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The Illustrated Ivan

Ivan IV in the Illustrated Chronicle Compilation

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Abstract

The surviving segments of the incomplete *Illustrated Chronicle Compilation* (LLS),¹ in both text and miniatures, present a consistently positive image of Ivan IV as pious, just and competent, although the portrayal of individual events could vary. Nevertheless they also sometimes portray him as not in control of his elite, his subjects or events. If Ivan had to restore order by punishing those who had acted unjustly without his permission, then he had obviously failed to prevent such misdeeds. The miniatures in *LLS* present a cohesive image of the Public Ivan, despite the various stages of completion of individual segments, efforts at revision that were underway when the project was abandoned, and its fragmented preservation thereafter. However, the *Illustrated Chronicle Compilation* never criticizes Ivan for his failings, blaming his actions on human or non-human evil doers. Although *LLS* idealized Ivan, it did not idealize Ivan's reign.

Keywords: Ivan the Terrible, *Litsevoi letopisnyi svod*, *Tsarstvennaia kniga*, *Lebedevskaia letopis*, *Aleksandro-Nevskaia letopis*, *Synodal'nyi spisok*

¹ In this article "LLS (unitalicized)" refers to the text, *LLS* (italicized) to the online publication of the facsimile with the miniatures discussed in Part 2.

The *Illustrated Chronicle Compilation* (*Litsevoi letopisnyi svod*, hereafter LLS) was one of the most ambitious cultural and literary projects undertaken during the reign of Ivan IV, an illustrated world history that included Rus'. Unfortunately, the project remained unfinished. Editorial revisions to the chronicle account of Ivan's reign were never integrated into a single final text. Blank spaces awaited their illustrations, and some illustrations remained in outline or not colored. Worse yet, LLS survives only in segments. The volume(s) devoted to Rus' history before 1122 are not extant. Even so, the text of LLS at our disposal contains approximately 10,000 folios and 16,000 miniatures. Studying such a huge and incomplete text poses considerable difficulties. Scholars have reached no consensus on who sponsored LLS, who compiled it, who revised it, and when, although almost everyone attributes the text to Ivan's reign.² This article addresses Ivan's image in the text and miniatures of LLS.

LLS survives in segments. The *Tsar's Book* (*Tsarstvennaia kniga*) covers the years from 1533, when Ivan assumed the throne as Grand Prince of Moscow at the age of three, to 1553, but it also contains interpolations, most famously about the 1553 succession crisis.³ The *Alexander Nevskii Chronicle* (*Aleksandro-Nevskaia letopis'*) largely duplicates the *Tsar's Book's* annals for 1533–1553, but also has variant readings, and its continuation, which skips from 1553 to 1563, covers 1563 to 1567.⁴ The *Lebedev Chronicle* (*Lebedevskaia letopis'*) contains annals for 1553 to 1563.⁵ The *Synodal Copy* (*Synodal'nyi spisok*) represents an intermediate stage of the composition of LLS but it alone contains miniatures. LLS contains no material on Ivan's reign after 1567.

² Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Amosov, *Litsevoi letopisnyi svod. Kompleksnoe kodikologicheskoe issledovanie* (Moscow: Editorial URSS, 1988); E.A. Belokon', V.V. Morozov, and S.A. Morosov, compilers, *Litsevoi letopisnyi svod xvi veka: metodika i izucheniia raznoznennogo letopisnogo kompleksa* (Moscow: Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet, 2003); Valentin Viktorovich Morozov, *Litsevoi svod v kontekste otechestvennogo letopisaniia xvi veka* (Moscow: Indrik, 2005); Charles J. Halperin, Chapter 1, "Why Did the *Illustrated Chronicle Compilation* and the *Book of Degrees* Remain Unfinished?," in Halperin, *Ivan IV and Muscovy* (Bloomington: Slavica Publishers Inc., 2020), 7–38.

³ *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* (hereafter *PSRL*) 13 (Moscow: Nauka, 1965), 409–532.

⁴ *PSRL* 29 (Moscow: Nauka, 1965): 117–216, 315–355.

⁵ *PSRL* 29: 224–314.

1 Part 1: Textual Evidence

LLS propagates a single image of Ivan textually and visually, but in the narrative Ivan was not always in control of his realm or its subjects, for which LLS absolves him of guilt or responsibility. To summarize, the chronological relationship of segments in the text to the calendar is as follows: 1533 to 1553 are covered in the *Tsar's Book* and the *Nevskii Chronicle*; 1553 to 1563 in the *Lebedev Chronicle*; and 1563 to 1567 in the *Nevskii Chronicle*. We will present different versions of the same event in different segments. Despite those differences, Ivan's image remains constant.

