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James H. Billington: The Icon and the Axe Study Guide, 2013

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JAMES H. BILLINGTON: THE ICON AND THE AXE STUDY GUIDE, 2013 Steven Alan Samson

II. THE CONFRONTATION

1. THE MUSCOVITE IDEOLOGY

Outline

- A. THE GREAT RUSSIAN CULTURE: ITS EMERGENCE AFTER THE ECLIPSE OF KIEV (47-49)
 1. Architecture: Tent Roof and Onion Dome
 2. Adoption of **Wooden Construction Methods**
 - a. Onion dome
 - b. Church of the Transfiguration at Kizhi
 3. Moscow's **Kremlin**
 - a. Bell tower of Ivan the Great
 4. Moscow (Muscovy)
 - a. Third Rome (after Constantinople)
 5. Shabby Beginnings
 6. Lack of Surviving Records from the Fall of Kiev in 1240 until 1380
 - a. Turning of the Tatar Tide: **Battle of Kulikovo Field**
- B. RISE OF MUSCOVY (49-58)
 1. Religious Stirrings
 2. Role of the Orthodox Church
 - a. Peasants known as *krest'ianin*
 - b. Transfer of the Metropolitan seat from Vladimir to Moscow, 1326
 - c. Ivan Kalita, Prince of Moscow
 3. Monastic Revival
 - a. **Metropolitan Alexis** built a large number of churches inside the Kremlin
 - 1) Biakont family
 4. **Sergius of Radonezh**
 5. New Role of Monasteries as Fortress and Colonizing Center
 6. **Hesychasm**
 - a. Inner calm
 - b. Divine illumination
 7. Pioneering Russian Hermit
 - a. Doctrine emphasizing direct contact with God
 - b. God's involvement in all creation
 8. Theme of **Transfiguration**
 9. Cultivation and Colonization
 10. Stephen of Perm
 - a. Komi people
 11. *Life of St. Sergius of Radnezh*
 - a. Victory at Kulikovo
 12. Mt. Athos Monasteries in Greece Served as a Model
 13. Spiritual Energy and Icon Painting
 14. Literary Culture
 - a. Weaving
 15. Conscious Development of a National Art

- a. *Life of Alexander Nevsky*
- 16. Victory at Kulikovo
 - a. Dimitry Donskoy
 - b. *Tale from Beyond the Don*
 - c. Call for Christian crusade
- 17. Russian Christendom Seen as a Special Culmination of Sacred History
- 18. **Chiliastic** (Millennial) Teachings
 - a. Fall of Jerusalem and transfer of relics to Constantinople
- 19. Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire
 - a. Specially genealogy claimed through Babylonia, Persia, and Rome
- 20. Orthodox Theology
 - a. Emphasis on the drama of cosmic redemption rather than personal salvation
- 21. Flight into Apocalyptic Prophecy
- 22. Serbia
 - a. **Stephen Dushan**: Tsar, Autocrat, and Emperor of the Romans
- 23. Bulgaria
 - a. Trnovo as the New Rome {capital of the Second Bulgarian Empire}
- 24. Turkish Conquests at Kosovo and Sofia
 - a. Cyprian becomes Metropolitan of Moscow
 - b. *Tale of the Great Princes of Vladimir*
- 25. Prayer for the Tatar Khan
- 26. Byzantine Union with Rome, 1437-39: Florentine Union
 - a. Metropolitan Isidore driven into exile and became a Catholic in exile
- 27. Capture of **Constantinople**, 1453
 - a. Prophetic significance for the Russian church
 - b. Khan Akhmet's attack on Moscow, 1480
- C. RELIGIOUS EXPECTATIONS (58-61)
 - 1. Philotheus
 - a. **Apollinarian heresy**: Denial of the humanity of Christ
 - b. Hagarenes [Ishmaelites, descendants of Hagar; according to Islam, Muhammad is a descendent of Ishmael]
 - 2. Marriage of Ivan II (the Great) to Sophia Paleologus [latinized from Palaiologos]
 - 3. Apocalyptic Expectations
 - a. Judaizers
 - b. Revival of the Apocrypha, including the apocalypse of Ezra
 - 4. Alternation between Anticipation and Fear
 - 5. Rise of Prophecy
 - 6. Pillar-like Immobility
 - 7. Holy Fools
 - a. Renunciation of the flesh
 - b. Erasmus's *The Praise of Folly*
 - c. Ascetic hermits (*skitalets*)
 - d. **Nil Sorsky**
 - e. All externals are regarded as tillers, means of steering men back into the wind of the spirit
 - f. Trans-Volga Elders
- D. RISE OF MUSCOVY (61-67)
 - 1. Muscovy Resembled an Expectant Revivalist Camp
 - a. **Sacerdotium** [church] and **imperium** [state authority] were intertwined [caesaropapism]
 - 2. There Was Almost No Exposure to the Texts of Classical Antiquity
 - 3. Platonic Idealism
 - 4. **Pamiat'** = Memory
 - 5. Collective Memory: Special Authority of Elders Who Preserved Apostolic Memory
 - a. Role of the **starets**, *starosta*, and the *stariny*

