

## Simeon Bekbulatovich's Remarkable Career as Tatar Khan, Grand Prince of Rus', and Monastic Elder<sup>\*</sup>

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### Abstract

Tsar Simeon Bekbulatovich was the nephew of Ivan IV's second wife, Mariia Temriukovna. He was a Chingissid who had a remarkable career, first, as khan of Kasimov, then after entering Muscovite service, as head of the Muscovite army's "main regiment", as grand prince of Rus', and as grand prince of Tver'. He also married Anastasia Ivanovna Miloslavskaiia. Finally he was tonsured as the monk Stefan and was buried in the Simonov Monastery. The episode that has attracted the most attention in the sources and in the scholarly literature was his appointment as grand prince of all Rus' between September 1575 and September 1576. Ivan IV held on to his other titles, including tsar of Kazan' and Astrakhan', but he also acquired an estate as the prince of Moscow under Grand Prince Simeon. In this article, I classified the primary source testimony into two categories: those accounts contemporary to the time of Ivan IV and those written after his death in 1584. After analyzing them and comparing them with the various historiographical explanations, I proposed that Ivan IV placed Simeon on the grand princely throne of Rus' as a legal maneuver to allow him to go after certain individuals in the ruling elite who he thought were plotting against him. These individuals who he suspected were mostly former members of the oprichnina. Ivan had claimed to the metropolitan in 1565 that he was being prevented from investigating and punishing certain individuals and again to foreigners in 1575 about the perfidiousness of his subjects. By having someone else serve as grand prince of Rus' who would give him the go ahead, he would be freed from constraints on his actions.

### Keywords

Chingissid, tsar, grand prince, Rus', oprichnina, Tatars

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*Dedicated to the Memory  
of Omeljan Pritsak*

During a remarkable career, the subject of this article had three identities, each associated with a different name. As Saín Bulat he became khan of the Kasimov Khanate and was, according to a genealogical analysis done by V. V. Vel'iaminov in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a great grandson of Akhmat, the last khan of the Great Orda, and a descendant of Chinggis Khan through his eldest son Jochi.<sup>1</sup> As a Muscovite serving prince, under the name Simeon Bekbulatovich, he was a prominent military and political figure who was involved in one of the more puzzling episodes in Russian history—his replacing Tsar Ivan IV as grand prince of all Rus' in 1575. Later he was tonsured as the monk Stefan and ended his days as an elder, being buried in the Simonov Monastery in Moscow. In certain respects his career paralleled that of his wife's great grandfather Kudai Kul (Peter Ibraimov) and in other respects went beyond it.<sup>2</sup> We do not have evidence when or where Saín was born. The first mention of him in our sources refers to an event in 1561. According to the *Supplement to the Nikon Chronicle*, Tsarevich Saíl [Saín], son of Bulat, came to Moscow in that year in the entourage of his aunt, Princess Kochenei (the sister of his mother Altynchach), when she was baptized Mariia and married to Ivan IV.<sup>3</sup>

Our evidence that Saín Bulat had become khan of Kasimov by January 24, 1570, comes from a response of Ivan Novosil'tsev to the Ottoman Sultan Selim II.<sup>4</sup> The *Military Registers* (*Razriadnie knigi*) provide evidence that he led a rearguard regiment gathered at Novgorod for action against the Swedes during the winter of 1571–1572.<sup>5</sup> From 1572, even before he was

<sup>1</sup> V. V. Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovaniia o kasimovskikh tsariakh i tsarevichakh*, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg: Imperatorskaia Akademiia nauk, 1863–1867), 2: 9–11.

<sup>2</sup> See Donald Ostrowski, "The Extraordinary Career of Tsarevich Kudai Kul/Peter in the Context of Relations between Muscovy and Kazan'," in *States, Societies, Cultures: East and West: Essays in Honor of Jaroslaw Pelenski*, edited by Janusz Duzinkiewicz, Myroslav Popovych, Vladyslav Verstiuk, and Natalia Yakovenko (New York: Ross Publishing, 2004), 697–719.

<sup>3</sup> *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* (PSRL), 43 vols. (St. Petersburg/Petrograd/Leningrad and Moscow: Arkheograficheskaia komissiia, Nauka, and Arkheograficheskii tsentr, 1841–2005), 13: 333.

<sup>4</sup> *Puteshestviia russkikh poslov XVI–XVII vv.*, edited by D. S. Likhachev (Moscow: Akademiia nauk SSSR, 1954), 77. Novosil'tsev's embassy left Moscow on that date.

<sup>5</sup> *Razriadnaia kniga 1475–1605 gg.*, compiled by N. G. Savich, edited by V. I. Buganov (Moscow: Akademiia nauk SSSR. Institut istorii, 1982), 2.1: 292–294. *Razriadnaia kniga, 1475–1598*, compiled by V. I. Buganov, edited by M. N. Tikhomirov (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), 242.

baptized, until 1585, when he was demoted under Tsar Fedor, Saín Bulat is usually described as leading the main regiment (*bol'shoi polk*) whenever he accompanied the Muscovite army.<sup>6</sup> A Tatar khan (tsar), thus, occupied the position of the second most powerful individual in the Muscovite army and, thereby, the Muscovite state. Such an occurrence, of a Tatar tsar's or tsarevich's commanding a regiment in the Muscovite army had ample precedent.<sup>7</sup> But Saín Bulat is one of the only Tatars to have commanded

<sup>6</sup> The *Military Register* as extant in the *Sinbirskii Sbornik* reports that in December 1572, Saín Bulat led the main regiment in a campaign against the Swedes. *Sinbirskii sbornik*, vol. 1: *Chast' istoricheskaiia* (Moscow: A. Semen, 1844), 31–35. The *Military Register* reports that in May 1573, “Saín Bulat Bekbulatovich” led the main regiment of the Russian army around Novgorod and Pskov with I. P. Shuiskii, V. A. Sitskoi, Nikita Romanovich Iur'ev, and F. I. Mstislavskii. *Sinbirskii sbornik*, 39.

<sup>7</sup> According to the chronicles and military registers, in 1450, Tsarevich Kasim commanded a regiment against the Tatars of Kazan'. In 1452, Tsarevich Yakup commanded a regiment against Dmitrii Shemiaka in Kokshenga. In 1467, Tsarevich Kasim commanded a regiment against Kazan'. In 1471, Tsarevich Danyar commanded a regiment against Novgorod. In 1473, Tsarevich Danyar commanded a regiment against Khan Ahmed at the Oka River. In 1478, Tsarevich Danyar commanded a regiment against Novgorod. In 1487, Tsarevich Mehmed Emin commanded a regiment against Kazan'. In 1491, Tsarevich Saltagan (Saltygan) commanded a regiment against the Great Orda. In 1496, Tsarevich Mehmed Emin commanded a regiment against Kazan'. In 1499, Tsarevich Saltagan (Saltygan) commanded a regiment helping Khan Abdul Leitif regain the throne of Kazan'. *PSRL*, 6, 12, 13, 18, *Ioasafovskaia letopis'*, edited by A. A. Zimin (Moscow: Akademiia nauk SSSR, 1957; and *Razriadnaia kniga, 1475–1598*, compiled by V. I. Buganov, edited by M. N. Tikhomirov (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), 17–35. In the first Muscovite campaign against Livonia in 1558, Tsar Shah-Ali, former khan of Kazan', commanded the main regiment, Tsarevich Tokhtamysh commanded the vanguard, and Tsarevich Kaibula (Abdulla) commanded the right wing. See George Vernadsky, *A History of Russia*, 5 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943–1969), vol. 5: *The Tsardom of Muscovy 1547–1682*, 94; Shah-Ali continued to command regiments for Muscovy until his death in 1567. Tokhtamysh commanded the vanguard at Smolensk in 1562 and in the Polotsk campaign of 1563. Tsarevich Bekbulat, the brother of Tokhtamysh, commanded Muscovite regiments between 1562 and 1566. Tsarevich Ibak was one of the commanders of the main regiment in 1560 at Pskov, in 1562 at Smolensk, the rear regiment against Polotsk in 1563, and served in the Muscovite army until 1567. Tsarevich Kaibula commanded the left-wing regiment in the Polotsk campaign of 1563. See Janet Martin, “Multiethnicity in Muscovy: A Consideration of Christian and Muslim Tatars in the 1550s–1580s,” *Journal of Early Modern History*, 5, no. 1 (2001): 5–17; and idem, “Tatars in the Muscovite Army during the Livonian War,” in *The Military and Society in Russia, 1450–1917*, edited by Eric Lohr and Marshall Poe (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 366–371. During the reign of Vasili III, Tsarevich Peter commanded the main regiment from 1506 until his death in 1523, but by then he had already converted to Orthodoxy. Ostrowski, “Extraordinary Career,” 698. Likewise, Tsar Simeon Kasaevich (formerly Yadigâr Mehmet) commanded Muscovite regiments mainly on the southern frontier

regiments in the Muscovite army both before and after conversion. He converted to Christianity by July 15, 1573, and was given the name Simeon Bekbulatovich.<sup>8</sup>

In 1575, according to one of the *Military Registers*, Ivan IV placed the recently baptized Simeon Bekbulatovich on the throne as the grand prince of all Rus'.<sup>9</sup> One problem that seems to have been resolved to a certain extent is determining exactly when Simeon Bekbulatovich served in that position—September 17, 1575, at the earliest to September 2, 1576, at the latest. In an article published in 1965, Jack M. Culpepper concluded that Simeon Bekbulatovich was “enthroned” or “installed” sometime between September 17, 1575, and October 30, 1575. His reasoning is that we have a decree from Ivan IV issued on the former date without any change in his title, and he wrote a petition to the Grand Prince Simeon Bekbulatovich on the latter date (see above).<sup>10</sup> By the beginning of the next year, September 2, 1576, Ivan IV was once again issuing documents as tsar and grand prince of all Rus'.<sup>11</sup> In the spring of 1576, Simeon married Anastasiia Ivanovna Mstislavskaia, the great granddaughter of Tsarevich Peter (Kudai Kul) and Evdokhiia Ivanovna, the sister of Grand Prince Vasilii III (Ivan's father). Ivan kept for himself the title Tsar (Khan) of Kazan' and Astrakhan' as well as the Grand Prince of Tver' and even Tsar of “all Rus'.” In addition, he carved out an appanage (*udel*) for himself within Simeon's principality<sup>12</sup> and called

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after he converted to Orthodoxy in 1553 until his death in 1565, but also a regiment at Velikie Luki in 1562 and the right-wing regiment in the Polotsk campaign of 1563. Tsar Alexander (formerly Ötemish-Girey) accompanied Ivan IV on the Polotsk campaign, but he was too young to command a regiment. See Martin, “Multiethnicity,” 7–9; and idem, “Tatars in the Muscovite Army,” 368–369.

<sup>8</sup> N. M. Karamzin, *Istoriia Gosudarstva Rossiiskogo*, 5th ed. (St. Petersburg: Eduard Prats, 1843) 9: col. 149, citing *Delo Datsk.*, № 2, fol. 41 that by July 15, 1573, he was called Simeon. Cf. Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovaniia o kasimovskikh tsariakh*, 2: 3, 11–24; and N. V. Lileev, *Simeon Bekbulatovich* (Tver': Tipografiia Gubernskogo Pravleniia, 1891) 17–20.