2 Ivan's Character

Ivan's character can be analyzed under four sometimes overlapping virtues: he is pious, just, competent, and a family man.

2.1 *Pious*

At the age of eleven in 1541, upon receiving news of a Crimean incursion Ivan prayed with tears in the Dormition Cathedral for divine assistance.⁶

The following year Ivan went on the first of many pilgrimages to the Trinity Sergius Monastery.⁷

The extensive narrative of the 1552 campaign that led to the conquest of Kazan' repeatedly alludes to Ivan's piety. He prays constantly. Because of his piety he succors his troops.

He declares himself ready to die for the Orthodox faith and the holy churches.⁸

Sub anno 1556 the *Lebedev Chronicle* observed that Ivan always attended religious services to the very end in reverent silence and prayed daily.⁹

6 Tsar's Book: *PSRL* 13, 434; *Nevskii*: *PSRL* 29, 136–137.

7 Tsar's Book: *PSRL* 13, 438–439; *Nevskii*: *PSRL* 29, 154.

8 Tsar's Book: *PSRL* 13, 463–464, 467, 483, 486, 512; *Nevskii*: *PSRL* 29, 159, 162, 176–177, 179, 202.

9 *Lebedev*: *PSRL* 29, 245–246.

2.2 *Just*

At the age of thirteen in 1543 Ivan could no longer tolerate boyar arbitrariness, cruelty, and injustice, so he ordered Prince Andrei Shuiskii seized by his kennelmen and dispersed Shuiskii's supporters.¹⁰

Shortly thereafter Ivan disgraced boyar Prince Ivan Kubenskii for corruption and disorder, and exiled him and his wife.¹¹

In 1546 Ivan ordered Afanasii Buturlin's tongue cut out for impolite words. In that same year Ivan disgraced several boyars for their injustice.¹²

In 1556 *Lebedev Chronicle* attributed Ivan's bravery and courage to God. Ivan treated magnates, middle gentry, and lower gentry equally, and treated everyone according to his birth and service.¹³

2.3 *Competent*

Even at the age of six, in 1536 when his mother, Grand Princess Elena Glinskaia, was still alive, the boy Ivan was capable of greeting a Tatar royal woman with the respectful Turkic greeting, *tabag salaam*.¹⁴

In 1543 at the age of thirteen Ivan first went hunting, a much-admired manly skill at the time.¹⁵

In 1547, when Ivan was sixteen, he informed Metropolitan Makarii of his wish to marry a Muscovite woman, because a foreign woman would have different customs. The metropolitan and the boyars were even further impressed at Ivan's maturity and wisdom when he announced his decision to be crowned "tsar" like his ancestor Vladimir Monomakh.¹⁶

10 Tsar's Book: *PSRL* 13, 444; Nevskii: *PSRL* 29, 144.

11 Tsar's Book: *PSRL* 13, 445; Nevskii: *PSRL* 29, 145.

12 Tsar's Book: *PSRL* 13, 446–447; Nevskii: *PSRL* 29, 146.

13 Lebedev: *PSRL* 29: 245–246.

14 Tsar's Book: *PSRL* 13: 425–427. This passage cannot be found in Nevskii: *PSRL* 29; 131.

15 Tsar's Book: *PSRL* 13: 442; Nevskii: *PSRL* 29, 143.

16 Tsar's Book: *PSRL* 13: 450–451; Nevskii: *PSRL* 29: 149–150.

The extensive narrative of the 1552 campaign that led to the conquest of Kazan' abundantly attests to Ivan's competence. He made all strategic and tactical decisions wisely. His leadership inspired his army. He unselfishly turned over all the booty of the city to his army, keeping for himself only the khan of Kazan' Ediger-Magmet and his family, the khan's standards, and the city's artillery. Back in Moscow he lavished his largesse on his soldiers.¹⁷

In 1563 Ivan led the campaign that conquered Polotsk, playing the same commanding role as he had eleven years earlier in the conquest of Kazan'.¹⁸

In December 1564 Ivan took his treasury and the city's religious treasures with him to Aleksandrovskaia sloboda. From there he informed Moscow of his abdication because of boyar perfidy and ecclesiastical connivance. He agreed to return to the throne only if he could establish his state-within-a-state, the *oprichnina*, and if he was given a free hand to deal with traitors.¹⁹