6. Monastic support as an underpinning for authority
 - a. Aura of sanctity for the **Grand Duke of Muscovy**
 7. Ideology of Muscovite Tsardom
 - a. **Joseph Sanin**
 - 1) Wealthy chain of cloisters through bequests by the tsar's brother
 - 2) Contrast with Nil's doctrine of apostolic poverty
 8. Controversy between the "Possessors" and the "Non-possessors"
 9. Victory of the Possessors
 - a. Influence of the Josephite party
 - b. Tradition of "**the Tsar's words**"
 10. Alliance between Monks and Tsars
 11. Blurred between the Monastery and the Outside World
 - a. Tsar as archimandrite-in-chief
 12. Temptations to Worldliness
 - a. Alcoholism and sexual perversion
 13. Increasing Monasticism of the Outside World
 - a. White (married) vs. black (celibate) parish priests
 - b. Fasts
 - c. Church services
 - d. Religious processions
 14. Cult of Humility and Self-Abnegation
 - a. **Kenotic** [*kenosis* = *emptying*] manner of Russia's first national saints: Boris and Gleb
 15. *Podvizhnik*: A Champion
 16. Emphasis on Following or Serving Rather than Imitating Christ
 - a. Focus on Christ's mission rather than His teachings
 17. The Monastic Civilization of Muscovy Was Dominated More by Fanaticism Than Kenoticism
- E. IVAN IV GROZNY: THE TERRIBLE, THE DREAD, OR THE MENACING (67-69)
1. First Formally-Crowned Tsar
 2. **Ivan Grozny** Can Be Seen as a Fundamentalist Survival of Byzantium
 - a. Josephite teachers
 - b. **Caesaropapism**
 - c. Cruelty and caprice, like the Tatar khans
 - d. Legends of Dracula
 3. **Oprichnina** (Oprichniks)
 - a. A secret police that has been likened to the Turkish janissaries and the builders of the modern service state
 4. Supreme Codifier of the Muscovite Tradition
 - a. His ambivalence toward modernization and Europeanization
 - b. Unresolved tension
 - c. Pilgrimages to Muscovite shrines
 - d. Debates
 5. Humiliation of Rival Centers of Power
 - a. Traditional landholding **boyars** and cities like Novgorod
 - b. Church leaders
 - c. Religious dissenters
 6. Hagiography
 7. Campaign against the Tatars at Kazan
 - a. Cathedrals
 8. Legislative Council
 - a. *Zemsky sobor*
 - b. Church code, 1551: Hundred Chapters
 - c. Household Book
 - d. *Oprichnina* bound by the vows, rules, and dress of a monastic order
 9. Radical Monasticization of Society

