prigovor) confirming this conclusion was taken by the boyars Prince I. F. Mstislavskii, Prince I. I. Pronskii, I. V. Sheremetev-Men'shoi, I. P. Yakovlev, L. A. Saltykov, Prince P. S. Serebryanyi and M. I. Voronoi-Volynskii.¹⁰⁷

And so, the make-up of the privy boyars had not undergone any significant changes whatsoever in 1567. Worthy of note is the return of L. A. Saltykov, who was referred to as a "very privy counsellor" of Ivan IV by the German adventurers Taube and Kruze. In the summer of 1567 he won the precedence dispute with Prince A. I. Tatev, which clearly indicates Saltykov's improved standing in the tsar's entourage.¹⁰⁸ A new man amongst the privy councillors was M. I. Voronoi, the former head of the Kazan' Chancellery (Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa). The Volynskii family

¹⁰⁵ See RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 209; Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 198; Grala, Ivan, 298.

¹⁰⁶ RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, D. 13, ff. 65v., 66; Savva, *O Posol'skom prikaze*, 203. On the activity of the secretary Vasil'ev in 1567, see also *Sbornik RIO*, LXXI, 555.

¹⁰⁷ *Sbornik RIO*, LXXI, 563. In summer 1567, Prince P. S. Serebryanyi attended a court examination carried out by the tsar. See *Akty, otnosyashchiesya do yuridicheskogo byta Drevnei Rusi*, I, no. 52-VIII, cols. 234, 235.

¹⁰⁸ Roginskii, "Poslaniya Ioganna Taube i Elerta Kruze," 54; RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 213, 214.

were in the tsar's entourage up until 1568 during the Oprichnina years.¹⁰⁹

Having returned to the Privy Council in 1567, the boyar M. Ya. Morozov was charged with a responsible task, in conjunction with the secret family affairs of the tsar. He had to meet at the Swedish border Katarzyna Jagiellonka, who was to be taken from Sweden in order to marry Ivan IV.¹¹⁰ Other privy councillors, Prince M. I. Vorotynskii, Prince V. S. Serebryanyi and Prince A. P. Telyatevskii were given important posts in the tsar's army in 1567.¹¹¹

The last reference in the military service registers to Tsarevich Kaibula dates back to the same year. Evidently, he retired from army service due to his advanced age, but he governed the town of Yur'ev, granted him as early as the 1550s, right up until his death in 1570.¹¹² After the death of the tsarevich, his place in the Privy Council was inherited by his son Mikhail (see below). On the whole, the stormy events of the 1560s did not have any noticeable effect on the position of Kaibula at Ivan IV's court. Occupying a fairly modest position amongst the Tartar nobility, he won the approval of the tsar as a representative of the old Astrakhan' khanate dynasty at the Sovereign's Court. Kaibula's ascent was facilitated by the military prowess he displayed during battles with the enemies of the Russian tsar.

In February 1567, the privy oprichniki, A. D. Basmanov and Prince A. I. Vyazemskii, concluded a treaty with the Swedish ambassadors in the Aleksandrovskaia Sloboda. In the autumn, Prince A. I. Vyazemskii and P. V. Zaitsev were appointed court commanders during the Lithuanian campaign.¹¹³ During 1567, two of the privy councillors were stationed in an embassy abroad, I. M. Vorontsov in Sweden, F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev in Lithuania, while the boyar I. P. Fedorov was at that time in disfavour. That year saw the death of the privy boyar V. M. Yur'ev.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ See Veselovskii, *Issledovaniya po istorii oprichniny*, 287; Shmidt, *Rossiiskoe gosudarstvo*, 69; Nosov, *Stanovlenie*, 441, 482; R. G. Skrynnikov, *Oprichnyi terror* (Leningrad, 1969), 49.

¹¹⁰ PSRL, XIII, part 2: 407. See also the letter sent by M. Ya. Morozov from Oreshek to the Swedish governor in Vyborg with the demand to speed up the arrival of Katarzyna Jagiellonka from Sweden (Riksarkivet, Stockholm. *Muscovitica*, 8. *Kopieböcker och avskriftssamlingar. Förhandlingar mellan Sverige och Ryssland, 1526–1567*). I would like to express my gratitude to Jaakko Lehtovirta who provided me with a copy of this document. See also J. Lehtovirta, "Maasta on pitkä matka taivaaseen." *Henkilökohtaiset konfliktit ja Iivana IV:n ylemmysvaatimus Ruotsin-diplomatiassa*, Faravid. *Acta Societatis Historicae Finlandiae Septentrionalis* 18–19 (Rovaniemi, 1996), 105–131.

¹¹¹ RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 211 (Vorotynskii); *Razryadnaya kniga 1550–1636 gg.* (hereafter RK 1550–1636), I (Moscow, 1975), 157 (Serebryanyi), 163 (Telyatevskii).

¹¹² RK 1475–1605, II, part 1: 218; *Puteshestviya russkikh poslov XVI–XVII vv.*, ed. D. S. Likhachev (Moscow, Leningrad, 1954), 77.

¹¹³ See *Opisi tsarskogo arkhiva XVI v. i arkhiva Posol'skogo prikaza 1614 g.*, ed. S. O. Shmidt (Moscow, 1960), 121; RK 1550–1636, I, 162.

¹¹⁴ See Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 432.

In January 1568, the heads of the Privy Council, Prince I. F. Mstislavskii, Prince I. I. Pronskii, P. S. Serebryanyi and others, were in Moscow, where they were conferring over “matters of state” (*zemskie dela*) with the tsar.¹¹⁵ In May 1568, the Privy Council submitted a decision on “Lithuanian affairs,” which was taken by the boyars Prince I. D. Bel’skii, Prince I. F. Mstislavskii, N. R. Yur’ev, M. Ya. Morozov, I. V. Sheremetev-Bol’shoi, I. P. Yakovlev, the Treasurer N. A. Funikov, the Keeper of the Seal M. I. Viskovatyi and the secretaries P. Mikhailov, A. Vasil’ev, A. Ya. Shchelkalov and V. Ya. Shchelkalov.¹¹⁶ A distinctive feature of the make-up of the Privy Council in 1568 was the increase in the number of privy secretaries, due to the general tendency towards a growth in the role of secretaries in state affairs during the second half of the 16th century.¹¹⁷ The first secretary recorded in the decision is Putila Mikhailov. As early as the start of the Oprichnina, Mikhailov, together with another privy secretary, A. Vasil’ev, proclaimed an appeal from the tsar to the people. From 1555 to 1567, P. Mikhailov headed the Service Land Chancellery (*Pomestnyi prikaz*), an important body engaged in distributing plots of land amongst the service people. For a long time, Putila collaborated closely with the Treasurer N. A. Funikov, who was a member of the Privy Council.¹¹⁸ In 1569, Putila Mikhailov transferred to the Oprichnina, where he held the post of Oprichnina Treasurer.¹¹⁹ Ivan IV’s decision to include Mikhailov in the Oprichnina bears witness to the par-

¹¹⁵ See V. I. Koretskii, “*Politicheskaya bor’ba i soslovnye uchrezhdeniya vremeni oprichniny.*” In *Feodalizm v Rossii* (Moscow, 1987), 230, 231.

¹¹⁶ *Sbornik RIO*, LXXI, 564–565.

¹¹⁷ See S. O. Shmidt, “O d’yachestve v Rossii v seredine XVI v.” In *Problemy obshchestvenno-politicheskoi istorii Rossii i slavyanskikh stran* (Moscow, 1963), 181–190. The increasing influence of the counsellor secretaries in the political arena is shown by the fact that from the 1560s onwards they began their own diplomatic correspondence (for more details, see Bogatyrev, “Gramoty,” 25).

¹¹⁸ See PSRL, XIII, part 2: 392; RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, D. 11, f. 305v.; Savva, O Posol’skom prikaze, 328; S. B. Veselovskii, *D’yaki i pod’yachie XV–XVII vv.* (Moscow, 1975), 233–234. Administrator of the extensive lands along the Northern Dvina river from the mid-1550s, Putila already had at that time the right to make personal reports to the tsar. See AAE, I (St. Petersburg, 1836), nos. 250, 273.

¹¹⁹ For more details, see Bogatyrev, “Putila Mikhailov: pomestnyi d’yak i oprichnyi kaznachei.” In *Realizm istoricheskogo myshleniya. Chteniya, posvyashchennye pamyati A. L. Stanislavskogo* (Moscow, 1991), 38–39. The sources show a close connection between Mikhailov and the Monastery of Our Saviour at Yaroslavl’. Iona, the monastery’s archimandrite at the beginning of the 16th century was probably Putila’s grandfather. See Veselovskii, *D’yaki i pod’yachie*, 334; *Istoricheskie akty Yaroslavskogo Spasskogo monastyr’a. Dopolneniya*, ed. I. A. Vakhromeev (Moscow, 1896), 17, 18, 26, 31, 34, 35. It is evident that Putila entered the Oprichnina together with the Yaroslavl’ district, from where he hailed. On the inclusion of Yaroslavl’ in the Oprichnina, see Yu. V. Ankhimiyuk, “Zapisi letopisnogo kharaktera v rukopisnom sbornike Kirillo-Belozerskogo sobraniya – novyi istochnik po istorii oprichniny,” *Arkhiv russkoi istorii* 2 (1992): 121–129. On Putila’s land estates in Moscow, Vyaz’ma and Ruza provinces, see Likhachev, *Razryadnye d’yaki*, 263; Kobrin, “Sostav,” 62; S. N. Kisterev, L. A. Timoshina, comps., *Ruzskii uезд po pistsovoi knige 1567–1569 godov* (Moscow, 1997), 163.

ticular trust this official enjoyed in the eyes of the tsar, since the treasurer played a far greater role in the Oprichnina than in the Zemshchina.¹²⁰

The 1560s saw the start of the rapid rise of the Shchelkalov secretaries, who are also mentioned in the decision taken in January. Unlike P. Mikhailov, who fled the intrigues behind the scenes, the Shchelkalovs stood at the head of an entire group of courtiers. This group brought together Shchelkalovs' relatives the Sukins, and also the Klobukovs, Godunovs, and the oprichniki Prince V. I. Temkin and M. L. Skuratov.¹²¹ The alignment of opposing forces in 1568 has been precisely described by the Polish historian I. Grala. The Shchelkalov brothers had very strained relations with the "godfather" of the Oprichnina, Prince M. T. Cherkasskii – the latter even sought to slander V. Ya. Shchelkalov with the aid of one of the clerks.¹²² On the whole, the efforts of the Shchelkalov faction were directed against the old members of the Privy Council – the Treasurer N. A. Funikov, the Keeper of the Seal I. M. Viskovatyi, the oprichniki Prince A. I. Vyazemskii, the Basmanovs, and Prince M. T. Cherkasskii. These old members of the council spoke out in favour of limiting the policy of terror. One of the early manifestations of this conflict was the suit for "dishonour" brought by V. Ya. Shchelkalov and Prince V. I. Temkin against the Keeper of the Seal I. M. Viskovatyi. As Grala points out, the extant materials concerning this case should be dated back to 1567/68, i.e. precisely the period when the Shchelkalovs first appeared at the Privy Council. It is no coincidence that it was precisely 1568 that saw a decline in Viskovatyi's diplomatic activity.¹²³

Grala also lists the influential boyars the Zakhar'ins and Sheremetevs among the opponents of the Shchelkalov secretaries. In my opinion, they all belonged to the same faction. The close friendship between the Shchelkalovs and the Sheremetevs is directly referred to in the sources. In particular, the boyar I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi was a close friend of Shchelkalov.¹²⁴ As to

¹²⁰ See Sadikov, Ocherki, 83.

¹²¹ Andrei Shchelkalov was married to U. I. Sukina, the sister of the influential official F. I. Sukin (Likhachev, Razryadnye d'yaki, 214). Andrei's brother Vasilii married Anastasia Ermolaevna Likhareva, the progeny of a clan of dvoryane from Kashira. For more on the family ties of the Shchelkalovs, see my work "The Clan of the Diaks Shchelkalov," HG 5 (1996): 60–70. An extensive record of the Shchelkalov clan is contained in the memorial register (sinodik) of the Monastery of Valaam. Ortodoksinen kirkkomuseo (Kuopio, Finland), MSS, no. 67 (4/41), f. 10v.–11.

¹²² See Pistsove knigi Moskovskogo gosudarstva. Pistsove knigi XVI v., ed. N. V. Kalachov, I (St. Petersburg, 1872), part 1: 381; AAE, I, no. 280.

¹²³ See AI, I, no. 180: 341–343; Grala, Ivan, 305; idem, "Padenie moskovskogo kantslera." In Realizm istoricheskogo myshleniya, 62–63; Cherkasova, Zemlevladienie, 146. Cf. Kobrin, "Sostav," 77. The documents on the suit refer to V. Ya. Shchelkalov as a "senior secretary" (vvedennyi d'yak), i.e., a secretary from the Privy Council.

¹²⁴ Likhachev, Razryadnye d'yaki, 205.

the Zakhar'ins, from the 1540s until the accession of the Romanovs in 1613, this clan acted as patrons to the Shchelkalovs. The supporters and close relatives of the Shchelkalovs, the well-known court intriguers the Sukins, were also related to the Zakhar'ins.¹²⁵ And so in 1568, the Sheremetevs and the Yur'evs belonged to the Shchelkalov group.

Worthy of particular note is the fact that the confrontation between the two factions in the Muscovite elite at the turn of the 1560s and 1570s began with the struggle by the privy secretaries, the Shchelkalovs and Viskovatyi. It was the Privy Council which was to become the forum for clashes. This is quite natural, insofar as the Privy Council, while uniting the cream of the tsar's court, did not possess a strict official and rank hierarchy of the kind to be found in the chancelleries and the Sovereign's Court.¹²⁶

The decision of May 1568 thus reflects the composition of Ivan IV's Privy Council at a time when the council was encompassed by a fierce political conflict. In the summer of 1568, privy councillors, including the boyars Prince I. I. Pronskii, M. I. Voronoi-Volynskii and I. V. Sheremetev-Men'shoi were in command of the army stationed at Vyaz'ma.¹²⁷ Taking part in the court battle on the side of the Shchelkalovs' faction, the Sheremetev boyars felt quite at ease financially at the end of the 1560s. This is witnessed by the feverish acquisition of land properties undertaken by the Sheremetevs in that period. Yet as early as 1568/69, the eldest of the Sheremetev brothers, Ivan Vasil'evich Bol'shoi, was considering taking monastic vows. The reason for such intentions was his deteriorating health.¹²⁸

In July 1568, the chief privy oprichnik Prince A. I. Vyazemskii headed the punitive detachment sent to confront the supporters of the boyar I. P. Fedorov. In 1568, the tsar looked favourably upon L. A. Saltykov, and probably also enlisted him into the Oprichnina in that year. In the same period, the member of the Privy Council, Prince A. P. Telyatevskii commanded the Oprichnina forces at Kaluga (he died in the following year).¹²⁹

¹²⁵ See Grala, Ivan, 372–381; idem, "Padenie," 63. For more on the links between the Zakhar'ins and the Shchelkalovs, see Bogatyrev, "The Clan of the Diaks," 66–67. Cf. V. I. Koretskii, "Politicheskaya bor'ba," 239; Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 320–321.

¹²⁶ According to Likhachev, the tsar's counsellors were recorded in the decisions under consideration without reference to the rules of precedence or to the time the counsellor rank was acquired. See N. P. Likhachev, "Dumnoe dvoryanstvo v Boyarskoi dume XVI v." *Sbornik Arkheologicheskogo instituta* 6 (St. Petersburg, 1898): 11.

¹²⁷ See Koretskii, "Politicheskaya bor'ba," 230, 231; RK 1550–1636, I, 165.

¹²⁸ *Opisanie dokumentov XIV–XVII vv.*, nos. 955, 993–994, 998–1000, 1003–1011, 1104, 1105. I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi's plans are described *ibid.*, no. 1000. Cf. Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 433.

¹²⁹ On the case of Fedorov, see Roginskii, "Poslaniya," 41, 42; Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 283; Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 316, 317. On the other members of the Privy Council, see Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 227 (Saltykov); 401 (Prince V. S. Serebryanyi died in 1568 while military governor at Polotsk); RK 1550–1636, I, 166, 169 (Telyatevskii).

The changes which occurred in the make-up of the Privy Council in 1568 were a portent of the terrible tragedy unleashed within the tsar's entourage two years later. The first signs of the Basmanovs' imminent fall into disfavour could be seen just before the winter of 1568/69. The position of Prince M. I. Vorotynskii was also wavering at that time, and at the end of 1568 a considerable part of his patrimonial estate was confiscated.¹³⁰ Another member of the Privy Council, Prince I. I. Pronskii, was executed in the following year. Having returned from Lithuania at the end of 1567, the boyar F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev was subjected to sharp scorn by the tsar, after which, however, Ivan IV forgave Umnoi-Kolychev for his unsuccessful diplomatic mission and even gave him the task of governing the Oprichnina part of Moscow.¹³¹

In the summer of 1569, the tsar received terrible news about the revolt in Sweden against the King Eric XIV. The very idea that subjects could overthrow a lawful monarch had a powerful effect on Ivan and undoubtedly influenced his relations with his own boyars. At the very end of 1569, the boyars' council continued to function in Moscow, although the tsar had already set off on a punitive campaign to Novgorod. Several days after the murder of the uncompromising opponent of lawlessness, the former Metropolitan Filipp Kolychev, Ivan wrote to his boyars in Moscow about the arrangements for receiving ambassadors as if nothing had happened. The letter was addressed to Prince I. D. Bel'skii, Prince I. F. Mstislavskii, Prince M. I. Vorotynskii and "all the boyars."¹³² And so it was that no marked changes yet occurred in the council. On the contrary, Vorotynskii, who had formerly been stripped of his properties, made a reappearance among the councillors. Three of the aforesaid councillors also figure in the correspondence with the tsar in March 1570 concerning the state of affairs in Siberia.¹³³

Crucial for the study of the composition of the Privy Council in 1570 is the boyars' decision of 27th May, taken by both the Oprichnina and Zemshchina counsellors of the tsar. Judging by this document, the Privy

¹³⁰ Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 376. Skrynnikov considers that Vorotynskii was compromised by the Polish king's proposal that he transfer to the service of the Poles (Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 475). For more on Vorotynskii in 1568, see *Razryadnaya kniga 1559–1605 gg.* (Moscow, 1974), 56, 57. On Vorotynskii's estate, see E. I. Kolycheva, "K probleme istochnikovedcheskogo izucheniya zaveshchaniya Ivana Groznogo." In *Spornye voprosy*, 128, 129; V. Yu. Belikov, E. I. Kolycheva, "Dokumenty o zemlevladii knyazei Vorotynskikh vo vtoroi polovine XVI–nachale XVII vv.," *Arkhiv russkoi istorii* 2: 93–121.

¹³¹ For more details, see Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 391; Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 227, 326, 354.

¹³² RGADA, F. 79, Op. 1, D. 2 (1569), f. 7.

¹³³ AI, I, no. 179: 340–341.

Council at that time was composed of the following people: from the Zemshchina, the boyars Prince I. D. Bel'skii, Prince I. F. Mstislavskii, I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi, M. Ya. Morozov, N. R. Yur'ev, the Treasurer N. A. Funikov, the Keeper of the Seal I. M. Viskovaty, the secretaries brothers Shchelkalov; from the Oprichnina, Prince M. T. Cherkasskii, the boyars Prince V. I. Temkin-Rostovskii, I. Ya. Chebotov, F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev, the okol'nichii V. I. Umnoi-Kolychev and the counsellor dvoryane I. F. Vorontsov, P. V. Zaitsev, I. S. Cheremisinov, V. G. Gryaznoi and M. L. Bel'skii.¹³⁴ This decision demonstrates the position of forces in the struggle between the court factions, and the division into factions was not based on membership of the Zemshchina or Oprichnina, but on ties of patronage, family and friendship. The separate recording of Zemshchina and Oprichnina counsellors was simply a reflection of the office principles for registering service people.

It is obvious that noticeable changes had taken place in the composition of the tsar's Oprichnina counsellors by May 1570. The tsar's brother-in-law, Prince M. T. Cherkasskii, raised at Ivan IV's court and married to the daughter of the privy boyar, V. M. Yur'ev, became the leading one among them. Referred to in the documents as a "great person" (*velikii chelovek*), he held a special position in Ivan IV's entourage compared to the other oprichniki.¹³⁵ Prince Vasilii Ivanovich Temkin entered the privy entourage of Ivan IV after 1567, when the tsar ransomed him from his Lithuanian imprisonment. In the following year, Prince V. I. Temkin led the organisation of the proceedings against the disgraced Metropolitan Filipp Kolychev.¹³⁶ As was noted above, V. I. Temkin was actively involved in the conflict between the privy councillors on the side of the Shchelkalov faction as one of the tsar's trusted aides. Ivan Yakovlevich Chebotov, recorded in the council decision after Prince Temkin, was a member of Ivan IV's suite as early as the 1550s. Chebotov's position changed markedly during the tsar's trip to the Aleksandrovskaia Sloboda at the end of 1564. To begin with, the tsar took him along, but halfway along the route Chebotov was sent back to Moscow, after having been cruelly humiliated. It was only in 1566 that Chebotov succeeded in reinstating himself at the court of the tsar.

¹³⁴ Sbornik RIO, LXXI, 666. In historiography, this decision is traditionally cited as an example of the union of the Zemshchina and Oprichnina boyars' councils. See Sadikov, *Ocherki*, 79; Kobrin, "Sostav," 83; Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 369.

¹³⁵ See Kobrin, "Sostav," 86, 87; R. G. Skrynnikov, "Oprichnina i poslednie udel'nye knyazheniya na Rusi," *IZ* 76 (Moscow, 1965), 168, 169.

¹³⁶ For more on Prince Temkin, see Kobrin, "Sostav," 77; Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 255; Veselovskii, *Issledovaniya po istorii oprichniny*, 341; Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 241.

In July of the same year, Chebotov participated in the State Assembly and was soon received into the Oprichnina. In 1567, the tsar dispatched him to the border with Sweden to meet Katarzyna Jagiellonka.¹³⁷ Very few sources on Chebotov's accession to the Oprichnina have survived to our day. One of these documents is an unpublished letter from the tsar to the Muscovite boyars dated 27th December 1569. It informs us that I. Ya. Chebotov and Putila Mikhailov were enlisted to arrange the provision of food for the Lithuanian ambassadors in Vyaz'ma and other towns in the Oprichnina.¹³⁸ As V. B. Kobrin has pointed out, I. Ya. Chebotov's service was always closely linked to the Royal Palace Chancellery (Dvortsovyi prikaz).¹³⁹ As it was usually the majordomo who distributed food to foreign ambassadors, there is every reason to maintain that the position of Oprichnina majordomo at the turn of 1569/70 was held by I. Ya. Chebotov. Among the new privy councillors referred to in the May decision of 1570 was V. I. Umnoi-Kolychev. He entered the council thanks to the support of his brother, the privy boyar F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev.¹⁴⁰

Just as in the mid-1560s, a special place in Ivan IV's entourage of 1570 was occupied by the courtiers with the appellation of counsellor dvoryanin, or, in the words of the May decision, "dvoryane who are constantly with the tsar and the boyars" (dvoryane, kotorye zhivut u gosudarya z boyary). And so the counsellor dvoryanin I. S. Cheremisinov-Karaulov returned to the Privy Council, having by that time become an oprichnik. Another counsellor dvoryanin, Ivan Fedorovich Vorontsov, who also took the May decision of 1570, entered the Oprichnina in 1567.¹⁴¹ As has been shown, the representatives of this old Muscovite family had been members of the Privy Council as early as the 1550s. According to Ivan IV's writings, the counsellor dvoryanin V. G. Gryaznoi, whose name was recorded in the 1570 decision was also privy to the tsar (v priblizhen'e).¹⁴²

The privy councillors (Prince I. D. Bel'skii, Prince I. F. Mstislavskii, Prince M. I. Vorotynskii, M. Ya. Morozov, I. P. Yakovlev, N. R. Yur'ev, I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi, N. A. Funikov, I. M. Viskovatyi, A. Vasil'ev) received the Swedish ambassadors in June 1570. These same people (apart from I.

¹³⁷ Riksarkivet, Stockholm. Muscovitica, 8. Kopieböcker och avskriftssamlingar. Förhandlingar mellan Sverige och Ryssland, 1526–1567. See also Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 127.

¹³⁸ RGADA, F. 79, Op. 1, D. 2 (1569), f. 9.

¹³⁹ Kobrin, "Sostav," 83.

¹⁴⁰ On V. I. Umnoi-Kolychev, see Kobrin, "Sostav," 43–44; Zimin, "Sostav," 73; Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 230.

¹⁴¹ See Kobrin, "Sostav," 31. See also Veselovskii, *Issledovaniya po istorii oprichniny*, 101, 102; Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 263.

¹⁴² *Poslaniya Ivana Groznogo*, 193. Cf. Skrynnikov, *Oprichnyi terror*, 155.

P. Yakovlev and A. Vasil'ev) took the decision on Swedish affairs of 12th June. The privy boyar I. V. Sheremetev-Men'shoi did not participate in the sessions of the Privy Council, as he was in the army in the field, but up to and after 1570 he was part of the tsar's privy circle.¹⁴³

In 1570, both the Privy Council and the Sovereign's Court as a whole began to be subjected to monstrous havoc. A. L. Khoroshkevich links the executions of 1570 with the failure of Russian diplomacy in talks with Poland.¹⁴⁴ All the Muscovite diplomats who suffered in 1570 had been members of the Privy Council. It is therefore most likely that the crisis in relations between the tsar and his court were sparked off primarily by the deep-running conflict and struggle between opposing factions within the Privy Council. One reason for the start of the struggle in the Privy Council may have been the death of the Tsarina Mariya Temryukovna in September 1569. Such events in the family life of the sovereign always gave rise to a heightening of the struggle between the court groupings. This is how the contemporaries of Ivan IV perceived these events. According to the Life of Saint Filipp, dated back to the 1590s, the tsar himself complained shortly before the executions: "my privy people have become alien to me."¹⁴⁵ The full list of executed and disgraced counsellors can be found in Appendix II (Table 2), whereas here we shall simply mention several cases inadequately covered in the historiography. As has been established by researchers, the summer of 1570 saw the extermination of the heads of the main administrative organs. It is known for certain that the tsar executed the Treasurer N. A. Funikov and the Keeper of the Seal I. M. Viskovatyi. The head of the Foreign Affairs Chancellery, Andrei Vasil'ev also suffered in the course of the purges, although concrete facts about his fate have not survived.¹⁴⁶ At the same time, the memorial register of the chancellery staff who were disgraced, and executed on 21st June, records the son and daughter of a certain Andrei. Could this have been Andrei Vasil'ev? Zimin conjectured that Vasil'ev himself was "forgiven" by the tsar during the execution. It is a fact that sadistic "mercy" of that order was quite in character for Ivan IV.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ See Sbornik RIO, CXXIX, 187–190; RK 1475–1598, 232 and following. Savva correctly supposed that Vasil'ev also took part in submitting the decision of 12th June (Savva, O Posol'skom prikaze, 205).

¹⁴⁴ A. L. Khoroshkevich, "Eshche odna teoriya proiskhozhdeniya oprichniny Ivana Groznogo." In *Spornye voprosy*, 289.

¹⁴⁵ Quoted from Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 328.

¹⁴⁶ Most historians consider that he was executed (see D'yaki i pod'yachie Posol'skogo prikaza, 147, which includes a historiography of the issue).

¹⁴⁷ See Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 541 (a reconstruction of the text of the memorial register); Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 442.

After the elimination of the former heads of the Foreign Affairs Chancellery, this department was presided over by A. Ya. Shchelkalov, who was carrying out the duties of the secretary of the Military Chancellery at the same time. Together with his elder brother, Vasili Shchelkalov also obtained appreciable success, announcing the sentences during the summer executions of 1570. At the end of the same year, he was first appointed to the group of courtiers who were to hold negotiations with a foreign delegation.¹⁴⁸ The transfer of administrative power into the hands of the Shchelkalovs signified the total victory of their faction at the Privy Council and the chancellery departments. After the Novgorod "treachery" (*izmennoe delo*), the tsar banished the former privy boyar M. I. Voronoi. His relative, G. I. Voronoi, perished in Novgorod at the hands of oprichniki.¹⁴⁹

Not only Zemshchina officials but also those from the Oprichnina were subjected to persecution. In the second half of 1570, the Oprichnina major-domo, I. Ya. Chebotov, took monastic vows. His subordinate, Putila Mikhailov, also entered the monastic state. Mikhailov entered the monastery no sooner than December 1569, when he was still serving in the Oprichnina, but no later than 1571, which was the year he died.¹⁵⁰ The taking of monastic vows at the same time by two heads of the Oprichnina Palace administration corroborates the idea put forward by other writers that the departure of Chebotov, and also of Mikhailov, for the monastery was tied up with the disfavours and executions of 1570.¹⁵¹

The executions of 1570 were to be the most profound shock in the history of the Privy Council during the period under examination. The outburst of terror provoked panic in the tsar's closest entourage, as reflected in the codicils to Prince M. I. Vorotynskii's will. Petrified by the massacre at Novgorod and the summer executions, the tsar's counsellors sought to limit to the utmost any unofficial contacts with each other. Thus it was that two privy councillors, Prince I. F. Mstislavskii and N. R. Yur'ev, having agreed earlier to act as the executors of Prince M. I. Vorotynskii's will, now hastily reneged on their decision.¹⁵² The refusal obviously came after the Novgorod affair, which cast a shadow over the Yur'evs. It was probably in

¹⁴⁸ See Belokurov, *O Posol'skom prikaze*, 106; RK 1475–1605, II, part 2: 310; Likhachev, *Razryadnye d'yaki*, 554; Graham, "A Brief Account," 260; Savva, *O Posol'skom prikaze*, 395.

¹⁴⁹ Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 369.

¹⁵⁰ See *Istoricheskie akty Yaroslavskogo Spasskogo monastyrya. Dopolneniya*, 26. For the date of Putila Mikhailov's death, see Kobrin, "Sostav," 68; *Kniga posol'skaya Metriki Velikogo knyazhestva Litovskogo s 1573 po 1580 gg.* (Moscow, 1845), 278.

¹⁵¹ See Veselovskii, *Issledovaniya po istorii oprichniny*, 237, 468; Kobrin, "Sostav," 83–84.

¹⁵² Belikov, Kolycheva, "Dokumenty," 115.

August 1570, prior to the tsar's campaign against the Crimean Tartars, that Ivan decided not to take N. R. Yur'ev with him, leaving him behind in Moscow.¹⁵³ It is fully understandable that, under such circumstances, Yur'ev was prepared for the worst and did not wish to tie himself down with any responsibilities whatsoever. N. R. Yur'ev's fears were transmitted to Prince I. F. Mstislavskii.