<sup>9</sup> *Razriadnaia kniga 1475–1605 gg.*, 2.2: 391. Cf. V. I. Koretskii, “Solovetskii letopisets kontsa XVI v.,” *Letopis' i khroniki* 1980 g. (Moscow: Nauka, 1981), 239; M. N. Tikhomirov, “Maloizvestnye letopisi pamiatniki,” *Istoricheskie arkhiv*, 7 (1951): 226, republished in M. N. Tikhomirov, *Russkoe letopisanie* (Moscow: Nauka, 1979), 199.

<sup>10</sup> Jack M. Culpepper, “The Kremlin Executions of 1575 and the Enthronement of Simeon Bekbulatovich,” *Slavic Review*, 24, no. 3 (1965): 503 n. 1.

<sup>11</sup> *Russkaia istoricheskaia biblioteka (RIB)*, 39 vols. (St. Petersburg/Petrograd/Leningrad, 1872–1927): 32, № 269.

<sup>12</sup> On the composition of Ivan's appanage within Simeon's grand principality, see S. P. Mordovina and A. L. Stanislavskii, “Sostav osobogo dvora Ivana IV v period ‘Velikogo

himself “Prince of Moscow.” Ivan’s doing so has challenged historians to provide an explanation. We can approach the riddle by arranging the accounts and explanations into three categories depending on the time of origin: (1) accounts contemporary to the time of Ivan IV; (2) accounts written shortly after Ivan’s death in 1584; and (3) recent scholarly theories.

One of the accounts contemporary to Ivan IV is that of Daniel Printz von Buchau, the ambassador of the Holy Roman Emperor, who arrived in Moscow in December 1575. In his report to the Emperor Maximilian II, Printz said that Ivan appointed Simeon because there had been a plot on his life and “because of the deceit of his subjects” (*ob improbitatem subditorum*).<sup>13</sup> Another contemporary source, Daniel Sylvester, says something very similar. Sylvester, an interpreter with the Russia Company, wrote that he had two private conversations with Ivan IV, who gave him the reason for making Simeon Bekbulatovich the grand prince of Muscovy. Both these conversations occurred while Simeon was on the throne. The first was on November 29, 1575, in which Ivan cited “the perverse and evill dealinge of our subjects” as the reason for placing the “government ... into the hands” of Simeon.

For the occasion whey we pretended those proceedings with our sister [Elizabeth I] was, that we highlye forsaue the varyable and dungerous estate of princes, and that as well as the meanest they are subject unto chaunge, which caused us to suspect oure owne magnificence and that which nowe inded ys chaunced unto us, for we have resyned the estate of our government, which heathertoo hath bene so royally maynteyned, into the hands of a straunger whoe is nothinge alyed unto us our lande or crowne. The occasion whereof is the perverse and evill dealinge of our subjects who mourmour and repine at us, for gettinge loyauull obedience they practice againste our person. The which to prevent we have gyvene them ouer unto an other prince [Simeon Bekbulatovich] to governe them but have reserved in our custodye all the treasure of the lande withe sufficient trayne and place for their and our relyefe.<sup>14</sup>

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Kniazheniia’ Semena Bekbulatovicha,” *Arkheograficheskii ezhegodnik za 1976* (Moscow, 1976), 153–192.

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Printz, *Moscoviae ortus, et progressus* (Guben: Christophor Gruber, 1681), 103 as reprinted in *Scriptores Rerum Livonicarum*, 2 vols. (Riga and Leipzig: Eduard Franken, 1853), 2: 705. Daniel Prinz, “Nachalo i vozvyshenie Moskovii,” trans. I. A. Tikhomirov, *Chteniia v Obshchestve istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh pri Moskovskom universitete* (Moscow, 1845–1918), 1876, № 3, § 4, p. 29.

<sup>14</sup> Iurii Tolstoi, *Pervye sorok let snoshenii mezhdu Rossiei i Anglieiu 1553–1593* (St. Petersburg: A. Transhel, 1875), 179–180; cf. N. C. de Bogoushevsky, “The English in Muscovy in the Sixteenth Century,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 7 (1878): 107.

Like Printz, Sylvester does not name any of the subjects who Ivan thought were doing “perverse and evil” things. The second conversation was on January 29, 1576, exactly two months later, when Ivan said that he could take back being grand prince at any time:

For althoughe we manifested to thyne aparaunce to have enthronysed an other in th'emperryall dignitie and therevnto have entrowled bothe vs and others yet not so muche and not the same not so farr resyned, but that at our pleasure wee can take the dignitie vnto us againe and will yet do thear in as God shall instructe vs, for that the same ys not confirmed vnto him by order of coronacion ne he by assent elected, but for our pleasure.<sup>15</sup>

Sylvester indicates that Ivan told him that Simeon had not been crowned, nor was he elected. Such an election would have been by an Assembly of the Land (*zemskii sobor*), and we have no evidence that any was convened at that time.<sup>16</sup>

Next we have a petition that is dated to October 30, 1575, from Ivan and his sons Ivan and Fedor to Simeon, in which Ivan requests that he be allowed to choose “from all the members of the court” servitors without their losing their possessions:

The year 7084 [1575], October 30. Prince Ivan Vasil'evich of Moscow and his sons, Prince Ivan and Prince Fedor Ivanovich of Moscow, presented this petition to the Grand Prince of all Rus' Semion Bekbulatovich, and the petition says:

Ivanets Vasil'ev together with his sons Ivanets and Fedorets petition the Lord Grand Prince of all Rus' Semion Bekbulatovich, that you, Lord, showing mercy, would allow for permission to apportion the members of the court, the boyars, the courtiers, the provincial nobility, and the attendants. We petition further that some may be kept and others dismissed and submit that all this may be arranged with the help of the Lord's officers. Also, we request permission to make our choice from all the members of the court. Also, we crave permission to rid ourselves of those who are not wanted by us. And when we have sorted the people out, then, O Lord, we shall submit their names to you and thereafter we shall take none without your Lordship's express permission. And we request, O Lord, your favor in not sequestering the private estates of the people who come to us, as was done previously in the case of appanage princes. We urge you to let

<sup>15</sup> Tolstoi, *Pervye sorok let snoshenii*, 184–185.

<sup>16</sup> See L. V. Cherepnin, *Zemskie sobory russkogo gosudarstva v XVI–XVII vv.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1978); and Donald Ostrowski, “The Assembly of the Land (*Zemskii Sobor*) as a Representative Institution,” in *Modernizing Muscovy: Reform and Social Change in Seventeenth-Century Russia*, edited by Jarmo Kotilaine and Marshall Poe (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 117–142.

them remove from their estates granted to them by the government their money, their harvested grain, and their movable belongings. We ask that they should be allowed to leave the estates without being robbed.

We request that you show mercy to those who desire to join us and that they will be permitted to leave without incurring your displeasure and that they will not be taken away from us. And as for those who desire to leave us in order to join you, we request, O Lord, that you will show favor to us and be merciful to us by not taking them into your court and not accepting their petitions.

Do us also, O Lord, the kindness of granting us a decree in your name showing what provisions should be made for the court attendants, whether by letters patent of our clerks, or by charter signed by us, or would you demand a full bond? Let us know, O Lord, the terms of your decree.

Thus do we petition you! Show us your mercy and favor, O Lord!<sup>17</sup>

The administrative introduction to this petition, a document from 1576, and 17th-century chronicles (see below) say that Ivan referred to himself as “Prince of Moscow.”<sup>18</sup> We do have an immunity charter issued by the Rostov Archbishop Iona on June 27, 1576, that refers to “Prince Ivan Vasil’evich of Moscow”<sup>19</sup> and three charters from spring 1576—March 1, March 14, and May 20, respectively—that are from the “Lord Prince Ivan Vasil’evich of Moscow.”<sup>20</sup> But in the petition itself Ivan does not use that title. Although the petition does not provide an explanation for Ivan’s action, it does provide evidence at least in part for what Ivan wanted to do during the time Simeon was grand prince of Rus’.

The reason given by Printz and reported by Sylvester for his placing Simeon on the throne is similar to Ivan’s establishment of the *oprichnina*

<sup>17</sup> This petition is maintained in one copy in RGADA, fond. 27 (Razriad of the State Archive, Tainyi Prikaz), delo № 12. Photos of the beginning, middle, and end of the ms can be found in *Poslanie Ivana Groznogo*, edited by D. S. Likhachev and Ia. S. Lur’e (Moscow and Leningrad: Akademiia nauk SSSR, 1951), see the insert between p. 196 and p. 197. A printed version of the text appears in *ibid.*, 195–196 and in *RIB*, 22.2: 76–77. The translation here is taken mainly from Robert Payne and Nikita Romanov, *Ivan the Terrible* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1975) 351–352.

<sup>18</sup> Besides the *Piskarev Chronicle* (*Piskarevskii letopisets*) and the *Abbreviated Annal* cited above, see the *Moscow Chronicle* (*Moskovskii letopisets*). *PSRL*, 34: 226; V. I. Buganov and V. I. Koretskii, “Neizvestnii Moskovskii letopisets XVII veka iz muzeinogo sobraniia GBL,” *Zapiski Otdela rukopisei*, 32 (1971): 132–134, 146.

<sup>19</sup> *Akty, sobrannye v bibliotekakh i arkhivakh Rossiiskoi imperii Arkheograficheskoi ekspeditsiei Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk (AAE)*, 4 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1836), 1: 358, № 294.

<sup>20</sup> *Akty XIII–XVII vv., predstavlennye v razriadnyi prikaz predstavitelami sluzhilykh familii posle otmeny mestnichestva*, ed. by Aleksandr Sergeevich Iushkov (Moscow: Universitetskaya tipografiia, 1898), p. 185, no. 204; p. 186, no. 205; and pp. 186–187, no. 206.



ten years earlier. In 1565, Ivan had appointed Ivan Fedorovich Mstislavskii as head of the *zemshchina*. Ivan gave the following reasons in a letter to Metropolitan Afanasii in 1565 for his leaving Moscow and residing in Aleksandrova sloboda. He claimed prelates, in collusion with “boyars, courtiers, d’iaki, and all the bureaucrats,” would act to thwart the sovereign when he wanted to punish subjects:

whenever he, the sovereign, wanted to investigate and punish his boyars and all the bureaucrats as well as the serving princes and *deti boiarskie* for their misdeeds, the archbishops, bishops, archimandrites, and hegumens, colluding with boyars, courtiers, d’iaki, and all the bureaucrats would begin to protect them from the sovereign tsar and grand prince.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, the sources contemporary to Ivan are in general agreement for placing Simeon Bekbulatovich on the throne and those reasons coincide with the reasons he gave for setting up the oprichnina—that is, his desire to punish certain perfidious subjects, from which action he was otherwise being prevented.