For treason, in 1565 Ivan ordered several boyars, associate boyars and gentry executed (Prince Aleksandr Borisovich Gorbatiy and his son, Petr Petrov syn Golovin, Prince Ivan Ivanov syn Sukhoi Kashin, Prince Dmitrii Andreev syn Shevyrev) or shorn (Prince Ivan Kurakin, Prince Dmitri Nemoi), and others were disgraced and exiled to Kazan'. Ivan confiscated their property.²⁰

2.4 A Family Man

Ivan had his children baptized. All his daughters and one son, the first Tsarevich Dmitrii, died in infancy, but LLS does not comment on Ivan's reaction to their deaths. In 1559 according to the *Lebedev Chronicle* Ivan experienced great grief upon the death of Prince Vasilii Iur'evich, the only child of his brother, Prince Iurii Vasil'evich. In 1560 Ivan was totally grief-stricken by the death of

17 Tsar's Book: *PSRL* 13: 463–464, 467, 477, 488–489, 499–500, 505, 515, 522; Nevskii: *PSRL* 29: 159, 162, 172, 181, 190, 191, 192, 205, 210.

18 Lebedev: *PSRL* 29: 308–313; Nevskii: *PSRL* 29: 318.

19 Nevskii: *PSRL* 29: 341–345.

20 Nevskii: *PSRL* 29: 345.

his first wife, Tsaritsa Anastasiia, and had to be led by the hand at her funeral.²¹

Although Ivan had not, so he said, intended to remarry after Tsaritsa Anastasiia's death, at the importuning of Metropolitan Makarii and his boyars he undertook negotiations to find a foreign (second) wife, eventually marrying Kuchinei, the daughter of his North Caucasus Circassian ally, Temriuk.²²

3 Ivan Not in Control

Sixteenth-century Muscovite chroniclers had a very strong sense of propriety, a conception of how things "ought to be." In "normal," meaning ideal, circumstances the ruler ruled with the unanimous agreement of the boyars and the loyal submission of the rest of the population. Disagreement was considered so "abnormal" that it was often attributed to the machinations of the Devil, which succeeded "for our sins" because Russians had not been behaving piously. If Ivan had to restore his control, then he, or if he were a boy, his government, had failed to exercise proper leadership. Thus, Ivan acts justly to restore his control by punishing the guilty with anything from disgrace to mutilation to death, but he has to act because disorder had replaced order. However, paradoxically, he should not have needed to act at all. Still, Ivan is excused for these lapses, either because he was too young or because the devil inspired his servitors, and because he atoned for and corrected them, but precisely because he had not been in control.

In 1537, when Ivan was seven and his mother was still alive, the Devil turned them both against his uncle, appanage Prince Andrei Ivanovich of Staritsa. After the death of Ivan's older uncle, appanage Prince Iurii Ivanovich of Dmitrov, Prince Andrei had demanded a share of Prince Iurii's land, as was customary, but Ivan and Elena gave him gifts instead. Evil people lied to Prince Andrei that Ivan and his mother wanted to arrest him. When Prince Andrei disobeyed a royal request to appear in Moscow and fled,

²¹ Lebedev: *PSRL* 29: 285, 288.

²² Lebedev: *PSRL* 29: 291.

neither Ivan nor his mother authorized the boyar sent to pursue him, Telepnev-Obolenskii, and to offer him safe-conduct if he surrendered. Prince Andrei did surrender, but when he arrived in Moscow expecting leniency, he was arrested, because his amnesty was offered without royal approval.²³

After his mother's death in 1538, Ivan did not authorize the beheading of state secretary Fedor Mishurin or the removal from office of Metropolitan Daniil, perpetrated by the Princes Shuiskie and boyars.²⁴

In 1541, when Ivan was eleven, Metropolitan Ioasaf and the boyars decided that it was physically impossible to evacuate Ivan and his brother, both young boys, from Moscow in the face of a feared Crimean invasion. They could not take proper care of them on the open road. They also informed the Muscovite troops blocking the Crimeans' path to Moscow that Ivan was too young to lead the troops in person.²⁵

In 1542 when Prince Ivan Shuiskii staged a coup, boyars seized Prince Ivan Bel'skii and removed Metropolitan Ioasaf without Ivan's knowledge. Later, again without Ivan's approval, assassins murdered Bel'skii in exile. When armed men entered Ivan's personal quarters during the middle of the night, he was afraid.²⁶