3. THE PRIVY COUNCIL DURING THE TSAR'S CAMPAIGNS (1571–1572)

The composition of the Privy Council in 1571–1572 can be reconstructed on the basis of diplomatic records on relations with Sweden and military service registers. In particular, the diplomatic records refer to the Privy Council in a description of talks with the Swedish ambassador, Bishop Paul Juusten at Novgorod in January 1572. The Privy Council is also mentioned in Ivan IV's letter to the commander of the army in the field of 15th January 1572. Judging by these sources, the Privy Council consisted of the following people at the turn of 1571–1572: the Astrakhan' Tsarevich Mikhail Kaibulovich, Prince P. T. Sheidyakov, Prince I. F. Mstislavskii, Prince M. I. Vorotynskii, Prince P. D. Pronskii, Prince F. M. Trubetskoi, Prince N. R. Odoevskii, Prince V. A. Sitskii, I. V. Sheremetev-Men'shoi, the *okol'nichii* Vasilii Sobakin, the counsellor *dvoryane* M. L. Skuratov-Bel'skii, I. S. Cheremisinov, and the secretaries A. Ya. Shchelkalov and V. Ya. Shchelkalov.¹⁵⁴ In his itinerary Juusten referred to these grandees as senators and boyars (*senatori & bajori*).¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ See Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 432; RK 1475–1598, 233. The codicils to the will reveal that the refusal followed between April 1569 and May 1571. It is unlikely that the boyars would have made this move after 1st January 1571, when the tsar appointed Prince Vorotynskii to reorganise the defence of the southern frontiers, thus displaying his confidence in Vorotynskii, and consequently there were no reasons to break off relations with Vorotynskii.

¹⁵⁴ *Sbornik RIO*, CXXIX, 216, 219, 224–225. Cf. Savva, *O Posol'skom prikaze*, 212.

¹⁵⁵ I. Kajanto, ed., *The Tragic Mission of Bishop Paul Juusten to Tsar Ivan IV: The Itinerary of the Delegation to Moscow*. Translated with Introduction and Commentary. *Annales Academiæ Scientiarum Fennicæ*, 1995, series B, vol. 276: 32; H. F. Graham, "Paul Juusten's Mission to Muscovy," *Russian History*, 13 (1986), no 1: 84. The commentaries of Graham to his translation include a short analysis of the biographies of the privy councillors (ibid., 84–87, notes 93–94). Juusten's account was first published by the "father of Finnish history," Henrik Gabriel Porthan in 1775. See H. G. Porthan, "Narratio Pauli Juusten, episcopi aboensis, de legatione sua russica," in *Henrici Gabrieli Porthan opera selecta*, 3 (Helsingfors, 1867), 385–419. On Juusten, see also K. Tarkiainen, *Se vanha vainooja: Käsitykset itäisestä naapurista Iivana Julmasta Pietari Suureen* (Helsinki, 1986), index; S. N. Bogatyrev, "Pavel Yusten: protestantskii episkop i korolevskii diplomat." In Yusten, P., *Posol'stvo v Moskoviyu*, ed. G. M. Kovalenko (St. Petersburg, forthcoming).

Just as in the preceding periods, the Tartar service princes continued to head the privy councillors at the beginning of the 1570s. The chief amongst them was the Astrakhan' Tsarevich Murtaza-Ali, baptised in about 1570 under the name Mikhail. At that time he also became related to the Sheremetev family, when he married the daughter of the privy boyar I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi.¹⁵⁶ The position of Tsarevich Mikhail in the tsar's entourage was determined by political and dynastic considerations.¹⁵⁷ As was noted above, Tsarevich Kaibula Akhkubekovich, Mikhail's father, was already a member of Ivan IV's Privy Council in the 1550s. After Kaibula's death, his place in the Privy Council went – as if by inheritance – to his son, who represented the Astrakhan' dynasty at the court of Ivan IV. As to another Tartar grandee in the Privy Council, Petr Tutaevich Sheidyakov, he was one of the most distinguished princes of the Nogai Horde. The tsar made Sheidyakov a privy person in 1571 and granted him the rank of boyar.¹⁵⁸

Besides the Tartar princes, the Privy Council of the early 1570s included highly prominent representatives of the boyars and chancellery officials. By the end of 1571, Prince I. F. Mstislavskii had managed to restore his former position at the tsar's court, which he had forfeited earlier when suspected of treachery.¹⁵⁹ The beginning of the 1570s saw the marked consolidation of the position of Prince M. I. Vorotynskii, appointed to manage the defence of Russia's southern borders.¹⁶⁰ The boyar I. V. Sheremetev-Men'shoi entered the Privy Council due to his high noble origins and friendly relations with the influential officials, the Shchelkalov brothers.¹⁶¹ By 1572, the latter had already established themselves in top government circles. A. Ya. Shchelkalov succeeded in acquiring the post of counsellor secretary by this time, while his brother probably acquired this position some time later, in the second half of the 1570s.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶ See V. V. Vel'yaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie o kasimovskikh tsaryakh i tsarevichakh*, 2 (St. Petersburg, 1864), 86. Graham, "Paul Juusten's Mission," 84, note 93; D. Kobeko, "Mikhail Araslanovich Kaibulin, tsarevich Astrakhanskii," *Zapiski Vostochnogo otdeleniya Russkogo Arkheologicheskogo obshchestva* 13 (St. Petersburg, 1901): 78. Cf. PSRL, XXXIV (Moscow, 1978), 226; *Opisanie dokumentov XIV–XVII vv.*, nos. 944, 947; Yurganov, "Udel'no-votchinnaya sistema," 97–99.

¹⁵⁷ Zimin linked the rise of Mikhail Kaibulovich with the plans for creating a Tartar principality of Astrakhan', dependent on Muscovy. See Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 465.

¹⁵⁸ Kobrin, "Sostav," 88. See also Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 246; Skrynnikov, "Oprichnina i poslednie udel'nye knyazheniya," 172.

¹⁵⁹ Ivan IV blamed Prince I. F. Mstislavskii for the crushing defeat of the Russian forces during the raid by the Khan Devlet-Girei in the spring of 1571 (Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 463).

¹⁶⁰ See Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 451. See also Chapter IV.

¹⁶¹ See Likhachev, *Razryadnye d'yaki*, 465–466.

¹⁶² The first reference in the military service registers to A. Ya. Shchelkalov as a counsellor secretary dates back to precisely 1572. See RK 1475–1605, II (Moscow, 1982), part 2: 310. On V. Ya. Shchelkalov, see Likhachev, *Razryadnye d'yaki*, 554.

The privy councillor Prince P. D. Pronskii enjoyed the tsar's special favour as early as 1566, when he was granted the rank of boyar. Together with his younger brother Semen, Prince P. D. Pronskii entered the Oprichnina in 1568/69, i.e., at precisely the time when the struggle among the factions in the tsar's entourage was escalating. In 1569–1571, P. D. Pronskii served as governor of Novgorod.¹⁶³

Another member of the Privy Council, Prince F. M. Trubetskoi, as one of the most prominent members of the line of the Grand Duke of Lithuania Gedimin, became his clan's first representative amongst the tsar's closest counsellors. After going over to the Oprichnina in September 1570, Prince Trubetskoi often held the post of commander-in-chief of the Oprichnina court.¹⁶⁴ The Privy Council of 1571 and early 1572 also saw the entry of Prince N. R. Odoevskii, who had not long since joined the Oprichnina and had become a boyar.¹⁶⁵ Odoevskii was related to the royal family. So was another member of the Privy Council, Prince V. A. Sitskii. He was related to the tsar, having married Anna, sister to the Tsarina Anastasia. Being related to the tsar by marriage, Prince Sitskii was the first member of his clan to be granted the counsellor rank. Once Prince V. A. Sitskii had become an oprichnik he was invariably to be found in Ivan IV's entourage.¹⁶⁶ As H. F. Graham has demonstrated, the *okol'nichii* Vasilii Sobakin, recorded in the diplomatic records amongst the privy councillors, is in fact Vasilii Stepanovich Sobakin-Men'shoi.¹⁶⁷ He undoubtedly entered the Privy Council after the wedding of Ivan IV to his niece, M. V. Sobakina, on 28th October 1571. The diplomatic records also include amongst the privy advisors two counsellor *dvoryane*, M. L. Skuratov and I. S. Cheremisinov, both of whom were in the Privy Council as early as the 1560s.

This information contained in the diplomatic records needs to be compared with the military service register for the winter campaign of 1571 to Novgorod, where the Privy Council held talks with the Swedish delegation. Judging by the military service records, Tsarevich Mikhail Kaibulovich and

¹⁶³ See Kobrin, "Sostav," 66–67; Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 198, 205, 384, 385. Cf. Skrynnikov, *Oprichnyi terror*, 98, 150. On Prince Pronskii, and his post at Novgorod in particular, see also Graham, "Paul Juusten's Mission," 52.

¹⁶⁴ See Veselovskii, *Issledovaniya po istorii oprichniny*, 235; Kobrin, "Sostav," 78; Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 251; S. P. Mordovina, A. L. Stanislavskii, "Sostav osobogo dvora Ivana IV v period velikogo knyazheniya Simeona Bekbulatovicha." In *AE za 1976 g.* (Moscow, 1977), 186–187; Skrynnikov, *Oprichnyi terror*, 149.

¹⁶⁵ See Kobrin, "Sostav," 53–54; Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 75; Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 237; Skrynnikov, *Oprichnyi terror*, 149.

¹⁶⁶ See Veselovskii, *Issledovaniya po istorii oprichniny*, 232; Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 199; Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 244; Kobrin, "Sostav," 72.

¹⁶⁷ Graham, "Paul Juusten's Mission," 86. See also Zimin, "Sostav," 76; Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 244; Bychkova, *Sostav*, 131.

other privy councillors were to be found in the Sovereign's Regiment during the campaign. The military service registers also contain the names of Prince S. D. Pronskii, the okol'nichii N. V. Borisov-Borozdin and the Keeper of the Seal R. V. Alfer'ev.¹⁶⁸ These three courtiers were included in the tsar's entourage. Prince S. D. Pronskii was the younger brother of Prince P. D. Pronskii. Another member of the suite, N. V. Borisov-Borozdin was distantly related to the tsar's family. Shortly before the Novgorod campaign in 1571, the tsar included him in the Oprichnina.¹⁶⁹ Roman Vasil'evich Alfer'ev was a member of the Sovereign's Court from the end of the 1550s. Although at that time Alfer'ev had not yet been admitted to "secret affairs," he already had close ties with privy councillors; they discussed a number of political issues with Alfer'ev at an unofficial level. An oprichnik from 1567, R. V. Alfer'ev, though illiterate, held in 1571 the responsible posts of treasurer and keeper of the seal. The sources refer to Alfer'ev as a "great man" (velikii chelovek). Like many privy oprichniki, R. V. Alfer'ev held the rank of counsellor dvoryanin.¹⁷⁰ On the whole, there are enough grounds for asserting that thanks to their prominent position at the court as well as their family ties, Prince S. D. Pronskii, N. V. Borisov and R. V. Alfer'ev also entered the Privy Council between the second half of 1571 and early 1572.

The military service register informs us that the tsar was accompanied to Novgorod by the boyars N. R. Yur'ev and M. Ya. Morozov, who by that time, however, had already lost influence in the Privy Council. As has been shown above, N. R. Yur'ev lost the tsar's favour in the summer of 1570. Skrynnikov considers that the Morozov clan was under suspicion after the execution of F. I. Morozov-Saltykov in 1571. The tsar did not therefore include these boyars in his immediate entourage, sending them to join the troops of the army in the field. By the end of 1571, the tsar banished V. G. Gryaznoi, a former member of the Privy Council.¹⁷¹ Beside these people, several other councillors left the Privy Council in 1571. In May, during the raid of the Crimean Tartars on Moscow, Prince I. D. Bel'skii and M. I. Voronoi-Volynskii burnt to death in a conflagration. The purges led to the

¹⁶⁸ RK 1475–1598, 241–242.

¹⁶⁹ Kobrin, "Sostav," 27. His father V. P. Borisov and Ivan IV's brother, Prince Yurii were married to sisters, the daughters of Prince D. F. Paletskii (Veselovskii, *Issledovaniya po istorii oprichniny*, 206).

¹⁷⁰ See *Sbornik RIO*, LIX, 541–543; RK 1475–1605, II, part 2: 296; Kobrin, "Sostav," 50–51; Schmidt, *Rossiiskoe gosudarstvo*, 163; Mordovina, *Stanislavskii*, "Sostav," 181; Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 242. On R. V. Alfer'ev's family ties, see also N. D. Pleshko, "Rodstvennye svyazi nekotorykh rodov Moskovskogo obshchestva vremeni Ivana Groznogo," *Novik*, 1957, section 1: 41–50.

¹⁷¹ See RK 1475–1598, 242; Skrynnikov, "Oprichnina i poslednie udel'nye knyazheniya," 166; idem, *Tsarstvo*, 438.

execution of P. V. Zaitsev, Prince V. I. Temkin-Rostovskii, Prince M. T. Cherkasskii and I. P. Yakovlev. In January 1571, V. I. Umnoi-Kolychev fell into disgrace. His brother F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev lost the precedence dispute to the boyar V. B. Saburov and was forced to take monastic vows. In the summer of 1571, another privy courtier, the boyar I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi, became a monk.¹⁷²

Thus it was that by 1572 a new grouping of privy councillors which had begun the struggle for power in 1568, had already established themselves in the Privy Council. One may call these people the Shchelkalov secretaries' faction. During that time, the representatives of this group subjected the administrative organs, the Treasury, the Military Chancellery, and the Foreign Affairs Chancellery, to their influence, and also acquired the highest ranks and responsible positions in the court hierarchy. The rise of the new leaders took place at the expense of those privy councillors who had advanced even before the introduction of the Oprichnina and in the 1560s. At the same time, the princes from the Lithuanian and Tartar dynasties maintained their solid positions in Ivan IV's entourage.

The last piece of evidence on the Privy Council of this period is contained in a letter sent on 11th August 1572 from Ivan IV to the Swedish King John III. The tsar wrote that he was expecting the Swedish ambassadors at Novgorod "with his Duma assembly, [that is] with his privy people" (*s svoim chinom Dumoyu, z blizhnimi lyud'mi*).¹⁷³ The military service registers inform us that almost all the privy people who had accompanied the tsar during the previous Novgorod campaign in the winter of 1571 were with him at Novgorod in 1572. During the movement of troops to Novgorod in the summer of 1572, the majority of privy people were in the Sovereign's Regiment, and they included Tsarevich Mikhail Kaibulovich, Prince P. D. Pronskii, Prince S. D. Pronskii, Prince V. A. Sitskii, N. V. Borisov, V. S. Sobakin-Men'shoi, R. V. Alfer'ev, the Shchelkalov secretary brothers, and the court commanders Prince F. M. Trubetskoi and M. L. Skuratov.¹⁷⁴ Certain members of the Privy Council were appointed to other army units: Prince P. T. Sheidiakov to the Advance Regiment, and Prince I. F. Mstislavskii to the Rear Regiment. Three privy people, Prince M. I. Vorotynskii, Prince N. R. Odoevskii and I. V. Sheremetev-Men'shoi were at that time in command of

¹⁷² See Kobrin, "Sostav," 43-44; M. E. Bychkova, *Rodoslovnye knigi XVI-XVII vv. kak istoricheskii istochnik* (Moscow, 1975), 170; Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo*, 433, 434, 437.

¹⁷³ *Poslaniya Ivana Groznogo*, 146. Ivan was based at Novgorod from 1st June until 17th August 1572. See PSRL, XXX (Moscow, 1965), 162, 196.

¹⁷⁴ RK 1475-1598, 243.

another army, engaged in repulsing an onslaught of the Crimean Tartars.¹⁷⁵

The military service register for the Novgorod campaign of 1572 also refers to new members of the Privy Council. Thus the first boyar in the Sovereign's Regiment to be recorded was Prince I. A. Shuiskii. His presence in Ivan IV's Oprichnina entourage has given rise to certain bewilderment amongst historians. On the strength of this record, many experts have included Prince Shuiskii amongst the oprichniki.¹⁷⁶ At the same time S. B. Veselovskii considered that Prince I. A. Shuiskii's rise during the Oprichnina was due to Ivan IV's personal relations with the Suzdal' princes, who included the Shuiskiis.¹⁷⁷ It was demonstrated above that places in the Privy Council were frequently inherited by the representatives of one and the same clan. As we saw, the Privy Council of 1563 already included one of the Shuiskiis, Prince Petr Ivanovich. Thus the appearance of Prince I. A. Shuiskii in the tsar's suite of 1572 was connected to his presence in the Privy Council of Ivan IV.

By the summer of 1572, the tsar's entourage had witnessed the admittance of new privy councillors from the okol'nichii rank, including the oprichnik Prince O. M. Shcherbatyi, who was the first member of his clan to receive a counsellor rank. Another privy okol'nichii was Grigorii Stepanovich Sobakin, brother of Vasilii Stepanovich Men'shoi, who was mentioned earlier. Besides these, okol'nichii positions were also held during the campaign by D. A. Buturlin and D. G. Koltovskii.¹⁷⁸ Dmitrii Andreevich Buturlin was in the tsar's suite as early as the Polotsk operation of 1562–1563. As Kobrin has pointed out, Ivan IV displayed special favour towards the majority of those involved in the taking of Polotsk right up until his death. D. A. Buturlin was no exception to this rule, for Ivan had admitted him to the Oprichnina by 1570 and granted him the rank of okol'nichii.¹⁷⁹ A decisive event in D. G. Koltovskii's career was the wedding of Ivan IV to his relative Anna Koltovskaya at the beginning of 1572. After the marriage, Daniil Grigor'evich acquired the rank of okol'nichii and entered the Oprichnina, and at the same time, he was made a member of the Privy Council.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁵ RK 1475–1598, 244, 247.

¹⁷⁶ See L. M. Sukhotin, "Spisok oprichnikov Groznogo," *Novik* 3 (1940): 25; Platonov, *Ocherki po istorii Smuty*, 78; Sadikov, *Ocherki*, 49; Skrynnikov, *Oprichnyi terror*, 152; cf. B. N. Morozov, A. P. Pavlov, "K istorii zemlevladieniya knyazei Shuiskikh." In *Chteniya pamyati V. B. Kobrina* (Moscow, 1992), 125.

¹⁷⁷ See Veselovskii, *Ocherki po istorii oprichniny*, 162. Cf. Kobrin, "Sostav," 91; Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 365; Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 248.

¹⁷⁸ RK 1475–1598, 244. On Shcherbatyi, see Kobrin, "Sostav," 80. For more on Sobakin, see Zimin, "Sostav," 76; Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 244, 245; Bychkova, *Sostav*, 131.

¹⁷⁹ See Kobrin, "Sostav," 28; idem, *Ivan Grozni*, 59–60; Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 219.

¹⁸⁰ See Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 352; Bychkova, *Sostav*, 134–136.

Finally, the military service register shows that the Master of the Bedchamber Dmitrii Ivanovich Godunov also took part in the Novgorod campaign of 1572. As Veselovskii has pointed out, this fact speaks of the great trust and mercy shown towards D. I. Godunov by the tsar.¹⁸¹ We saw that the master of the bedchamber was a member of the Privy Council as early as the 1550s, which means that there are adequate grounds for regarding D. I. Godunov as a member of the Privy Council of 1572. Although the tsar's suite did not include I. S. Cheremisinov, one of the privy councillors from the previous period, it is known that in 1572, after the utter defeat of the Tartars at the battle of Molodi, he was sent to the victorious Russian commanders with a reward from the tsar. In 1572/73, he was a commander at the Sovereign's Headquarters during the capture of the Baltic town of Waisenstein.¹⁸² Thus there is no evidence for the removal of I. S. Cheremisinov from the Privy Council in 1572. The information which we have examined on the composition of the Privy Council of 1572 relates to the summer period. In the second half of 1572, the disgraced V. S. Sobakin-Men'shoi, G. S. Sobakin and D. G. Koltovskii left the Privy Council.¹⁸³

* * *

Notwithstanding the tempestuous political events of the third quarter of the 16th century, Ivan IV did not reject the tradition of continuous consultations with his privy counsellors. Just as earlier, the counsellors were summoned during dynastic crises, and the tsar used the counsellors to form his regents' council. By means of ritualised consultation, the tsar sought to ensure support for his foreign policy actions, and the counsellors' authority and experience were actively employed during talks with foreign diplomats.

In the third quarter of the 16th century a quite specific circle of boyars was summoned to the tsar's council. These boyars always signed the council's decisions and made up the sovereign's entourage during campaigns. The remaining boyars and most of the okol'niche did not take part in the work of the council at all. The role of the council was to become particularly important during the Oprichnina, because the councillors were assigned the task of running the Zemshchina. During the Oprichnina, Ivan IV was particularly concerned about the personal devotion and absolute

¹⁸¹ See RK 1475–1598, 243; Veselovskii, *Issledovaniya po istorii oprichniny*, 210; Mordovina, Stanislavskii, "Sostav," 171.

¹⁸² For more on Cheremisinov's service, see Kobrin, "Sostav," 85.

¹⁸³ See Zimin, *Oprichnina*, 365.

loyalty of his counsellors. He repeatedly changed the composition of his council, subjecting counsellors to executions, exiling them or compelling them to take monastic vows. Yet despite the Oprichnina purges, the structure of the council did not undergo radical alterations. Just as before, in the Oprichnina years, representatives of noble foreign clans stood at the head of the council. Under Ivan IV, the council was led by Tartar grandees and descendants of the Lithuanian duke Gedimin, the Belskii and Mstislavskii princes. At the beginning of the 1570s, another representative of Gedimin's descendants, Prince F. M. Trubetskoi, also became a member of the council. Also present on Ivan IV's council were the Vorotynskii princes, who hailed from the lands bordering Muscovy and Lithuania. Although the Vorotynskii enjoyed high status at the court of the Muscovite sovereign, their position on the council was unstable. After the death of privy councillor Prince V. I. Vorotynskii in 1554, the tsar was clearly in no rush to introduce other representatives of this family into his Privy Council. In the 1560s, the tsar fundamentally restricted Prince M. I. Vorotynskii's rights of ownership. Having thereby ensured Prince Vorotynskii's full loyalty, the tsar admitted him to his council. The Vorotynskii's relatives, the Odoevskii princes, entered the Privy Council in the early 1570s. As to the princes from North-Eastern Rus', only a few of them were represented on the council in the third quarter of the 16th century.

In the third quarter of the 16th century, Ivan IV's privy counsellors also included representatives of princely clans that had served the Muscovite princes from the 14th to the early 15th centuries: the princes Bulgakov, Kurlyatev, Serebryanyi, Paletskii, Gorenskii and Shcherbatov. Alongside them, Ivan IV did not neglect counsellors from the non-titled boyar clans, whose members had, for generations, loyally served the princes of Moscow: the Morozovs, Sheremetevs, Yur'evs, Vorontsovs and Basmanovs.

When discussing Ivan IV's Privy Council, it ought to be noted that in the 1560s it took on a whole group of counsellor dvoryane. Although the dvoryane entered the council in the first half of the 16th century, under Ivan IV their number rose considerably. They included representatives of very old but considerably enlarged clans. The counsellor dvoryane originated from boyar clans (Zaitsev, Vorontsov, Kobayakov), from princely clans (Telyatevskii, Gorenskii), and from the upper echelons of the provincial service people (Cheremisinov, Gryaznoi, Bel'skii). The counsellor dvoryane made a career for themselves primarily thanks to their personal merits. There were many prominent military commanders among them – Prince Telyatevskii, Prince Cheremisinov, and also, probably, Zaitsev and Bel'skii.

In the 1550s, many future counsellor dvoryane were entered in the lists of members of the Sovereign's Court (*Tsyachnaya kniga* and *Dvorovaya tetrad'*). The dvoryane were recorded in these lists as representatives of various provinces who could serve in the capital if need be. Thus it was that as early as the 1550s these individuals were regarded as worthy of candidature for advancement in the service hierarchy. It is probable that the entry of counsellor dvoryane into the council in the 1560s was related to general changes in their position in the Sovereign's Court. At the start of the 1560s, a special group of servitors (*vybornye dvoryane*) began to be distinguished among the mass of provincial servitor people. This group was supposed to spend a long period in service in Moscow. The government hereby sought to strengthen service ties between the centre and the provinces. Such aims were also met by the practice of enlisting some of the most prominent members of the service people in regular consultations between the sovereign and his top men. By drawing on the counsellor dvoryane to discuss various issues in the council, the tsar demonstrated that he was prepared to consult not only with representatives of the elite, but also with a wider circle of his servitors. From the tsar's standpoint, decisions taken by the council thereby became more weighed and well-founded. As a rule, the counsellor dvoryane enjoyed Ivan IV's particular confidence, and it was no coincidence that they included many prominent members of the Oprichnina.

In the third quarter of the 16th century, the positions of the treasurer, majordomo, keeper of the seal, master of the bedchamber, and privy secretaries on the council were noticeably reinforced. The treasurer and counsellor secretaries submitted matters associated with the work of the chancelleries for the council's deliberation. As experts in their field, the administrators prepared issues for examination by the council and could influence decisions taken. The administrators' position on the council was solid to such an extent that they actively participated in the counsellors' factional struggle for access to the sovereign's person and for influence over him.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRIVY COUNSELLORS IN
THE MUSCOVITE STATE

Archetypal models for the behaviour of the ruler and his counsellors were reproduced during the performance of various rituals and ceremonies. The main role in the ritual was assigned to the king, the head of the group to which the ceremony belongs. During the performance of the ritual, there occurred a symbolical union of the higher and earthly spheres, the participants in the ceremony became mediators between the secular and heavenly worlds. During the ceremony, the head was conceived to be the incarnation and repository of God. Under the influence of ritual, the principal participants in the ritual ceremonies acquired a dual image. The king fulfilled in society the same function as God did in the Universe, and so the king acquired two hypostases: divine, as the incarnation of God and earthly, as a mortal man.¹

Due to this two-fold social status of the monarch, his life was subject to numerous taboos, and access to his "frail, sacred organism" was strictly regulated. Nevertheless, someone had to carry out the functions of real administration, to be responsible for service and to direct the ritual. And so alongside the figure of the sacred ruler there emerged the institution of "custodian," "majordomo," "administrator," who also dealt with the concerns of administration.² Depending on the functions fulfilled during the ritual, each administrator was responsible for the sacred objects which were entrusted to him. In societies of primitive culture, the royal craftsman was responsible for the holy royal canoe, the royal smith for the holy anvil, while other trusted people of the king bore his standard or lance, and served during a coronation. The king began to be surrounded by a circle of privy counsellors who carried out defined ritual functions and were responsible for the corresponding spheres of activity.

In the Middle Ages, there was also a close link between participation in the ritual and the possession of one or another court post. The grandees who held the highest posts at court performed ceremonial functions at the coronation and during the monarch's solemn receptions. These courtiers also fulfilled obligations in the running of the state and army, and as a rule, these court posts were hereditary. Gradually, as the state structure grew more complex, this ritual organisation was transformed into an administrative structure. The counsellors began increasingly to fulfil administrative functions. They supplied the ruler with important information, discussed

¹ Hocart, *Kings and Councillors*, 5.

² See Hocart, *Kings and Councillors*, 101; A. P. Tolochko, *Knyaz' v Drevnei Rusi: Vlast', sobstvennost', ideologiya* (Kiev, 1992), 20.

and asserted their points of view, formulated decisions, carried them out or saw to it that they were carried out. The situations and circumstances calling for the fulfilment of the above obligations were regularly repeated. In the Muscovite state, military campaigns were organised each year, and annually foreign ambassadors paid visits to the Kremlin and Russian delegations travelled abroad. Finally, various issues concerning internal administration – disputes over land and property, and conflicts over precedence – were constantly on the agenda. Each of these actions called for ritualised consultations between the sovereign and his trusted counsellors.

Just like any ceremony, the act of consultation envisaged the existence of a specific procedure. The participants in the ceremony, the sovereign and his counsellors, began to acquire definite functional obligations which they had to follow during the ceremony of consultation. The Muscovite Privy Council was therefore a synthesis of formal and informal organisational principles, with the latter predominating.³ Historians have established that medieval state formations were already marked by a clear bureaucratic organisation.⁴ Being a medieval state structure, the 16th-century Blizhnyaya Duma always included representatives of solely administrative departments (the treasurer, the keeper of the seal, council secretaries). And so the Blizhnyaya Duma undoubtedly possessed some executive powers.

The Muscovite sovereigns governed the realm with the help of the Privy Council, and whenever extraordinary decisions were taken or there was a need to gather additional facts about some issue or other, the composition of the council could be extended in accordance with the will of the tsar to any size whatsoever.⁵ The level of independence of the council in state affairs was generally determined by its relations with the sovereigns and often depended on concrete political conditions at court.

³ Cf. P. Williams, *The Tudor Regime* (Oxford, 1979), 463. Among the privy councils of 16th-century European monarchs, the English Tudor Council was the only one to possess full executive power. See G. R. Elton, "Tudor Government: The Points of Contact: The Council," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 25 (1975): 197. On the role of the Duma in Russia and of the Council in England in the 16th century, see S. N. Bogatyrev, "Administratsii Tyudorov i Ryurikovichei: Sravnitel'nyi analiz." In *Zerkalo istorii: Sbornik statei*, ed. N. I. Basovskaya (Moscow, 1992), 77–78.

⁴ See G. R. Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge, 1960), 4. The term "bureaucratic" is naturally used here in a historical rather than a sociological sense.

⁵ On the whole, this practice existed throughout the 16th century regardless of the "state assemblies" which were occasionally convoked under Ivan IV. As A. P. Pavlov has shown, the principle of territorial representation first appeared as late as the assembly of 1598. Before that, the state assembly was, to quote A. I. Zaozerskii's apt definition, "a parliament of officials," rather than an organ of national representation. Pavlov, *Gosudarev Dvor*, 226; A. I. Zaozerskii, "K voprosu o sostave i znachenii zemskikh soborov," *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniya*, 1909, May–June: 319, 335.

1. THE COUNSELLORS AND THE SOVEREIGN'S COURT

In the course of the 14th to the 16th centuries the circle of counsellors underwent a certain evolution. The main question concerns how this evolution occurred. Many historians have directly linked changes in the council with the formation of the rank structure of the Sovereign's Court. For example, according to Klyuchevskii, in the 16th century the boyar council (Boyarskaya Duma) acquired the character of a permanent institution consisting of four court ranks: boyars, *okol'nichie*, counsellor *dvoryane* and counsellor secretaries.⁶ Historians have linked the birth of the Privy Council (Blizhnyaya Duma) with the growth in the Boyarskaya Duma and the impossibility of gathering all the Boyarskaya Duma members to discuss an urgent issue. A. K. Leont'ev regarded the Privy Council as a sort of political counterweight to the conservative Boyarskaya Duma.⁷

In my opinion, despite the formation of the rank structure of the Sovereign's Court, no direct connection existed between the rank structure of the court and the right to sit on the council. The concept of the Boyarskaya Duma, which was established by writers in the field, ought not to be regarded as the council of the sovereign (see Appendix I). The council of the Muscovite sovereign developed continuously on the basis of those principles which had been established as early as the appanage period. The literary works and chronicles show that the tradition of consultations between the prince and his trusted servants already existed in the pre-Tartar era and was preserved until the 16th century. Neither the prince nor the boyars ever insisted on all the boyars from the court being summoned to the council.