We also have at least nine documents issued by Simeon Bekbulatovich as grand prince of all Rus’: one immunity charter (*zhalovannaia gramota*) (to the Kirillo-Belozersk Monastery on April 2, 1576);<sup>22</sup> two obedience charters (*poslushnaia gramota*) (one to the widow and children of Fedor Sunbulov for half a village and half a hamlet in Riazan’ uезд on January 7, 1576; the other to Prince Daniil Zasekin about a votchina in Vladimirskii uезд);<sup>23</sup> three entry charters (*vvozyne gramoty*) (the first to Stepan Kuz’mín syn Merkuloва for a hamlet in Mtsensk uезд on February 9, 1576; the second to Prince Vasiliĭ Ivanovich Teliatvskii, et al., for *pomest’ia* in Dmitrievsk on the river Kapsha and in Nikol’sk on the river Iavosma pogosts in Obonezhskaia *piatina* on March 29, 1576; and the third to Prince Vasiliĭ Ivanovich Teliatvskii, et al., for *pomest’ia* in Voskresensk, Klimetsk and other pogosts in Obonezhskaia *piatina* on July 18, 1576);<sup>24</sup> a decree (*uka-znaia gramota*) (to town *prikazchik* Vasiliĭ Bludov granting a petition to

<sup>21</sup> PSRL, 13: 392; PSRL, 29: 342.

<sup>22</sup> AAE, 1: 356–357, № 292.

<sup>23</sup> *Akty sluzhilykh zemlevladel'tsev XV–nachala XVII veka. Sbornik dokumentov*, 4 vols., compiled by A. V. Antonov and K. V. Baranov (Moscow: Arkheograficheskii tsentr', 1997), 3: 341–342, № 417; and AAE, 1: 355–356, № 290.

<sup>24</sup> *Akty sluzhilykh zemlevladel'tsev XV–nachala XVII veka*, 3: 205, № 250; 4: 234–236, № 317; and 4: 13–14, № 15.



*pomeshchik* Vasilii Semen syn Kablukova in Shuiskii uезд on March 14, 1576);<sup>25</sup> a *kormlenie* grant (to Konstantin Ivanovich Karamyshev for the town of Roslavl' on May 23, 1576);<sup>26</sup> and a deed of purchase (from July 7, 1576).<sup>27</sup> Although none of these documents refers to Ivan or provides any testimony about his placing Simeon on the throne, they do show that Simeon was officially fulfilling the responsibilities of the grand prince.<sup>28</sup>

Next we turn to those accounts written within a few decades of Ivan's death. Jerome Horsey, an agent of the Russia Company, was in Muscovy more or less continually from 1573 until 1591, so he was there during the time when Simeon Bekbulatovich was ostensibly the grand prince of Rus'. Yet, Horsey may not have begun writing his *Travels* until 1589 (possibly not until 1591 after he left Muscovy), and completed the manuscript in 1621.<sup>29</sup> In addition, we have reason to believe Horsey was writing the account of his stay in Muscovy as a means of advancing his own views about England. Therefore, I place his testimony in the second category—accounts written shortly after Ivan's death. Horsey described a financial motivation behind Ivan's placing of Simeon Bekbulatovich on the grand princely throne:

He has so fleeced his merchants by taking their commodities to exchange with strangers for cloth of gold, dollars, pearl, jewels, etc., which he continually took into his treasury without paying little or nothing, by that means borrowing great sums of cities, towns, and monasteries, exhausting all their wealth by great impositions and customs to augment and increase his own treasure, became so odious and in such a desperate case as he devised how to prevent and alter his estate. To annihilate and frustrate all this he had engaged his crown unto, made a separation and division of his towns, offices, and subjects, called this oprichnina and the other zemshchina, established a new king or emperor, named Tsar Simeon, the emperor's son of Kazan', resigned his style and lent him his crown; transfers all authority thereunto incident; crowns him, but with no solemnity nor consent of peers; causeth his subjects to address themselves and their affairs, petitions, and suits to him; and in his name all privileges, charters, instruments, and writings to be called in and new to be published in his name and under his seal. They plead in all courts of justice in his name; coins money, receives

<sup>25</sup> Akty istoricheskie, sobrannye i izdannye Arkheograficheskoi komissiei (AI), 5 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1841–1842), 1: 360–361, № 195; and Akty sluzhilykh zemlevladel'tsev XV–nachala XVII veka, 3: 126–127, № 148.

<sup>26</sup> Akty sluzhilykh zemlevladel'tsev XV–nachala XVII veka, 1: 78–79, № 103.

<sup>27</sup> P. A. Sadikov, "Iz istorii Oprichniny XVI v.," *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 3 (1940): 278–279, № 69.

<sup>28</sup> Koretskii mentions "some 50 documents" issued to Novgorod by Simeon as grand prince of Rus', but I am unable to confirm that number. V. I. Koretskii, "Zemskii sobor 1575 g. i chas-tichnoe vozrozhdenie oprichniny," *Voprosy istorii*, 1967, № 5: 39. My thanks to Charles Halperin for bringing Koretskii's statement to my attention.

<sup>29</sup> See "Introduction," in *Rude & Barbarous Kingdom*, 253.

customs and casual fines and certain revenues for the maintenance of his house, officers, and servants; is liable to all debts and matters concerning his office of treasury. He sets in majesty; the old Emperor Ivan comes and prostrates himself. Causeth his metropolitans, bishops, priors, noblemen, and officers to do the like, and all ambassadors to resort before him, which some refused. Was married unto the daughter of Kniaz' Ivan Fedorovich Mstislavskii, prime prince of the blood royal. These things being thus controverted and changed, the old emperor would take no notice of any debts owing in his time—letters patents, privileges to towns and monasteries all void. His clergy, nobility, and commons must now petition Ivan Vasil'evich that he would be pleased to take the crown and government upon him again, upon many conditions and authentical instruments confirmed by act of parliament in a very solemn new inauguration.<sup>30</sup>

Horsey's explanation of an economic motivation—Ivan's wanting to transfer responsibility for his debts to Simeon—is similar to that of another Englishman writing at around the same time.

Giles Fletcher, English ambassador to the court of Tsar Fedor, wrote at the end of the 16th century and attributed the placing of Simeon Bekbulatovich on the grand princely throne to an attempt on Ivan's part to get at the wealth of the bishops and monasteries and to do so while precluding further hatred for himself:

To this end Ivan Vasil'evich, late emperor, used a very strange practice that few princes would have done in their greatest extremities. He resigned his kingdom to one *Velikii Kniaz'* Simeon, the emperor's son of Kazan', as though he meant to draw himself from all public doings to a quiet private life. Towards the end of the year he caused this new king to call in all charters granted to bishoprics and monasteries, which they had enjoyed many hundred years before, which were all canceled. This done (as in dislike of the fact and of the misgovernment of the new king), he resumed his scepter and so was content (as in favor to the church and religious men) that they should renew their charters and take them of himself, reserving and annexing to the crown so much of their lands as himself thought good.

By this practice he wrung from the bishoprics and monasteries (besides the lands which he annexed to the crown) an huge mass of money, from some forty, from some fifty, from some an hundred thousand rubles. And this as well for the increase of his treasure as to abate the ill opinion of his hard government by a show of worse in another man. Wherein his strange spirit is to be noted, that being hated of his subjects (as himself knew well enough), yet would venture such a practice to set another in his saddle that might have ridden away with his horse while himself walked by on foot.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup>) Jerome Horsey, *Travels*, in *Rude & Barbarous Kingdom: Russia in the Accounts of Sixteenth-Century English Voyagers*, edited by Lloyd E. Berry and Robert O. Crummey (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 275.

<sup>31</sup>) Giles Fletcher, *Of the Russe Commonwealth*, in *Rude & Barbarous Kingdom*, 166–167 [updated spelling].

As with Horsey, Fletcher may have been advancing this explanation with an eye to the Church lands issue in England. We have evidence that Ivan IV was granting wealth and lands to the monasteries throughout his reign, which would seem to refute the theory he was seeking to take lands away from the monasteries.

The *Piskarev Chronicle* of the early 17th century in the entry under the year 7081 (1572/73) proposes two alternative explanations for Ivan's making Simeon grand prince: (1) "certain people" said sorcerers had predicted "the Muscovite tsar" would die that year and (2) Ivan wanted to conduct an opinion poll to find out what the people would say concerning it:

That same year about the rule of Tsar Simeon. According to the will of Tsar and Grand Prince Ivan Vasil'evich they put Tsar Simeon Beidbulatovich on the Moscow tsarist throne and crowned him with the crown of the tsars in the Most Pure Great Cathedral [Church] in Moscow. Simeon lived on the Vzruba beyond the Vstretenie where Rostriga lived. And the grand prince lived beyond the Neglinnaia on the Perovka, on the Arbat [Obrat], opposite the old Stone Bridge and called himself "Ivan of Moscow." And so wrote the petitioners. And he went simply like a boyar, but in the winter he drove on the thills [not in the sleigh]. And he took a few boyars for himself, and that all belonged to Simeon. When he came to Grand Prince Simeon, he would sit far away as also the boyars, but Grand Prince Simeon sits in the tsar's place. And he married him to Princess Anastasiia, the daughter of Mstislav. And the marriage was in Moscow at the Vzruba, and everything according to tsarist ceremony, and the metropolitan married [them] in the Most Pure Great [Cathedral Church]. And it was his life for more than a year and again he [Ivan] sent him [away] and gave him Tver' and Torzhok as an appanage. Certain people said that he enthroned him because the sorcerers said to him that in that year [there] will be change: the Muscovite tsar will die. And other voices were among the people that he searched the people to find out what the common talk will be among the people about that.<sup>32</sup>

Jacques Margeret, whose *Estat de l'Empire de Russie et Grande Duché Moscovie* appeared in 1607, served as a mercenary in Russia from 1600 to

<sup>32</sup> "Piskarevskii letopisets," ed. O. A. Iakovleva, in *Dokumenty po istorii XV–XVII vv., Materialy po istorii SSSR*, 2 vols., edited by A. A. Novosel'skii, L. V. Cherepnin, and L. N. Pushkarev (Moscow: Akademiia nauk, 1955), 2: 81–82. Cf. *PSRL*, 34: 192. The so-called *Abbreviated Annal to 1691* (*Sokrashchennyi Vremennik do 1691 g.*) of the 18th century reports under the year 7082 (1573/74) provides a shortened form of the information found in the *Piskarev Chronicle*. "Sokrashchennyi vremennik," addendum to "Piskarevskii letopisets," 2: 148. The *Abbreviated Annal* is an abbreviation of the *Piskarev Chronicle*, as O. A. Iakovleva concluded in her introduction to the texts. Iakovleva, "Piskarevskii letopisets," 20. The *Solovetskii Chronicle* reports that Ivan spent the year in Kaluga (*v Kolugi*). Koretskii, "Solovetskii letopisets," 239; Tikhomirov, "Maloizvestnye letopisi pamiatniki," 226; and Tikhomirov, *Russkoe letopisanie*, 199.

1606. He, too, states that by elevating Simeon to the throne Ivan wanted to test the loyalty of his subjects.<sup>33</sup> In contrast, Ivan Timofeev also at the beginning of the 17th century in his *Vremennik* characterized it as a “game” played by Ivan and “God’s people”.<sup>34</sup>

The *Moscow Chronicle*, which was probably composed after 1613, says that Ivan found out about “the desire of his son the tsarevich Ivan Ivanovich for the tsardom and wanted to place an obstacle before him; namely, the grand principality of Tsar Simeon Bekbulatovich.”<sup>35</sup>

But like the “certain people” of the *Piskarev Chronicle*, this explanation finds no corroboration in the historical record, either that Ivan Ivanovich wanted to overthrow his father or that Ivan Groznyi feared that Ivan Ivanovich wanted to do so.

