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

Steven Alan Samson

*Liberty University*, [ssamson@liberty.edu](mailto:ssamson@liberty.edu)

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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