As was shown in Chapter I, the ideologists of autocracy stressed the dual character of the tsar's power. As the earthly incarnation of God, the sovereign was always portrayed surrounded by loyal counsellors. This thereby supported the myth of the divine inspiration behind all the actions undertaken by the ruler upon consultation with his wise grandees. As an earthly ruler, the sovereign was represented as the master of his slaves, and so he

⁶ Klyuchevskii, *Boyarskaya дума*, 169, 170, 243, 269.

⁷ See A. K. Leont'ev, *Obrazovanie prikaznoi sistemy upravleniya v Russkom gosudarstve* (Moscow, 1961), 138, 139. On the origin of the Privy Council, see also Vladimirskii-Budanov, *Obzor istorii russkogo prava*, 167; A. N. Filippov, *Uchebnik istorii russkogo prava*, I (Yur'ev, 1907), 367; Zimin, *Reformy Ivana Groznogo*, 318; Skrynnikov, *Nachalo oprichniny*, 74, 75; Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 48.

could at will banish an unworthy counsellor, dispatch him into disgrace or even have him executed. As the master of his slave-counsellors, the sovereign could remove unworthy people from his council and introduce new favourites. As the state administration grew more complex, the Muscovite rulers began to involve in the practice of consultation people who possessed the required knowledge and competence. This age-old tradition of consultations was thereby turned into an instrument of state administration. Ivan III, Vasiliï III and Ivan IV assiduously adhered to consultations with their privy counsellors. The switch from the amorphous inner circle of counsellors to the Privy Council took place during the reign of Vasiliï III, roughly at the end of the 1510s.⁸ At that time appointments to the army in the field were becoming less and less attractive to those people who were close to the person of the grand prince. For them, closeness to the ruler opened up new opportunities which were more alluring than dangerous military service.⁹ During Ivan IV's infancy, the former counsellors of the grand prince concentrated in their hands the entire scope of state power.

Under Ivan IV, the tradition of consultation was even fixed in the Law Code of 1550, although no changes in the ideological essence of the ritual occurred subsequently. Even following the passing of the new code, the official chroniclers and Ivan IV himself continued to interpret the "sovereign-counsellors" topos on the basis of texts from the Holy Scripture and Byzantine authors. At the conceptual level, the meetings with the privy counsellors continued to be looked upon as an integral part of the image of the pious and wise Christian ruler. At the same time, under Vasiliï III and Ivan IV, the organisational function of the consultation with the counsellors altered. As the rank structure of the Sovereign's Court took shape, the practice of consultations began to be employed as a means of communication and as a channel for the exchange of information between the sovereign and the court elite. The meetings between the sovereign and the most prominent representatives of the elite were to become known as the Privy Council (*Blizhnyaya Duma*).

In order to examine the relationship between the Privy Council and the Sovereign's Court, we need to compare the circle of privy councillors and

⁸ Savva's research has shown that the position of the counsellors in the reign of Vasiliï III must not be conceived on the basis of the words of Bersen'-Beklemishev, who complained that Vasiliï III settled all affairs without the boyars. In reality, under Vasiliï III as well, the boyars were no less actively involved in the administration than under his father, Ivan III. See Savva, *O Posol'skom prikaze*, 54.

⁹ A. M. Kleimola, "Military Service and Elite Status in Muscovy in the Second Quarter of the Sixteenth Century," *Russian History* 7 (1980), parts 1-2: 56.

the composition of the top ranks of the Sovereign's Court, boyars and okol'nichie. As Chart 1 shows, during the third quarter of the 16th century the Privy Council was composed of from 13 to 53% of all the boyars. It follows therefore that by no means all the people with boyar ranks were admitted to Ivan IV's council.

This observation confirms the reports by Russian and foreign sources that in 16th-century Russia there were various interpretations of the concept of "boyar." According to Fletcher, some members of the elite, referred to "for honors sake" as boyars, could be called counsellors only in the broad sense of the word. In reality they never participated in decision-making, since only a specific group of boyars known as "counsellor boyars" (*dumnye boyare*) were admitted to the real Privy Council. A comparison of the different versions of the text shows that the earlier manuscripts of Fletcher's work contain important additional information about the council which was not included in the published text and therefore remained unknown to historians:

The Emperours of Russia giue the name of counsellour to diuers of their chiefe Nobilitie, rather for honors sake, then for any vse they make of them about their matters of state. These are called Boiarens [or Counsellours] without any addition, and may be called Counsellors at large [or extraordinary]. For they are seldome or neuer called to any publique consultation. They which are of his speciall and priuie Counsell indeed (whom hee vseth daily and ordinarily for all publique matters pertaining to the State) haue the addition of Dumnoy, and are named Dumnoy boiaren, or Lords of the [Privie] Counsell, their office or sitting Boarstua dumna.¹⁰

Historians commenting on Fletcher consider that the expression *Dumnoy boiaren* is tautological. Yet many Russian and foreign sources from the 16th and 17th centuries distinguish between different categories of boyars. Russian diplomatic documents contain expressions similar to those used by Fletcher: *boyarin dumnyi*, *gosudarevy dumnye boyare*, *boyare dumnye Blizhnei dumi*.¹¹

¹⁰ Berry, *The English Works*, 211. The square brackets contain the text from earlier manuscripts which was not included in the 1591 edition or in modern publications (cf. *ibid.*, 496). Cf. a facsimile print of the 1591 edition: *On the Russe Commonwealth* by Giles Fletcher (Cambridge, Mass., 1966). See also *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom. Russia in the Accounts of Sixteenth-Century English Voyagers*, ed. L. E. Berry, R. O. Crummey (Madison, Milwaukee, London, 1968), 153 note 2 (comments by L. E. Berry); Klyuchevskii, *Boyarskaya дума*, 323; S. M. Seredonin, *Sochinenie Dzhil'sa Fletchera "On the Russe Commonwealth" kak istoricheskii istochnik* (St. Petersburg, 1891), 218–229.

¹¹ RGADA, F. 79, Op. 1, D. 23, ff. 127, 193v., 204v.; A. Possevino, *Istoricheskie sochineniya o Rossii* (Moscow, 1983), 26, 28. Grigorij Kotoixin, *O Rossii*, 19, 39; Jacob Reutenfels, "Skazanie svetleishemu gertsogu Toskanskomu Koz'me Tret'emu o Moskovii," transl. A. I. Stankevich. *ChOIDR*, 1905, bk. 3: 99. See also V. I. Sergeevich, *Drevnosti russkogo prava*, 2 (St. Petersburg, 1900), 516.

The following charts reflect the composition of the Privy Council during the reign of Ivan IV. As we possess only fragmentary information about the personal composition of the Privy Council for the years from 1556 to 1560 and 1569, the charts do not take into account these years.

Chart 1. Boyars in the Privy Council between 1553 and 1572

¹ Taking into account the boyar status of Prince I. D. Bel'skii.
² Average number of all boyars for 1571 and 1572.

Chart 2. Okol'niche in the Privy Council between 1553 and 1572

¹ Average number of all okol'niche for 1571 and 1572.

There are therefore grounds for believing that the boyars really were divided into several categories with respect to their membership in the council: one group, the Duma boyars, were members of the council, while the other bore the name of boyar "for honors sake" and did not take part in the work of the council.

Documents reflecting the working process of the council also show that not all the boyars were present at its meetings. All the boyars sought, as a rule, to remain in Moscow in order to be as close as possible to the person of the tsar.¹² At the same time for the period from 1553 to 1572 the military service records contain references to 34 boyars on average each year (in some years even more than forty). There were never so many people with the rank of boyar present at council meetings.¹³ The practice of summoning selected boyar representatives to the council ought not be explained by the fact that the rest of the boyars were outside Moscow. When necessary certain (but not all) boyars were specially called from the provinces to take part in the meetings of the Privy Council.¹⁴

Drawing attention to Fletcher's expression *boarstua dumna*, Klyuchevskii interpreted it to mean the name of the institution, the Boyarskaya Duma, i.e., the sovereign advisory board consisting of all boyars. Fletcher undoubtedly knew Russian but it is not known to what extent. In his book Fletcher nowhere employed the Russian noun *duma*. At the same time, he frequently made use of the Russian adjective *dumnyi* in Latin transliteration. In this case, the word *dumna* is most likely an incomplete form of the Old Russian adjective *dumnago* (gen. of *dumnoe*) rather than the noun *duma*. Thus, correctly indicating the genitive ending of the noun *boyarstva*, he made a typical mistake with the genitive ending of the adjective *dumnoe*. One should note that in earlier versions of the manuscript of Fletcher's work the Duma boyars (i.e., counsellor boyars) are called "Lords of the Privie Counsell" rather than "Lords of the Counsell."¹⁵ The words "Privy Council" were used by foreigners to mean the *Blizhnyaya Duma* of the Muscovite tsar. Thus it is obvious from the context of the cited extract that the words *Boarstua dumna* ought to be read as *boyarstva dumna[go]* (gen. of "counsellor boyars"). And so Fletcher's evidence becomes perfectly clear: the Duma boyars, or the "Lords of the

¹² See Alef, *The Boyar Duma*, 95; R. O. Crummey, *Aristocrats and Servitors: the Boyar Elite in Russia, 1613–1689* (Princeton, 1977), 165.

¹³ The average number of boyars was calculated on the basis of Camphausen's data (*Die Bojarenduma*, 257–258).

¹⁴ See RK 1475–1605, II (Moscow, 1981), part 1: 190.

¹⁵ Berry, *The English Works*, 496.

Privie Counsell,” made up the Privy Council, referred to as the “meeting of the counsellor boyars.”¹⁶

There is yet another source revealing the meaning of the word boyarin, and that is the English manuscript *The Lawes of Russia Written*.¹⁷ This document includes the following explanation of the word boyarin:

Boyaren, a counsellor magistrate or best nobleman of the best bloode and landes, ther be aboute Twentye of them all of the counsell, and one is made Bolshoi or cheife that hath onelye accesse to the Emp. and giveth the ffinal Sentence in counsell. They ar about 20 in all.¹⁸

And so the English manuscript confirms the conclusion that there were two categories of boyars: the boyar was a member of the council (a magistrate) or a top nobleman of high origins (“of the best bloode”) who owned the best lands.¹⁹ According to *The Lawes of Russia Written*, the okol’nichii rank was lower than that of boyar, and only a certain number of okol’nichie were admitted to the council:

Okolnichen, is a degree lower and some be of the counsell which attend neere the prince and counsell to goe aboute such matters as be committed to them, an harbenger, they ar about a dozen.²⁰

Our analysis of the composition of the Privy Council fully confirms the reports in *The Lawes of Russia Written* on the limited presence of okol’nichie in the tsar’s council. To begin with, the okol’nichie very rarely appeared at Ivan IV’s Privy Council: for the period from 1553 to 1572, the Privy Council included okol’nichie only in 1553, 1554, 1555, 1570, 1571 and 1572.²¹ Chart 2 reflects certain quantitative features of this issue. Right up

¹⁶ Fletcher includes in his work a list of 31 names. It is evident that he is counting both the members of the tsar’s council and the boyars “for honors sake.”

¹⁷ This document, preserved at McGill University (Montreal, Canada), consists of three sections. The first contains the English translation of the 1550 Law Code, the second gives an interpretation of the Russian court ranks (boyar, okol’nichii, dvoryanin, syn boyarskii, etc.), and the third describes the staff and functions of the main Muscovite chancelleries. The source dates to 1598 or early 1599. The presumed author was the court doctor to Tsar Fedor Ivanovich, the Englishman Mark Ridley. Having left Russia in 1598, Ridley was able to draw up a brief description of Russian juridical norms. See Arel, “The Lawes of Russia Written,” 13–38; S. N. Bogatyrev and S. O. Shmidt, “Pisanye zakony Rossii: Angliiskoe opisanie Moskovskogo gosudarstva kontsa XVI veka,” *IA* 3 (1995): 183–201.

¹⁸ Arel, “The Lawes of Russia Written,” 26.

¹⁹ The evidence of the manuscript concerning the number of boyars ought to be studied more thoroughly, taking into account the situation prevailing in the 1590s.

²⁰ Arel, “The Lawes of Russia Written,” 26.

²¹ The okol’nichii A. F. Adashev also entered the Privy Council in 1557, but this information is not taken into consideration in my calculations, as, on the whole, very little is known about the composition of the Privy Council in the second half of the 1550s.

until the 1570s, the *okol'nichie* either did not enter the council at all, or were represented there by just one man, i.e., fewer than 10% of the total number of *okol'nichie*. Most probably, this situation can be explained in terms of the general decline in the role of the *okol'nichie* beginning in the second quarter of the 16th century.²² Ivan IV admitted to his council only those *okol'nichie* who enjoyed his absolute trust, for example, the favourite A. F. Adashev or the tsarina's relatives. At the beginning of the 1570s the privy *okol'nichii* rank became a distinctive decoration for those favourites of the tsar who could not aspire to boyar status, that is those who were chiefly the relatives of the tsar's wife. It is noteworthy that by 1572, when the circle of Ivan IV's relatives expanded considerably after his consecutive weddings, the percentage of privy *okol'nichie* also markedly increased up to 75% of the total number of *okol'nichie*.

We shall now consider the total number of privy councillors. As Chart 3 shows, Ivan IV's Privy Council usually consisted of from 15 to 20 of the tsar's councillors, which is corroborated by Giles Fletcher's testimony about 20 courtiers who were members of the Muscovite sovereign's council.²³ Approximately the same number of councillors meeting daily with Ivan IV is mentioned in an apocryphal letter from the tsar to the Holy Roman Emperor. According to reports by the Papal nuncio A. Possevino, the tsar had 12 close councillors, who passed sentence on lawsuits and reported to the sovereign on key issues.²⁴ Swedish ambassadors were also received in Moscow by about 15 elderly *grande*es, who constituted the council of the Muscovite sovereign.²⁵

²² According to A. M. Kleimola, this trend can be traced back to 1526. The author quite rightly links the declining influence of the *okol'nichie* with the transfer of administrative responsibilities from the *okol'nichie* to professional officials, the secretaries and clerks. See Kleimola, "Patterns," 235. Cf. Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 39; N. Kalugin, "Okol'nichii." In *Arkhiv istoriko-yuridicheskikh svedenii, otnosyashchikhsya do Rossii*, ed. N. V. Kalachov, 2 (Moscow, 1855), part 1: 143–144.

²³ "... Some of his [the tsar's] Nobilitie about the number of twentie being all of his Counsel" (Berry, *The English Works*, 196).

²⁴ Yu. N. Shcherbachev, "Akty Kopengagenskogo arkhiva, [Issue] 1, 1326–1569," *ChOIR*, 1915, bk. 4: 297, 310. See also Shmidt, *Rossiiskoe gosudarstvo*, 98; Possevino, *Istoricheskie sochineniya*, 49. Chart 3 shows that the average membership of the Privy Council was approximately 18 people each year. It is noteworthy that the Privy Council of the English Tudors and the Lithuanian Privy Rada, like the Muscovite *Blizhnyaya Duma*, also consisted as a rule of about twenty of the monarch's councillors. See Williams, *The Tudor Regime*, 452–456; I. Malinovskii, *Rada Velikogo knyazhestva Litovskogo v svyazi s Boyarskoi Dumoi Drevnei Rusi*, II (Tomsk, 1912), issue 2: 99.

²⁵ "Ibi erant ante nos circiter 15 Senes viri, Senatores & Proceres imperii Muscovitici" (Kajanto, *The Tragic Mission*, 23).

Chart 3. Princes in the Privy Council between 1553 and 1572
Tartar princes are included in the number of titled privy counsellors.

In order to explain why the Privy Council had a relatively broad composition, we need to take a closer look at its structure. The Privy Council incorporated several groups of counsellors. First, its indispensable members were the most prominent titled courtiers in the service of the Muscovite tsar. As a rule, these were Tartar princes or representatives of princely clans from the territories of Lithuania and Western Russia. It is entirely natural that immigrants from foreign lands maintained links with their former homeland, which were used occasionally by Russian and foreign diplomats to establish semi-official contacts between the two sides. Having settled in the Privy Council of the Russian tsar, the Lithuanian and Tartar princes became the distinctive representatives of “overseas rulers” at the Moscow court. This kind of representation came into play whenever normal diplomatic relations between two neighbouring countries collapsed for specific reasons, chiefly military. That the leaders of the Privy Council were actually perceived at the Kremlin as aliens is indicated by the relationship between Ivan IV and Prince I. F. Mstislavskii. Despite the fact that the Mstislavskiis had entered Muscovite service as early as 1526, even half a century later, after the fall of Polotsk in 1579, Tsar Ivan reproached Prince I. F. Mstislavskii: “You old dog, still full of the Lithuanian spirit.”²⁶ The rep-

²⁶ Quotation from A. A. Zimin, *V kanun groznykh potryaseni* (Moscow, 1986), 57.

representative status of the foreign aristocrats at Ivan IV's court compelled them to refrain from active involvement in the struggle among the court factions in the second half of the 16th century. Therefore, for example, the Bel'skii and Mstislavskii princes, "the prime counsellors" who headed the council in the third quarter of the 16th century, appeared to historians to be people without any particular merits and "without the taste for power."²⁷ The duties of the prime counsellors are revealed in *The Lawes of Russia Written*. According to this source, the great boyar had exclusive access to the sovereign and gave the final sentence in the council.²⁸ When carrying out their responsible duties – risky duties, too, considering Ivan IV's stern disposition – the prime counsellors were wary of getting embroiled in the arguments and debates of their younger colleagues. In particular, the extreme caution of the Prime Counsellor, Prince I. F. Mstislavskii, was manifested in his refusal to act as the executor of Prince M. I. Vorotynskii's will (see Chapter III). According to reports by the English ambassador Jerome Horsey, who visited Russia during Ivan IV's reign, the Prime Counsellor, Prince I. F. Mstislavskii wrote and concealed certain chronicles which have not survived to modern times. Horsey also mentions many secrets which eighty-year-old I. F. Mstislavskii told him from memory.²⁹ Undoubtedly, the prime counsellors maintained silence, as they knew about the most secret affairs and intrigues of the Muscovite court.

The next extensive group of privy councillors consisted of people with a boyar rank. When discussing their presence on the Privy Council, it is interesting to note the link between the number of privy boyars and the dynamics of the political system. As Chart 1 shows, in the first half of the 1550s under A. F. Adashev's stable policies, the proportion of privy boyars did not essentially change; fluctuations in numbers were generally determined by natural causes. The sharp drop in the percentage of privy boyars, to 13%, occurred in 1561, and was caused by the fall of Adashev's government and the increase in the tsar's distrust in his entourage. From 1562 to 1567, we witness a two-way process of change in the ratio between the number of privy boyars and the total number of people with a boyar rank. On the one hand, the Privy Council saw a rise in the number of its boyar members. On the other, the absolute number of boyars steadily decreased

²⁷ Maksimovich, "Pervosovetnik," 143. The neutral status of another head of the Privy Council, Tsarevich Mikhail Kaibulovich, is referred to by P. A. Sadikov (see Sadikov, *Ocherki*, 41). Cf. Skrynnikov, "Oprichnina i poslednie udel'nye knyazheniya," 154, 161, 174.

²⁸ Arel, "The Lawes of Russia Written," 26 note 38.

²⁹ J. Horsey, "Travels." In *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom*, 263–264.

as a result of executions, and so the ratio of privy boyars to all the boyars continually increased. It is interesting that the introduction of the Oprichnina in 1564 was not reflected in this general trend. In 1567, this process reached a critical point: this year saw the largest number (17) of privy boyars for the entire period under examination. In percentage terms, this means that over half of all the boyars sat on the Privy Council at that time. It is possible that precisely this ratio was a reason for the struggle which broke out amongst the privy advisers in 1568 and led rapidly to terrible massacres and executions. By 1568, the representatives of the elite could clearly realise that there were fewer and fewer vacant places on the Privy Council, and so rivalry over closeness to the sovereign took the most brutal forms. After 1567, the percentage of privy boyars declined slightly, but on the whole their share amongst all the boyars remained relatively high. By way of conclusion, one may note the following. The average percentage of privy boyars among the total number of boyars was approximately 20%. During political crises and the exacerbation of faction disputes this average deviated materially one way or the other.

The third group of privy councillors were relatives of the tsar's wife. Referring to the tsar's council, Jacques Margaret noted especially that this "privy council for particularly important affairs" consisted of the sovereign's closest relatives.³⁰ Tradition obliged the great prince to consult constantly with the members of his family. That is why a courtier related to the sovereign was immediately assured a place amongst his trusted counsellors. It was not by accident that the selection of a bride for the tsar always developed into a bitter struggle between the various court factions. From observations on the personal make-up of the Privy Council, we may note that its size increased precisely in proportion to the number of the tsarina's relatives. This trend manifested itself very clearly in 1571–1572, since in those years Ivan IV managed to celebrate two weddings of his own. It is entirely understandable that each grandee dreamed of becoming a member of the grand prince's family. This kind of aspiration also corresponded to the tsar's own interests, since in those times family bonds were the most reliable means of maintaining links between the various social and family groupings within society.³¹

³⁰ J. Margaret, "Sostoyanie Rossiiskoi imperii i velikogo knyazhestva Moskovii." In *Rossiya XV–XVII vv. glazami inostrantsev*, ed. Yu. A. Limonov (Leningrad, 1986), 240. See also Klyuchevskii, *Boyarskaya дума*, 324.

³¹ See Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 123.

As was noted above, the Privy Council always included the chief administrators from the central bodies of the Muscovite state. The highest positions were held by the treasurer and the keeper of the seal. The latter headed the state chancellery and was also regarded as the head custodian of the royal archives. Another member of the Privy Council was the master of the bedchamber, who was responsible for the monarch's personal papers and wardrobe.³² Besides the treasurer, keeper of the seal and master of the bedchamber, the counsellor secretaries were also actively involved in the work of the council and the tsar's chancellery. According to N. Sh. Kollmann, despite the strengthened position of the secretary rank in the state apparatus from the mid-16th century, the chancellery people nevertheless did not participate in taking decisions submitted by the boyars' council. Yet N. P. Likhachev, V. I. Savva, A. A. Zimin, S. O. Shmidt and other historians who have studied this issue in detail have come to quite the opposite conclusions. The secretaries not only prepared debated issues for consideration and implemented decisions which had been taken, something of no mean import in itself, but occasionally even insisted on amendments to decisions already taken by the tsar and the boyars.³³ Their important role in the administration thus enabled the secretaries to consolidate their position in Ivan IV's Privy Council. The special role of the privy secretaries is also witnessed by the fact that from the 1560s they received the right to engage in independent diplomatic correspondence.³⁴ There is yet another reason why the tsar appointed secretaries to his Privy Council. They were the heads of the basic administrative departments and also the personal secretaries of the Muscovite sovereign. And so, it was the privy secretaries I. M. Viskovatyi and V. Ya. Shchelkalov, who presumably wrote the text of both of Ivan IV's wills. Thus the chief secretaries were both state officials and the monarch's personal servants, as at that time the state administration had still not finally broken away from the palace management of the grand prince.³⁵

³² It was not only the all-powerful favourite Adashev who had access to important documents when master of the bedchamber, but also others who held this post. See Veselovskii, *Issledovaniya po istorii oprichniny*, 287; Shmidt, *Rossiiskoe gosudarstvo*, 135, 152–168; idem, "Pravitel'stvennaya deyatel'nost A. F. Adasheva," 38–39. Besides the monarch's archives and wardrobe, the master of the bedchamber was also responsible for the thoroughbred horses which were given to foreign ambassadors visiting Moscow (RGADA, F. 53, Op. 1, D. 1, f. 93v.).

³³ See Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 48. Cf. Savva, *D'yaki i pod'yachie Posol'skogo prikaza*, 109, 271. See also Likhachev, *Razryadnye d'yaki*, 71–226; Zimin, "D'yacheskii apparat," *passim*; Shmidt, "O d'yachestve," 181–190; E. V. Chistyakova, ed. "Oko vsei velikoi Rossii: Ob istorii russkoi diplomaticheskoi sluzhby XVI–XVII vekov (Moscow, 1989), *passim*.

³⁴ Bogatyrev, "Gramoty," 24–25.

³⁵ See Veselovskii, *Issledovaniya po istorii oprichniny*, 303, 304; J. R. Strayer, *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State* (Princeton, 1970), 95; Bogatyrev, "Administratsii," 79.

And finally, the last group in the Privy Council were the tsar's counsellors with the rank of *okol'nichii* and the counsellor *dvoryane*. The composition of this group has already been examined to some extent above, though it should be further mentioned that this category of counsellors united the most active political figures of this period, for at various times it included the tsar's favourite, A. F. Adashev, and also the prominent *oprichniki* M. L. Bel'skii, P. V. Zaitsev, V. G. Gryaznoi and others.

The structural analysis of the composition of the Privy Council demonstrates that the tsar's council incorporated titled courtiers (one of whom was the prime counsellor), the leaders of old Muscovite boyar families, and the tsar's favourites and chief administrators, the treasurer, keeper of the seal, master of the bedchamber, privy secretaries. A short description of the structure of the Privy Council can be found in diplomatic records containing a report on the reception in 1563 of an ambassador in the sovereign's personal chambers (*postel'naya palata*). According to this document, the tsar admitted to his apartments "a number of boyars," "a number of *dvoryane* who are permanently involved by the sovereign in military affairs," and "a number of chancellery secretaries."³⁶

The Privy Council brought together the leaders of the most influential groups within the Sovereign's Court. At the same time, unlike the Sovereign's Court as a whole, the Privy Council did not possess a clearly defined organisational structure. The rules of precedence regulating service relations within the Sovereign's Court were not applied at sessions of the Privy Council. As was noted above, in the extant decisions of the council, the names of the counsellors are not listed according to the rules of precedence.³⁷ The sovereign could thus compose his council not only in accordance with the court hierarchy, but also according to his own preferences and dispositions. The main thing was that these councillors, from the tsar's standpoint, were sufficiently devout and could offer their ruler wise advice.

³⁶ "Boyare nemnogie," "dvoryane nemnogie, kotorye u gosudarya v ratnom dele zhivut," "d'yaki izbnye nemnogie" (*Sbornik RIO*, LXXI, 288).

³⁷ See Likhachev, "Dumnoe dvoryanstvo," 11; A. I. Markevich, *Istoriya mestnichestva v Moskovskom gosudarstve v XV-XVII vv.* (Odessa, 1888), 355.

2. THE PRIVY COUNCIL AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

The evolution of the council during the 16th century can be explained in terms of the strengthening of the administrative element in its composition. The administrators had for some time been accustomed to attend the meetings held by the prince. For example, the secretary-slaves always wrote the wills of their lord, and the distinguished counsellors never opposed such a procedure, as the process of writing out the text of a document was generally regarded as an activity of little merit. Throughout the 14th–15th centuries, the grand prince ruled his principality with the aid of a primitive administrative apparatus. Where necessary, he issued individual orders to his counsellors. In the 14th–15th centuries, the counsellors were present at the conclusion of agreements between principalities, took part in judicial sessions, and held the top posts in the court administration and in the military command. In the 15th century, the counsellors were entitled to issue documents on behalf of the grand prince. The situation began to change noticeably by the end of the 15th century. Despite their custom of holding fast to ancient ways, the Muscovite sovereigns were compelled to improve the system of central government. Otherwise, they would not have been able to cope with the growing territory of their possessions, and would not have been able to collect taxes and maintain the military might of their court. The administration of the royal household gradually passed over from the senior boyars and *okol'niche* to special individuals, namely professional administrators. During the 16th century, at the heart of the Palace and the Treasury new chancelleries emerged – profoundly bureaucratic structures of government. The heads of the new departments began to be seen on the council. P. B. Brown, in his dissertation on the Muscovite chancelleries, writes of the bureaucratic revolution which occurred in Russia in the mid-16th century.³⁸ The administrative revolution led to the expansion of documentation into all aspects of governmental activity. The growing importance of written documents had a profound effect on Muscovite administration and on overall society.³⁹ The coun-

³⁸ Brown, "Early Modern Russian Bureaucracy," 160. Brown's ideas are closely tied up with the concept of administrative revolution introduced into historical study by G. R. Elton. The administrative revolution means the transition from palace methods of government to a national administration based on a departmental system. See Elton, *Tudor Revolution*. For an analysis of debate on the concept of "administrative revolution," see J. Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford, New York, 1989), 156–157.

³⁹ Poe, "Elite Service Registry," 252. Poe describes this process as the growth of administrative literacy, i.e., the ability to use various forms of writing – narratives, lists, indices, files and tables, among others – to manage information in organisations.

cil was also affected by the new tendencies in the administrative system. In the 1550s, at the same time as the formation of the chancellery system, leaders of a new kind began to emerge in the council, the most striking representative being the head of the Foreign Affairs Chancellery, I. M. Viskovatyi.

The effect of these developments was enhanced by the fact that in Muscovy, the start of the bureaucratic revolution coincided with the formation of the conception of autocratic power. Having taken on from previous eras the tradition of consultations between the sovereign and his privy counsellors, the Muscovite rulers actively used this practice throughout the 16th century for running their country.

In his account, Fletcher pointed out the important position of the council in Muscovite administration and, at the same time, the subordination of the council to the sovereign:

Concerning the principall pointes and matters of State, wherein the Soueraintie consisteth (as the making and annulling of publike Lawes, the making of Magistrates, power to make warre or league with any foraine State, to execute or to pardon life, with the right of appeale in all matters, both ciuil and criminall) they doo so wholly and absolutely pertaine to the Emperour, and his Counsell vnder him, as that hee may be saide to be both the Soueraine commaunder, and the executioner of all these.⁴⁰

From the mid-16th century onwards, the Privy Council played a vital role in the foreign and domestic policy of the Muscovite state and its members constantly took part in talks with foreign ambassadors. After the Petitions' Chancellery (*Chelobitnyi prikaz*) was established, it was the privy councillors who began to examine requests addressed to the sovereign. The Privy Council participated in the appointment of abbots at monasteries and controlled the Kazan' lieutenants. The decision on brigandage taken by the Privy Council on 18th January 1555 laid the foundation for the creation of new criminal legislation.⁴¹ Finally, it is quite evident that regardless of the relationship between what was known as the "Chosen Council" (*Izbrannaya Rada*) and the state structures, the overwhelming majority of the members of A. F. Adashev's government entered the Privy Council in

⁴⁰ Berry, *The English Works*, 194–195.