The accounts written within a few decades of Ivan’s death thus provide various theories for the placing of Simeon Bekbulatovich on the throne: Ivan wanted to evade responsibility for paying his debts (Horsey); he wanted to get at the wealth of the bishops and monasteries (Fletcher); soothsayers predicted the Muscovite tsar would die in that year (*Piskarev Chronicle*); Ivan wanted to find out what the people thought (i.e., whether they were loyal to him) (*Piskarev Chronicle* and Margeret); Ivan was playing a “game” (Timofeev); and Ivan detected a threat to take over his throne from his son Ivan (*Moscow Chronicle*).

Researchers have found irresistible the temptation to conjecture and speculate about this episode. Initially they tended to deny any importance to the event but eventually a number of researchers began trying to see some rationality behind this apparently action that was odd even for Ivan IV.

S. M. Solov’ev wrote that Ivan was motivated by his doubts in Ivan Fedorovich Mstislavskii, the head of the zemshchina, to choose the more reliable Simeon, who then issues decrees as zemshchina head.<sup>36</sup> In 1871,

<sup>33</sup> Jacques Margeret, *The Russian Empire and Grand Duchy of Muscovy: A 17th-Century Account*, translated and edited by Chester S. L. Dunning (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983), 16.

<sup>34</sup> *Vremennik Ivana Timofeeva*, ed. O. A. Derzhavina (Moscow and Leningrad: Akademiia nauk SSSR, 1951), 12. Derzhavina places the bulk of the work as being written between 1610 and 1617 (355–356) but that Ivan Timofeev continued to revise and add to it through 1628 (356–357).

<sup>35</sup> *PSRL*, 34: 226. For the proposed time of composition of the *Moscow Chronicle*, see V. I. Buganov, “Predislovie,” *PSRL*, 34: 5.

<sup>36</sup> S. M. Solov’ev, *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen*, 29 vols. in 15 books (Moscow: Izdatel’svo Sotsial’no-ekonomicheskoi literatury, 1959–1966), bk. 3, vol. 6, p. 565.

A. I. Pavlov accepted Horsey's and Fletcher's claim that Ivan placed Simeon on the throne to take away lands and immunities that the churches and monasteries had only to restore chosen ones later when he returned to the throne.<sup>37</sup> D. I. Ilovaiskii in 1874 considered this event to be nothing more than eccentric behavior on Ivan's part.<sup>38</sup> N. V. Lileev proposed in 1891 that Ivan put Simeon on the throne so he could flee to England.<sup>39</sup> The problem with that explanation, as Ia. S. Lur'e pointed out, is the absence of evidence that Ivan made any plans to flee to England in 1575/76.<sup>40</sup> Also in 1891, S. M. Seredonin rejected the assertion of previous scholars that Simeon was made head of the zemshchina in place of Ivan Fedorovich Mstislavskii.<sup>41</sup> He also rejected the claim of Horsey and Fletcher that Ivan wanted to take away lands from churches and monasteries. Seredonin pointed out there is no evidence any lands were taken away under Simeon, but there is evidence of continued confirmation by Ivan of church and monastic landholding when he returned to ruling as grand prince (80–81). Instead he suggested that the appointment of Simeon as grand prince in 1575 was connected with the "events of 1564 [the beginning of the oprichnina], that is, at that time, Ivan had reasons to be dissatisfied with his supporters" (81). In 1899, S. F. Platonov expressed the opinion that the placing of Simeon on the throne as grand prince was "some kind of game or whim, the sense of which is unclear, and the practical meaning insignificant."<sup>42</sup>

V. O. Kliuchevskii connected the placing of Simeon Bekbulatovich on the throne with evidence that Ivan had earlier "placed a converted Tatar, the captured Kazan' Khan Ediger[Yadigâr]-Simeon, at the head of the *zemshchina*."<sup>43</sup> Yet Kliuchevskii did not see any great significance to the role each played: "if we translate these titles into modern Russian values, they

<sup>37</sup> Aleksei Stepanovich Pavlov, *Istoricheskii ocherk sekularizatsii tserkovnykh zemel' v Rossii* (Odessa: Tipografiia Ul'rikha i Shul'tse, 1871), 156.

<sup>38</sup> D. I. Ilovaiskii, *Istoriia Rossii*, vol. 3: *Moskovsko-tsarskii period, pervaiia polovina ili XVI vek* (Moscow: Tipografiia Gracheva, 1874), 281.

<sup>39</sup> Lileev, Simeon Bekbulatovich, 51–52.

<sup>40</sup> Ia. S. Lur'e, "Kommentarii," in *Poslanie Ivana Groznogo*, 642.

<sup>41</sup> Sergei Mikhailovich Seredonin, *Sochinenie Dzhul'sa Fletchera "Of the Russe Common Wealth" kak istoricheskii istochnik* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia I. N. Skorokhodova, 1891), 79–81 (here 79).

<sup>42</sup> S. F. Platonov, *Ocherki po istorii Smuty v Moskovskom gosudarstve XVI–XVII vv. (Opyt izucheniia obshchestvennogo stroia i soslovnykh otnoshenii v smutnoe vremia)* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia I. N. Skorokhodova, 1899), 157.

<sup>43</sup> V. O. Kliuchevskii, *Kurs russkoi istorii*, pt. 2, in V. O. Kliuchevskii, *Sochineniia*, 8 vols. (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1957), 2: 178–179 (here 178).

probably amount to no more than that Ivan appointed the two Simeons presidents of the Council of Provincial Boyars” (178). Kliuchevskii reasoned that “Ivan drew a distinction between himself as Appanage, or oprichnina Prince of Moscow, and himself as that ‘Tsar of All Rus’ who stood at the head of the zemshchina.” He wrote that the appointment of Simeon Bekbulatovich was “not entirely a political masquerade.” Instead, he saw the formation of the oprichnina, which in a different form was continued with the appointment of Simeon Bekbulatovich, as “forming a political sanctuary where the Tsar wanted to hide from his rebellious boyardom” (179). Kliuchevskii cited as evidence Ivan’s will composed about 1572 in which he declares himself an exile and a wanderer: “Through the multitude of my transgressions, God’s anger has descended upon me, so that the boyars, of their conceit, have driven me from my possessions, and I wander through all lands” (179).<sup>44</sup> This interpretation is not the only one that can plausibly be applied to the quoted passage. The will of Ivan IV is extant in only one copy, from 1805. It was apparently copied at least two times before that. One of the copyists glosses the word *exiled* as “Here exile does not signify deprivation of the throne but hatred of him, [and] in his last testament, done in 7090 [1582], he speaks more clearly of this and forbids revenge.”<sup>45</sup> In addition, the word *wander* is glossed as “His wandering signifies that he preferred, because of fear of revolts, to live in the city of Staritsa or, even more, in the Aleksandrova *sloboda*.”<sup>46</sup>

In 1921, P. A. Sadikov suggested that Ivan placed Simeon on the throne so that he (Ivan) could stand for election to the Polish throne in November 1575. He based this conjecture on the existence of a “strong party” in Lithuania that wanted either Ivan or his son Fedor to be chosen.<sup>47</sup> But, again, as Lur’e pointed out, first, we have no evidence that Ivan attempted to be elected to the throne of Poland at that time (although he had made an attempt earlier, in 1572); and, second, Ivan “led the negotiations over

<sup>44</sup> Howes has this translation: “And if, because of the multitude of my sins which caused God’s wrath to spread, I were exiled by the boyars—because of my wilfulness—from my possessions, and I wander about my lands....” *The Testaments of the Grand Princes of Moscow*, translated and edited with commentary by Robert Craig Howes (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), 310–311.

<sup>45</sup> Testaments of the Grand Princes of Moscow, 310, n. 16.

<sup>46</sup> Testaments of the Grand Princes of Moscow, 311, n. 17.

<sup>47</sup> P. A. Sadikov, “Iz istorii oprichniny Ivana Groznogo,” *Dela i dni: Istoricheskii zhurnal*, 2 (1921): 7, n. 1; and idem, *Ocherki po istorii oprichniny* (Moscow and Leningrad: Akademiia nauk SSSR, 1950), 43–44.

dividing up the *Rzeczpospolita* and acquiring Lithuania and Livonia, for which he did not need to give up the Russian throne.”<sup>48</sup> In 1947, Hans von Eckhardt proposed that Ivan’s placing Simeon on the throne can “be interpreted as an attempt to make astute concessions to the Tatar element in Muscovy ... while at the same time deprive the [Crimean] khan of any pretext for a fresh attack on the Orthodox sovereign.”<sup>49</sup>

V. I. Koretskii proposed in 1959 that Simeon Bekbulatovich was enthroned as the result of a meeting of the Assembly of the Land in 1575. The aim of the calling of the Assembly, according to Koretskii, was to secularize church lands.<sup>50</sup> But, as Ellerd Hulbert pointed out in 1966 the calling of an Assembly of the Land in 1575 is unlikely and the notion that one was called resulted from a mistake in the Russian translation that Koretskii used of Horsey’s English text. Instead, the reference in Horsey to “a high and provincial convocation” should be understood as a reference to the Church Council of 1580, not an Assembly of the Land of 1575. According to Hulbert, Horsey seems to have conflated the 1580 Church Council with a military gathering of the type that is described as meeting in 1571 to discuss events on the southern front.<sup>51</sup> Later, in 1967, Koretskii proposed that two incidents in the *Life of Varlaam and Ioasaf* provided the basis for Ivan’s forming the oprichnina in 1565 and for the subsequent placing of Simeon Bekbulatovich on the throne in conjunction with a “partial revival of the oprichnina.”<sup>52</sup> In the *Life* is a prediction similar to that given in the *Piskarev Chronicle*. It seems more likely to me that the connection with the *Life* occurred to those whom the *Piskarev* chronicler is referring as “certain people” as a possible explanation for what seemed to them inexplicable in Ivan’s behavior than that it had occurred to Ivan himself. Also in 1959, Michael Cherniavsky mentioned what he perceived to be an “irony” in the “reversal of roles” in that “it was the traditional, orthodox Christian Russia that got the Chingizide prince, and the new absolutist secular Russia that got the God-crowned tsar.”<sup>53</sup>

<sup>48</sup>) Lur’e, “Kommentarii,” 642.

<sup>49</sup>) Hans von Eckhardt, *Iwan der Schreckliche* (Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1947), 328–329.

<sup>50</sup>) V. I. Koretskii, “Zemskii sobor 1575 g. i postavlenie Simeona Bekbulatovicha ‘Velikim Kniazem Vsea Rusi,’” *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, № 2 (1959): 148–156.

<sup>51</sup>) Ellerd Hulbert, “The *Zemskii Sobor* of 1575: A Mistake in Translation,” *Slavic Review*, 25 (1966): 320–322.

<sup>52</sup>) Koretskii, “Zemskii sobor 1575 g. i chastichnoe vozrozhdenie oprichniny,” 38–39, 49.