- a. Censorship of literature
- F. COMPARISONS WITH SPAIN (69-72)
1. Spain and Muscovy Both Found Their National Identity in the Fight to Expel Muslim Invaders
 - a. Fanaticism: Dispute over the filioque clause [addition of the phrase “and from the Son” in the creed]
 2. Fight against Judaizers
 - a. The words for Jew and Spaniard are easily confused [Spain was a center of Sephardic Judaism until the Jews were expelled in 1492]
 - b. Partial imitation of the Inquisition
 3. Love-Hate Relationship
 - a. Music [Mikhail Glinka and Nikolai Rimsky-Korskov]
 - b. Both were breeding grounds of **revolutionary anarchism**
 4. Partisan (Guerrilla) Activities against Napoleon
 - a. Russian Decembrists drew inspiration from Spanish partisans
 5. **José Ortega y Gasset**
 - a. Russia and Spain: Two pueblo races
 6. Modern Russians Idealization of Spain
 - a. Picaresque roguery of Lazarillo de Tormes (anonymous, 1554) and the implausible gallantry of **Don Quixote** (Miguel de Cervantes)
 - b. Dostoevsky on Cervantes
 - c. Turgenev preferred Calderón to Shakespeare
 7. Music and Other Parallels
 - a. Mikhail Glinka
 - b. Opera
 - c. Dostoevsky’s Legend of the Grand Inquisitor
 - d. Spanish and Russian revolutions
 8. Role Played by Jews
 - a. Hebrew-derived letters in Russian
 - b. **Philo-Semitism** of the Russian dissidents [likewise in the music of Sergei Prokofiev and Dmitry Shostakovich]
 9. Transfer Eastward of the Center of World Jewry
- G. COMPARISONS WITH ANCIENT ISRAEL (72-75)
1. Sources of Anti-Jewish Fervor
 - a. Peasant antipathy to the city
 - b. Jealousy of a newly proclaimed chosen people
 2. Medieval Muscovy gave a prophetic interpretation to bondage and humiliation
 - a. Both were more of a religious civilization than a political order
 - b. Old Testament analogues
 3. Khazar Kingdom
 - a. Khazars disappearance in the 12C
 - b. Jewish influence on early Russian music
 4. Later Influx of Talmudic Jews
 - a. Their emergence from the **Pale of Settlement**
 - b. **Doctors’ plots**
 5. Messianic Fervor
 - a. Two periods of apocalyptic expectation
 - b. **Massacres of 1648-50** [the Cossack leader Bogdan Chmielnicki launched a pogrom in Ukraine against Polish rule that destroyed as many as 300 Jewish communities at the cost of 100,000 dead]
 6. Assimilation and Persecution [cf. René Girard, *The Scapegoat*]
 7. Populism and Zionism in 1917
 - a. Jews who lent apocalyptic passion to the revolution became its victims
 - b. They became scapegoats for the Muscovite legacy of **xenophobia**
- H. IVAN GROZNY REDUX (75-77)
1. Spanish and Jewish Comparisons

- a. Ivan's "crusading zeal, ideological fanaticism, and hatred of deviation made him closer in spirit to Philip II of Spain than to any other contemporary."
 - b. Josephites
 - c. Ivan's favorite reading: The Book of Kings
 - d. Tatars seen as Canaanites
 - e. Poles seen as Philistines: Defection of Prince Kurbsky
2. Moses Regarded as a Tsar
 3. Ivan's and Stalin's Campaigns of Vilification
 4. Acceptance of the Muscovite Ideology
 - a. Metropolitan Philip
 - b. *Discourse of Valaam*
 - c. Absence of an effective program for resisting Ivan
 - d. Ivan Peresvetov
 - e. The necessity of dread
 5. Muscovy as a Realm of Fear
 - a. *Oprichnina*: Hooded order of vigilantes
 - b. **Livonian War**
 - c. Dramatic conflict with the diffuse and worldly West

Review

wooden construction methods	Kremlin	Battle of Kulikovo Field
Metropolitan Alexis	Sergius of Radonezh	hesychasm
transfiguration	chiliastic	Stephen Dushan
Constantinople	Apollinarian heresy	Nil Sorsky
sacerdotium	imperium	<i>pamiat'</i>
starets	Grand Duke of Muscovy	Joseph Sanin and Josephites
the Tsar's words	kenotic	Ivan Grozny
caesaropapism	<i>Oprichnina</i>	boyars
revolutionary anarchism	José Ortega y Gasset	Don Quixote
Philo-Semitism	Pale of Settlement	doctors' plots
massacres of 1648-50	xenophobia	Livonian War