⁴¹ See Belokurov, *O Posol'skom prikaze*, 104–105; Savva, *O Posol'skom prikaze*, 393–396; Shmidt, *Stanovlenie*, 154–155; V. I. Koretskii, *Istoriya russkogo letopisaniya vtoroi poloviny XVI–nachala XVII vv.* (Moscow, 1986), 62; "Moskovskie sobory na eretikov XVI v. v tsarstvovanie Ivana Vasil'evicha Groznogo," *ChOIDR*, 1847, bk. 3, section 2: 19; Golokhvastov, Leonid, "Blagoveshchenskii ierei," 88; *Zakonodatel'nye akty Russkogo gosudarstva vtoroi poloviny XVI–pervoi poloviny XVII veka. Kommentarii* (Leningrad, 1987), 19; Nosov, *Stanovlenie*, 382.

the 1550s. The privy advisers were also present at the State Assembly in 1566. As has already been demonstrated, the political struggle, which broke out amongst the warring factions within the Muscovite elite at the end of the 1560s began precisely in the Privy Council and only later spread to the chancellery system.

One of the most obscure issues in the history of the Privy Council was its work process. Some information has been preserved on the location of the council meetings in the Kremlin. When Ivan IV was still a minor, the boyars convened in the palace dining room (*stolovaya izba*). Later, meetings of the council took place in the palace's "riverside" chamber or room (*naberezhnaya palata, komnata*), where the boyars gathered for their sessions and examined various controversial issues. This building was also referred to as the "chamber where the boyars pass judgement" (*palata, gde boyare sudyat*). The chamber was divided into two rooms – the smaller and larger.⁴²

Owing to the very nature of the Privy Council, and its informality, only suppositions may be entertained on its daily activity. The counsellors often consulted the tsar on matters of foreign policy and court ceremonial, and helped in drawing up diplomatic documents. The range of issues examined by the counsellors was reflected in the Privy Council's judgements. By way of example, we may examine the council's judgements on relations with the Crimea in the 1560s.⁴³ During deliberations over an agreement with the Crimean khan, the tsar and his counsellors examined the diplomatic letters received from the khan. The council also discussed the wording of the oath which the tsar would have to pronounce during the ceremony of concluding the agreement. Another issue discussed in the Privy Council was the gifts to be presented on behalf of the Russian tsar to the khan, the members of his family and the khan's officials. According to the tradition of eastern diplomacy, a subordinate person was supposed to give presents to his master. The tradition of giving expensive gifts to the Tartars dated back to the times when the Muscovite princes were dependent on the Golden Horde. If the khan deemed presents which he had received to be insufficiently expensive, he might embark upon a military campaign against the Russian lands. In order to preserve peaceful relations with the Crimea, the Russian side endeavoured to win it over with opulent gifts. This is why the

⁴² PSRL, XXIX, 45; Savva, *O Posol'skom prikaze*, 210–212. For a plan of the Kremlin showing these buildings, see S. Bartenev, *Moskovskii Kreml'*, 2: 103.

⁴³ RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, D. 7, ff. 70–70v.; D. 10, ff. 368v.–370; D. 13, ff. 66–69.

meetings of the Privy Council frequently discussed what items were to be presented to the khan and his grantees. One of the council's judgements states that expensive outer garments and a silver dish ought to be sent to the khan in order to secure his friendship.⁴⁴ If the counsellors were not assured of the khan's benevolent attitude towards Russia, they proposed to postpone the dispatch of presents until corresponding confirmation was received. Whenever Russian envoys were being sent to the Crimea, the sovereign and his counsellors discussed the wording of the speeches and instructions given to the envoy, worked out tactics for the holding of talks, endeavoured to guess how the talks would proceed and gave the envoy corresponding recommendations. Throughout the 1560s, the Russian side had a special resident in the Crimea, Afanasii Nagoi, who spent ten years at the khan's court. Nagoi regularly sent information to Moscow about the situation in the Crimea. In Moscow, his letters were examined on the tsar's orders by the privy counsellors.⁴⁵

When the sovereign and the counsellors were in different locations, a brisk correspondence occurred between them. After the conquest of Polotsk in 1563, the tsar left in the town some commanders, headed by the privy counsellors Prince P. I. Shuiskii and Prince V. S. Serebryanyi. When the tsar returned from the campaign to Moscow, he began corresponding with his counsellors about the demarcation of borderlands in the seized territory. From the period between November 1563 and early 1564, two of the tsar's letters and two of the counsellors' letters have survived.⁴⁶ The counsellors in Polotsk sent the tsar a list of frontier lines. The tsar, in turn, forwarded the Polotsk commanders information about the domains of the Lithuanian magnates. The tsar ordered the commanders to check this information which he had obtained from Russian envoys in Poland. The commanders had to find out whether these domains belonged to the conquered province or to Vilna province. In their response, the commanders informed the tsar about the land surveys that were being carried out in Polotsk province.⁴⁷ Before starting the surveys, they questioned the local inhabitants. In addition, in their letter the counsellors listed the villages and rural districts (*volosti*) which the tax in grain (*chetvertnoi khleb*) had been levied

⁴⁴ RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, D. 10, ff. 368v.-370.

⁴⁵ RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, D. 13, ff. 66-68.

⁴⁶ See RGADA, F. 389, D. 566, ff. 50-65. The tsar's epistles indicate that Shuiskii and Serebryanyi wrote to the tsar on an earlier occasion but these epistles of the counsellors have not been preserved.

⁴⁷ For more on the surveys of land in Polotsk province, see N. V. Shelamova, "O kharaktere i vremeni sostavleniya Tetradi rubezhei Polotskogo poveta," *Voprosy arkhivovedeniya*, 1965, no. 4: 51-56.

from. The inhabitants of these villages were forced to take an oath, probably an oath of allegiance to the Muscovite tsar. Attached to the counsellors' letter was a list indicating the distances between the border points. The next document was sent to Polotsk from Moscow on 1st January 1564. In this letter the tsar demanded that the counsellors compile a list of the villages and volosti in certain provinces, that they draft the corresponding drawings and gather further information about the border of Polotsk province with neighbouring provinces. In their report on the fulfilment of these assignments, the counsellors stated that they had carried out further surveys of land and interviewed the inhabitants again. As the inhabitants furnished conflicting data, they were subjected to torture. Ultimately, the counsellors drew up the required lists and drawings and sent them to the sovereign.

Thus, residing in a recently conquered area, the counsellors supplied the tsar with information about the situation at the frontier and in the areas close to it. They thereby became an important channel of information between the centre and the periphery of the state. The counsellors also established a link between the central power and the local population, organised the collection of taxes and required the inhabitants of the conquered territories to take an oath. The counsellors reported to the tsar on the fulfilment of his assignments relating to the surveys of land. The required information was gathered by carrying out inspections of the territory, questioning the local population, interrogations and torture. Reports were presented in the form of written documents and drawings. In order to make decisions, the central government made use of information received from diplomats and facts supplied by the counsellors in the provinces. Service in the province gave the councillor first-hand experience in administrative work. It is no coincidence that after staying in Polotsk, Prince V. S. Serebryanyi returned to the Privy Council. His brother, P. S. Serebryanyi, became a member of the council at the same time, and he, too, had been in Polotsk. If Prince P. I. Shuiskii had not perished in 1564, at the battle on the Ula, he too, in all probability, would have returned to the tsar's council after his sojourn in Polotsk.

When they were in the capital, the counsellors acted as a link between the tsar and the central organs of administration. A fine illustration of the work of the council is the set of documents dating from early 1571 concerning arrangements for protecting the southern frontiers of the Russian state. On 1st January, the tsar assigned one of his privy boyars, Prince M. I. Vorotynskii, to organise a border and reconnaissance service on the

southern frontier. Vorotynskii went off to the Military Chancellery to tell them about the tsar's assignment. He referred to the "sovereign's word," and so we may assume that the tsar's order was made orally. Vorotynskii requested the officials at the chancellery to supply him with lists of the previous border posts and ordered everyone who had been involved in patrolling the southern border over the last ten to fifteen years to come to Moscow. They were appointed various dates for arriving in the capital depending on how far away they lived. Moreover, people who had been enlisted to guard the frontiers in the past but had now retired through old age or illness, and also those who had been imprisoned and had now been released were also summoned to Moscow.

In January and February, all those requested to do so by Vorotynskii arrived in Moscow. The boyar carried out an inspection of the available personnel and reported to the tsar on the results. The tsar ordered a plan of the frontier defences to be produced, showing where and from which points patrols ought to be sent, where sentries needed to be arranged, and how many people needed to be on the patrols. This plan was to be drawn up on the basis of detailed questioning of those who had been invited to Moscow.

In order to assist Vorotynskii, the tsar appointed several other people to take charge of specific sections of the frontier. Vorotynskii and his subordinates devised their strategy in the form of a plan (*prigovor*), which was concluded on 16th February. The primary aim of the *prigovor* was to secure the southern frontiers and to provide the forces dispatched there with exhaustive information on their opponent. To this end, the document defined precisely the obligations of the patrol and local authorities. The plan also included a patrolling schedule.⁴⁸

The provisions in the *prigovor* of 16th February were elaborated in the following plan by Vorotynskii and his assistants issued on 21st February. The new plan referred to concrete points where the outposts were to be located, that is on the banks of the Volga and Don, Oskol and near the town of Orel. The areas which were to be patrolled and the size of the outposts were also specified.⁴⁹ Vorotynskii's plans were accompanied by detailed lists of the patrols for each border area. A total of eight such lists have survived with a detailed description of the locations and indications

⁴⁸ For the wording of the plan, see *Akty Moskovskogo gosudarstva, izdannye Imperatorskoyu Akademiiyu nauk* (hereafter AMG) I (St. Petersburg, 1890), no. 2: 2–5. See also I. D. Belyaev, "O storozhevoi, stanichnoi i polevoi sluzhbe na pol'skoi ukraine Moskovskogo gosudarstva do tsarya Alekseya Mikhailovicha," *CHOIDR*, 1846, bk. 4, section 1: 15.

⁴⁹ AMG, 1, no. 4: 6–7.

of the distances between them. These lists were compiled on the basis of questionings of local service people and by an examination of the location by Vorotynskii's assistants.⁵⁰

Several months later, in October 1571, Vorotynskii issued one more plan. On this occasion, this concerned the fact that expanses of field were to be scorched in the zones where an incursion might be undertaken by the Tartars. The main idea behind this arrangement was to make observation easier and deprive the Tartar horses of fodder. These measures were to be performed in dry weather, taking into account the wind direction to prevent fortifications and buildings from being damaged. The plan was accompanied by a detailed list of the areas where the grass was to be set alight. On the basis of this plan, the Military Chancellery was to dispatch written instructions to the regions.⁵¹

When the border service was being set up, the question arose as to which categories of service people were to perform the watch service and on what conditions. This question called for settlement by the council itself, and the council issued its decision on 18th February. Although it is stated in the records of the decision that it was taken by the boyar Prince Ivan Dmitrievich Bel'skii, Prince Ivan Fedorovich Mstislavskii, Prince Mikhail Ivanovich Vorotynskii and "all the boyars," it is quite evident that in fact not all the boyars took part in the work of the council.⁵² And so the expression "all the boyars" had a ritualistic rather than a concrete meaning.

According to the decision of the council, the old practice of using watches from Ryazan' for the frontier guard was to be stopped. They were now to be transferred to ordinary regimental service. The patrolling was instead to be performed by Cossacks sent from all the border towns. The decision of the council specified the organisational structure of the patrol service. Strict sanctions were laid down for anyone who wilfully deserted his post. His estates were seized and handed over to other servitors. The decision also defined the conditions of service of some categories of service people from the town of Putivl', the sevryuks. They had formerly served on the patrol service as hired soldiers but the government had been dissatisfied with their service, for the sevryuks had been late in notifying about the enemy's troop movements and their information often proved untrustworthy. The council now laid down that the sevryuks were to serve

⁵⁰ AMG, 1, nos. 6–12, 14: 7–15, 17.

⁵¹ AMG, 1, no. 13: 15–17.

⁵² For example, the boyar S. I. Yakovlya was in Smolensk at this point, and the boyar P. D. Pronskii was in Novgorod. See Sbornik RIO, LXXI, 791; CXXIX, 195.

(Making a decision on organizing the defence of the southern borders of Russia in 1571)

The Privy Council

Types of communications:

→ Order

---> Report

Means of communication:

oral order

order on paper

oral report

report on paper

Plate 12. Communications between the Tsar, the Council and the Military Chancellery

under ordinary conditions, i.e., for a regular remuneration and for the right to exploit their estates, with no provision for special payments for hired service, as had previously been the case. A deadline was set for their recruitment. If they so wished, some of the Cossacks could also receive land for their watch service, though without an advance financial payment for service.⁵³

⁵³ AMG, 1, no. 3: 5–6.

The conditions of service for the Putivl' patrols were also examined in yet another council decision of 6th March. This document defined the level of payment for carrying out watch service, and also set the procedure for compensating the material expenses incurred by those taking part in the patrols. On the basis of reports by the commanders, half of the expenses was to be compensated. However, this rule was not extended to cover patrols from the towns of Ryazan' and Tula, since they had provided the centre with false information.⁵⁴

The border service established by Vorotynskii demonstrated its effectiveness in 1572 during a foray of Tartars into Russian territory. The decisions taken by Vorotynskii and his colleagues became a precedent whenever issues relating to the defence of the southern frontiers were on the agenda. In 1572/73, during an investigation into a complaint by Cossacks engaged in watch service, the officials were guided by the sovereign's decree and Vorotynskii's plans.⁵⁵ The documents examined above show that the council worked in close contact with central and local institutions. An issue could be prepared and processed by one of the members of the council, who prepared material for a session of the council. The work of the council progressed under the control of the sovereign. If he was with his counsellors in Moscow, then it was enough for him to issue oral instructions. If the counsellors and the tsar were in different places, they undertook active correspondence consisting of highly detailed reports by council members and detailed instructions from the tsar.

Thus, the Muscovite council used various kinds of documents in its work, something which corroborates Poe's observation on the growth of "administrative literacy" in 16th-century Russia. Shmidt considers that the Privy Council's archives were in the Bedchamber Treasury (*Postel'naya kazna*), located in the mid-16th century in the upper chambers of the tsar's palace. When discussing the Privy Council's archives, we must take into consideration the fact that in those days there was no explicit division between state and personal archives, and this subject is covered in detail in Shmidt's work.⁵⁶ Thus it was that the privy secretary A. Ya. Shchelkalov kept the marriage ceremony records, which contained descriptions of the weddings of the high-ranking members of the court. The archives of the

⁵⁴ AMG, 1, no. 5: 7.

⁵⁵ AMG, 1, no. 15: 17–18.

⁵⁶ See Shmidt, *Rossiiskoe gosudarstvo*, 135, 148. According to Smirnov, the decisions of the Privy Council included the formulation "the tsar and the boyars have decided," while the decisions of the Boyar Duma contained the expression "the tsar and all the boyars have decided" (see Smirnov, *Ocherki*, 154; Cf. Savva, *O Posol'skom prikaze*, 194–200). See also Nosov, *Stanovlenie*, 382.

Foreign Affairs Chancellery, a department long presided over by the Shchelkalov brothers, included a genealogical list of their family. A similar situation also arose in other 16th-century states, where the archives of the state secretary, who was usually a member of the Privy Council as well, were also state archives. The storage of state documents together with the secretaries' personal papers was in keeping with the informal status of the privy councils under 16th-century monarchs. Documents written by a secretary were regarded as his own property, and so an official leaving a post frequently took all the papers with him.⁵⁷ Most probably, the documents relating to the activity of the Privy Council were kept by the privy secretaries in chancellery and personal archives. In particular, the above mentioned council decisions on the guarding of the frontiers have survived to our day among the archives of the Military Chancellery.

The documents examined above give us grounds to suppose that when any decision of the Privy Council was being recorded, the secretaries sought somehow to record the names of those privy councillors who had been present at the session. References to councillors who had taken a decision are to be found in the text of documents of varying importance. Thus, such references can be found in an important decision of the Privy Council on brigandage. At the same time, some decisions of secondary importance contained in the diplomatic records were also accompanied by a list of the people who had taken these decisions.⁵⁸

The procedure at the sessions of the council is described by Fletcher. The courtiers were summoned to the council sessions by special notices. At the beginning of the session, one of the secretaries of the council declared the reason for the meeting and the issues which were to be discussed. The results of the discussions were compiled in documents, "proclamations" according to Fletcher, which were distributed to local officials.⁵⁹ Despite the ritual expression of the united will of the sovereign and his counsellors in official documents, enough evidence exists about the heated arguments which sometimes erupted at the council. For example,

⁵⁷ Likhachev, *Razryadnye d'yaki*, 306; V. I. Gal'tsov, publ., *Opis' arkhiva Posol'skogo prikaza 1626 g.*, ed. S. O. Shmidt, 1 (Moscow, 1977), 367. For more on the marriage records, see *Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossii*, 357. For more details on the archives of the state secretary, see Bogatyrev, "Administratsii," 80; E. I. Kouri, ed. *Elizabethan England and Europe: Forty Unpublished Letters from Elizabeth I to Protestant Powers*. Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research. Special Supplement no. 12 (November, 1982), 4.

⁵⁸ These features of the decisions in the diplomatic records have already been noted by Savva. See Savva, *O Posol'skom prikaze*, 207.

⁵⁹ Berry, *The English Works*, 198, 211. For details, see S. N. Bogatyrev, "Proklamatsii 'Tsarskogo soveta' po sochineniyam Dzh. Fletchera." In *Mir istochnikovedeniya. Sbornik v chest' Sigurda Ottovicha Shmidta* (Moscow, Penza, 1994), 63–66.

the Tverskaya Chronicle (1534) reports that the boyars argued about which rite, the Orthodox or Catholic, ought to be used when receiving the Byzantine princess Sophia Palaeologa, who arrived in Moscow from Italy in 1473. Under the boyars' government during the minority of Ivan IV, the younger members of the council dared to argue with the distinguished boyars during the preparation of diplomatic documents.⁶⁰ Independent views were expressed in particular by the head of the Foreign Affairs Chancellery, the secretary Ivan Viskovatyi. Finally, the stormiest scenes were acted out in the council during political crises, especially when the sovereign was ill. It is interesting to notice that some decisions of the council include the reasons or motivations why they were made. For example, in the decision of 1536 the counsellors explained with whom of the influential Crimean grandees relations ought to be maintained. These motivations may be regarded as an echo of the discussion in the council. Apparently, the basis for making a decision was proposed by one of the "judicious councillors" (Kotoshikhin's expression), and was in some cases recorded in the decision.⁶¹

The decisions of the council were usually recorded directly on the document which was being discussed by the councillors. A study of the drafts of the chancellery documents reveals that corrections to the sense and style of the wording of the decision were made directly as these documents were being written out in the chancelleries.⁶² It follows therefore that their composers did not have at their disposal any finished texts of the decisions recorded at the council. The recording of the wording of a decision directly at the council was thus considered superfluous if, of course, a council secretary was able to remember it. Occasionally during the sittings of the council, a secretary would jot down brief notes for his own purposes, and some of these have survived in chancellery documents.⁶³ On the whole, even in the 17th century minutes drawn up on the council sessions were the exception rather than the rule.⁶⁴ The decision acquired its ultimate form when the documents necessary for its implementation were being produced (memoranda, reports, etc.).

⁶⁰ PSRL, XV, 299; Sbornik RIO, LIX, 97, 98, 165.

⁶¹ RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, D. 8, f. 294v. Information on these decisions has been gathered into Savva's work (*O Posol'skom prikaze*, 52, 67, 69, 84, 87, 95, 157, 159, 238).

⁶² Such a conclusion may be made on the basis of the council's decisions on exchanging prisoners-of-war with Poland and on compensating the losses of Russians who came back from captivity in the Crimea. These decisions have been preserved in correspondence between the boyars and officials dating from 1580 and 1589. RGADA, F. 79, Op. 1, D. 1 (1579), f. 147; F. 123, Op. 1, D. 1 (1589), ff. 1-3.

⁶³ See Likhachev, *Delo*, 241.

⁶⁴ N. P. Likhachev, *K voprosu o podpisnykh dumnykh lyudei na postanovleniyakh Boyarskoi Dumy* (St. Petersburg, 1907), 4.

3. THE PRIVY COUNCIL AND THE *OPRICHNINA*

The most bizarre act of Ivan IV was undoubtedly his Oprichnina. S. B. Veselovskii considered that the Oprichnina policy stemmed from the profound conflict which had arisen between Ivan IV and the members of his court.⁶⁵ In contemporary literature, this conflict is viewed in connection with Ivan IV's mythological ideas about the divine nature of his power. Ivan supposed that he differed from his subjects in that he was endowed with supreme divine wisdom. The tsar's behaviour was constructed as a reactualisation of the Christian myth, as the incarnation of varying images of the one God. According to Orthodox theology, God must be not only merciful but also awesome and chastising. Ivan's *groza* was associated with the severity of the God Sabaoth and the Archangel Michael. Like the Archangel, Ivan sought by means of severe punishment, to purify his people, to restore them to sanctity and turn them into the chosen people. The ideas about purifying punishment were connected with predictions about the fast-approaching end of the world, which might have stimulated eschatological expectations in Muscovy in the 1560s.⁶⁶

These expectations related to the problem of the chosen people who would be saved after the end of the world. It was no coincidence that the idea of the council as a meeting of chosen counsellors pleasing to God became the principal theme of the correspondence between Ivan IV and Kurbskii. It is very typical that this idea was taken up by both authors of the correspondence. Each of them affirmed that he was surrounded by the worthiest and most virtuous people, and that his opponent's entourage included a wicked counsellor sent by the Devil. In order to expel the Devil's messengers from his entourage, Ivan began to examine his own Privy Council. The tsar was concerned about the make-up of his close counsellors, and he strove to include in the council people whom he could definitely rely on. It is characteristic that on the very eve of the Oprichnina a new group of courtiers appeared in the Privy Council, and they were soon to become the most prominent oprichniki.

⁶⁵ See Veselovskii, *Ocherki po istorii oprichniny*, 25, 28, 47, 133. Veselovskii has justly pointed out that the events of the Oprichnina were greatly affected by Ivan IV's personality. For more details, see S. N. Bogatyrev, "Groznyi tsar' ili groznoe vremya? Psikhologicheskii obraz Ivana Groznogo v istoriografii," *Russian History* 22 (1995), no. 3: 285–308; idem, "Povedenie Ivana Groznogo i moral'nye normy russkogo obshchestva XVI v.," *Studia Slavica Finlandensia* XI (Helsinki, 1994): 1–20.

⁶⁶ Hunt, "Ivan IV's Personal Mythology," 784–785; Yurganov, "Oprichnina i Strashnyi sud," *Otechestvennaya istoriya*, 1997, no. 3: 57, 67.

Ivan IV's Oprichnina entourage consisted of the closest people at the Sovereign's Court, who formed the tsar's privy council.⁶⁷ The practice of consultation provided Ivan with extensive opportunities for achieving his mythological notions about his supreme mission. As was shown in Chapter I, in the Old Russian culture, the "sovereign-counsellors" topos provided for situations where some of the ruler's functions could be passed on to a counsellor. This is how Dmitrii Ivanovich Donskoi proceeds in the *Skazanie o Mamaevom poboishche*. The theme of Dmitrii Ivanovich's ideological inheritance was particularly topical during the Oprichnina. The Illustrated Chronicle Compilation produced between 1568 and 1576 stressed that when Ivan IV conquered Kazan' he was protected by the cross of Dmitrii Ivanovich. The chronicle miniatures depict this cross above the standards of the Russian army marching on Kazan'.⁶⁸ Mid-16th-century works also expressed the idea that a boyar could be assigned some of the functions entrusted to the tsar by God himself.⁶⁹ Finally, it was very important for the boyars to be able to assume the sins committed by the sovereign. One monastery chronicler indicates that the boyars persuaded Vasilii III to divorce his infertile wife and conclude a second marriage, taking upon themselves the sin of a non-canonical divorce.⁷⁰

The collective image of the sovereign and his counsellors meant that the boyars were supposed to gladly assume the sins of the Orthodox sovereign, in order to preserve his purity and virtue. Such a theme of sufferings for the tsar was widespread in Muscovite society. When, in 1575, Ivan IV handed the throne to the baptised Tartar tsarevich, one chronicler explained such an action in the following way: it had been predicted to Ivan that death was in store for the Muscovite grand prince, and so he decided to hand over the Muscovite throne to someone else for a while.⁷¹

⁶⁷ See Klyuchevskii, *Boyarskaya дума*, 338, 339. Klyuchevskii referred to the Privy Council as a "chamber" (*komnata*). Cf. *Sbornik RIO*, LXXI, 593.

⁶⁸ The Illustrated Chronicle Compilation also includes a special miniature portraying the episode when Dmitrii Ivanovich and his counsellor switched clothes prior to the battle of Kulikovo Pole. The author of the miniatures paid particular attention to Dmitrii Ivanovich's cross. The miniaturist conceived the cross to have been large in size, like the altar cross upon which the oath was usually taken. See *Povest' o Kulikovskoi bitve. Tekst i miniatury Litsevoogo svoda XVI veka*, ed. D. S. Likhachev (Leningrad, 1984), 163, 164; *Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii muzei, Synodal'noe sobranie*, no. 149, f. 532. I would like to express my gratitude to Jaakko Lehtovirta for his information on these miniatures.

⁶⁹ Golokhvastov, Leonid, "Blagoveshchenskii ierei," 93–96. See also I. U. Budovnits, *Russkaya publitsistika XVI v.* (Moscow, Leningrad, 1947), 203.

⁷⁰ See N. A. Kazakova, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi obshchestvennoi mysli: Pervaya tret' XVI veka* (Leningrad, 1970), 211–212.

⁷¹ See PSRL, XXXIV, 192, 226.

When he embarked on the mission of saving the Russian people before the Last Judgement, Ivan IV assigned to his counsellors obligations relating to the running of the state. Thus he transferred to them some of his powers. It was no coincidence that according to the edict on the Oprichnina the administration of the Zemshchina was left to the principal boyars. Having assumed some of the tsar's powers, the counsellors effectively became an incarnation of the sovereign himself. The counsellors therefore also had to take on the sins committed by the tsar after the death of his first wife. In his letter to Kurbskii, Ivan IV acknowledged his sins, but he blamed his counsellors for these misdeeds. This is why the tsar reproached the boyar for his refusal to suffer for the sovereign:

If you are just and pious as you say, why did you fear a guiltless death, which is no death but gain? [...] And if you are just and pious, why do you not permit yourself to accept suffering from me, your froward master, and [so] to inherit the crown of life?⁷²

Having transferred the responsibility for his sins to the counsellors, Ivan was cleansed from his own sins and himself became a chastising force. Ivan IV's tomb in the Moscow Kremlin shows the tsar himself as a hand punishing the boyars in the name of Michael, the Angel of Death.⁷³

Ivan IV believed that his close entourage threatened his power and prosperity. The tsar therefore decided to abandon his old court and create in the Oprichnina a new court consisting of the most trusted people. The actions undertaken by the tsar provoked contradictory feelings among his entourage. On the one hand, each courtier was afraid to attract the wrath of the awesome tsar. At the same time, the establishment of the Oprichnina opened up new opportunities for making a career and acquiring wealth. Closeness to the tsar attracted people by the extensive opportunities it afforded and also frightened them by its fatal danger. According to Heinrich von Staden, who served at the court of Ivan the Terrible, "whoever was close to the Grand Prince became scorched, and whoever was distant froze."⁷⁴ Thanks to its important position within the court system, the Privy Council could not avoid being drawn into the conflict between Ivan IV and his court. Moreover, it was the Privy Council which acted as the breeding

⁷² Fennell, *The Correspondence*, 19, 21. On Ivan's sins, see *ibid.*, 27. Ivan also contrasts Kurbskii's treachery with the pious behaviour of the boyar's servant, Vasili Shibanov, who delivered Kurbskii's letter to the tsar and hastened to die for his master (*ibid.*, 21, 23).

⁷³ Hunt, "Ivan IV's Personal Mythology," 785.

⁷⁴ Staden, *The Land*, 108.

ground for this conflict and the scene of the bitter struggle between the court factions who sought to gain the maximum advantage for themselves under any political conditions. Klyuchevskii wrote of the close link between the Oprichnina and the Privy Council.⁷⁵ To return to Klyuchevskii's ideas, we may note that the Oprichnina was directly linked to the Privy Council, but this link was genetic rather than organisational. In other words, the Oprichnina conflict originated in the Privy Council, even though the Privy Council was not an Oprichnina organ of state. The struggle within the Sovereign's Court which led to the Oprichnina was expressed mainly in the form of confrontation within the Privy Council.

Despite the profound conflict with his entourage, Ivan did not decide to finally break with his counsellors. As was previously pointed out, even during the Oprichnina, he looked upon himself and upon his two principal counsellors from the Zemshchina, Princes Bel'skii and Mstislavskii, as the main pillars upon which the entire kingdom rested. In keeping with the ideological model of "sovereign-counsellors," Ivan supposed that his council was to be a meeting of pious men united by a spirit of concord and unanimity. Even in the Oprichnina era the Privy Council played an important role in supporting general stability within Muscovite society. As we saw from the example of the privy boyars, abrupt changes in the alignment between the privy counsellors and other members of the court were always accompanied by grave political crises. On the whole, despite all the political collisions, the structure of the Privy Council remained relatively stable, although there occurred a distinctive rotation amongst the counsellors, who were either banished in disgrace or once more returned to the council. The stability of the Privy Council was determined by the stable nature of the Sovereign's Court as a complex structure uniting the ruling elite of Muscovite society. According to Strayer, no state system can come into being without the prolonged existence of stable structures within society.⁷⁶ It was only thanks to its relatively stable composition that the Privy Council became an integral element of the Muscovite political system.

As Kollmann points out, the Oprichnina led to "the eventual amalgamation of the Oprichnina's new elite into the established Muscovite boyar elite. But the court political system was not thereby destroyed; the composition of the elite was changed and enlarged, but many of the same great families (such as the Shuiskiis, Mstislavskiis, Glinskiis and Romanovs) main-

⁷⁵ Klyuchevskii, *Boyarskaya дума*, 338, 339.

⁷⁶ Strayer, *On the Medieval Origins*, 6, 7. On the stable nature of the Sovereign Court, see Veselovskii, *IPIK*, 87; Pavlov, *Gosudarev dvor*, 203.

tained power under the next tsar, Fedor Ivanovich (ruled 1584–98).⁷⁷ On the basis of Chart 3 it may be asserted that the titled families actually preserved their firm positions in the Privy Council right up until the abolishment of the Oprichnina. On average, about half of the privy councillors generally possessed a princely title. This fact confirms the observations of L. M. Sukhotin, S. B. Veselovskii and other authors who have noted the firm position of the titled families during the Oprichnina.