<sup>53</sup>) Michael Cherniavsky, “Khan or Basileus: An Aspect of Russian Medieval Political Theory,”



S. M. Kashtanov in 1961 saw the appointment of Simeon as a maneuver to strengthen Ivan's hand in relation to Kazan'.<sup>54</sup> He disputes Fletcher's and Horsey's claim (and thereby Koretskii's interpretation) that confiscation of monastic wealth was Ivan's motivation by pointing out that no systematic pattern in regard to the recalled charters can be discerned.<sup>55</sup> Kashtanov declared that having Simeon as grand prince meant that Ivan had to be on guard against him and did so by holding on to his own title as tsar of Kazan' and Astrakhan'. Furthermore, he argued, "only such a dialectical dualism of the role of Simeon explains to us the internal contradictions of Ivan's policy in 1575–1576 and the quick 'demotion' of Simeon Bekbulatovich from the throne of grand prince of all Rus'."<sup>56</sup> Kashtanov does not make clear how this differs from any other appointments by Ivan. In the case of Simeon, we have no hint of disloyalty to Ivan or of Ivan's suspecting such. Just the opposite, Simeon maintained Ivan's favor right up until Ivan's death in 1584.

Omeljan Pritsak in 1967 pointed to the importance of Simeon Bekbulatovich's being a Chinggisid for Ivan's choice of him to ascend to the grand princely throne. Pritsak drew a comparison of Ivan with Temur the Lame, who could appoint khans, but could not be a khan himself since he was not of Chinggisid descent.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, according to Pritsak, the attempts to connect the ruler of Muscovy with the first Rome (through the fictional genealogy connecting the grand prince to Prus, the brother of Augustus Caesar) and with the second Rome (Constantinople) (through the legend of Monomakh's cap) were not accepted as legitimate in diplomatic circles. Therefore, Ivan needed the legitimation of being tsar/khan of Kazan' and Astrakhan'.<sup>58</sup> As insightful as Pritsak's analysis is, it elides one crucial point. Temur as a non-Chinggisid appointed Chinggisids to be khans, but Ivan as a non-Chinggisid did not appoint Simeon Bekbulatovich

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*Journal of the History of Ideas* 20 (1959): 476; article reprinted in *The Structure of Russian History: Interpretive Essays*, edited by Michael Cherniavsky (New York: Random House, 1970), 65–79.

<sup>54</sup> S. M. Kashtanov, "O vnutrennei politike Ivana Groznogo v period 'velikogo kniazheniia' Simeona Bekbulatovicha," *Trudy Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo istoriko-arkhivnogo instituta*, 16 (1961): 461–462.

<sup>55</sup> Kashtanov, "O vnutrennei politike Ivana Groznogo," 427.

<sup>56</sup> Kashtanov, "O vnutrennei politike Ivana Groznogo," 440.

<sup>57</sup> Omeljan Pritsak, "Moscow, the Golden Horde, and the Kazan Khanate from a Polycultural Point of View," *Slavic Review*, 26 (1967): 578.

<sup>58</sup> Pritsak, "Moscow, the Golden Horde, and the Kazan Khanate," 582–583.

to be a khan (= tsar), only grand prince (unless one counts Simeon's accession to the throne of Kasimov as an appointment by Ivan).

George Vernadsky in 1969 considered it to be “a misunderstanding” of the *Piskarev* chronicler that Simeon was enthroned as tsar, since Simeon was already a tsar when he was installed in Kasimov: “As the supreme ruler of Russia he became Grand Prince.”<sup>59</sup> Vernadsky's conclusion can be supported by the official title of Ivan IV as given in his great seal: “By the Grace of God, Tsar and Grand Prince Ivan Vasil'evich, Lord of All Rus'—Volodimer, Moscow, Novgorod—Tsar of Kazan', Tsar of Astrakhan', Sovereign of Pskov and Grand Prince of Smolensk, Tver', Iugra, Perm', Viatka, Bolgar.”<sup>60</sup> Thus, Ivan granted Simeon part of his own title—grand prince of all Rus'—but kept for himself the rest, including tsar of Kazan' and Astrakhan'.

Vernadsky provided a wide variety of reasons for Ivan's placing of Simeon on the throne of Moscow.<sup>61</sup> He wrote that “Ivan's motive was to make himself less conspicuous and to channel any dissatisfaction of the public with state affairs against the person of the new ruler” (141). He also thought that both the reasons proposed in the *Piskarev Chronicle* are “probably right” since “Ivan ... was superstitious and believed in sorcery and soothsaying” and he was suspicious of the people, as he had told Daniel Sylvester (143–144). Ivan IV may have been superstitious and believed what sorcerers and soothsayers said, but we do not have any corroborating evidence that sorcerers or soothsayers had predicted the demise of the ruler in that year. Given the mistakes (including the year) and uncorroborated evidence in the *Piskarev Chronicle*, we are at risk for whatever evidence we accept from it uncritically. Vernadsky commented that Ivan seemed to be more confident in his second interview with Daniel Sylvester “than he had been ... when he had deemed it necessary to appoint Simeon official ruler of Russia” (144).<sup>62</sup> Vernadsky attributed the change in Ivan's outlook to

<sup>59</sup> Vernadsky, *The Tsardom of Muscovy 1547–1682*, 142–143; and idem, “Ivan Groznyi i Simeon Bekbulatovich,” in *To Honor Roman Jakobson: Essays on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday, October 11, 1966*, 3 vols. (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), 2133–2151. Some but not all of what Vernadsky has in *Tsardom of Muscovy* appeared earlier in the article published in 1967.

<sup>60</sup> E. I. Kamentseva and N. V. Ustiugov, *Russkaia sfragistika i geraldika* (Moscow: Vysshiaia shkola, 1963), 114–116.

<sup>61</sup> Vernadsky, *The Tsardom of Muscovy 1547–1682*, 141–146.

<sup>62</sup> If we take the September 17, 1575, decree, wherein no change in Ivan's title appeared, as indication that he had not yet made Simeon grand prince, then the appointment of Simeon would have occurred at most only a little over four months before the second interview.

“Ivan’s apparent success in building up a strong and reliable bodyguard, which he had lacked since the dissolution of the oprichniki in 1572” (144). Here Vernadsky resorted to speculation because we do not have evidence either way whether Ivan had “a strong and reliable bodyguard” during this period and if he did whether it was stronger or weaker than before or after. Vernadsky went on to write that Ivan now had “a pretext in legality” and cited the petition of Ivan and his sons to Simeon. Vernadsky contrasted the request in the petition to “his drastic action in instituting the oprichnina early in 1565” (144) and that this “whole procedure took a more orderly course than had the formation of the oprichniki corps,” which also meant that “the servitors of the reorganized dvor of Ivan were not allowed to commit such excesses as had the oprichniki” (145). Although the maneuver may have been a legalistic one (as I explore below), it is difficult to find anything in the petition to indicate that Ivan’s new servitors would be prohibited from repeating the “excesses” of the oprichnina.

A. A. Zimin proposed in 1970 that placing Simeon Bekbulatovich on the throne of Muscovy was part of the creation of an “anti-oprichnina”, with the idea of “repressing the old oprichnina guard.”<sup>63</sup> Zimin pointed out that during the spring and summer of 1575 before Ivan placed Simeon on the throne, certain individuals associated with the oprichnina were executed including: Grigorii Aleksandrovich Koltovskii (the brother of Ivan’s fourth wife, Anna) and his family, Aleksandr Konstantinovich Koltovskii, Boris Dmitrievich Tulupov, Vasilii Ivanovich Umnii-Kolychev, and Timofei Danilov Kolychev.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, in August 1575, Leonid, the archbishop of Novgorod, who some scholars see as having been associated with the oprichnina, was imprisoned. In 1971, Richard Hellie speculated that the episode was part of an effort on Ivan’s part to counter “[m]any leading figures” who were opposed to the Livonian war and some of whom “may have contemplated replacing Ivan with his son Tsarevich Ivan Ivanovich.” In response to this threat, Ivan, according to Hellie, “upstaged (and outraged) his opposition in 1575 by ‘resigning’ and installing the loyal Christian Kasimov Tatar Khan Simeon Bekbulatovich in his stead,” by killing “some of his opponents,” by killing his son, and by declaring “Forbidden Years to win

<sup>63</sup> A. A. Zimin, “Ivan Groznyi i Simeon Bekbulatovich v 1575 g.,” *Iz istorii Tatarii*, vol. 4 in *Uchenye zapiski Kazanskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta* 80 (1970): 157.

<sup>64</sup> Zimin, “Ivan Groznyi i Simeon Bekbulatovich,” 155–156.

the middle service class to his side in the political struggle, or at least to encourage them not to abandon the war effort.”<sup>65</sup>

Ruslan Grigor'evich Skrynnikov argued in 1975 that Ivan's placing of Simeon on the throne represents a second abdication (the first was his leaving of Moscow in December 1564 for Aleksandrova sloboda), in an attempt to finish up the punishment of the “mighty landed vassals” that had escaped the net of the oprichnina. By abdicating, he could then get at them without having to obtain approval from the boyar дума.<sup>66</sup> But, according to Skrynnikov's own account,<sup>67</sup> as Jonathan Shepard pointed out, “most of its victims were old lackeys of Ivan, ex-members of his first oprichnina, including members of its council in its last states.”<sup>68</sup> Connections between the establishment of the oprichnina in 1565 and Ivan's placing of Simeon on the throne of the grand prince can be overdrawn, especially since Ivan did not leave Moscow, repairing only to the Arbat, during the time Simeon was on the throne whereas Ivan's leaving for Aleksandrova sloboda precipitated the oprichnina. Yet, the similarities are difficult to ignore. Kliuchevskii's point about seeing Ivan's realm as being made up of separate holdings does help to explain why Ivan maintained a distinction between Simeon as “Grand Prince of All Rus” and himself as “tsar” in messages to Kazan'.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, Skrynnikov characterized Simeon as “play[ing] a role suitable only for a weak and mediocre man. Ivan could do whatever he liked with his tame khan.... A service Tatar khan, formerly a Muslim, could enjoy no authority among the boyars or with the church...”<sup>70</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Richard Hellie, *Enserfment and Military Change in Muscovy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 319–320, n. 39.

<sup>66</sup> R. G. Skrynnikov, *Ivan Groznyi* (Moscow: Nauka, 1975), 200; and idem, *Rossia posle oprichniny. Ocherki politicheskoi i sotsial'noi istorii* (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo universiteta, 1975), 39. Lur'e seemed to be suggesting an earlier version of this hypothesis in 1951: “the tsar again returned to his previous politics....” Ia. S. Lur'e, “Voprosy vneshnei i vnutrennei politiki v poslaniakh Ivana IV,” in *Poslanie Ivana Groznogo*, 484.

<sup>67</sup> Skrynnikov, *Ivan Groznyi*, 203. Cf. R. G. Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo terrora* (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 1992), 496–497.

<sup>68</sup> Jonathan Shepard, review of Ruslan G. Skrynnikov, *Ivan the Terrible*, edited and translated by Hugh F. Graham (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1981) in *Historical Journal*, 25 (1982): 516.

<sup>69</sup> See S. M. Kashtanov, “Finansovaia problema v period provedeniia Ivanom Grozным politiki uдела,” *Istoricheskie zapiski*, № 82 (1968): 245, for a comparison of wording in documents of the time.

<sup>70</sup> Skrynnikov, *Ivan Groznyi*, 200. Elsewhere Skrynnikov used the term “marionette” to refer to Simeon.

According to B. A. Uspenskij in 1984, Ivan IV appointed Simeon Bekbulatovich as grand prince of all Rus' to demonstrate that Tatars were no longer legitimate rulers and that his own power was divinely ordained.<sup>71</sup> This interpretation was endorsed by Pavlov and Perrie as “a more persuasive approach to the symbolism of the Bekbulatovich affair.”<sup>72</sup> It, however, is redolent of eisegesis; that is, the reading too much of Uspenskii's own ideas into the extant evidence. In the view of A. A. Zimin, in a book published posthumously in 1986, Ivan IV conceptualized three parts to the realm: “the grand principality (Simeon), the tsardom (Ivan IV) and the ‘appanage’ [*udel*] (his own).”<sup>73</sup> But it would appear that Ivan considered his own appanage as part of the grand principality that Simeon ruled over.<sup>74</sup> Thus, Ivan probably envisioned only two parts to the realm—Simeon's grand principality of all Rus' (in which he had an appanage) and his tsardom that included Kazan' and Astrakhan'.

In 1987, Robert O. Crummey placed the episode in the context of “a full revival of the oprichnina” being “imminent.”<sup>75</sup> Crummey wrote that “[o]nce again fearing conspiracies among his courtiers, Ivan abandoned the central ceremonial position at court where he was an easy target and retired to the shelter of his own resident and bodyguard” (173). Ivan chose Simeon as grand prince because of his charisma as a Chingissid, “had served Ivan loyally and shown little aptitude for leadership,” and, thus, “would feel no temptation to transform his ceremonial position into one of real power” (173). Ivan, however, “left no doubt who really ruled Muscovy” as evidenced by his petition of October 1575 to Simeon, which although it “sounded a

<sup>71</sup> B. A. Uspenskij, “Tsar and Pretender: Samozvančestvo or Royal Imposture in Russia as a Cultural-Historical Phenomenon,” in Ju. M. Lotman and B. A. Uspenskij, *The Semiotics of Russian Culture*, edited by Ann Shukman (Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Contributions, 1984), 259–292.

<sup>72</sup> Andrei Pavlov and Maureen Perrie, *Ivan the Terrible* (London: Pearson Longman, 2003), 174.

<sup>73</sup> A. A. Zimin, *V kanun groznykh potriasenii. Predposylki pervoi krest'ianskoi voiny v Rossii* (Moscow: Mysl', 1986), 37.

<sup>74</sup> This appanage was quite extensive according to the findings of Koretskii, in 1575–76, it included: Dmitrov, Dvina, Porkhovskii in the Shelonskaia piatina, Pskov, Rostov Rzhev, Staritsa, and Zubtsov. Koretskii, “Vozrozhdenie oprichniny,” 40–41. Both Kashtanov and Zimin proposed that also included in the appanage was Belozero (before March 1576) and Iaroslavl'. Kashtanov, “O vnutrennei politike,” 431; idem, *Ocherki russkoi diplomatiki* (Moscow, 1970), 154; and Zimin, “Ivan Groznyi i Simeon Bekbulatovich,” 157. See also Mordovina and Stanislavskii, “Sostav osobogo dvora Ivana IV,” 154–156.

<sup>75</sup> Robert O. Crummey, *The Formation of Muscovy 1304–1613* (London: Longman, 1987), 172.

note of abject humility” demonstrated “the real relationship between” them. Crummey speculated that Ivan took back the throne within a year because “[i]n all likelihood, the increasing intensity of the Livonian War distracted him from domestic affairs” (173). Also in 1987, E. I. Kolycheva proposed that placing Simeon on the throne was an attempt to counteract the opposition of the Church to Ivan.<sup>76</sup>

In 1989, V. B. Kobrin described the episode of Simeon’s appointment as grand prince as a “political masquerade” (127) and “strange comedy” (128) and referred to Simeon as a “marionette” (128). In Kobrin’s understanding, Simeon “was solemnly crowned grand prince of all Rus’ in the Uspenskii Cathedral of the Kremlin” (127). He saw this act of Ivan as essentially dividing “Russia” (*Rossiiia*) into two parts: Rus’ and the *udel* of Groznyi. Neither of these he considered included the “lands with Tatar and other non-Russian population” that had been part of the Khazan’ Khanate (127), which thus constituted a third part (128). Kobrin identified similarities with the oprichnina, including dividing the country, hunting with dogs(!), and executions (this time of former *oprichniki*). He dismissed the idea that declaring Simeon to be grand prince had anything to do with Ivan’s wanting the Polish throne (129). He also dismissed the idea expressed by Fletcher that Ivan wanted Simeon to rescind the privileges of the monasteries, because we have no documentary evidence that any monastic privileges were rescinded under Simeon (129). He additionally dismissed the two ideas expressed in the *Piskarev Chronicle*—that soothsayers predicted the death of the grand prince as only rumor and that Ivan wanted to test the loyalty of his subjects as unlikely (129–130). He also found not credible the claim of the *Moscow Chronicle* that Groznyi felt threatened by his son (130). Finally, Kobrin declared that we have insufficient evidence to determine why Simeon was demoted to grand prince of Tver’ within a year (130).<sup>77</sup>

In 1995, Janet Martin referred to the episode as a “charade” in which, as in 1564 “Ivan IV once again declared that he was abdicating.... once again established a separate court and maintained his own armed force” but she saw no greater significance to this echo of the oprichnina than that it created a new “trauma” for “the political system.”<sup>78</sup> In 1999, Boris Floria announced that the research findings of Kashtanov and Koretskii have

<sup>76</sup> E. I. Kolycheva, *Agrarnyi stroi Rossii XVI veka* (Moscow: Nauka, 1987), 133–141.

<sup>77</sup> V. B. Kobrin, *Ivan Groznyi* (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1989), 126–131.

<sup>78</sup> Janet Martin, *Medieval Russia 980–1584* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 350.

provided definitive answers to the questions concerning Simeon's being made grand prince of all Rus'.<sup>79</sup> It is clear, according to Floria in a chapter titled "The New Oprichnina," that Ivan's choice of land for himself as prince of Moscow near the border with Livonia indicated that the war with Livonia was foremost in his mind. As support for this assertion, Floria pointed out that even from the fall of 1576 on, after Simeon stepped down from being grand prince of all Rus', the lands assigned to Prince Ivan were called "the court" (*dvor*) and the towns in it "court towns" (*dvorovye gorody*) (310–311). Floria saw similarities between the oprichnina and the Bekbulatovich episode in the dividing of the land as well as the gentry in two, in that Ivan again realized "that it was not possible to rule Russia by the usual, traditional means" (312).

In 2004, I expanded on Pritsak's explanation and tried to account for Ivan's action within the framework of steppe political practice. I proposed that Ivan IV in effect reversed this practice in what I called a "crude parody of steppe political-genealogical relations." Instead of a non-Chinggisid prince appointing a Chinggisid to be tsar, Ivan as a non-Chinggisid tsar appointed a Chinggisid to be prince (i.e., grand prince of all Rus').<sup>80</sup> That view has fortunately not gained much acceptance in the scholarship.

In 2005, Isabel de Madariaga in a brief discussion of the historiography about the Bekbulatovich affair made two observations: (1) his "execution of a considerable number of courtiers" resulted from the reassertion of one of Ivan's "periodic fits of panic ... [that] led to outbursts of sadism" and (2) the location of the lands Ivan set aside for his appanage under Simeon (namely, in the vicinity of Novgorod and Pskov) was part of his intent to revive the Livonian war.<sup>81</sup> In 2005, Natal'ia Pronina proposed that Ivan needed to leave someone in Moscow while he went off to fight the Livonian War just as he had left Metropolitan Makarii in charge of Moscow over 20 years earlier when he went to conquer Kazan'.<sup>82</sup> The flaw in this proposal is that although Ivan moved out of the Kremlin while Simeon was on the throne of

<sup>79</sup> Boris Floria, *Ivan Groznyi* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1999), 309–316.

<sup>80</sup> See Ostrowski, "Extraordinary Career," 709.

<sup>81</sup> Isabel de Madariaga, *Ivan the Terrible: First Tsar of Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 301, 302.

<sup>82</sup> Natal'ia Pronina, *Ivan Groznyi. Muchitel' ili muchenik?* (Moscow: Iauza Eksmo, 2005), 313–314.



all Rus', he remained living in Moscow in the Arbat, and he did not conduct any campaigns against Livonia until June 1577.<sup>83</sup>

In 2006, Sergei Bogatyrev proposed that Ivan's appointment of Simeon first as grand prince of Rus' and then as grand prince of Tver' appears "to be an elaborate means of precluding a possible Chingisid succession to the throne." According to Bogatyrev, in the "intense political situation of the mid-1570s," Ivan was concerned that Simeon, as a result of his genealogy and already having the title of *tsar'*, a title that Ivan had bestowed on him in the late 1560s, would "become a pretender to the Muscovite throne." Since using violence against a *tsar* "would compromise the idea of the divine origin of the *tsar's* power," Ivan resorted to lowering "Simeon's status in the dynastic hierarchy."<sup>84</sup> Also in 2006, Viacheslav Valentinovich Shaposhnik published twice on the question of Simeon's being appointed grand prince.<sup>85</sup> In his *Tserkovno-gosudarstvennye otnosheniia v Rossii v 30–80-e gody XVI veka*, after a survey of the Russian-language historiography (366–373), he agreed with Skrynnikov that Ivan was after magnates whom he suspected of plotting against him (373–375). Shaposhnik disagreed with Skrynnikov in seeing any significance in the imprisonment of the Archbishop of Novgorod Leonid in 1575 and his connection, according to Horsey, with Eliseus Bomelius, who had poisoned oprichniki on Ivan's orders (373–376). Shaposhnik concluded that "Groznyi did not need the service of the Tatar tsarevich (sic) for the realization of his political plans" (379). Yet, Simeon was "a figure totally dependent on the *tsar* and did not have any pretence to independence" so Ivan used him (381). In what way that helped Ivan go after the suspected magnates is not clear from Shaposhnik's exposition. As a result of being unfamiliar with the non-Russian historiography, Shaposhnik continued to accept Koretskii's claim, based on a mistranslation of Horsey's memoir into Russian, that a *zemskii*

<sup>83</sup> See *inter alia* Alexander Filjushkin, *Ivan the Terrible: A Military History* (London: Frontline Books, 2008), 197–198.

<sup>84</sup> Sergei Bogatyrev, "Ivan IV (1533–1584)," in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, vol. 1: *From Early Rus' to 1689*, edited by Maureen Perrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 261.

<sup>85</sup> Viacheslav Valentinovich Shaposhnik, *Tserkovno-gosudarstvennye otnosheniia v Rossii v 30–80-e gody XVI veka*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta, 2006), 366–383; and *idem*, *Ivan Groznyi: pervyi russkii tsar'* (St. Petersburg: Vita Nova, 2006), 310–323. The latter piece, which constitutes a chapter of the book, is a shorter version of the former piece.

sobor met in 1575 and was involved in the placing of Simeon as grand prince (367, 373). Shaposhnik did state, however, that the “removal of Simeon from Moscow” in 1576 was not connected to any zemskii sobor (382).