At the same time, the share of the titled councillors in the Privy Council fluctuated in response to changes in the general political situation in the state. And so from 1565 until 1570 the composition of the Privy Council became increasingly “humble in origin,” while in the early 1570s it began to display the very opposite tendency: the percentage of privy princes increases, and by 1572 they have reinstated themselves in the Privy Council. This is undoubtedly a symptom of the general trend noted by R. G. Skrynnikov.⁷⁸ According to him, the Oprichnina may be divided into two periods: of which the first is marked by a policy hostile to the princes, while the second period was distinguished by unrestrained terror against all sections of the Sovereign’s Court. The chronological dividing line between these phases of Oprichnina policy was the State Assembly of 1566 and the execution of Prince Vladimir Andreevich Staritskii. Skrynnikov’s constructions are perfectly correct as regards the dynamic of change in the proportion of titled grandees in the Privy Council. Yet it would be hardly correct to see this process as the main substance of the Ivan IV’s Oprichnina as a whole. On the whole, the proportion of princes in the Privy Council during the Oprichnina generally varied very little, while a low percentage of titled privy councillors was not just a feature of the Oprichnina years (e.g., it was 27.3% in 1554).⁷⁹

During the Oprichnina, the Privy Council found itself at the very centre of dramatic events. The tsar himself viewed the council as an instrument for carrying through his messianic strivings and as a means of self-purification before God. The counsellors were given the responsibility for the kingdom and for the sovereign’s personal sins. The tsar required the counsellors to deal with state affairs and report to him in detail about everything that was going on. He retained the right to serve as the supreme judge, who rewarded worthy counsellors and punished miscreants who had

⁷⁷ Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 183.

⁷⁸ See Skrynnikov, *Nachalo oprichniny*, 3; idem, *Tsarstvo*, 277. Cf. Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*, 133.

⁷⁹ See Chart 3.

stolen into the Privy Council. The counsellors were compelled to play the role of a kind of mediator between the Sovereign's Court and the awesome tsar. Through the Privy Council, which included Oprichnina and Zemshchina counsellors, the sovereign conversed with the Oprichnina and Zemshchina sides of his court and with the administrative organs.

CONCLUSION

Russian rulers (initially the grand princes, and from 1547 the tsars) were always surrounded by privy counsellors, and the tradition of consultation can be traced back to very old models of ritualised behaviour. These models were aimed at achieving the success of important social actions through full agreement among all those involved, and agreement was worked out in the process of deliberations and meetings between the ruler and his trusted servitors. Thus, the ceremony of consultation reproduced the myth of unanimity between the ruler and the principal representatives of the elite.

The counsellor's role in the Muscovite political system was defined by the dualistic character of the monarch's image. The image of the counsellor as an apostle corresponded to the image of the sovereign as the earthly incarnation of Christ. The sovereign and the council therefore constituted a single entity. Like the apostles whose duty was to bring the divine light and teaching of Christ into the world, the counsellors served as a link between the sovereign and his kingdom. Embodying the chastising hypostasis of God, the prince was invested with qualities of awesome force to defend goodness and punish wickedness. Such an image of the prince defending his trusted counsellors by means of his *groza* appeared in works of literature as early as the 12th–13th centuries. In the course of the 14th–15th centuries, the writers developed the “sovereign–counsellors” topos. This topos emerged in works devoted to a whole range of subjects: the struggle with the Tartars, relations between the princes of various lands, the rise of Moscow, the annexation of Novgorod and Kazan', etc. According to this topos, the tsar was an autocrat but he was obliged to listen to the counsellors, and his actions were restricted by moral and religious frameworks. The counsellors were obligated to point out to the tsar his improper acts. The sovereign was supposed to heed the advice of the pious counsellors and rid himself of the wicked ones. The evil caused by an ill-willed counsellor could take a variety of forms. Sometimes it was of a passing nature, when a counsellor gave unsuitable advice owing to his youth and foolishness, but the highest form of evil was the cosmic evil caused by the Devil. The idea of the wicked counsellor as a messenger of the Devil was particularly actively elaborated in the 16th century when the Muscovite writers created the conception of autocratic power. Any unfit person in the entourage of the Muscovite grand prince was declared to be a wicked

counsellor seeking to inflict harm on the sovereign on the Devil's incitement. The images of good and wicked counsellors were used to interpret the historical experience, motivation and actions of the princes and episodes in struggles between court factions. The "sovereign-counsellors" topos was particularly frequently employed in retrospective assessments of historical events some distance from the writer in terms of time.

The Russian tsar was portrayed as the bearer of supreme wisdom, the messiah saving his people before Judgement Day. In order to be able to fulfil such a weighty mission, the sovereign had to be devoid of sin. In the Orthodox religious tradition, purification was conceived as being achieved through suffering. In particularly critical situations, a counsellor could assume some of the sovereign's functions, his obligations with regard to running the state, and, most importantly, the sins committed by the sovereign. Dying for the tsar was represented as being akin to dying for Christ, a baptism of blood. This is why, during the Oprichnina, Ivan IV transferred to his counsellors responsibility for his actions and for his earthly kingdom. At the same time, he subjected his counsellors to disgrace and execution in the belief that he would thereby purify himself and his subjects on the eve of Judgement Day. Despite the Oprichnina massacre, Ivan IV did not abandon the practice of regular consultations with his counsellors. Furthermore, since the tsar summoned his council people from the Zemshchina and Oprichnina, there are good reasons to believe that the gap between these two parts of Ivan's realm has been exaggerated by historians. On the whole, in terms of high policy, the Oprichnina did not affect the Muscovite political system to any substantial extent. Our examination of the Privy Council during the Oprichnina correlates with the results of studies by Veselovskii, Pavlov and Kollmann, who have pointed to the stable nature of the court political system in this period.

The tradition of consultations met not only the ideological needs of autocracy but also the requirements of state administration. At the lowest, practical level, the sovereign discussed with his counsellors issues of domestic and foreign policy, private matters of his family life and succession to the throne. Starting from the mid-14th century, the counsellors were the senior boyars who consulted with the ruler on a variety of issues, carried out his administrative, military and political orders, and performed judicial functions. The Muscovite princes constantly involved representatives from the most prominent boyar families in the act of consultation, the tradition of taking part in the ceremony of consultation with the ruler being handed down within these boyar families by inheritance. Such inheritance

within specific families was essential for maintaining social stability in the Muscovite elite, and the interchange between the ruler and his counsellors was of a dynamic nature. In this sense, it is highly unlikely that any attempt to determine the dominating part in the Muscovite political system, be it the sovereign or the boyars, would be successful. Under the regime of autocracy, neither the sovereign nor the boyars enjoyed a monopoly on political power. Thanks to the sacral conception of the counsellor's duties, the sphere of the counsellors' activity was never separated from that of the sovereign. The collective image of the sovereign and the boyars, dating back to the old archetypes, was reflected in the court ceremonies, in legislative and administrative documents and in illustrative sources. At the same time, one should not underestimate the role of the sovereign in the Muscovite polity. Our analysis of the process of consultations does not corroborate Kollmann's ideas about the overwhelming dominance of the boyars in the Muscovite political system. The Muscovite sovereign obviously had at his disposal a more effective mechanism for implementing his decisions compared with the boyars, namely that the sovereign presided over the ceremony of consultations. Furthermore, as an earthly ruler, the sovereign was considered to be the master of his slaves, and therefore from the end of the 15th century all Russians, including the closest counsellors themselves, began to be regarded as the grand prince's slaves (*kholopy*). The sovereign could include various people in his close entourage according to his own discretion, and he could put them in disgrace, and sometimes even decide their fate. He selected his counsellors on the basis of favouritism, personal and family ties, and professional skills.

Autocracy was much about adjusting an archaic political culture to new political and administrative challenges. This process can be clearly discerned in the evolution of the ceremony of consultations between the sovereign and his trusted favourites. The frequent meetings between the sovereign and his counsellors developed their experience of gathering information and processing decisions on vital issues. In the 14th–15th centuries the senior boyars still did not have any organisational structure for their activity. Their work was based exclusively on informal relations with the grand prince. Elementary secretarial obligations were fulfilled by means of the household staff of the grand prince. In the 16th century, during the reign of Vasilii III, the amorphous circle of senior boyars was transformed into a council which by nature was a medieval state structure. In the third quarter of the 16th century, the appellation "Privy Council" (*Blizhnyaya Duma*) began to be fixed as the name of the council. As the territory

expanded and the mechanism of state grew more complex, the heads of the central administrative bodies began to appear in the council. The tradition of consultations between the ruler and his counsellors was thereby transformed into a means of co-ordinating the work of administrative organs. As these departments had a precise internal structure, when their heads entered the council they introduced elements of organisation and order into its work.

By the end of the third quarter of the 16th century, the council occupied a quite definite place in the system of state. It had become a mediator between the sovereign and the central organs of government, and also between the sovereign and his court. In the 16th century, the Privy Council represented the summit of the Sovereign's Court, which was attended by the leaders of the main court groupings. At the same time, presence in the council was not directly linked to the possession of the court rank of boyar or *okol'nichii*. Thus the Muscovite state did not conceive of the Boyar Duma as it is understood by modern historians, that is a body which combined all representatives of the highest court ranks. Within the Privy Council, just as within the Sovereign's Court as a whole, a struggle was being waged between various factions in order to get closer to the tsar and influence him. In the third quarter of the 16th century, this struggle between the factions revolved around the personal qualities of Ivan IV, who began to see this struggle as a threat to his power and to him personally. Ivan's attempt to settle this conflict was expressed in the creation of the *Oprichnina*. Despite the fatal risk associated with being near the suspicious tsar, access to the Privy Council was still attractive to the members of the Sovereign's Court. Closeness to the tsar provided the prospect of a career, riches and prosperity. Courtiers therefore fought each other for the right to behold the "sovereign's eyes," that is, for the right to sit on the tsar's council, and everyone in Muscovite Russia dreamt that the tsar would make him into a privy counsellor. It is no coincidence that in the fortune-telling books of the 16th century, the best prediction for parents was that their son would end up alongside the sovereign.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ A. A. Turilov, A. V. Chernetsov, "Otrechennaya kniga Rafli," *TODRL* 40 (1985), 304, 305, 307, 325, 327.

APPENDIX I

THE MUSCOVITE COUNCIL IN HISTORIOGRAPHY

The term *duma* has been variously interpreted in scholarly literature. It has been general practice to distinguish between two types of *Duma* – the Boyar *Duma* (*Boyarskaya Duma*) and the Privy *Duma* (*Blizhnyaya Duma*). In the historiographic tradition the Boyar *Duma* is portrayed as a convocation of all the tsar's counsellors, the sovereign advisory board. Many historians maintain that the Boyar *Duma* consisted of people holding counsellor ranks (boyars, *okol'nichie*, counsellor *dvoryane*, counsellor secretaries). As the Boyar *Duma* grew in size and it became impossible to gather all its members together, there arose the *Blizhnyaya Duma* which became a distinct Privy Council comprising a small number of the tsar's especially trusted counsellors.

The fact that this harmonious scheme coincides with the manner in which councils developed in Western European states could not fail to attract researchers. It is for this reason that the concept of the Boyar *Duma* has firmly established itself in the works of historians and law students writing about the governmental structure of Muscovite Russia. Though the combination *Boyarskaya Duma* is not encountered in the sources, the divergence among existing documents has been explained in terms of the disappearance of other, "correct" documents about the Boyar *Duma*, and of the inaccuracy or distortion of the information contained in extant sources.

Broadly speaking, Muscovite council studies have had an interesting and, at times, dramatic history – an odd combination of brilliant discoveries and the creation of a literary phantom, the Boyar *Duma*. To a certain extent, the history of *Duma* research has reflected the journey taken by historical discipline as a whole. That is why it makes sense to examine this history more closely, especially since it has never been the subject of special investigation.

Research into the *Duma* may be divided into a number of phases. The first lasted from the 18th century to the 1840s, the period which saw the appearance of the first professional historical works on Russian history. The second phase, from the 1840s to the 1890s, was to prove decisive for the formation of a general conception of Russian history and of the main ideas about the Boyar *Duma*. From the beginning of the present century up until the 1950s, the Boyar *Duma* began to be examined mainly from a sociolog-

ical standpoint. From the 1950s, these methods were complemented by prosopographical analysis. Recent years have also seen the application of anthropological approaches. Of course, the development of historical thought naturally does not conform to a strict pattern, and different historians working in the same period have approached the subject of the Duma in different ways. Moreover, the ideas about the Duma which arose in 19th-century historical literature have exerted a definite influence on the works of subsequent historians, today's included. Nevertheless, this division into periods, in my view, reflects the main phases which led to the modern understanding of the Muscovite sovereign's council.

1. THE DISCOVERY OF THE DUMA: THE TSAR'S COUNCIL IN EARLY RUSSIAN HISTORICAL WORKS (1730s–1840s)

Research into the Duma was started as early as the 18th century. At that time, historians based their views on rationalistic philosophy and so stressed the moral benefit of history. This is why their works are full of moral maxims, instructive examples of virtue, and colourful accounts of heroic feats. The first Russian historian in the modern sense of the word, V. N. Tatishchev (1686–1750), sought in his approach to Russian history to gather and investigate material without using complex theories. Evaluating Tatishchev's contribution to our knowledge of the past, the classic writer of Russian history S. M. Solov'ev emphasised in particular that Tatishchev's main merit was that he correctly indicated many subjects that were important for historical research and worthy of study.¹ Engaged in the 1730s–1740s in the study of Russian lexicography, Tatishchev included in his reference work a host of concepts closely associated with the Duma. The very word *duma* was defined by Tatishchev as “council” (*sovet*), “senate” (*senat*), “chamber” (*palata*), “assembly” (*sobor*). When referring to the boyars, Tatishchev noted that Ivan IV had divided them into two categories: the chamber boyars (*komnatnye boyare*) were admitted to the privy council, while the privy boyars (*blizhnie boyare*) were only invited to public ceremonies. Given the vagueness of medieval Russian sources, Tatishchev's attempt to scrutinise their terminology is worthy of note, regardless of whether his interpretations are always correct or not. Furthermore, Tatishchev

¹ S. M. Solov'ev, “Pisateli russkoi istorii XVIII v.,” *Arkhiv istoriko-yuridicheskikh svedenii, otnosyashchikhsya do Rossii*, II (Moscow, 1855), part 1: 17, 23.

hev's idea about the existence of different boyar categories ought undoubtedly to be acknowledged as fruitful, for by no means were all the boyars counsellors to the tsar. The rank hierarchy in the Duma was presented by Tatishchev as follows: the chamber boyars, the privy boyars, the *okol'nichie*, and the counsellor *dvoryane*. Lastly, the counsellor secretaries who reported matters to the counsellors and certified their decisions were also admitted to the Duma.² On the whole, Tatishchev did not pay particular attention to the various ranks which existed in the Muscovite state. He preferred to resort in his works to the generalisation "grandees" (*vel'mozhi*), which meant the representatives of the elite and people fulfilling judicial functions.³ Thus, Tatishchev employed the concept of the Duma in its raw form, so to speak, and his ideas about the existence of different groups of boyars are of the utmost importance. At the same time, in Tatishchev's works we can already see the birth of the concept of the Duma as a state organ consisting of four ranks. The holding of one of these ranks was seen as a sign of the unconditional right to sit on the tsar's council.

In the second half of the 1760s, the subject of the Duma was treated by the major historian, eminent archivist and collector of documents, G. F. Miller (1705–1783). In his extant draft notes on the state institutions of Muscovite Russia, Miller made use of the concept of the Grand Duma (*Bol'shaya Duma*). This is possibly the earliest attempt in historiography to experiment with the word *duma*. According to Miller, the Grand Duma consisted of boyars, *okol'nichie* and counsellor *dvoryane*.⁴ In his work on the Russian nobility, Miller included in the Grand Duma not only boyars, *okol'nichie*, and counsellor *dvoryane*, but also counsellor secretaries.⁵ Thus in Miller's works the council acquired the structure which almost all researchers subsequently ascribed to it at the expense of Tatishchev's ideas about various boyar categories. Miller also pointed out that the Grand Duma bore a certain resemblance to the Senate of the 18th-century Russian Empire.

The first published historical study on the state institutions of Muscovite Russia was an anonymous article printed in 1791.⁶ It has been established

² See V. N. Tatishchev, "Leksikon rossiiskoi, geograficheskoi, politicheskoi i grazhdanskoi." In *Izbrannye proizvedeniya* (Leningrad, 1979), 190, 195, 269, 352; idem, "Sobranie zakonov drevnikh russkikh." In *Istoriya Rossiiskaya*, 7 (Leningrad, 1968), 203, 230, 288.

³ See S. N. Valk, "Vel'mozhi v Istorii Rossiiskoi Tatishcheva," *TODRL XXIV* (1969), 352.

⁴ Excerpts from Miller's notes were published in A. B. Kamenskii's work "Izuchenie istorii gosudarstvennykh uchrezhdenii Moskovskoi Rusi vo vtoroi polovine XVIII v.," *IZ* 108 (1982): 263.

⁵ G. Miller, *Izvestiya o dvoryanakh rossiiskikh* (Moscow, 1790), 16–17; cf. idem, *Sochineniya po istorii Rossii. Izbrannoe* (Moscow, 1996), 184, 215.

⁶ "Moskovskie starinnye prikazy." In *Drevnyaya rossiiskaya vivliofika*, 20 (Moscow, 1791); Kamenskii, "Izuchenie," 264–266.

that this article was written in 1781–1783 and was based on materials provided by Miller, adapted and supplemented by archive employees. The information on the Duma in the article coincides virtually completely with Miller's work of 1790.

In 1776, the historian and publicist, Prince M. M. Shcherbatov (1733–1790) published a study on the old Russian ranks. The council is referred to by Shcherbatov as the sovereign's chamber (*gosudareva palata*). Shcherbatov considered that the structure of the council acquired the following form: the first rank were the boyars; the second rank the *okol'nichie*; the third rank the counsellor *dvoryane* and counsellor secretaries. Unlike Tatishchev, Shcherbatov noted especially that all the boyars were included in the chamber.⁷ However, in his general multi-volume work on Russian history, Shcherbatov employed the concepts of "first-rank boyars" (*pervostepennnye boyare*) and "privy council" (*blizhnii sovet*). Thus, during a systematic account of historical events, Shcherbatov possibly began to perceive that the council consisted of a fairly narrow circle of *grandees*, who admitted not all the boyars, but only a chosen few. Shcherbatov's ultimate views on this subject are not easy to ascertain, since he intended to write a special essay on the government of Muscovite Russia, yet the manuscript of his monumental work was left unfinished.⁸

Shcherbatov's opponent on many scholarly issues was the historian and statesman I. N. Boltin (1735–1792). Generally speaking, Boltin shared the same views as Tatishchev regarding the council, but Boltin's views are expressed with a far greater certainty than those of other 18th-century historians. Boltin referred to the Muscovite council using the words "supreme council" (*verkhovnyi sovet*). This term reflected the realities of 18th-century Russian history. He also called the council "chamber" (*palata*), "senate" (*senat*), and "tsar's дума" (*tsarskaya дума*). Boltin further remarked that the supreme council was also the highest court in the Muscovite state.⁹

The next small yet important step forward in the development of ideas about the Duma was taken by N. M. Karamzin (1766–1826), who was referred to by his contemporaries as a "Columbus who discovered Ancient Rus' for his readers." Karamzin, who paid particular attention to the behav-

⁷ M. M. Shcherbatov, "O drevnikh chinakh, byvshikh v Rossii, i o dolzhnosti kazhdogo iz nikh." *Opyt trudov Vol'nogo rossiiskogo sobraniya pri Imperatorskom Moskovskom universitete* 3 (1776): 49–54.

⁸ Shcherbatov, *Istoriya rossiiskaya s drevneishikh vremen*, V (St. Petersburg, 1903), part 2: 334; VI (St. Petersburg, 1904), part 1: 254.

⁹ I. Boltin, *Primechaniya na "Istoriyu Drevniya i nyneshniya Rossii" g. Leklerka*, 2 (St. Petersburg, 1788), 289, 441; idem, *Otvety general-maiora Boltina na pis'mo kn. Shcherbatova, sochinitelya "Rossiiskoi istorii"* (St. Petersburg, 1789), 118, 119.

iour and morals of the monarch and his relationship with his subjects, wrote that the “council without the sovereign is like a body without a head.” According to Karamzin, the sovereign’s counsellors consisted of boyars, *okol’niche* and counsellor *dvoryane* (later joined by counsellor secretaries). As we can see, by Karamzin’s day such ideas about the tsar’s council had already gained wide acceptance. It ought to be borne in mind that from the publication of Karamzin’s work between 1818 and 1829 his books shaped for many decades to come the historical ideas of several generations of educated Russian society. Thus Karamzin’s authority as an historian and man of letters finally consolidated the idea of the tsar’s council as a meeting of the four highest ranks. Karamzin considered that all the boyars were counsellors of the sovereign. Furthermore, it was precisely Karamzin who to all appearances was the first historian to refer to this council as the “boyar дума” (*boyarskaya дума*). These magic words uttered by the great historian cast a spell over many subsequent researchers.¹⁰

2. A REGULAR INSTITUTION? THE MUSCOVITE COUNCIL AND THE “STATE SCHOOL” IN RUSSIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY (1840s–1890s)

The 1840s–1850s saw the advent of a new school of thought which was to become a basic trend in Russian historical studies. This was the “state school” (*gosudarstvennaya shkola*), whose adherents, S. M. Solov’ev, B. I. Chicherin, K. D. Kavelin, V. I. Sergeevich and others regarded the state and its activity as the basis for historical process.¹¹ Chiefly dealing with the history of the state and law, these researchers based their work on the methods of German idealism, primarily on Hegel. From Hegel they took the idea that the historical process was organic and dialectic, and that the central role in history was played by the state. Naturally this methodology was updated with time, and Hegelian ideas were gradually replaced by the concept of positivism. The switch to positivism prepared the ground for the extensive use in historical works of sociological methods, Marxism in particular.

¹⁰ N. M. Karamzin, *Istoriya gosudarstva Rossiiskogo*, 5th ed., 4 books (St. Petersburg, 1842–1845; reprint, Moscow, 1988–1989), book 2, vol. 8: 5–6; book 3, vol. 9: 262, 263.

¹¹ For more on the “state school,” see J. L. Black, “‘State school’ of Russian historians.” In *MERSH*, 37 (1984), 118–125.

The basic conceptual idea of the “state school” declared that historical growth was embodied in the political evolution of society from a patriarchal tribal system (rodovoi byt) to a modern state system. The omnipotence of the state was determined by natural conditions: the steppes hindered the formation of stable communities, the people wandered about the endless spaces, and only the state was capable of introducing an organising principle into society. An important role in the development of the research method of the “state school” was accomplished by the ideas of the German scholars of law Friedrich Karl Savigny (1779–1861) and Georg Friedrich Puchta (1798–1846). These scholars stressed in particular the idea of the natural development of law. Therefore, many historical concepts, including that of the Duma, were treated by “state school” authors as regulated phenomena that developed according to definite laws.

One of the leading theoreticians of the “state school,” K. D. Kavelin (1818–1885) dealt with the subject of the Duma in his works. Thus, he wrote in 1846 that, to begin with, the tsar’s Duma consisted solely of high dignitaries, noble boyars and okol’niche who restricted the initiative of the tsar, himself the incarnation of the supreme state authority. Ivan IV therefore brought non-noble people, the counsellor dvoryane, into the Duma on the strength of their personal merits. Yet the Duma continued to be in the hands of nobles who hated Ivan IV for having removed them from government.¹² In his essay on the Russian court system (1851), Kavelin pointed out that the sovereign’s great duma consisted of counsellor ranks (boyars, okol’niche, counsellor dvoryane, counsellor secretaries). All the counsellors had solely de facto influence on the tsar; there was no legal restriction whatsoever on the ruler’s power.¹³

Important for consolidating different ideas about the Duma was the work of Professor K. A. Nevolin (1806–1855), expert on the history of government and Russian civil law. From 1829 to 1832, he studied law in Germany, where he attended lectures by Hegel and Savigny. In 1844, in his work on state government in Russia, Nevolin proposed an extremely complicated outline of Russian supreme government. It was Nevolin who distinctly expressed the idea of the existence of more than one council in Muscovy. According to Nevolin, there were no less than three kinds of council: the Great All-Land Duma (Bol’shaya Zemskaya Duma), a representative body that met and discussed issues at the discretion of the

¹² K. D. Kavelin, *Sobranie sochinenii*, I (St. Petersburg, 1897), 50–54.

¹³ Kavelin, *Sobranie sochinenii*, I, 214, 234.

supreme power; the Boyar Duma (Boyarskaya Duma), which was the regent's council while the tsar was still an infant and during the interregnum; and the Tsar's Duma (Tsarskaya Duma), which was the tsar's permanent council and the oldest government institution in Russia. Nevolin shared the idea that the three highest ranks and counsellor secretaries were present in the Tsar's Duma. The sessions of the Tsar's Duma, held under the chairmanship of the tsar, could be ordinary or extraordinary. The Tsar's Duma debated issues proposed by the supreme power, and matters relating to administrative activity.¹⁴ Despite their brevity and abstract nature, Nevolin's remarks about the tsar's council had a noticeable effect on later literature. It may be said that future research into the Duma in many respects involved finishing and polishing Nevolin's scheme.

Yet F. M. Dmitriev (1829–1894) advanced original ideas that diverged fundamentally from Nevolin's standpoints. In his studies of legal instances, Dmitriev wrote that not all the boyars but only a selected group were summoned to the Duma to discuss state affairs. When administrative issues were up for discussion, the Duma on the contrary gathered together all the boyars. As we can see, Dmitriev is returning to the ideas of Tatishchev about various boyar categories; and indeed Dmitriev's work contains direct references to Tatishchev. According to Dmitriev, from Ivan IV's day onwards, the Duma became the permanent supreme institution with a limited number of counsellors; during the reign of Fedor Ivanovich (1584–1598) they numbered five or six. The historian pointed out that the Duma ought not to be regarded as the central institution of the state, it was simply the tsar's council, with a consultative role only. The approach to the Duma as an informal council with a small number of participants is to the undoubted merit of the author. As a whole, Dmitriev supposed that only one council existed in Muscovy.¹⁵

An interesting approach to the subject of the Duma was shown by N. G. Ustryalov (1805–1870), historian and publisher of numerous documents. Describing the organisation of supreme power in Muscovite Russia, Ustryalov concentrated mainly on the Sovereign's Court and the service hierarchy. The author thus laid the foundations for a highly fruitful trend in research in this field, the study of the Sovereign's Court as the principal service organisation in the Muscovite state. In the context of the history of the

¹⁴ K. Nevolin, "Obrazovanie upravleniya v Rossii ot Ioanna III do Petra Velikogo," *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniya* 41 (1844), section 5: 53–54.

¹⁵ F. Dmitriev, *Istoriya sudebnykh instantsii i grazhdanskogo appelyatsionnogo sudoproizvodstva ot Sudebnika do Uchrezhdeniya o guberniyakh* (Moscow, 1859), 140–143.

Sovereign's Court, Ustryalov also examined the history of the tsar's council, which he called the great дума or supreme council. Thus, the concept of "boyar" was primarily associated by Ustryalov with the service hierarchy. Writing about the history of the boyars, okol'niche, and other men of counsellor ranks, the author underlined the link between their presence on the Duma and a variety of services carried out by them at court.¹⁶

In the mid-19th century, the history of the Duma was dealt with in the works of Slavophiles and by authors with similar views. In 1845, Slavophilism's ideologist, A. S. Khomyakov, wrote that during the time of Adashev's reforms in the 1550s, the composition of the Boyar Duma was reorganised and, generally speaking, the first thirteen years of Ivan IV's reign were a time of "good advice." Slavophiles contrasted the aristocratic Duma with the assemblies of the land (zemskie sobory), as an electoral organ of the entire people.¹⁷

The subject of the Duma was approached with great caution by S. M. Solov'ev (1820–1879), the author of the monumental work, *The History of Russia from Earliest Times*. In the volumes devoted to 16th-century history, first published in the 1850s, Solov'ev linked the issue of the Duma to general changes taking place in the structure of the Sovereign's Court. Solov'ev pointed out that the word "boyar" (boyarin) had in the past very many meanings, which the modern historian may not always find easy to comprehend. Solov'ev was one of the first historians to employ the term "privy council" (blizhnyaya дума) to describe the trusted counsellors of the Muscovite sovereign.¹⁸ On the whole, Solov'ev refrained from drawing a precise distinction between the various kinds of Duma. Writing about the term дума itself, the historian pointed out that in previous times this word did not mean "state council," but rather the "palace," or possibly the "court."¹⁹

On the whole, the majority of specialists from the mid-19th century increasingly inclined towards a formal interpretation of the concept of the Duma. It was precisely this understanding of the word that was proposed by the well-known student of law, historian and expert on ancient texts, N.

¹⁶ N. Ustryalov, *Russkaya istoriya*, 3rd ed., I (St. Petersburg, 1845), 368, 390.

¹⁷ A. S. Khomyakov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, I (Moscow, 1878), otdel 2: 378–401; M. P. Pogodin, "Tsar' Ivan Vasil'evich Groznyi." In *Arkhiv istoricheskikh i yuridicheskikh svedenii, otnosyashchikhsya do Rossii*, 5 za 1859 (St. Petersburg, 1860), section Kritika: 11; cf. I. D. Belyaev, *Lektsii po istorii russkogo zakonodatel'stva* (Moscow, 1888), 384, 398.

¹⁸ S. M. Solov'ev, *Sochineniya*, III (Moscow, 1989), 152, 292, 298, 406; IV (Moscow, 1989), 273.

¹⁹ See S. M. Solov'ev, N. V. Kalachov, "Zamechaniya o slove 'дума'." In *Arkhiv istoriko-yuridicheskikh svedenii, otnosyashchikhsya do Rossii*, II (Moscow, 1855), part 1: 154.

V. Kalachov (1819–1885). He engaged in a direct polemic with Solov'ev over the meaning of the word *duma*. Kalachov stressed that the word was a juridical term signifying the meetings of all the boyars, *okol'nichie*, and counsellor *dvoryane*.²⁰

Similar views were held by Nevolin's pupil, the legal historian I. E. Andreevskii (1831–1891). Andreevskii's general understanding of the Russian historical process largely coincides with the main ideas of the "state school." He indicated that the chief causes of the slow state development in Russia were the influence of eastern traditions, the absence of Roman law traditions, and the adoption of Orthodoxy. This is why only one state element, supreme power, arose and consolidated itself in Russia, while the other, the civil freedom of the population, almost perished. Basing his ideas on the primacy of the state in Russian history, Andreevskii emphasised that the tsar's Duma was a permanent council where legislative, administrative and judicial matters were examined.²¹ The subject of the Duma was also approached from the standpoint of the "state school" by N. Khlebnikov, who admittedly sought to apply economic categories in his work. Unlike the preceding researcher, Khlebnikov assigned a decisive role to the sovereign. This is why he wrote of the insignificant role of the Duma in the Muscovite state. The entire government was concentrated in the hands of the sovereign, to whom the chancelleries were subordinate.²² An attempt to synthesise the opinions of different historians on the subject of the Duma was made by S. Petrovskii in his study of the Petrine Senate. With references to the works of Solov'ev, Nevolin and Dmitriev, he wrote of two kinds of Duma. The Boyar Duma was an emergency body that sat whenever the monarch was incapacitated or when the throne was vacant. The Tsar's Duma, on the other hand, was an institution with a permanent composition and a clearly defined organisation. Petrovskii contrasted the well ordered nature of the Tsar's Duma in Ivan IV's day with the amorphous council of earlier rulers. The Tsar's Duma was the highest judicial and administrative organ, consisting of boyars, *okol'nichie* and, from 1572 onwards counsellor *dvoryane*. The writer stressed the duality in the nature of the Duma. He pointed out that the tsar could summon certain individu-

²⁰ Solov'ev, Kalachov, "Zamechaniya," 154–155. Later, in 1883, Kalachov advanced a project of thorough research into the Duma and the publication of related documents, but his plans were never implemented. See L. I. Shokhin, "Ob odnom arkheograficheskom zamysle N. V. Kalachova." In *AE* za 1985 g. (Moscow, 1986), 100–106.

²¹ I. Andreevskii, *Russkoe gosudarstvennoe pravo*, I (St. Petersburg, 1866), 203–204.

²² N. Khlebnikov, *O vliyanii obshchestva na organizatsiyu gosudarstva v tsarskii period russkoi istorii* (St. Petersburg, 1869), 168–171.

als to the Duma at his own discretion, and on the whole the Duma always remained the private council of the ruler.²³

* * *

I shall now proceed to examine two fundamental works on the history of the Muscovite council, whose value for historians simply cannot be overestimated. In 1879, the well-known scholar and public figure, N. P. Zagoskin (1851–1912), Professor at the University of Kazan', published his study of the Boyar Duma.²⁴ Zagoskin based his work on the strict juridical approach to the subject that was typical of scholars of law in his day. His work provides a general picture about the Boyar Duma, followed by an historical essay on the Duma's development, and sections on the internal organisation of the Duma and its jurisdiction. Examining the general concept of the Boyar Duma, Zagoskin subscribed to the widespread opinion that there were two kinds of Duma, the ordinary Duma (*Duma obyknovennaya*), which met when there was a tsar able to govern the state in person, and the extraordinary Duma (*Duma s chrezvychainoi vlast'yu*), which was created when the throne was vacant or when the sovereign was still a minor. The author was of the view that by its very nature the Boyar Duma was the supreme consultative institution in the state.

According to Zagoskin, the origins of the Duma lie in the ancient custom of the princes to consult with the members of their military retinue (*druzhina*). With time, the privy advisors began to consider that the prince was obliged to consult with them. However, from the end of the 15th century with the growth in power of Moscow's grand princes, the roles were reversed. Now it was the ruler who considered that his servitors must appear at the council at his beck and call. Zagoskin stated quite clearly the main criterion on which he defined the composition of the Boyar Duma. He wrote that the entitlement and obligation to sit on the Boyar Duma were obtained by those with the highest court ranks, boyars and the *okol'niche*; during Ivan IV's reign, they were joined by the counsellor *dvoryane* rank. Unlike previous authors, Zagoskin pointed out that, as the administration grew, a fourth rank also gradually emerged at the Boyar Duma, that of counsellor secretary. It was thus that the ultimate idea of the four-tiered

²³ S. Petrovskii, *O Senate v tsarstvovanie Petra Velikogo* (Moscow, 1875), 16–21.

²⁴ N. P. Zagoskin, *Istoriya prava Moskovskogo gosudarstva*, II (Kazan, 1879), part 1, *Duma Boyarskaya*.

structure of the tsar's council evolved. The rhetorical explanations by 18th-century historians, Karamzin's brilliant literary work, and Nevolin's strict schematic constructions were complemented and summarised by Zagoskin with his precise juridical formulations.

It must be noted that Zagoskin himself had many reservations concerning his scheme. First, he pointed out that the council is never referred to in the sources as the "Boyar Duma." As a rule, the documents call the council "Duma," very occasionally "Sovereign's Duma" (Gosudareva Duma), quite often "chamber" (palata), "all boyars" (vse boyare), "boyars, okol'niche and men of counsellor ranks" (boyare, okol'niche i dumnye lyudi). Zagoskin therefore stressed the theoretical and artificial nature of the concept of the "Boyar Duma." Of comparable importance is another reservation by Zagoskin. Having included in the complete Boyar Duma not only all the holders of the four highest ranks, but also some officials (the treasurer, for example), the author indicated that this composition of the Boyar Duma is just an idealised construction, an artificial union of people entitled to sit on the Boyar Duma as a result of their status. In reality, only some played a full part in the work of the council, since the remaining holders of the counsellor ranks served as military governors in the towns outside Moscow, were involved in campaigns or were abroad with diplomatic missions.²⁵

Zagoskin also made important observations about the composition of the Privy Council (Blizhnyaya Duma). Like Tatishchev, Zagoskin indicated that the boyars and okol'niche were distinguished in accordance with the promotion of their clans and with their proximity to the tsar. The tsar's particularly trusted counsellors were quite rightly defined by Zagoskin as the chamber or privy boyars (komnatnye, blizhnie boyare) in contrast to the ordinary boyars (zauryadnye boyare), who were not admitted to the Privy Council. Zagoskin explained the rise of the Privy Council in terms of the sovereign's unwillingness to discuss certain matters with all his counsellors. According to the author, this kind of practice was a continuation of the ancient custom of consultations between the grand prince and his trusted people.²⁶ All these observations by Zagoskin about the Privy Council are confirmed by existent sources.

²⁵ Zagoskin, *Istoriya prava*, II, part 1: 46, 47. All of Zagoskin's factual observations are perfectly correct; indeed, historians have repeatedly noted the conscientiousness of his scholarship. However, the cause-and-effect relationship he alludes to were in reality quite different. The possession of one of the highest court rank ought to be correlated not with the right to be present on the tsar's council but with status in the court hierarchy (see Chapter IV).

²⁶ Zagoskin, *Istoriya prava*, II, part 1: 74–76.

The subject of the Privy Council was also examined by the classic writer of Russian history, V. O. Klyuchevskii (1841–1911). The history of the tsar's council is already covered in Klyuchevskii's first scholarly work, devoted to foreigners' accounts of Russia, and first published in 1866. On the basis of accounts by the English ambassador Giles Fletcher, Klyuchevskii noted that the Duma consisted of special counsellor boyars (*dumnye boyare*), who differed from the ordinary boyars that bore their title simply for honour's sake.²⁷ As was demonstrated in Chapter IV, Giles Fletcher's evidence on the Duma had immense significance for historians. Later, Klyuchevskii carried out a thorough reappraisal of his views on the Duma, as a result of which his conception of the council began to diverge fundamentally from the evidence provided by Fletcher. Having noticed this, Klyuchevskii declared Fletcher's information to be confused and unclear, although in reality the English ambassador's accounts accurately reflect the structure of the tsar's council. It ought to be noted, however, that Klyuchevskii did not have at his disposal a critical edition of Fletcher's work. In any event, Klyuchevskii's earlier views on the Duma are to a certain extent closer to historical reality than his subsequent constructions.²⁸

At the turn of the 1870s and 1880s, Klyuchevskii made the Boyar Duma the main object of his investigations. It is easy to imagine the shock he felt at the appearance of Zagoskin's book in 1879, and it is no surprise that relations between these historians were always cool, to say the least. Klyuchevskii's research resulted in a book entitled *The Boyar Duma of Ancient Russia* (first published in 1882 and then frequently republished). Up to the present, Klyuchevskii's work has been regarded as a foundation study on the Boyar Duma.

Klyuchevskii approached the history of the Boyar Duma on the basis of a sociological method which understood historical sociology as the study of society, i.e., the study of those forces which build up and direct human association. Klyuchevskii believed that it was important to establish which classes were involved in the historical process. He employed a wide variety of concepts for distinguishing between the classes within society: education, economic status, and moral, intellectual and physical conditions.²⁹

²⁷ V. O. Klyuchevskii, *Skazaniya inostrantsev o Moskovskom gosudarstve* (Moscow, 1991), 94.

²⁸ See for details S. N. Bogatyrev, "Tsarskii sovet v sochineniyakh Dzh. Fletchera i V. O. Klyucheskogo." In Klyuchevskii. *Sbornik materialov*, ed. S. O. Shmidt and others, 1 (Penza, 1995), 45–50.

²⁹ For more on Klyuchevskii's sociological method, see A. M. Medushevskii, "V. O. Klyuchevskii i gosudarstvennaya shkola russkoi istoriografii." In Klyuchevskii, *Skazaniya inostrantsev*, 308–315.

In the opinion of the author, law historians often exaggerated the significance of one or another form of government in the history of society. The fundamental idea behind Klyuchevskii's research was the study of the "social composition of government." It is no coincidence that in his book on the Boyar Duma, he considered that his main objective was to provide a history of this governmental institution in conjunction with the history of society. To quote the author, the Boyar Duma stood at the summit of ancient Russian administration, it was "the fly-wheel that set in motion the entire mechanism of government." Yet this very same Boyar Duma, according to Klyuchevskii, remained invisible to those who moved in tune with its instructions. Giving a general description of the Boyar Duma, Klyuchevskii wrote:

By its nature [the Boyar Duma] was a legislative institution that created general rules, permanent norms, but before us [remain] only the practical results of its legislative work... Hidden from society by the sovereign above and the clerk below, [the Duma] was a constitutional institution with broad influence but without a constitutional charter, a government seat with a broad circle of affairs but without chancery or archive.³⁰

Noting in a number of vivid expressions the elusiveness of the governmental and political activity of the Boyar Duma, Klyuchevskii effectively untied his own hands. He further pointed out that the social history of the Duma is much more "rewarding and intriguing," and proceeded to broad conceptual constructions embracing many centuries of Russian history. A critic of Klyuchevskii remarked later that the real title of his book ought to have been *The History of Russia from Earliest Times*.³¹

The structure of the Boyar Duma was regarded by Klyuchevskii, as did Zagoskin, as having consisted of four ranks. At the same time, he indicated that these ranks were not exclusive and immobile. He believed that members of one family could hold differing ranks simultaneously, while a person could climb up the hierarchy from a lower to a higher rank. The subject of the hierarchy is developed in detail by Klyuchevskii, who proposed a whole series of new, original ideas in this field. He approached the issue of hierarchy from the angle of the general changes in Muscovite

³⁰ Klyuchevskii, *Boyarskaya дума*, 5. Translation by N. Sh. Kollmann (see her *Kinship and Politics*, 12).

³¹ M. F. Vladimirovskii-Budanov, "Istoriya gosudarstvennogo prava," *Sbornik gosudarstvennykh znaniy* VIII (St. Petersburg, 1880), *Kritika i bibliografiya*: 108.

administration at the turn of the 15th and the 16th centuries. With the increasing complexity of administrative tasks, the household government was split into the palace and central national administrations, which in its turn led to the genesis of a special circle of privy or chamber servitors (*blizhnie, komnatnye lyudi*). These people had access to the tsar while others did not.³²

Klyuchevskii adduced a range of issues which lay within the province of the Privy Council. In his opinion, these were usually matters that concerned not the national government as a whole, but a restricted court sphere, secret affairs, and also extraordinary or especially complex problems that called for unusual solutions. According to Klyuchevskii, the competence of the Privy Council consisted of “particularly important occasions.” On the whole, Zagoskin and Klyuchevskii examined the council of the Muscovite tsar as a cabinet of ministers, that is they employed terms characteristic of the 19th-century Russian state.

In many respects Klyuchevskii relied on juridical studies contemporary to him. Nevertheless some authoritative historians of law have been critical of Klyuchevskii’s conception of the Boyar Duma. In a review of Klyuchevskii’s work, legal historian M. F. Vladimirskii-Budanov reproached the author for having over-extended the subject of the Duma.³³ He also spoke out against the sociological method employed by Klyuchevskii. According to the reviewer, “the history of the institutions should develop hand in hand with the history of the classes, and not merge into it.” In the thinking of 19th-century legal historians, the principal goal of any study of governmental institutions was to describe their composition and activity. This is why Vladimirskii-Budanov was particularly dissatisfied with the ideas about the impermanence of the Duma. In his opinion, the Boyar Duma would cease in that case to be an institution and would become an ephemeral phenomenon. The author was adamant that precisely all the boyars were members of the council, and this was the chief purpose of each boyar. Whether all the boyars took part in each session is in his opinion a purely factual question. A similar dogmatic approach was evident in the general works of Vladimirskii-Budanov, who among other issues dealt with the subject of the Boyar Duma. At the beginning of the 1870s, the author was the first historian to clearly and unequivocally express ideas about the Boyar Duma as a regular institution, about the absolute right of the coun-

³² For more details, see Chapter IV.

³³ Vladimirskii-Budanov, “*Istoriya gosudarstvennogo prava*,” 104–124.

sellor ranks to sit on the Boyar Duma, and the juridical right of the Boyar Duma to promulgate legislation.³⁴

Klyuchevskii's concept of the Boyar Duma as the "fly-wheel" of Russian history was argued by N. P. Kolyupanov in his comprehensive 1882 essay on the history of internal government in Russia.³⁵ Kolyupanov developed his own observations about the link between the administration and the council. In his opinion the role of the Boyar Duma was diminished by the fact that its members were also heads of separate chancelleries, and so they strove to resolve most issues not in the council, but in their chancelleries. On the whole, despite a number of critical judgements, Zagoskin's and Klyuchevskii's scheme was accepted by the majority of scholars. In particular, Klyuchevskii's views on the history of the Duma were entirely shared by the legal historian V. N. Latkin and by D. I. Ilovaiskii, who were representatives of a conservative trend in historiography.³⁶

* * *

However, the academic calm was broken by V. I. Sergeevich (1832–1910), the leading specialist on legal history, and the head of a new generation of historians within the "state school." Sergeevich drew a great deal of attention to the development of contractual relations between society and its ruler. From the end of the 1890s, Sergeevich became the most serious and consistent critic of the approach to the Boyar Duma as a regular institution akin to 19th-century state institutions. According to his logic, the concept of the Boyar Duma does not correspond in any way to that of the sovereign's advisory board. Sergeevich remarked that the issue of the council's composition is the main aspect of the problem. He noted that the sources cannot be used to corroborate the idea already expressed by Nevolin, Zagoskin and Klyuchevskii that the Boyar Duma consisted of all the boyars, okol'niche and counsellor dvoryane. Sergeevich set forth the bases of the hierarchy in Muscovite society with far greater detail and clarity than his predecessors.³⁷ He showed that at least in the 16th century, and possibly

³⁴ See M. F. Vladimirovskii-Budanov, *Obzor istorii russkogo prava*, 5th ed. (Kiev, 1907), 45–52, 162–178. Cf. A. N. Medushevskii, "Russkie pravovedy." In *Mir istochnikovedeniya*, 221–229.

³⁵ N. P. Kolyupanov, "Ocherk vnutrennego upravleniya v Rossii, nachinaya s moskovskogo perioda," *Russkaya mysl'*, 1882, no. 1: 303–305.

³⁶ See V. N. Latkin, *Lektsii po istorii prava* (St. Petersburg, 1892), 174–181; D. I. Ilovaiskii, *Istoriya Rossii*, 3 (Moscow, 1890), 445–446. Cf. P. N. Mrochek-Drozdovskii, *Istoriya russkogo prava*, I (Moscow, 1892), 90–93.

³⁷ V. Sergeevich, *Russkie yuridicheskie drevnosti*, 2nd ed., II (St. Petersburg, 1900), 357.

even earlier, a special group of privy boyars had formed amongst the boyars, and had access to the sovereign's personal chambers and carried out his most personal commands. "Closeness" was acquired as the result of the tsar's personal disposition, and that is why the cherished dream of every boyar was to become a privy boyar.³⁸ Sergeevich's critique of the formal interpretation of the concept of the Boyar Duma was an important stage in the historiography of the tsar's council. Yet Sergeevich's ideas have not been accepted by the majority of authors writing about the council.

3. THE ADVENT AND VICTORY OF SOCIOLOGY (1890s–1950s)

From the final decade of the 19th century on, more and more Russian historians have resorted to sociological research methods. The new methodology was created on the basis of Comte's positivist sociology, and also the works of the English positivist H. Spencer (1820–1903). Spencer conceived a plan for a comprehensive system of philosophy that would be based on his theory of evolution and that would embrace and integrate all existing fields of knowledge. With the move from the abstract philosophical doctrines of the 1840s to positivism, scholars began to regard the discipline of history as a supplier of facts for a higher branch of learning – sociology. Historians paid increasing attention to economic and social relationships, in particular to their role in the history of law. Each social group was assigned its own place in what were now recognised as social systems. This sociological approach has been characterised by the comparison of Russian and European history, the quest for common and specific traits in Russia's past. With time, sociological research methods began to be employed more and more intensely in historical studies, thanks especially to Marxism, which was growing ever more popular, and predominated after 1917, amongst Russian historians.³⁹

The switch in methodology coincided with the arrival of a new generation of historians. As early as 1901, the young historians A. E. Presnyakov (1870–1929) and N. P. Pavlov-Sil'vanskii (1869–1908) wrote in private correspondence that Sergeevich's and Vladimirskii-Budanov's views were a

³⁸ Sergeevich, *Russkie yuridicheskie drevnosti*, 2nd ed., I (St. Petersburg, 1902), 417–419.

³⁹ On the development of sociology in Russia, see A. N. Medushevskii, *Istoriya russkoi sotsiologii* (Moscow, 1993).

respected but ein überwundener Standpunkt.⁴⁰ At the turn of the century, Pavlov-Sil'vanskii himself advanced the theory of the general identicalness of the historical processes in Russia and Western Europe. Using sociological constructions, he affirmed that feudalism existed both in Russia and in Western European countries. Thus, in the Middle Ages, Russian state institutions, including the Boyar Duma, were largely analogous to those in Europe. One of the typical features of feudalism, according to Pavlov-Sil'vanskii, was the hierarchical system of legislative, judicial and military institutions, which united all the feudal lords in a single social group. Those scholars who shared Pavlov-Sil'vanskii's conception of feudalism in Russia developed the analogy between the Russian boyars and European feudal lords.⁴¹

Under the influence of the sociological approach, more and more researchers began to deal with the social composition of the Boyar Duma. As has already been noted, sociological methods were first employed in Duma research by Klyuchevskii, and his historical conception reflected ideas prevailing in Russian society in the period following the great reforms of the 1860s. This society was still poorly differentiated and had not known such upheavals as the revolutions of the early 20th century. Unlike Klyuchevskii, historians at the beginning of the 20th century were oriented towards the new industrial society gripped by acute social conflicts. The new generation of historians was interested primarily in economic and social history. The historians of the "new wave" of the early 20th century were divided in their attitudes towards Klyuchevskii's work. Some of them endeavoured to elaborate on Klyuchevskii's conception, drawing upon the latest achievements in sociology, the history of law and other disciplines. These specialists included S. Kotlyarevskii, S. F. Platonov, Yu. V. Got'e, M. K. Lyubavskii and M. A. D'yakonov.⁴²

Klyuchevskii's method was defended and developed by his followers. In 1909, in a collection of articles dedicated to Klyuchevskii, appeared S. Kotlyarevskii's work on Duma research methodology. In fact, all the author's arguments were directed against the juridical method and in support of Klyuchevskii's research approach. Referring to the relative nature of legal categories, the author emphasised that such categories are quite inap-

⁴⁰ See N. P. Pavlov-Sil'vanskii, *Feodalizm v Rossii* (Moscow, 1988), 555.

⁴¹ Pavlov-Sil'vanskii, *Feodalizm*, 126. For more on the evolution of views on feudalism in Russia, see M. B. Sverdlov, *Obshchestvennyi stroi Drevnei Rusi v russkoi istoricheskoi nauke XVIII–XX vv.* (St. Petersburg, 1996).

⁴² For more on the attitudes of early 20th-century historians towards Klyuchevskii's conception, see V. A. Murav'ev, "V. O. Klyuchevskii i 'novaya volna' istorikov nachala XX v." In *Klyuchevskii: Sbornik materialov*, I, 219–224.

plicable to the patrimonial state, to the era when the sovereign was inseparable from the landowner. Consequently, ideas about the division of power into the legislative, executive and judicial, and concepts about the legally defined competence of institutions are not very suitable for the study of the Muscovite state.⁴³ On the strength of these observations, Kotlyarevskii concluded that the main criteria for Duma research should be socio-economic rather than abstract juridical categories. For his time, such a conclusion was undoubtedly a major theoretical achievement that reflected the successes of the sociology of the day. This approach later gained a firm foothold in the works of Soviet historians.

The social approach to the history of the Muscovite state was consistently developed in the works of S. F. Platonov (1860–1933). It was Platonov who at the end of the 19th century advanced the idea that the main feature of Ivan IV's reign was the conflict waged by the tsar and the gentry against the aristocracy. Platonov also examined the history of the Boyar Duma from this standpoint. In his article on the Boyar Duma, he sought to demonstrate that as the tsar's authority grew, the amorphous meetings of princely counsellors were transformed into the highest government institution with the broadest jurisdiction.⁴⁴

Platonov's contribution to future research into the composition of the Privy Council is indisputable. In conceptual terms, Platonov understood the Privy Council in the same way as Klyuchevskii. He considered that it was a narrow and intimate council of the tsar's particularly trusted people, with whom he discussed important issues prior to submitting them to the Boyar Duma assembly. It is especially important that Platonov noted the permanent nature of the composition of the Privy Council. Platonov scrutinised the evidence contained in the chronicle on the Privy Council in the 1550s; Klyuchevskii in his works paid only fleeting attention to this source.

A rejection of formal, legalistic concepts was proclaimed in Yu. V. Got'e's article on the Boyar Duma. It is characteristic that Got'e did not even pose the question of the right of all the counsellor ranks to sit on the council. The existence of such a right was self-evident to the historian. This was the first time in historiography that the sociological method gained an unconditional victory. Practically all subsequent historians like Got'e would

⁴³ S. Kotlyarevskii, "Chto daet Boyarskaya Duma V. O. Klyuchevskogo dlya gosudarstvovedeniya." In *Sbornik statei, posvyashchennykh Vasiliyu Osipovichu Klyuchevskomu* (Moscow, 1909), 244–253.

⁴⁴ S. F. Platonov, "Boyarskaya дума – predshestvenitsa Senata." In *Stat'i po russkoi istorii*, 2nd ed. (St. Petersburg, 1912), 444–494.

go on to study not the council itself, but the combination of the four highest ranks. Having shown that the history of the Boyar Duma was closely linked to the political history of Muscovy, Got'e actually devoted his entire article, entitled *The Boyar Duma in the Period from the 15th to the 17th Centuries*, to the political history of Muscovite Russia.⁴⁵

A consistent critic of the ideas of the "state school" was F. N. Taranovskii. He argued that historical conclusions should be based not on written laws alone, but on unwritten juridical practice. In his view, the existence of the Boyar Duma is proven by the reaction of public opinion to the practice the rulers had of holding meetings with their privy counsellors. However, Taranovskii's reference to "public opinion" is vague and lacks any references to whatever sources. Counterbalancing Sergeevich's method, Taranovskii proclaimed his approach to Duma research: "The relationship between state institutions of the distant past must be explained on the basis of the real alignment of the political forces that stood behind them."⁴⁶

Worthy of note are the views on the council expressed by the historian M. K. Lyubavskii (1860–1936), who was Rector of Moscow University from 1911 to 1917, and subsequently became a full member of the Academy of Sciences. Developing Klyuchevskii's ideas, he directly linked the formation of the Boyar Duma structure with alterations to the state administration. Lyubavskii showed that the Duma consisted mainly of the heads of individual departments, and so as the number of departments increased the number of members of the council also grew.⁴⁷

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A traditional, legal school of research was also preserved alongside the sociological approaches in the historiography of the council.⁴⁸ And thus, as a result of increasingly heated polemics, the history of the Boyar Duma was to become a subject for debate. Generally speaking, the proponents of both schools did not advance any fundamentally new ideas about the Boyar

⁴⁵ Yu. V. Got'e, "Boyarskaya дума XV–XVII столетий." In *Russkaya istoriya v ocherkakh i stat'yakh*, ed. M. V. Dovnar-Zapol'skii, III (Kiev, 1912), 124–142.

⁴⁶ F. N. Taranovskii, *Otzyv o sochinenii V. I. Sergeevicha "Drevnosti russkogo prava"* (Yur'ev, 1911), 90–97.

⁴⁷ M. K. Lyubavskii, *Leksii po drevnei russkoi istorii do kontsa XVI v.* (Moscow, 1916), 283–284.

⁴⁸ See V. V. Ivanovskii, *Russkoe gosudarstvennoe pravo*, I (Kazan, 1896), part I, 160; A. S. Alekseev, *Russkoe gosudarstvennoe pravo*, 4th ed. (Moscow, 1897), 356, 357, 395.

Duma that were different from those of the “state school.” Surprising as it may seem, at the beginning of the 20th century, the ideas of the “state school” were increasingly stressed in the works of Klyuchevskii. In his book on the Boyar Duma, Klyuchevskii stressed the importance of political and social aspects in the history of the council. In his lectures on Russian history, however, Klyuchevskii emphasised that the Boyar Duma was not created as an arena for political struggle, and that personal and party interests should disappear “under the pressure of state interest and political decorum or custom.”⁴⁹

In 1903, N. K. Piksanov (1878–1969), subsequently a well-known literature specialist, published a comprehensive review on a new edition of Klyuchevskii’s book about the Boyar Duma.⁵⁰ Piksanov insisted that the Boyar Duma ought to be recognised as an institution with a definite composition consisting of four counsellor ranks. Citing Klyuchevskii, he also specified that in reality only those counsellor ranks in Moscow were summoned to the Duma at a given time. Thus Piksanov largely adhered to the schemes of Klyuchevskii and Zagoskin.

By all accounts, Piksanov’s views also reflected the standpoint taken by his teacher, M. A. D’yakonov (1855/6–1919). D’yakonov also criticised Sergeevich’s ideas in his works. In D’yakonov’s view, the Boyar Duma was the sovereign’s permanent council on matters concerning legislation and foreign policy. D’yakonov also noted that alongside the ordinary and routine meetings of the Boyar Duma, the Muscovite tsars consulted with their privy advisors, with members of the clergy in particular.⁵¹

Klyuchevskii’s and Zagoskin’s works formed the basis for the account of the Boyar Duma penned by A. N. Filippov, who in his textbook on the history of Russian law made an unoriginal attempt to resurrect the views of the “state school.”⁵² Klyuchevskii’s conclusions were also exploited in a textbook by V. Romanovskii on the history of state institutions. This book is marked by an endeavour to synthesise the opinions of different authors about the Boyar Duma, principally the views of Klyuchevskii and Sergeevich. Such an approach is intrinsically worthy of note, although admittedly Romanovskii did not apply it in the best possible way. In many

⁴⁹ V. O. Klyuchevskii, *Sochineniya v devyati tomakh*, II (Moscow, 1988), 326. The relevant volume of Klyuchevskii’s lectures was first published in 1906.

⁵⁰ N. K. [Piksanov], “K voprosu o Boyarskoi Dume,” *Zhurnal Ministerstva yustitsii*, 1903, no. 3: 334–360.

⁵¹ M. A. D’yakonov, *Ocherki obshchestvennogo i gosudarstvennogo stroya Drevnei Rusi*, 4th ed. (St. Petersburg, 1912), 426–449.

⁵² Filippov, *Uchebnik*, I, 366–379.

respects, his conclusions are an artificial compilation of various quotations from preceding literature.⁵³

Of far greater interest are the works of another of Klyuchevskii's disciples, the historian of law and state institutions, I. Malinovskii, who criticised the ideas of the "state school." Malinovskii sought in this way to combine the new methodology with the approach taken by older researchers. The old, static approach appeared the most acceptable to Malinovskii when he was writing about the Boyar Duma, too.⁵⁴ Yet Malinovskii also employed a new, comparative methodology, carrying out a detailed and well-argued comparison of the Muscovite Duma and the Rada in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Malinovskii made a whole series of highly interesting conclusions and observations in the field of the comparative analysis of the two councils.

Amongst the works about the Boyar Duma published in the period under consideration, a special place is held by the research of V. I. Savva (1865–1920). His works were a long way from the methodological innovations of the early 20th century and constitute a concrete study based on the most painstaking examination of 15th- and 16th-centuries diplomatic records. Savva used these sources to help bring to light information about the role of the council in foreign affairs. It was Klyuchevskii that saw the need to draw on chancellery documents, and in this sense Savva carried out Klyuchevskii's will. Yet unlike Klyuchevskii, Savva sought to keep his own interpretation of the documents to a minimum, for which he was afterwards subject to fierce criticism.⁵⁵ To his advantage, the enlisting of new archival materials distinguishes Savva's book from many of the above-mentioned works, whose authors often substituted the painstaking study of sources with a game of sociological phrase-making.

* * *

Other historians of the early-20th-century "new wave" had a sceptical attitude towards Klyuchevskii's theory, including his views on the history of

⁵³ V. Romanovskii, *Gosudarstvennye uchrezhdeniya drevnei i novoi Rossii*, 3rd ed. (Moscow, 1911), 293–320.

⁵⁴ See I. Malinovskii, *Lektsii po istorii russkogo prava* (Rostov-na-Donu, 1916), 4–7, 164–166, 187–190; idem, *Rada Velikogo knyazhestva Litovskogo v svyazi s Boyarskoi Dumoi Drevnei Rusi*, II (Tomsk, 1912), issue 2.