A third scholar, D. M. Volodikhin, also published in 2006 his views on the episode.<sup>86</sup> According to him, Ivan believed the sorcerers who predicted the death of the Muscovite tsar and connected their prediction with Ivan’s suspicions of boyar plots. The “real power of Simeon Bekbulatovich was entirely nominal” according to Volodikhin, as is evidenced by the fact that “coins with his name were not minted, foreign diplomats did not have discussions with him, his name did not enter the military register [as grand prince], and the treasury and insignia remained under the control of Ivan IV” (175). Ivan’s petition to Simeon for establishing a separate appanage in Tver’ on the war front was meant “to fill the ranks” for continuing the Livonian War (175).

To summarize, the explanations that historians have proposed for Ivan’s placing of Simeon Bekbulatovich on the throne as grand prince of Rus’ include: Ivan saw Simeon as a more reliable than I. F. Mstislavskii as head of the zemshchina (Solov’ev); it was an attempt by Ivan to secularize church and monastic lands (Pavlov and Koretskii 1959); Ivan planned to flee to England (Lileev); it was a partial revival of the oprichnina (Seredonin and Koretskii 1967); it was no more than Ivan’s being eccentric (Ilovaiskii) or playing a “game” (Platonov), and has been characterized as an ironic “reversal of roles” (Cherniavsky), a “political masquerade” (Kobrin), “charade” (J. Martin), or “crude parody” (Ostrowski 2004); Ivan wanted to hide from the boyars (Kliuchevskii) or get away from the court where he was “an easy target” (Crummey); Ivan wanted to be elected as king of Poland-Lithuania (Sadikov); it removed any reason for the Crimean khan to attack (Eckhardt); the episode strengthened Ivan’s hold over Kazan’ (Kashtanov); the appointment of a Chinggisid as grand prince was for the purpose of gaining ruling charisma (Pritsak); Ivan believed soothsayers’ prediction that the ruler would die within the year and wanted to become “less conspicuous,” to blame his successor, and to test the loyalty of his subjects (Vernadsky); Ivan believed the soothsayers’ prediction and he wanted to prepare to continue the Livonian War (Volodikhin); the creation of an anti-oprichnina was meant to get at the former members of the oprichnina (Zimin); Ivan wanted

<sup>86</sup> D. M. Volodikhin, *Ivan Groznyi: Bich Bozhnii* (Moscow: Veche, 2006), 174–176, 356. My thanks to Charles Halperin for providing me a photocopy of the relevant pages from Volodikhin’s book.

to counteract opposition among the boyars to the Livonian War and possibly to foil a plot to put his son Ivan on the throne in his place (Hellie); Ivan's creation of a second oprichnina was to get at those boyars who had escaped the first oprichnina and whom he was convinced were now plotting against him (Skrynnikov, Shaposhnik, and, possibly, Lur'e); Ivan's actions at the time were directed against opposition to him within the Church (Kolycheva); Ivan wanted to demonstrate his own divinely ordained power (Uspenskii); the usual means of ruling Russia were insufficient and Ivan wanted to continue the war against Livonia (Floria); the executions resulted from Ivan's mental illness, but the location of his appanage was part of a rational attempt to revive the Livonian War (de Madariaga); Bekbulatovich was in charge only when Ivan was out of town (Pronina) and Ivan was engaged in an "elaborate" attempt to deny Simeon's succession to the throne of Muscovy (Bogatyrev).

Both Zimin's and Skrynnikov's explanations come closest to the testimony found in the sources of the time of Ivan IV. Other explanations either derive from later sources (such as that he believed the sorcerers who predicted the death of the Muscovite ruler) or do not appear in our sources at all (such as that Ivan was trying to overcome boyar opposition to the Livonian War).

Besides those individuals associated with the oprichnina who were executed in the spring and summer of 1575, among the former oprichniki executed during the reign of Simeon Bekbulatovich were Protasii V. Iur'ev-Zakhar'in, the boyar Ivan A. Buturlin, the *okol'nichii* Dmitrii A. Buturlin, and the *okol'nichii* N. V. Borisov-Borozdin. The only prominent execution during 1575–76 that does not involve a former oprichnik was Prince P. A. Kurakin, who was one of those executed when Simeon was on the throne. If Ivan could have members of the old oprichnik guard executed while he was tsar and grand prince of all Rus', then why would he need Simeon on the throne as grand prince of all Rus' in order to continue the executions? And how does the execution of Kurakin fit in?

We do not have direct answers to these questions, but one can formulate an explanation that puts the pieces of evidence together within a relatively unified hypothetical framework. In 1577, Daniel Printz reported that there had been a plan hatched with the collusion of some boyars to replace Ivan on the throne with the Crimean khan.<sup>87</sup> Such a plan makes sense within the

<sup>87</sup> Printz, *Moscoviae ortus, et progressus*, 76, as reprinted in *Scriptores Rerum Livonicarum*, 2: 702. Prinz, "Nachalo i vyvyschenie Moskovii," 22.

context of steppe political practice, for as a non-Chinggisid, Ivan could not be a tsar (= khan). If, the Muscovite secular ruling elite wanted to maintain a tsar/khan as head of the state, then it needed a Chinggisid. The coup plot may have been in response to Ivan's executing a number of those formerly associated with the oprichnina in the spring and summer of 1575 or perhaps Ivan thought the former oprichniki were behind the coup plot. Ivan's placing Simeon, a Chinggisid khan, on the throne would have thwarted that plot until such time as Ivan could eliminate the coup plotters. If Ivan thought that Kurakin was part of the plot, then that would explain his execution as being in the second wave of executions—that is, those that occurred during the time Simeon was on the throne.

Either way, the point is that as a prince with an appanage in the realm of the grand prince of all Rus', Ivan could not be held legally accountable, except by the grand prince, for his actions there. As long as Ivan remained grand prince of all Rus', then his actions could be blocked by the Church prelates and the boyar дума. This explanation requires acceptance of the theory that a system of consensus politics existed in early modern Russia.<sup>88</sup> Likewise, the ruler had a certain sphere of activity that was his prerogative alone, such as issuing *kormlenie*, *votchina*, and *pomest'e* grants, as well as judicial immunities, and concluding local treaties, and so forth. Another sphere of activity, which involved the most significant acts of the government, the boyars participated in with the ruler, such as law codes, foreign treaties, and precedent-setting measures.<sup>89</sup> Between these two spheres was

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<sup>88</sup>) For various expositions of this theory, see Edward L. Keenan, "Muscovite Political Folkways," *Russian Review*, 45 (1986): 147; Nancy Shields Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics: The Making of the Muscovite Political System, 1345–1547* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 46–51; Daniel Rowland, "The Problem of Advice in Muscovite Tales about the Time of Troubles," *Russian History*, 6 (1979): 259–283; idem, "Towards an Understanding of the Political Ideas in Ivan Timofeev's *Vremennik*," *Slavonic and East European Review*, 62 (1984): 371–399; idem, "Did Muscovite Literary Ideology Place Limits on the Power of the Tsar (1540s–1660s)?" *Russian Review*, 49 (1990): 125–155; Donald Ostrowski, "The Façade of Legitimacy: Exchange of Power and Authority in Early Modern Russia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 44 (2002): 534–563; and Valerie Kivelson, "On Words, Sources, and Historical Method: Which Truth about Muscovy?" *Kritika* 3 (2002): 487–499. Cornelia Soldat, "The Limits of Muscovite Autocracy: The Relations between the Grand Prince and the Boyars in the Light of Iosif Volotskii's *Prosvetitel'*," *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 46, nos. 1–2 (2005): 265–276.

<sup>89</sup>) Article 98 of the *Sudebnik of 1550* states: "And whatever new matters there will be, but [such that] are not written in the *Sudebnik*, and however these matters are resolved with the

an area of ambiguity, where there was disagreement over whether the action involved was the prerogative of the ruler or required his consultation with the boyars.<sup>90</sup> It would appear that in regard to punishments and executions, the ruler could order and have carried out certain ones himself without boyar approval (or, at least, with their tacit consent), but that when such punishments and executions began to go too far, then the boyars and the Church prelates would and could intervene. Their intervention in a sphere Ivan thought was his own prerogative was probably what he was complaining about.

Likewise, Ivan's choice of Simeon Bekbulatovich, erstwhile khan of the Kasimov Khanate, and Chinggisid, was motivated by more than merely having a loyal subject and friend on the throne of all Rus'. Simeon's being a Chinggisid gave him ruling charisma within the steppe system of political culture, which the Muscovite polity shared. According to the *Piskarev Chronicle*, Ivan had Simeon marry Anastasiia Ivanovna Mstislavskaia,<sup>91</sup> widow of Mikhail Kaibulin and daughter of Ivan Fedorovich Mstislavskii, the head of the *zemshchina* from 1565 to 1572. Simeon and Anastasiia had six children, three sons—Fedor, Dimitrii, and Ioann (significantly the same names as the three sons of Ivan IV)—and three daughters (Evdokhiia, Mariia, and Anastasiia). In the commemoration lists of the Solovki Monastery, the entire family was listed as having prayers paid for them by the Mstislavskii.<sup>92</sup> Simeon is also listed in prayers in the Trinity St. Sergius Monastery paid for by the Mstislavskii. Thus, the Mstislavskii took on the responsibility of care for the soul of a former Tatar khan.

At the end of Simeon Bekbulatovich's year as grand prince of all Rus', according to the *Moscow Chronicle*, Ivan IV took back all the accouterments of that office and "gave Simeon as appanage Tver' and Torzhok, and ordered

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report (*doklad*) of the sovereign and verdict (*prigovor vershaetsia*) of all the boyars, those matters are to be appended to this *Sudebnik*." *Sudebniki XV–XVI vekov*, edited by B. D. Grekov (Moscow and Leningrad: Akademiia nauk SSSR, 1952), 176, and "Commentary," 334–337.

<sup>90</sup> See Donald Ostrowski, "Muscovite Adaption of Steppe Political Institutions: A Reply to Halperin's Objections," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 1 (2000): 267–304.

<sup>91</sup> *PSRL*, 34: 226 (fol. 249v).

<sup>92</sup> Arkhimandrite Dosifei, *Geograficheskoe, istoricheskoe i staticheskoe opisanie stavropigial'nogo pervoklasnogo Solovetskogo monastyria*, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Universitetskaiia tipografiia, 1853) 1: 118–119. Cf. Russell E. Martin, "Gifts for the Dead: Kinship and Commemoration in Muscovy (The Case of the Mstislavskii Princely Clan)," *Russian History*, 26 (1999): 196, citing RGADA, *fond* 141, № 62, fol. 113.

him to write ‘Grand Prince of Tver’ Simeon Bekbulatovich.’”<sup>93</sup> Ivan, thus, exchanged one of his other titles, “Grand Prince of Tver’,” for the title he had previously given up but now took back; that is, “Grand Prince of all Rus’.” Vernadsky stated that Ivan’s naming Simeon as the Tver’ grand prince “was not accidental” since Tver’ was in a strategic location “as a rear base” for conducting the Livonian War. The Muscovites could use the area “for assembling troops and supplies” and it “could function as a defense base for Moscow against enemy invasion.” As such, Ivan needed Simeon, whom he trusted and who was “an experienced army leader, to head this post.”<sup>94</sup>

Designating Simeon as Grand Prince of Tver’ may, thus, have not been insignificant. Throughout all this, Simeon Bekbulatovich led the main regiment of the Muscovite army and occupied other equally prominent military roles. The *Military Register* reports that he led the main regiment in 1577.<sup>95</sup> The *Moscow Chronicle* reports that in 1580 Simeon led the central regiment along with Fedor Ivanovich Mstislavskii and Nikita Romanovich Iur’ev.<sup>96</sup> The *Pskov Chronicle* reports that Ivan left a reserve army under the command of Simeon Bekbulatovich near Staritsa in August 1581.<sup>97</sup>

After Ivan’s death in 1584, Simeon acknowledged his allegiance to the new tsar, Ivan’s son Fedor. In a document addressed to Tsar Fedor in response to a decree dated May 23, 1585, about the sending of *deti boiarskie*, Simeon Bekbulatovich declared himself a slave (*kholop*) of the tsar and signed it “Grand Prince Simeon Bekbulatovich of Tver’.”<sup>98</sup> Vernadsky saw this as already a diminution of Simeon’s status as “a sovereign ruler” in that the leaders of “Fedor’s government demanded that Simeon formally declare himself Tsar Fedor’s subject.”<sup>99</sup> But such a formulation was standard for all serving princes and does not necessarily indicate that he was specially “demanded” to do so.<sup>100</sup> Lileev reported a “certificate” (*otpis’*) in the Tver’

<sup>93</sup> *PSRL*, 34: 227; Buganov and Koretskii, “Neizvestnii Moskovskii letopisets,” 146.

<sup>94</sup> Vernadsky, *The Tsardom of Muscovy 1547–1682*, 150.

<sup>95</sup> *Razriadnaia kniga 1475–1605 gg.*, 2.3: 444.

<sup>96</sup> *PSRL*, 34: 233; Buganov and Koretskii, “Neizvestnii Moskovskii letopisets,” 155.

<sup>97</sup> *Pskovskie letopisi*, 2 vols., edited by A. N. Nasonov (Moscow and Leningrad, Akademiia nauk SSSR, 1941, 1955), 2: 263.

<sup>98</sup> *Akty Moskovskogo gosudarstva*, edited by N. A. Popov (St. Petersburg: Tipografia Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk, 1890), vol. 1: *Razriadnyi prikaz. Moskovskoi stol 1571–1634*, 52–56, № 30.

<sup>99</sup> Vernadsky, *The Tsardom of Muscovy 1547–1682*, 186; and idem, “Ivan Groznyi i Simeon Bekbulatovich,” 2150.

<sup>100</sup> Marshall Poe, “What Did Muscovites Mean When They Called Themselves ‘Slaves of the Tsar?’” *Slavic Review*, 57, № 3 (1998): 585–608.

Museum from Ivan Shishkov that refers to Simeon as the Grand Prince of Tver'.<sup>101</sup> We also have a petition from one of Simeon's subjects written to him in 1584/85 (7093) as Grand Prince of Tver'.<sup>102</sup> Finally, we have a certificate (*otpis'*) of an instruction (*nakaz*) of April 1, 1585, from Simeon as Grand Prince of Tver' to Ivan Korsakov and Ivan Shiskov about the taking of *iam* money from the *votchina* of Kuzaz.<sup>103</sup>

Then Simeon's political fortunes began to decline. In May 1585, after his father-in-law, Ivan Fedorovich Mstislavskii, was forced to take monastic vows at the Kirillo-Belozersk Monastery, Simeon was exiled to his estate at Kushalov and deprived of the title "Grand Prince of Tver'."<sup>104</sup> According to the *New Chronicle* (*Novyi letopisets*), enemies of Simeon went to Boris Godunov after the death of Tsarevich Dmitrii Ivanovich and convinced him to have Simeon blinded in 1595.<sup>105</sup> The foreign mercenary Jacques Margeret, who said he heard it from Simeon himself, wrote that Boris Godunov exiled Simeon and sent him Spanish wine for his birthday that caused him to go blind.<sup>106</sup>

According to a diplomatic report of Andrzej Sapieha, the Lithuanian governor of Orsha, from June 6 (O.S.), 1598, a rumor reached Godunov that

<sup>101</sup>) Lileev, Simeon Bekbulatovich, 66.

<sup>102</sup>) RGADA, f. 210, Moskovskii stol stolbtsy, no. 1131 (22), fols. 17–21: Spisok umiano i velikogo kniazia Seona [sic] Bekbulatovicha tverskago stol[']nikom i dvorianom i zhiltsom i detem boiarskim tverich i novgor... [here the text is unclear] dvorovykh i gorodovykh kotorym skazana gosudareva sluzhba v 93-m godu. There follows: fol. 22–23 (new hand): Velikogo kniazia Semeona Bekbulatovicha tverskago deti boiarskie, zhiltsy oklad i pomest'e po 150 cheti, a deneg po 6 rub[lev]. My thanks to Russell E. Martin for providing me this information.

<sup>103</sup>) *Akty sluzhilykh zemlevadel'tsev XV–nachala XVII veka*, 2: 358, № 419.

<sup>104</sup>) According to Lileev, no mention of Simeon as grand prince of Tver' is made after 1585. Lileev, *Simeon Bekbulatovich*, 99.

<sup>105</sup>) *PSRL* 14: 47.

<sup>106</sup>) Margeret, *The Russian Empire and Grand Duchy of Muscovy*, 53. A letter attributed to Grigorii Otrepev (Rostriga), the first False Dmitrii, addressed to Boris Godunov in which is listed complaints against Boris, including Simeon's losing his eyesight and the poisoning of Simeon's son Ivan was accepted as authentic by Solov'ev. S. M. Solov'ev, *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen*, 29 vols. in 15 books (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi literatury, 1959–1966), vol. 8: *Istoriia Smutnogo vremeni*, 413–414. But this letter is probably a later concoction. See Nikolai Kostomarov, *Smutoe vremia Moskovskogo gosudarstva v nachale XVII stoletii, 1604–1613* (St. Petersburg, 1904), 84–86; Paul Pierling, *La Russie et le Saint-Siège: études diplomatiques*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1910), 3: 42; and Pavel [Paul] Pierling, "Nazvannyi Dmitrii i Adam Vishnevetskii," *Russkaia starina*, January 1904: 123–128. (My thanks to Chester Dunning for responding to my e-mail request regarding this document and for the bibliographical items above regarding it.)



“several princes and boyars, primarily Belskii and Fedor Nikitich [Romanov] with [his] brother [Aleksandr] and not a few others” were plotting to put Simeon Bekbulatovich on the throne.<sup>107</sup> The loyalty oath of September 15, 1598, that Godunov then required forbade recognizing Simeon as tsar or corresponding with him.<sup>108</sup> According to the *New Chronicle*, Rostriga (the first false Dmitrii) brought Simeon to Moscow, but when he would not accept the conversion of Muscovy to Catholicism, Rostriga had him tonsured at the Kirillo-Belozersk Monastery on April 3 (March 29, according to an archival document), 1606, when Simeon took the monastic name Stefan.<sup>109</sup> At the same time, his wife Anastasiia was veiled as the nun Aleksandra. On May 17, 1606, Rostriga was assassinated. According to a document dated May 29, 1606, the next tsar, Vasili Shuiskii, ordered the hegumen of the Kirillo-Belozersk Monastery to hand over the Elder Stefan to a certain Fedor Suponov to take him wherever the tsar ordered.<sup>110</sup> That destination turned out to be the Solovki Monastery on the White Sea.

On June 7, 1607, Simeon's wife died and was buried in the Simonov Monastery.<sup>111</sup> According to the *Donation Book* (*Vkladnaia kniga*) of the Trinity St. Sergius Monastery, she had recently (1605/06) made a donation of a total of 249 rubles for prayers for her husband, Simeon.<sup>112</sup> In 1612, on the basis of a decree issued by Prince D. M. Pozharskii and “on the advice of all the land” (i.e., the Zemskii sobor), the elder Stefan was sent back to the Kirillo-Belozersk Monastery.<sup>113</sup> He returned to Moscow after July 22, 1613, when Mikhail Fedorovich was crowned tsar. On January 5, 1616, the Elder Stefan died and was buried in the Simonov Monastery next to his wife.

The significance of Simeon Bekbulatovich's career involves multiple layers of meaning. It is indicative of the high-profile role Tatars played not only in the regime of Ivan IV but also in the rise of Muscovy. As leader of the

<sup>107</sup> Platonov, *Ocherki po istorii smuty* 239 [(Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe izdatel'stvo, 1937), 180] (citing “Archiv. d. Sapieh.”, I, pp. 187–188.); and idem, *Boris Godunov* (Prague: Plamia, 1924), 234.

<sup>108</sup> *AAE*, 2: 57–61, № 10.

<sup>109</sup> *AAE*, 2: 96–97, № 41 (March 29, 1606); *PSRL*, 14: 68 (April 3, 1606).

<sup>110</sup> *AAE*, 2: 103, № 45.

<sup>111</sup> “Nadpisi, nakhodiashchiesia v Simonovom Moskovskom monastyre,” *Drevnaia russkaia vivliofika*, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1791), 19: 385.

<sup>112</sup> *Vkladnaia kniga Troitse-Sergieva monastyria*, compiled by E. N. Klitina, T. N. Manushina, and T. V. Nikolaeva (Moscow: Nauka, 1987), 40, fol. 110.

<sup>113</sup> *Letopisets Solovetskii na chetyre stoletia Solovetskogo monastyria do nastoiashchogo vremeni* (Moscow: V. Kirilov, 1847), 54.

main regiment in the Livonian War, Simeon could take partial credit for some of the early Muscovite successes of steppe-type strategies and tactics in that war. But by 1578, when the battles were fought at major fortified sites, such as Wenden, the tide of the war turned, for steppe tactics were less adept at siege warfare. Yet, Simeon remained in favor until after the death of Ivan IV when Boris Godunov began to see Simeon as a potential rival for the throne. Simeon's role in the government and army of Ivan IV demonstrates the importance of kinship relations, since Simeon was Ivan's nephew-in-law just as Tsarevich Peter (Kudai Kul) was the brother-in-law of Grand Prince Vasili III (1505–1533). This implicit comparison was made explicit when Ivan had Simeon marry Anastasiia Ivanovna Mstislavskaia, the great granddaughter of Tsarevich Peter (Kudai Kul). This marriage made Simeon a member of the Mstislavskii family, who continued to commemorate his soul. In some respects, the career of Saín Bulat/Simeon Bekbulatovich/Stefan paralleled that of his eminent predecessor Kudai Kul/Peter Ibraimov. Both were Chinggisids who converted to Christianity, acted as confidants of the Muscovite ruler, and became the second most powerful person in the Muscovite army after the ruler himself. Both were related by marriage to the Muscovite ruler, and both were buried with honor in a sacred Christian area—Peter in the Archangel Cathedral in the Moscow Kremlin; Simeon in the Simonov Monastery. Yet, Tsarevich Peter was never a khan, although he was in the line of succession for the throne of Kazan', and he was not tonsured a monk. In these respects, Tsar Simeon Bekbulatovich's career was even more remarkable and varied than that of Tsarevich Peter Ibraimov, his wife's great grandfather.