⁵⁵ Savva, *O Posol'skom prikaze*. See a review of this work: V. Geiman, "Novaya popytka issledovaniya o Boyarskoi Dume," *Russkii istoricheskii zhurnal*, 1921, no. 7: 166–176. The second part of Savva's work was discovered in an archive and published in 1983 by S. O. Shmidt. See Savva, *D'yaki*.

the Boyar Duma. Drawing on Pavlov-Sil'vanskii's ideas about feudalism in Russia, these historians sought to create new conceptions about the historical development of Russia. A. E. Presnyakov observed that the political structure of Old Russia must not be described in terms of modern law, and he shed new light on the problem of the relations between the prince and his armed retinue (*druzhina*) in Old Rus'. Presnyakov's theory was to become a major achievement of historical studies at the beginning of the 20th century, indeed his ideas are frequently cited by today's researchers involved in the study of the Muscovite political structures. In Presnyakov's view, the Old Russian prince implemented his policy with the assistance of his retinue. It comprised the prince's closest comrades-in-arms, who aided him in peacetime and in military campaigns. According to Presnyakov, the retinue was not a regular institution. Rather, its members constituted the "inner circle" of the prince's personal servants. In the 12th century, the members of the retinue (*druzhinniki*) gradually achieved a greater economic independence from the prince. Thanks to their personal enterprise, they acquired lands, became tied economically to the local population, and eventually turned into a new estate of boyars. The boyar class emerging from the retinue did not sever its ties with the prince and rose to the pinnacle of society as a whole.⁵⁶ This is why in Presnyakov's works, the history of the Boyar Duma is examined in connection with the social history of the boyars. He insisted that the Boyar Duma was the repository of traditional forms of power, but during Ivan IV's reign it began to change into the supreme chancellery institution.⁵⁷

The first historians to interpret the history of the council in Marxist categories were two of Klyuchevskii's pupils, N. A. Rozhkov (1868–1927) and M. N. Pokrovskii (1868–1932). They were also impressed by Pavlov-Sil'vanskii's comparative approach to Russian history. The Marxist theory of historical development stresses, of course, the class struggle for the ownership of the means of production. As the chief means of production in the Middle Ages was the land, Rozhkov and Pokrovskii, when referring to the boyars, focused primarily on their ownership of land. Following in Pavlov-Sil'vanskii's footsteps, these two historians argued that feudalism was characterised by a close link between state power and land-ownership. Rozhkov argued that in Kievan Rus', the Boyar Duma assisted the prince in his

⁵⁶ A. E. Presnyakov, *Knyazheskoe pravo v Drevnei Rusi: Ocherki po istorii X–XII stoletii. Lektsii po russkoi istorii: Kievskaya Rus'* (Moscow, 1993), 181–230.

⁵⁷ A. E. Presnyakov, *Istoriya Moskovskogo tsarstva* (Petrograd, 1918), 34–37, 59, 112.

task of governing, but did not yet constitute a state institution and had no internal organisation. The history of the Muscovite Duma was examined by Rozhkov in terms of social struggle between various groups within the feudal society. For Rozhkov, the history of the Boyar Duma is the story of the confrontation between two social forces, the Duma aristocracy and the untitled counsellor ranks. In their turn, all the Duma members were united in opposing the provincial dvoryane, town-dwellers and prosperous peasants. During Ivan IV's reign the significance of the aristocratic Boyar Duma declined owing to the strengthening of the Privy Council, on which the tsar's trusted counsellors sat; here Rozhkov agreed with Klyuchevskii.⁵⁸

Pokrovskii also sought to apply Marxist ideas about classes and the class struggle to the history of the Muscovite state, sometimes in a highly simplified form. His basic idea was that Russia was one of the European countries, developing along the same lines as all the rest; this development was conceived in terms of Marxist categories.⁵⁹

With the consolidation of Marxism the sociological approach began to predominate amongst historians. Nevertheless, up to the early 1920s, notions about the Boyar Duma were heavily influenced by the works of Platonov, Got'e and Lyubavskii. The historians of the old school lost their position in the academic system after the Bolshevik takeover of power. When the Bolsheviks finally consolidated their power in the early 1920s, they began persecuting non-Marxist historians first through administrative measures and then through criminal prosecutions. The authorities implemented their ideological policy through Pokrovskii and his supporters, assigning them the highest administrative posts in the academic system. Pokrovskii insisted that all historians should study only topical themes, the history of imperialism, industrial capitalism and the proletariat. At the same time, he declared that themes relating to medieval Russian history had been "put in the attic" by the revolution.⁶⁰ Those scholars of the old school who continued to study medieval history were accused of wanting to restore the autocracy and the power of the bourgeoisie, an indictment which inevitably led to criminal prosecution in compliance with Stalinist legal practice. In 1930, accusations of this kind were made against major Russian medieval-

⁵⁸ N. A. Rozhkov, *Proiskhozhdenie samoderzhaviya v Rossii* (Moscow, 1906), 185, 190, 191; idem, *Russkaya istoriya v sravnitel'no-istoricheskom osveshchenii*, IV (Moscow, 1922), part 1: 130–131.

⁵⁹ See Pokrovskii's foreword to a publication of works by Pavlov-Sil'vanskii (1924) in Pavlov-Sil'vanskii, *Feodalism*, 576; M. N. Pokrovskii, "Boyarstvo i Boyarskaya дума," In *Bol'shaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya*, VII (1927), 271–275.

⁶⁰ See Yu. V. Krivosheev, A. Yu. Dvornichenko, "Izgnanie nauki: rossiiskaya istoriografiya v 20-kh–nachale 30-kh godov XX veka," *Otechestvennaya istoriya*, 1994, no. 3: 146, 148.

ists, including Platonov, Got'e and Lyubavskii.⁶¹ As was noted, these historians were leading specialists on the history of the Russian medieval state, including the history of the Muscovite council. After their arrest, serious research into the history of the medieval Russian state virtually came to a halt. This is why right up until the middle of our century, Soviet historians did not offer any new ideas in Duma research.

* * *

Generally speaking, the period from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th saw the formation of the basic ideas about the Muscovite council that have survived to the present. The conceptual understanding of the Boyar Duma largely coincided with the approach taken by the supporters of the "state school." At the same time, the introduction of the methods of sociology allowed a dynamic picture of the council to be constructed. Thereby, the link between the history of the tsar's council and the history of the country as a whole could be shown. On the other hand, this kind of approach was fraught with a danger that many scholars have been unable to avoid: the history of the council began to be seen from the angle of the social confrontation between the conservative aristocracy and the progressive nobility, and eventually the issue of the council dissolved into various speculations about this alleged conflict. This process was particularly promoted by the idea of the formalised structure of the council from the four highest court ranks. Although such an idea had taken shape as early as the 18th century, when historians were unfamiliar with many of the sources, these views were also accepted by specialists from a later period. The main reason for this was that the concept of the four-tiered structure of the council rendered the Boyar Duma a particularly convenient subject for sociological analysis.

⁶¹ See *Akademicheskoe delo 1929–1930 gg.*, ed. V. P. Leonov and others (St. Petersburg, 1993), issue 1, *Delo po obvineniyu akademika S. F. Platonova*; M. A. Pakhmatullin, "Delo po obvineniyu akademika S. F. Platonova," *Otechestvennaya istoriya*, 1994, no. 6: 174–183.

4. THE PROSOPOGRAPHICAL IMAGE OF THE COUNCIL (FROM THE 1950s UNTIL TODAY)

The renaissance of interest in the Middle Ages was linked to the establishment of Stalin's cult. Stalin sought to use historical analogies to underpin the regime of his personal power. Propaganda on the deeds of renowned princes and tsars was meant to evoke associations with Stalin's rule. Thus, in the early 1930s, the authorities decided to refrain from the nihilistic attitude towards the history of the Russian state. In 1934, a resolution was passed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party and by the Soviet Government calling for the teaching of history in educational establishments to be reinstated in full. Stalin's ideologists stressed in particular the consolidating role of a powerful, centralised state in the history of Russia. It was underscored that thanks to a centralised state, Russia had been able to cast off the "Tartar yoke" and hold its own in struggles with other invaders. All the annexations and conquests by Russian princes were now described using the euphemism "extension of the Russian state."⁶²

The new approaches to the history of the state were reflected in the officially approved textbook on the history of the USSR, which also made reference to the Boyar Duma. It was described as the sovereign's permanent council consisting of the top feudal nobility. It was stressed in particular that the Boyar Duma was at the same time home to a conservative feudal opposition. Brief references to the Blizhnyaya Duma are only contained in the chapters devoted to the 17th century.⁶³ Thus, in the second half of the 1930s, Soviet historians were again granted the opportunity to study the history of the Russian state in the Middle Ages, though they were obliged to adhere strictly to the officially favoured conception of Russian history. In particular, the well-known expert on Muscovite history, S. V. Bakhrushin (1882–1950), began to devote his efforts to a study of the government of the 1550s, and the findings of his research were published in 1945.⁶⁴ Although some of the theses in his work were dictated by a sim-

⁶² For details, see A. L. Khoroshkevich, "Oprichnina i kharakter Russkogo gosudarstva v sovetskoi istoriografii 20-kh–serediny 50-kh godov," *Istoriya SSSR*, 1991, no. 6: 88–89.

⁶³ *Istoriya SSSR*, ed. V. I. Lebedev, B. D. Grekov, S. V. Bakhrushin, I (1939), 326–327 (section written by K. V. Bazilevich), 488, 489.

⁶⁴ Bakhrushin's works were subsequently republished in a two-volume collection of his works which is referred to in this text. See Bakhrushin, "Izbrannaya Rada." In 1944, at a meeting of historians in the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Bakhrushin spoke of the particular importance of studying the history of the Russian state. Yu. N. Amiantov, Z. N. Tikhonova, eds., "Stenogramma soveshchaniya po voprosam istorii SSSR v TsK VKP(b) v 1944 g.," *VIS*, 1996, no. 3: 83. See also A. M. Dubrovskii, S. V. Bakhrushin i ego vremya (Moscow, 1992); Khoroshkevich, "Oprichnina i kharakter Russkogo gosudarstva," 91.

plified Marxist approach, it was Bakhrushin who undertook the first serious attempt to reconstruct the composition of the government of the 1550s. Bakhrushin identified the Privy Council (Blizhnyaya Duma) with what was known as the “Chosen Council” (Izbrannaya Rada) referred to in the works of the well-known Muscovite writer, Prince A. M. Kurbskii. Though the correctness of such an identification is still being debated by experts, Bakhrushin correctly pointed out that the 1550s were an important phase in the history of the Privy Council, marked by profound transformations in the state administration. Like many other historians, Bakhrushin saw the roots of the Privy Council in Vasilii III’s practice of holding meetings with his trusted counsellors. The process whereby the Privy Council came into being was viewed by Bakhrushin in terms of the social confrontation between the centralised monarchy and the aristocratic feudal curia, the Boyar Duma. Vasilii III therefore replaced the curia with the Privy Council, a body which could be dubbed a distinctive cabinet of ministers.⁶⁵

In 1958, the subject of the Privy Council attracted the attention of I. I. Smirnov (1909–1965), who employed a host of new sources in his research. Smirnov, like Bakhrushin, wrote of the elevation of the Privy Council during Ivan IV’s struggle with the reactionary Boyar Duma. The Privy Council constituted a nucleus of the boyars closest to the tsar, who were supporters of his policy. Smirnov’s general notions about the Privy Council and the Boyar Duma were based on Klyuchevskii’s views. At the same time, unlike Klyuchevskii, Smirnov underscored the significance of the Privy Council not only with regard to court and household issues but also to the administration of all state affairs. Of fundamental importance is Smirnov’s conclusion about the key role played by the Privy Council in foreign policy.⁶⁶

At virtually the same time as Smirnov’s work appeared A. A. Zimin’s study of the composition of the Boyar Duma. This work signified the start of a new phase in the study of the subject, insofar as Zimin (1920–1980) sought to make use of the entire body of sources for the period from the end of the 15th century through to the end of the 16th century. In conceptual terms, Zimin understood the Boyar Duma in exactly the same way as the majority of his predecessors, i.e., as the combination of the four highest court ranks. Applying the approach already formulated by Klyuchevskii and Taranovskii, Zimin wrote: “Changes in the composition of the Boyar

⁶⁵ Bakhrushin, “Izbrannaya Rada,” 329–352.

⁶⁶ Smirnov, *Ocherki*, 150–155.

Duma graphically reflect the struggle to centralise the state apparatus, to restrict the power of the boyar aristocracy.”⁶⁷

Yet on the whole Zimin did not pay a great deal of attention to theoretical deliberations about the Council. The trend started by Zimin’s studies was a dynamic one, oriented at unearthing social changes in the history of the Council. The works of authors using this research method were characterised by an active quest to find new sources and bring them into circulation.

In the 1960s, the study of the Muscovite political system became markedly more active. Without a doubt, an important contribution to this was the publication of works by S. B. Veselovskii (1876–1952), who carried out over many years an enormous study of the family ties in the period between the 14th and the 16th centuries. His studies inflicted a decisive blow on the groundless ideas about the antagonism between the aristocrats, who opposed the central power, and the progressive dvoryane, on whom Ivan IV leant for support in his reforms. As I have already noted, it was in the context of such a confrontation that the history of the council had previously been conceived.⁶⁸

In his work (1966) on the initial period of the Oprichnina, R. G. Skrynnikov called the Privy Council “the supreme government body” of the mid-16th century. An adherent of traditional views on the subject of the Boyar Duma, Skrynnikov has made a series of interesting, yet disputable observations on change in the composition of the tsar’s council. It is important to draw attention to Skrynnikov’s observation about the existence in Muscovite Russia of an organ of government alongside the Boyar Duma.⁶⁹ The historian calls this organ the semiboyarshchina (“the seven boyars’ government”). Although the name and number of members of this organ can be disputed, the actual fact of the existence of a special ruling group among the boyars is corroborated by a host of documents. Skrynnikov is also the author of valuable observations about the composition of several regents’ councils of the 16th century.

⁶⁷ Zimin, “Sostav,” 41. Cf. the section on the Boyar Duma written by Zimin in *Istoriya SSSR c drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei*, ed. M. N. Tikhomirov and others, 1st series, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1966), 148–149.

⁶⁸ Veselovskii, *Issledovaniya po istorii oprichniny*; idem, *IPIK*; idem, *D’yaki i pod’yachie*. See also V. B. Kobrin and K. A. Aver’yanov, S. B. Veselovskii: *Zhizn’, deyatel’nost’, lichnost’* (Moscow, 1989); J. Afferica, “Obraz Ivana Groznogo v trudakh S. B. Veselovskogo,” *Spornye voprosy*, 25–27.

⁶⁹ See R. G. Skrynnikov, “Moskovskaya semiboyarshchina,” *VIS*, 1973, no. 2: 209–213; idem, *Nachalo oprichniny*.

The research approach taken by Zimin was continued by G. Alef, who published in 1967 a comprehensive article about the Boyar Duma of Ivan III. Alef describes the Duma as a basic agency aiding the grand prince, an advisory group, a council and a “small exclusive club.” He concludes that “talent, evidence of success and proven ability played some role in determining assignments to responsible positions and in selecting candidates who would in time be admitted to the Duma.” At the same time, ties of family, marriage and friendship did not play such a large role in the career of people in Muscovite Russia.⁷⁰ In another, later work, Alef notes that “the competition for vacancies in the council, favourable to one or another group became a permanent feature of duma politics... The great servants of the crown turned to one another rather than against the ruler. They appealed to him as the ultimate arbiter. Law, tradition and institutional limitations of sovereign power never developed to a degree where they could curb the ruler’s power.”⁷¹ Finally, Alef was one of the first modern historians to ask the question about the relationship between the Boyar Duma and the Sovereign’s Court as a whole. In his words, the counsellors were “the best of the best.” Generally speaking, Alef at all events belongs to those historians who perceive the Boyar Duma as a permanent institution with defined membership and competence.⁷²

An important milestone in the study of the Privy Council was the work by A. N. Grobovsky, containing a new interpretation on the subject of the Russian government of the 1550s. This study questions the traditional concept of the Privy Council as a permanent and stable body, and Grobovsky considers that the Privy Council was an amorphous circle of royal counsellors.⁷³ Thus the approach taken by Grobovsky coincides to a great extent with the views of Sergeevich. Grobovsky examines the structures of the Muscovite state in relation to medieval theological ideas, demonstrating that the medieval understanding of the state differed fundamentally from notions about the modern-day state. Sixteenth-century Russians saw the state as an incarnation of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, and the principal statesmen were pictured as devout and righteous men chosen by God. In the appendix to his book, Grobovsky cites a number of excerpts from various sources indicating the makeup of the tsar’s inner entourage in 1553–1583.

⁷⁰ Alef, “Reflections,” 76–123.

⁷¹ Alef, *The Origins*, 217–219.

⁷² See G. Alef, “Duma.” In *Dictionary of the Medieval Ages*, ed. J. R. Strayer, 4 (1984), 305–306.

⁷³ Grobovsky, *The “Chosen Council.”* The composition of the Privy Council in the third quarter of the 16th century was relatively stable (for details, see Chapter IV).

The ideas articulated by Grobovsky had a considerable influence on the works of other Western authors writing about the tsar's council. A leading specialist on the social history of the boyars, R. O. Crummey, notes that in the 16th century the term "privy boyar" (*blizhnii boyarin*) did not refer to membership of state institutions and did not have the slightest political meaning.⁷⁴ In his book on the Muscovite boyars, Crummey describes the Boyar Duma as the "highest consultative body" in the Muscovite political system and the focal point of the royal administration and judicial system. The composition of the Boyar Duma is examined by Crummey in accordance with the traditional understanding that it was a union of four ranks. On the whole, his work approaches the members of the Duma not as a body, but as a group of important individuals. And so instead of the words "Duma members" Crummey prefers to make use of a more careful expression – "the boyar elite" – insofar as the boyars possessed a collective as well as an individual identity. The issues of the Duma's prerogatives and procedures lie outside Crummey's work, but in his other article he notes that "institutionally the boyars were the men whom the tsar appointed to the highest ranks in the Boyar Duma or royal council."⁷⁵

As was noted, the works by Alef and Crummey developed the dynamic approach to Duma studies, but they did not encompass Ivan IV's reign. This chronological gap was filled by the German historian H.-W. Camphausen. In his book we find a detailed analysis of the origins and structure of the Boyar Duma, its contribution to the political development of the state, and also a general conception of feudalism, which Camphausen considers can be applied to 16th-century Russia.⁷⁶

Camphausen adheres to the traditional sociological approach in his study of the council, considering one of the main traits of Russian history during Ivan IV's reign to be the social and political confrontation between the boyars and the gentry. The Boyar Duma is thus examined by Camphausen as the supreme government institution, with the help of which the aristocracy continuously participated in the government. According to Camphausen, the political and social conflict within the Boyar Duma to a large extent reflected the general dynamics of Muscovite society as a whole. Camphausen emphasises that the boyar aristocracy and the whole Muscovite nobility may generally be regarded as an estate (*Stand*) only in a rudimentary sense. The absence of estate corporations created a situation

⁷⁴ Crummey, *Aristocrats and Servitors*, 33.

⁷⁵ R. O. Crummey, "Boiar." In *MERSH*, 5 (1977), 49–51.

⁷⁶ Camphausen, *Die Bojarenduma*.

where Ivan IV's policy was directed in the first instance against personalities and did not bring about fundamental changes in the political system.

The formation of the Muscovite council is conceived by Camphausen largely in the same way as by his predecessors. In his view, the boyars and *okol'nichie* had already developed as ranks during the reign of Ivan III, and the counsellor *dvoryane* acquired their ultimate form only in the 16th century. The development of the rank of the counsellor secretaries is dated by Camphausen to the period after Ivan IV's reign, and thus he employs the traditional scheme of the structure of the Boyar Duma. Yet unlike other writers he uses this scheme as the basis for his entire conception of Ivan IV's era. It is precisely on the basis of the four-tiered structure of the Boyar Duma that Camphausen creates his classification of the Muscovite aristocracy (*Adel*). Moreover, the four-tiered structure acquires with Camphausen a major significance, insofar as he considers that membership of the Boyar Duma was far more important than belonging to the Sovereign's Court, owing to the decline in the latter's political and social importance.

When talking about the Privy Council, the German historian agrees with Klyuchevskii's conclusions, asserting that the genesis of the Privy Council was linked to the growth in the requirements of the central power, and also to the increase in the number of members of the Boyar Duma. Taking the ideas about the social confrontation between the aristocrats and the less noble *dvoryane*, Camphausen stresses that the existence of the Privy Council permitted the tsar to enlist capable people of lower birth into the governing process. Camphausen also correctly noted the relatively stable composition of the Privy Council.

Some modern scholars approach the problem of relations between the sovereign and his boyars from the prospect of maintaining stability in the Muscovite state. In her significant study *Kinship and Politics*, N. Sh. Kollmann focuses her attention on relationships among individuals and factions, rather than on classes or political institutions. She notes that political conflicts must be viewed "as a balancing of interests, not as a collision of contradictory ideologies; political groups are considered to have been formed on the basis of family, marriage, patronage, and personal loyalties [...]. The ruler did not act politically as the 'monarchical' branch of government, continually battling the corporate estates or institutions; rather he ruled through his charisma, commanding total loyalty and favouring selected men with personal relationships as advisers to him."⁷⁷ Recognising the

⁷⁷ Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 181.

existence of a hierarchy among the boyars, Kollmann insists that this hierarchy had never been formalised in Muscovy. In her view, “the collective terms that refer to the powerful few boyars – stareishie, blizhnie boiare, and privy council – occur rarely, suggesting that they do not denote permanent and primary aspects of Muscovite politics.”⁷⁸ Though Kollmann justly describes the Boyar Duma as a term of convenience invented by historians, she maintains that all boyars had a right to consult with the ruler. According to Kollmann, only the grand prince and his boyars enjoyed exclusive power in Muscovy, while other classes, including the bureaucracy were deprived of decision-making roles in the leadership.

Since Kollmann’s book focuses on the pursuit of stability and static harmony in Muscovite society, the author does not always take time and historical dynamics into account. Reviews of Kollmann’s book have already indicated that the author did not examine the process by which the state apparatus functioned and did not answer the questions: who made decisions? how might one go about weighing office and personality in these endeavours, and how might these components have changed over time? how was discussion and decision-making shared?⁷⁹ Finally, it is important to stress that Kollmann’s book finishes before the 1550s, and consequently her study does not take into account some important developments among the sovereign’s inner circle from the mid-16th century onwards. This was the period when the administration of the Muscovite state went through profound changes that resulted in an increasing presence of professional administrators on the council.

The theme of the sovereign and his top men is also touched upon in Daniel Ostrowski’s recent book, in which we find a graphic presentation of relations between the temporal ruler and his advisers.⁸⁰ Ostrowski approaches this topic from the angle of his apt definition of political culture (see Introduction). Ostrowski points out that according to the Muscovite understanding of these relations, under certain circumstances the pious counsellors were obliged to criticise and even rise in active opposition against a tyrant or tormentor. Though Muscovite political culture did not exclude the possibility of active opposition, it was not a typical situation for Muscovy. As a rule, the sovereign was considered to be following the law of God and thus his counsellors remained silently obedient. Like

⁷⁸ Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 122.

⁷⁹ See P. B. Brown, “Anthropological Perspective and Early Muscovite Court Politics,” *Russian History* 16 (1989), no. 1: 62.

⁸⁰ Ostrowski, *Moscow*, 204–205.

Kollmann, Ostrowski describes the standard relations between the sovereign and his counsellors in terms of prevailing concord and harmony.⁸¹ Though aspiration to concord was an important element of Muscovite political culture, it is important to take into account another aspect of this problem. Static harmony in these relations was offset by the sovereign's obligation to chase away the evil counsellor. In the 16th century the Muscovite rulers, in the first instance Ivan IV, became true masters in balancing between meekness and severity.

Based on his general theory of Muscovite political culture, Ostrowski has also advanced some ideas on the origin of the boyar council. He has argued that the Mongol state council, the *divan*, served as a model for the Muscovite boyar council. Though elsewhere in his book Ostrowski states that his conclusions on Muscovite administration are based on functional relationships, he has not examined the way that the boyar council operated. Ostrowski's theory of the Muscovite council is based on the assertion that the boyar council, like the *divan*, included four councillors. To support this idea Ostrowski has enlisted only two sources: a description of Muscovy penned by a Muscovite diplomat, Yurii Trakhaniot in 1486, and a biography of Ivan the Terrible by Robert Payne and Nikita Romanov.⁸² At the same time, an overall analysis of various sources demonstrates that in the period from the 14th to the 16th centuries the number of counsellors varied from 2 to over 20 (see Chapters II, III and Appendix II). Thus, Ostrowski's hypothesis that the boyar council originated from the Mongol *divan* obviously overreaches his sources.

On the whole, the second half of the present century saw the appearance of many studies of dynamic changes in the composition of the council. The most important merit of these studies was the gathering of a precious collection of facts about the holders of the counsellor ranks. The change in the composition of this group is analysed in close connection with the economic, political and social history of Russia. Thanks to works by Zimin, Alef, Crummey, Camphausen and other specialists, the history of this group has been investigated far more thoroughly than that of any other structure in the ruling elite of Muscovite society. These works on the composition of the Sovereign's Court have created a sound basis for the study of the history of Muscovy.

⁸¹ Similarly, one standard view of Byzantine culture and society sees it as essentially static, dominated by a weighty concern for tradition. This conception has been called into question in recent studies which depict Byzantium as an exceptionally fluent society. For more details, see Cameron, "The Construction of Court Ritual," 106–108.

⁸² Ostrowski, *Moscow*, 45 note 35, 46, 168, 193.

Along with the dynamic school of thought, the 1950s and 1960s saw the appearance of many works dealing with a general interpretation of the subject of the council. These interpretations were based on the conception of the Boyar Duma which was created by the historians of the “state school.” The ideas of the state school concerning the primacy of the state over society harmonised well with various interpretations of the historical process. In particular, the traditional interpretations of the notion “Boyar Duma” can be found in the works of Russian émigré historians G. Vernadsky and S. Pushkarev and in the well-known work by R. Pipes on the patrimonial character of the Russian state.⁸³

The conception of the Boyar Duma was also actively employed in Soviet studies of the Muscovite state. Investigations in this field became animated during discussions on fundamental issues of history. And so during a debate on the periods into which Russian history was to be divided, the subject of the Boyar Duma was dealt with by K. V. Bazilevich, S. V. Yushkov and other scholars. Their works made reference to the evolution of the Boyar Duma from a feudal curia into a social institution of the upper aristocracy, and examined the problem of the relationship between the tsar’s authority and the prerogatives of the council.⁸⁴

In 1962, The Soviet Historical Encyclopaedia contained an article about the Boyar Duma written by V. I. Buganov. He drew a direct analogy between the Boyar Duma and the councils of Western European kings. The structure of the council was perceived by Buganov in the traditional form. In another work, Buganov regarded any doubts about the correctness of using the expression *Boyarskaya Duma* as unexpected and even extravagant.⁸⁵

⁸³ G. Vernadsky, *Russia at the Dawn of the Modern Age* (New Haven, London, 1959), 118, 137; cf. idem, *The Tsardom of Moscow, 1547–1682*, 1 (New Haven, London, 1969), 36, 37. S. Pushkarev, *Dictionary of Russian Historical Terms from the Eleventh Century to 1917*, ed. G. Vernadsky, R. T. Fisher, Jr. (New Haven, London, 1970), 4, 5, 14; R. Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*.

⁸⁴ See K. V. Bazilevich, “Opyt periodizatsii istorii SSSR feodal’nogo perioda,” *VIS*, 1949, no. 11: 65–90; S. Yushkov, “K voprosu o politicheskikh formakh Russkogo feodal’nogo gosudarstva do XIX v.,” *VIS*, 1950, no. 1: 71–93; idem, *Istoriya gosudarstva i prava v SSSR*, I (Moscow, 1950), 271–273. Cf. S. S. Rotenberg, “Monarkhiya s boyarskoi dumoi,” *Uchenye zapiski Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo instituta im. Lenina*, 35 (1946): 69; *Ocherki istorii SSSR. Period feodalizma, konets XV–nachalo XVII vv.*, ed. A. N. Nasonov, L. V. Cherepnin, A. A. Zimin (Moscow, 1955), 322 (chapter by A. V. Chernov).

⁸⁵ See V. I. Buganov, “Boyarskaya Duma.” In *Sovetskaya istoricheskaya entsiklopediya*, 2 (1962), 660–662. Cf. an anonymous article on the *Blizhnaya Duma* *ibid.*, 487. For the same works in English see MERSH, s.v. See also V. I. Buganov, “O trude S. O. Kristensena po istoriografii Rossii XVII stoletiya.” In S. Christensen, *Istoriya Rossii v XVII v.* (Moscow, 1989), 13.

In the work by G. B. Gal'perin on the nature of the Russian state in the 15th and 16th centuries, the Boyar Duma was regarded as one of the main elements of the state system.⁸⁶ Following in Smirnov's footsteps, the author considered that the Boyar Duma as an institution possessed a dual nature. On the one hand, it was the supreme organ of power, which drew together all the strands of administration. On the other, the Boyar Duma continued to be the supreme organ of the feudal aristocracy, opposed to the autocratic authority. As regard the Privy Council (*Blizhnyaya Duma*), Gal'perin pointed out that it had neither a permanent composition nor any kind of regulations, and so it was not an institution in the strict sense of the word. The author thought that the existence of the Privy Council proved that the Boyar Duma was not entirely subordinate to the tsar and possessed a certain autonomy. Gal'perin was of the view that the decisions of the Privy Council became law only after their ratification by the Boyar Duma, although the sources do not confirm this surmise. Although broadly speaking his work does not contain any new ideas on the subject, Gal'perin expressed the predominant views of Soviet historians on the subject of the council in the most clear and definite manner.

It was largely thanks to Gal'perin's work that by the end of the 1960s, Soviet scholars had formed quite a definite picture of the council. As was said, this picture was generally based on the views of Klyuchevskii and the historians of the "state school." Admittedly, the fundamental difference between the works of Soviet historians and those of their predecessors was the Marxist idea that from the very earliest times, the history of any state was determined primarily by the class struggle. Thus the theme of the confrontation between the boyar aristocracy and the nobility in the Boyar Duma received a great deal of attention in Soviet scholarship. While this idea does not seem to advance our understanding of the Muscovite council to any significant extent, another approach by Soviet historians to Duma studies turned out to be rather fruitful. Soviet historians found a new way around the problem of the relationship between the authority of the sovereign and that of the council. Active investigations in this field were carried out from the second half of the 1940s. As a result of a thorough study of Muscovite legislation, primarily Article 98 of the 1550 Law Code, I. I. Smirnov, B. A. Romanov and other specialists established that in fact no clear distinction can be made between the powers of the tsar and those of

⁸⁶ G. B. Gal'perin, *Forma pravleniya Russkogo tsentralizovannogo gosudarstva XV–XVI vekov* (Leningrad, 1964), 65–69.

the council (for more details, see Chapter I). A general conclusion about the indivisibility of the prerogatives of the tsar and the council was presented in the work by N. P. Eroshkin on the history of state institutions in Russia.⁸⁷

A special place amongst studies into the Boyar Duma as a state institution is occupied by S. O. Shmidt's book, a study devoted to the archives and chronicles of the 16th century.⁸⁸ The author was the first to use a wide range of sources to carry out a thorough analysis of the link between the council and other institutions and of its role in the formation of archive collections. On the whole, Shmidt's conception of the council is based on the works of preceding historians. Side by side with the Boyar Duma, Shmidt singles out the Privy Council, whose birth he dates to the time of Vasiliï III. Amongst the causes of the appearance of the Privy Council, Shmidt lists the aristocratic nature of the Boyar Duma and its sluggishness. Unlike many of his predecessors, Shmidt does not limit himself to general comments about the Privy Council, but makes a whole series of valuable concrete observations on its activity. He shows, for example, that the Privy Council held meetings in the tsar's cabinet in the upper part of the palace. In the first instance, the members of the Privy Council accompanied the sovereign on military campaigns and on journeys around the country, and held talks with foreign ambassadors. The importance of the Privy Council was common knowledge abroad, and so its members were actively involved in diplomatic correspondence.

Research into the council as a state institution is summarised in a collective monograph on the development of Russian law in the period between the 15th and the 17th centuries. The corresponding section on the Boyar Duma was written by V. I. Karpets.⁸⁹ Karpets is an adherent of the static approach to the subject of the Duma. He examines the composition of the Boyar Duma in its usual four-tiered form, its legal status, and the subject of its competence. Karpets' remarks about the Privy Council are fairly brief, and the appearance of the Privy Council is dated to the period after the 1550s. While this work strikes the reader as a rather trivial recitation of previous scholarship, another piece by Karpets is of far greater interest. In his article devoted to the supreme power in Muscovy, the author refers to

⁸⁷ Otherwise, Eroshkin offered his readers entirely traditional views on the Boyar Duma. See N. P. Eroshkin, *Istoriya gosudarstvennykh uchrezhdenii dorevolutsionnoi Rossii* (Moscow, 1968), 34–35.

⁸⁸ Shmidt, *Rossiiskoye gosudarstvo*, 96–126.

⁸⁹ *Razvitie russkogo prava v XV–pervoi polovine XVII v.*, ed. V. S. Narsesyants (Moscow, 1986), 87–92. Cf. I. A. Isaev, *Istoriya gosudarstva i prava Rossii* (Moscow, 1994).

the specific character of Russian medieval legislation, demonstrating that according to the traditional understanding of the time, law was a spiritual and moral concept. The notion “law” incorporated the “order,” “rite,” “custom” (*starina*), and the traditions of fathers and grandfathers (*otchina* and *dedina*). From the earliest days of Rus’ existence, there had operated a principle of unanimity; issues were never decided by a majority of votes, but were discussed until everyone reached a single settlement. It was according to these principles that the council also functioned, whether in legislation, administration or judicial activity. The Boyar Duma resolved issues not on the strength of the rights invested in it but as a task of the supreme power; the tsar issued the members of his counsellors to “consider” a matter.⁹⁰

A summary of the Muscovite council is provided in the articles by Yu. M. Eskin published in the reference work *The Statehood of Russia*. The author indicates that the Privy Council was finally formed during the reign of Vasilii III. It was of a fluid nature and did not enjoy official status. In the mid-16th century, the Privy Council turned into a kind of government cabinet. Yet in Eskin’s view, the Boyar Duma remained the supreme legislative organ of state.⁹¹

In his recent book A. I. Filyushkin elaborates on Grobovsky’s ideas about the Chosen Council (*Izbrannaya Rada*) of Ivan IV. Filyushkin’s research method is based on contrasting chancellery documents and literary works, and the author points out that only the chancellery papers provide an objective picture of the government in the 1550s.⁹² This unbalanced standpoint leads Filyushkin to a rigid institutional approach to the history of the Muscovite state. His study of Ivan IV’s state focuses on defining the functions of government bodies, restoring the precise procedure for passing new laws and other issues typical of the modern state. In so doing, Filyushkin obviously neglects the medieval character of the 16th-century Russian state as it is described in Muscovite literary texts.

Filyushkin justly notes that all the boyars and *okol’niche* by no means took part in running the polity. Thus, he discerns among the boyars and *okol’niche* a “political elite,” which he describes as “the politically active group of officials and representatives of the feudal aristocracy.” Though the preciseness of this definition may be argued, the very idea of extracting a

⁹⁰ Karpets, “*Verkhovnaya vlast’ v Rossii XVI–XVII vv.*,” 108–114.

⁹¹ Yu. M. Eskin, “*Blizhnaya Duma*.” In *Gosudarstvennost’ Rossii. Slovar’-spravochnik*, 1 (Moscow, 1996), 51; idem, “*Boyarskaya дума*,” *ibid.*, 53–54.

⁹² Filyushkin, *Istoriya*, 16.

political elite from the boyars and okol'niche is quite prospective. Nevertheless, in his discussion of the Muscovite state structure, Filyushkin does not develop the notion of the political elite and adheres to the traditional conception of the Muscovite state. When studying the structure of Ivan IV's state, the author distinguishes between the Boyar Duma and the Privy Council. In his view, the Boyar Duma was "the highest government body," whereas the Privy Council was a circle of counsellors with an irregular composition. The latter formed a political microclimate in the tsar's entourage, giving him advice and recommendations. Filyushkin points out that the competence of the Privy Council was not clearly defined. He also maintains that the Privy Council was formed in the early 1560s, something which contradicts the sources which refer to the Privy Council in 1555 (for more details, see Chapter III).

Besides the "political elite," Filyushkin also writes about "the closest entourage of the tsar" (*blizhaishie okruzhenie tsarya*) in 16th-century Russia. Unfortunately, he fails to provide the reader with any criterion for including one or another courtier into this group. The author attempts to restore the composition of the group using the military records, but his approach to this source is highly inconsistent. On the one hand, the historian ignores the testimonies of the military records on the constant presence of Tartar princes in Ivan IV's suit. On the other hand, without any justifications, Filyushkin sometimes includes all persons enlisted in a military record in the tsar's closest entourage. This entourage thereby becomes as large as over 50 people. Trying to correct these unrealistic figures, Filyushkin adds to his narration another notion, "the first and second echelons of the closest entourage" (*pervyi i vtoroi eshelony blizhaishego okruzheniya*). Such muddled definitions mislead the reader and make the author's logic hard to follow. In particular, it is unclear how the author correlates the "political elite" and the "closest entourage of the tsar" with the Boyar Duma and the Privy Council.

* * *

The survey we have carried out may be used to form a quite definite idea about the main trends in the historiography of the Muscovite council. Above all, our century has seen the formation of two main approaches to research in this field. The first of them is dynamic, and historical-comparative. Using the methods of sociology and prosopography, the historians of this school have lent a collective shape to the council, and demonstrated the dynamic of its development. The other, the static or formal-legal

approach, regards the council as a state institution. The supporters of this view pay attention to the relationship between the council and the ruler, and the functions and competence of the Boyar Duma.⁹³

Since both these schools of thought undoubtedly complement each other, it is impossible to show a simple preference for either of these approaches, and we hardly need do so. Something else is of far greater importance. Generally speaking, the situation with the study of the Muscovite council is similar to that which developed in the historiography of the Privy Council of the Tudors in the 1950s: "the council has been the subject of 'constitutional' rather than 'institutional' investigation, so that we are better informed of its theoretical significance than of its practical history."⁹⁴ Similarly, in the historiography of the Muscovite state, the subject of the Muscovite Privy Council somehow always remains in the shadow of the history of the Boyar Duma. This situation is particularly noteworthy if it is borne in mind that the Boyar Duma was invented by historians, while the existence of the Privy Council is confirmed by many sources.

The conceptual understanding of the tsar's council as a combination of the four main ranks is a general feature of the majority of works, regardless of the methods of historical research used. In many studies, the council is examined through the prism of the Sovereign's Court. Historians usually considered that the Muscovite council constituted the summit of the Sovereign's Court. Consequently, in the view of many specialists, the council, just like the Sovereign's Court, contained its own system of ranks and service relationships. It is believed that the council functioned on the basis of the same organisational principles as the Sovereign's Court. Thus, the history of the council is actually reduced to the history of the acquisition or forfeiting of the highest court ranks by various members of the elite. Furthermore, the conception of the Boyar Duma does not correspond to the basic notions of Muscovite political culture. In fact, the council was founded on notions which did not entail any kind of strict organisational structure. The council embodied the sacred conception of advice and the collective image of the ruler and his privy advisors. Relations between the sovereign and his counsellors were established on the basis of archaic notions about the dual nature of the tsar's power. In essence, the sessions of the council constituted the age-old tradition of consultation between the ruler and the chief representatives of the elite.

⁹³ Cf. Christensen, *Istoriya Rossii*, 47–51.

⁹⁴ Elton, *The Tudor Revolution*, 2.

APPENDIX II

LIST OF COUNSELLORS

Table 1. The Composition of the Inner Circle (the mid-14th to the mid-16th centuries)

ca 1350–1351	Vasilii Vel'yaminovich-Protasievich Vasilii Okat'evich Valuev Mikhail Aleksandrovich
1366	Fedor Andreevich Sviblo Ivan Fedorovich Sobaka-Fominskii Timofei Vasil'evich Vel'yaminov
1371	Dmitrii Mikhailovich Bobrok-Volynskii Ivan Fedorovich Sobaka-Fominskii
ca 1375	Timofei Vasil'evich Vel'yaminov Ivan Rodionovich Kvashnya Ivan Fedorovich Sobaka-Fominskii Fedor Andreevich Sviblo
1389	Dmitrii Mikhailovich Bobrok-Volynski Timofei Vasil'evich Vel'yaminov Ivan Rodionovich Kvashnya Semen Vasil'evich Valuev Ivan Fedorovich Vorontsov Aleksandr Andreevich Ostei Fedor Andreevich Sviblo Fedor Andreevich Koshka Ivan Fedorovich Sobaka-Fominskii Ivan Andreevich Khromoi
Early 1390s	Dmitrii Aleksandrovich Vsevolozhskii Daniil Feofanovich Byakontov Semen Vasil'evich Okat'evich Ivan Fedorovich Koshkin Fedor Andreevich Koshka Fedor Andreevich Sviblo
September 1406– June 1407	Prince Yurii Ivanovich Vsevolozh- Kisleevskii Menya Konstantin Dmitrievich Sheya Dmitrii Afineevich Ivan Dmitrievich Vsevolozhskii Vladimir Danilovich Krasnyi Snabdya Ivan Fedorovich Koshkin Fedor Fedorovich Koshkin
ca 1417	Prince Yurii Patrikeevich Patrikeev Ivan Dmitrievich Vsevolozhskii Mikhail Andreevich Chelyadnya Ivan Fedorovich Koshkin Fedor Ivanovich Sabur

ca 1423	Prince Yurii Patrikeevich Patrikeev Ivan Dmitrievich Vsevolozhskii Mikhail Andreevich Chelyadnya Ivan Fedorovich Koshkin Mikhail Fedorovich Koshkin Fedor Ivanovich Sabur
1461/62	Prince Ivan Yur'evich Patrikeev Ivan Ivanovich Koshkin Prince Vasilii Ivanovich Obolenskii Fedor Vasil'evich Basenok Fedor Mikhailovich Chelyadnya
1460s–early 1470s	Prince Ivan Yur'evich Patrikeev Ivan Ivanovich Koshkin Prince Vasilii Ivanovich Obolenskii Fedor Davydovich Khromogo
1502	Prince Vasilii Danilovich Kholmskii Prince Danila Vasil'evich Shchenya- Patrikeev Yakov Zakhar'ich Koshkin- Zakhar'in
1504	Prince Vasilii Danilovich Kholmskii Prince Danila Vasil'evich Shchenya- Patrikeev Yakov Zakhar'ich Koshkin- Zakhar'in Treasurer Dmitrii Vladimirovich Khovrin
1520	Prince Vasilii Vasil'evich Shuiskii Prince Mikhail Danilovich Shchenya Prince Boris Ivanovich Gorbatyi Semen Ivanovich Vorontsov Ivan Grigor'evich Morozov Andrei Vasil'evich Saburov Ivan Vasil'evich Khabar Mikhail Yur'evich Zakhar'in Ivan Ivanovich Tret'yakov Secretary Ivan Teleshev Secretary Afanasii Kuritsyn Secretary Vasilii Teterin
1533	Prince Ivan Vasil'evich Shuiskii Prince Vasilii Vasil'evich Shuiskii Mikhail Yur'evich Zakhar'in Mikhail Semenovich Vorontsov Mikhail Vasil'evich Tuchkov Prince Mikhail L'vovich Glinskii Ivan Yur'evich Shigona Petr Ivanovich Golovin Secretary Grigorii Men'shik Putyatin Secretary Fedor Mikhailov Mishurin

Table 2. Changes in the Composition of the Privy Council, 1553–1572

YEAR	COMPOSITION OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL	PRIVY COUNCILLORS: disgraced (dis.) executed (ex.) died (d.)
1553	A. F. Adashev N. A. Funikov Prince D. I. Kurlyatev M. Ya. Morozov Prince I. F. Mstislavskii Prince D. F. Paletskii I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi I. M. Veshnyakov I. M. Viskovatyi Prince V. I. Vorotynskii V. M. Yur'ev D. R. Yur'ev	
1554	A. F. Adashev N. A. Funikov Prince D. I. Kurlyatev M. Ya. Morozov Prince I. F. Mstislavskii Prince D. F. Paletskii I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi I. M. Veshnyakov I. M. Viskovatyi V. M. Yur'ev D. R. Yur'ev	Prince V. I. Vorotynskii (d.) V. M. Yur'ev (Jan.–May in Poland)
1555	A. F. Adashev Prince I. D. Bel'skii Prince Yu. M. Bulgakov Tsarevich Kaibula Akhkubekovich Prince D. I. Kurlyatev M. Ya. Morozov Prince I. F. Mstislavskii Prince I. I. Pronskii Prince V. S. Serebryanyi I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi Tsar Simeon Kasaevich I. M. Veshnyakov I. M. Viskovatyi I. M. Vorontsov V. M. Yur'ev D. R. Yur'ev	N. A. Funikov (dis.) Prince D. F. Paletskii (removed from the Privy Council) D. R. Yur'ev (dis.) V. M. Yur'ev (dis.)
1556	M. Ya. Morozov I. M. Viskovatyi I. M. Vorontsov [...]¹	I. M. Vorontsov (May–Sept. in Poland; after returning removed from the Privy Council)

¹ Three dots indicate that the data is not available or incomplete.

YEAR	COMPOSITION OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL	PRIVY COUNCILLORS: disgraced (dis.) executed (ex.) died (d.)
1557	A. F. Adashev I. M. Viskovatyi [...]	
1558	[...]	Prince Yu. M. Bulgakov (d. between 1558 and 1569) Prince D. F. Paletskii (last ref. in the sources in 1558/9)
1560	[...]	A. F. Adashev (dis.) I. M. Veshnyakov (dis.?)
1561	Prince P. I. Gorenskii Prince I. F. Mstislavskii Prince I. I. Pronskii Prince A. P. Telyatevskii F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev A. Vasil'ev I. M. Viskovatyi I. P. Yakovlev D. R. Yur'ev	<u>Removed from the Privy Council:</u> Prince I. D. Bel'skii Prince D. I. Kurlyatev M. Ya. Morozov Prince V. S. Serebryanyi I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi <u>No data available:</u> V. M. Yur'ev Tsarevich Kaibula Akhkubekovich Tsar Simeon Kasaevich
1562	Prince I. D. Bel'skii Prince V. M. Glinskii Prince P. I. Gorenskii Tsarevich Kaibula Akhkubekovich Prince I. F. Mstislavskii Prince I. I. Pronskii Prince V. S. Serebryanyi Tsar Simeon Kasaevich Prince A. P. Telyatevskii F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev A. Vasil'ev I. M. Viskovatyi (from August in Denmark) I. P. Yakovlev V. M. Yur'ev D. R. Yur'ev	Prince I. D. Bel'skii (dis. in Jan.–March) Prince D. I. Kurlyatev (dis.) M. Ya. Morozov (dis.) I. M. Viskovatyi (from August in Denmark)

YEAR	COMPOSITION OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL	PRIVY COUNCILLORS: disgraced (dis.) executed (ex.) died (d.)
1563	Prince I. D. Bel'skii Prince V. M. Glinskii Prince P. I. Gorenskii Tsarevich Kaibula Akhkubekovich Prince I. F. Mstislavskii Prince I. I. Pronskii Prince V. S. Serebryanyi Prince P. I. Shuiskii Tsar Simeon Kasaevich Prince A. P. Telyatevskii F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev A. Vasil'ev I. M. Viskovatyi I. P. Yakovlev D. R. Yur'ev V. M. Yur'ev P. V. Zaitsev	M. Ya. Morozov (dis.) I. M. Viskovatyi (in Denmark up to November)
1564	A. D. Basmanov Prince I. D. Bel'skii I. S. Cheremisinov I. P. Fedorov N. A. Funikov Prince V. M. Glinskii Prince P. I. Gorenskii Tsarevich Kaibula Akhkubekovich Sh. V. Kobayakov Prince I. F. Mstislavskii Prince I. I. Pronskii L. A. Saltykov Prince P. S. Serebryanyi Prince V. S. Serebryanyi Tsar Simeon Kasaevich Prince A. P. Telyatevskii F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev A. Vasil'ev I. M. Viskovatyi I. P. Yakovlev V. M. Yur'ev P. V. Zaitsev	Prince V. M. Glinskii (d.) Prince P. I. Gorenskii (dis. in autumn) M. Ya. Morozov (dis.) I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi (dis. in spring) Prince P. I. Shuiskii (died in battle) I. P. Yakovlev (dis. at the end 1564) D. R. Yur'ev (d.)

YEAR	COMPOSITION OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL	PRIVY COUNCILLORS: disgraced (dis.) executed (ex.) died (d.)
1565	A. D. Basmanov Prince I. D. Bel'skii I. P. Fedorov N. A. Funikov Tsarevich Kaibula Akhkubekovich Prince I. F. Mstislavskii Prince I. I. Pronskii Prince P. S. Serebryanyi Prince V. S. Serebryanyi I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi Tsar Simeon Kasaevich Prince A. P. Telyatevskii A. Vasil'ev I. M. Viskovatyi Prince A. I. Vyazemskii I. P. Yakovlev V. M. Yur'ev N. R. Yur'ev P. V. Zaitsev	Prince P. I. Gorenskii (ex.) M. Ya. Morozov (dis.) L. A. Saltykov (dis.) Tsar Simeon Kasaevich (d.) <u>Removed from</u> <u>the Privy Council:</u> I. S. Cheremesinov Sh. V. Kobayakov F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev
1566	Prince I. D. Bel'skii I. P. Fedorov N. A. Funikov M. Ya. Morozov Prince I. F. Mstislavskii Prince I. I. Pronskii Prince P. S. Serebryanyi Prince V. S. Serebryanyi I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi I. V. Sheremetev-Men'shoi F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev A. Vasil'ev I. M. Viskovatyi I. M. Vorontsov Prince M. I. Vorotynskii Prince A. I. Vyazemskii I. P. Yakovlev V. M. Yur'ev N. R. Yur'ev P. V. Zaitsev	<u>No data available:</u> A. D. Basmanov Tsarevich Kaibula Akhkubekovich Prince A. P. Telyatevskii

YEAR	COMPOSITION OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL	PRIVY COUNCILLORS: disgraced (dis.) executed (ex.) died (d.)
1567	A. D. Basmanov Prince I. D. Bel'skii N. A. Funikov Tsarevich Kaibula Akhkubekovich M. Ya. Morozov Prince I. F. Mstislavskii Prince I. I. Pronskii L. A. Saltykov Prince P. S. Serebryanyi Prince V. S. Serebryanyi I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi I. V. Sheremetev-Men'shoi Prince A. P. Telyatevskii F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev A. Vasil'ev I. M. Viskovatyi M. I. Voronoi-Volynskii I. M. Vorontsov Prince M. I. Vorotynskii Prince A. I. Vyazemskii I. P. Yakovlev N. R. Yur'ev V. M. Yur'ev P. V. Zaitsev	I. P. Fedorov (dis.) F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev (in Lithuania) I. M. Vorontsov (in Sweden from June) V. M. Yur'ev (d.)
1568	Prince I. D. Bel'skii N. A. Funikov P. Mikhailov M. Ya. Morozov Prince I. F. Mstislavskii Prince I. I. Pronskii L. A. Saltykov Prince P. S. Serebryanyi V. Ya. Shchelkalov A. Ya. Shchelkalov I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi I. V. Sheremetev-Men'shoi Prince A. P. Telyatevskii F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev A. Vasil'ev I. M. Viskovatyi M. I. Voronoi-Volynskii Prince A. I. Vyazemskii I. P. Yakovlev N. R. Yur'ev	I. P. Fedorov (ex.) Prince I. I. Pronskii (ex. in 1569) Prince V. S. Serebryanyi (d.) Prince A. P. Telyatevskii (d. in 1568/9) I. M. Vorontsov (in Sweden) <u>Removed from the Privy Council:</u> A. D. Basmanov Tsarevich Kaibula Akhkubekovich Prince M. I. Vorotynskii <u>No data available:</u> P. V. Zaitsev

YEAR	COMPOSITION OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL	PRIVY COUNCILLORS: disgraced (dis.) executed (ex.) died (d.)
1570	M. L. Bel'skii Prince I. D. Bel'skii I. Ya. Chebotov I. S. Cheremisinov Prince M. T. Cherkasskii N. A. Funikov V. G. Gryaznoi M. Ya. Morozov Prince I. F. Mstislavskii A. Ya. Shchelkalov V. Ya. Shchelkalov I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi I. V. Sheremetev-Men'shoi Prince V. I. Temkin-Rostovskii V. I. Umnoi-Kolychev F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev A. Vasil'ev I. M. Viskovatyi I. F. Vorontsov Prince M. I. Vorotynskii I. P. Yakovlev N. R. Yur'ev P. V. Zaitsev	A. D. Basmanov (ex.) I. Ya. Chebotov (took monastic vows) N. A. Funikov (ex.) Tsarevich Kaibula Akhkubekovich (d.) P. Mikhailov (took monastic vows) L. A. Saltykov (dis.) Prince P. S. Serebryanyi (ex.) A. Vasil'ev (dis.?) I. M. Viskovatyi (ex.) M. I. Voronoi-Volynskii (removed from the Privy Council) I. M. Vorontsov (d.) I. F. Vorontsov (ex.) Prince A. I. Vyazemskii (dis.)
1571 – early 1572	R. V. Alfer'ev M. L. Bel'skii N. V. Borozdin I. S. Cheremisinov Tsarevich Mikhail Kaibulovich Prince I. F. Mstislavskii Prince N. R. Odoevskii Prince S. D. Pronskii Prince P. D. Pronskii A. Ya. Shchelkalov V. Ya. Shchelkalov Prince P. T. Sheidyakov I. V. Sheremetev-Men'shoi Prince V. A. Sitskii V. S. Sobakin-Men'shoi Prince F. M. Trubetskoi Prince M. I. Vorotynskii	1571: Prince I. D. Bel'skii (perished during a fire) Prince M. T. Cherkasskii (ex.) P. Mikhailov (d.) I. V. Sheremetev-Bol'shoi (took monastic vows) Prince V. I. Temkin- Rostovskii (ex.) V. I. Umnoi-Kolychev (dis.?) F. I. Umnoi-Kolychev (took monastic vows in 1571/72) M. I. Voronoi-Volynskii (perished during a fire) I. P. Yakovlev (ex.) P. V. Zaitsev (ex.) <u>Removed from the Privy Council:</u> V. G. Gryaznoi M. Ya. Morozov N. R. Yur'ev

YEAR	COMPOSITION OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL	PRIVY COUNCILLORS: disgraced (dis.) executed (ex.) died (d.)
1572, summer	R. V. Alfer'ev M. L. Bel'skii N. V. Borozdin D. A. Buturlin I. S. Cheremisinov D. I. Godunov D. G. Koltovskii Tsarevich Mikhail Kaibulovich Prince I. F. Mstislavskii Prince N. R. Odoevskii Prince S. D. Pronskii Prince P. D. Pronskii A. Ya. Shchelkalov V. Ya. Shchelkalov Prince O. M. Shcherbatyi Prince P. T. Sheidyakov I. V. Sheremetev-Men'shoi Prince I. A. Shuiskii Prince V. A. Sitskii G. S. Sobakin V. S. Sobakin-Men'shoi Prince F. M. Trubetskoi Prince M. I. Vorotynskii	The second half of 1572: D. G. Koltovskii (dis.) V. S. Sobakin-Men'shoi (dis.) G. S. Sobakin (dis.)

GLOSSARY

- Blizhnyaya Duma, the Privy Council
Bol'shoi dvorets, the Chancellery of the Grand Court
Boyarin (pl. boyare), the highest rank in the court hierarchy
Boyarskaya Duma, a literary term for the tsar's council, the sovereign's advisory board, the combination for the four highest court ranks, boyare, okol'niche, dumnye dvoryane, dumnye d'yaki (see)
Chelobitnyi prikaz, the Petitions' Chancellery
D'yak (pl. d'yaki), secretary
Deti boyarskie (sg. syn boyarskii), literally "boyar children," rank-and-file members of the middle service class
Druzhina, armed retinue of the grand prince in the period from the 10th to the 14th centuries
Dukhovnaya gramota, will
Duma, literally "thought," "thinking," by extension "advice," "counsel," "a council"
Dumnye lyudi, men of counsellor rank, first four ranks in the court hierarchy
Dumnyi d'yak (pl. dumnye d'yaki), counsellor secretary
Dumnyi dvoryanin (pl. dumnye dvoryane), counsellor dvoryanin (see), 3rd rank in the court hierarchy
Dumtsy, counsellors, councillors
Dvor, see Gosudarev Dvor
Dvoretskii, majordomo
Dvoryanin (pl. dvoryane), a cavalryman, a member of the service class
Gosudarev Dvor, Sovereign's Court
Gosudarev polk, Sovereign's Regiment
Gosudarev razryad, Sovereign's Military Records
Kazna, the Treasury
Kaznachei, treasurer
Komnata, the Chamber
Konyushii, equerry
Kravchii, high-ranking household servitor
Letopis', chronicle
Mestnichestvo, the system of precedence
Okol'niche (pl. okol'niche), 2nd rank in the court hierarchy
Oprichnik (pl. oprichniki), member of the Oprichnina (see)
Oprichnina, from 1564 until 1572 that part of the Muscovite realm which was personally governed by Ivan IV, his own domain
Oruzhnychii, arms bearer
Pechatnik, keeper of the seal
Peredovoi polk, Advance Regiment
Pervosovet, the prime council
Pervosovetnik, prime councillor
Pod'yachii, clerk
Polk pravoi ruki, Right Wing Regiment
Polk levoi ruki, Left Wing Regiment
Pomestnyi prikaz, the Service Land Chancellery
Posol'skaya kniga, diplomatic records in book form
Posol'skii prikaz, the Foreign Affairs Chancellery
Postel'naya kazna, the Bedchamber Treasury
Postel'niche, the master of the bedchamber
Pravaya gramota, judgement chapter

Prigovor, decision of the council, verdict, (judicial) sentence
 Prikaz (administrative body), chancellery
 Prikaz Bol'shogo prikhoda, the Chancellery of the Grand Revenue
 Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa, the Kazan' Chancellery
 Razryadnaya kniga, military service record in book form
 Razryadnyi prikaz, the Military Chancellery
 Sinodik, memorial register
 Sobor, assembly, synod
 Stolovaya izba, dining room (in the tsar's palace)
 Storozhevoi polk, Rear Regiment
 Sudebnik, Law Code
 Syn boyarskii, see Deti boyarskie
 Vvedennyi boyarin, senior boyar, incorporated in the council
 Vvedennyi d'yak, senior secretary, incorporated in the council
 Zemshchina, from 1564 until 1572 the non-oprichnina part of Ivan IV's realm
     remaining under national jurisdiction
 Zemskii sobor, the Assembly of the Land

ABBREVIATIONS

AAE	Akty, sobrannye v bibliotekakh i arkhivakh Rossiiskoi imperii Arkheograficheskoyu ekspeditsieyu imp. Akademii nauk
AE	Arkheograficheskii ezhegodnik
AFZKh	Akty feodal'nogo zemlevladieniya i khozyaistva XIV–XVI vekov
AI	Akty istoricheskije, sobrannye i izdannye Arkheograficheskoyu komissieyu
AMG	Akty Moskovskogo gosudarstva, izdannye Imperatorskoyu Akademii nauk
ASEI	Akty sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi istorii Severo-Vostochnoi Rusi kontsa XIV–XVI v.
AZR	Akty, otnosyashchiesya k istorii Zapadnoi Rossii
ChOIDR	Chteniya v Imperatorskom obshchestve istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh
DAI	Dopolneniya k Aktam istoricheskim. Sobrannye i izdannye Arkheograficheskoyu komissieyu
DDG	Dukhovnye i dogovornye gramoty velikikh i udel'nykh knyazey XIV–XVI vv.
DRV	Drevnyaya rossiiskaya vivliofika
HG	Istoricheskaya Genealogiya=Historical Genealogy (Ekaterinburg–Paris)
IA	Istoricheskii arkhiv
IZ	Istoricheskie zapiski
MERSH	The Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History
Nasledie	Rimsko-konstantinopol'skoe nasledie na Rusi: Ideya vlasti i politicheskaya praktika. IX Mezhdunarodnyi seminar istoricheskikh issledovaniy "Ot Rima k tret'emu Rimu," Moskva, 29–31 maya 1989 g. (Moscow, 1995)
Obshchestvo i gosudarstvo	Obshchestvo i gosudarstvo feodal'noi Rossii. Edited by V. T. Pashuto (Moscow, 1975)
Prodolzhenie DRV	Prodolzhenie Drevnei Rossiiskoi Vivliofiki
PSRL	Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei
Realizm istoricheskogo myshleniya	Realizm istoricheskogo myshleniya. Chteniya, posvyashchennye pamyati A. L. Stanislavskogo (Moscow, 1991)
RGADA	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov
RK 1475–1598	Razryadnaya kniga 1475–1598 gg.
RK 1475–1605	Razryadnaya kniga 1475–1605 gg.
RK 1550–1636	Razryadnaya kniga 1550–1636 gg.
Sbornik RIO	Sbornik Russkogo Imperatorskogo istoricheskogo obshchestva
SGGD	Sobranie gosudarstvennykh gramot i dogovorov
SKK	Slovar' knizhnikov i knizhnosti Drevnei Rusi
Spornye voprosy	Spornye voprosy otechestvennoy istorii XI–XVIII vv. Tezisy Pervykh chtenii, posvyashchennykh pamyati A. A. Zimina (Moscow, 1990)
TODRL	Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoi literatury
Veselovskii, IPIK	Veselovskii, S. B. Issledovaniya po istorii klassa sluzhilykh zemlevladel'tsev (Moscow, 1969)
VID	Vspomogatel'nye istoricheskie distsipliny
VIS	Voprosy istorii

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