In 1543, when Ivan was thirteen, boyars led by Prince Andrei Shuiskii beat up Ivan's favorite courtier Fedor Vorontsov in Ivan's presence and would have killed him save for the intercession of Metropolitan Makarii. The revised version of this episode omits that the metropolitan interceded on his own initiative, instead writing that Ivan sent the metropolitan and a boyar to Shuiskii to beg him to exile Vorontsov instead of killing him.²⁷

For arresting boyars without Ivan's permission shortly thereafter, Ivan put boyar Prince Ivan Kubenskii in disgrace.

23 Tsar's Book: *PSRL* 13: 428–431; Nevskii: *PSRL* 29: 132–134.

24 Tsar's Book: *PSRL* 13: 432; Nevskii recounts these actions but does not specify Ivan's lack of approval: Nevskii: *PSRL* 29: 135.

25 Tsar's Book: *PSRL* 13: 435; Nevskii: *PSRL* 29: 136–137.

26 Tsar's Book: *PSRL* 13: 439–440; Nevskii: *PSRL* 29: 140–141.

27 Tsar's Book: *PSRL* 13: first 443 (also found in Nevskii: *PSRL* 29, 144), revised 442–444.

In 1546, according to the first version in the *Tsar's Book*, Ivan in anger disgraced, executed or arrested several boyars (Prince Ivan Kubenskii, Fedor Vorontsov, Vasiliï Mikhailovich Vorontsov) because of the slander, inspired by the Devil, of state secretary Vasiliï Grigor'ev syn Zakharov Gnil'ev. The revised longer version omits Gnil'ev's satanic inspiration. Instead it narrates that while in Kolomna on recreation Ivan was confronted by fifty Novgorod gunners who wished to petition him. When Ivan ordered his courtiers to disperse them, they resisted, resulting in a violent confrontation with fatalities on both sides. Ivan ordered Gnil'ev to investigate and he found some boyars guilty (perhaps for allowing armed men into Ivan's presence).²⁸

In 1547, after several devastating fires in the city of Moscow, according to the first version of the *Tsar's Book*, Moscow's rioting commoners killed Prince Iurii Glinskii, a relative of Ivan's mother, and many gentry. In the revised version Metropolitan Makarii, the boyars, and Ivan's confessor the archpriest Fedor Barmin of the Kremlin Annunciation Cathedral informed Ivan that sorcery was responsible for the fires. Commoners gathered in Red Square loudly blamed Ivan's grandmother, Princess Anna Glinskaia, for sorcery and her family for oppressing the people. Princess Anna and boyar Prince Mikhail Glinskii were not in Moscow, but upon hearing the crowd Prince Iurii Glinskii sought sanctuary in the Dormition Cathedral. The boyars and archpriest Fedor, sent by Ivan to investigate, did not break up the mob, which invaded the church to seize Prince Iurii. The mob then stoned him to death and went on a looting rampage. Many then marched to Vorob'evo, a Moscow suburb, to petition Ivan to surrender the other Glinskii relatives. Ivan ordered the mob dispersed, the leaders seized and executed, and others exiled. Princess Anna and Prince Mikhail Glinskii later tried to flee the country, claiming they felt their lives at risk, and Archpriest Fedor, according to marginalia, was afraid that he would be punished and took the cowl.²⁹

28 *Tsar's Book*: *PSRL* 13: 448–449, repeated 532; Nevskii: *PSRL* 29: 147 (the revised version).

29 *Tsar's Book*: *PSRL* 13: 445–457, 458, 460; Nevskii: *PSRL* 29: 153 (the revised version of the riot), 154, 156.

The first version in the *Tsar's Book* contains nothing about Ivan's illness in 1553. The first interpolation on the subject, a short straightforward statement that Ivan was ill, was crossed out by the same person who wrote it. A later, much longer interpolation recounts that Ivan grew sick, few knew, the worst was feared. After sending for his testament, Ivan summoned his cousin Prince Vladimir and the boyars and asked them to kiss the cross to his infant son Tsarevich Dmitrii as his successor. Prince Dmitrii Kurliatev and Treasurer Nikita Funikov delayed coming to Ivan's quarters, claiming that they were ill, but finally took the loyalty oath on the third day of the crisis. It was said that they favored Prince Vladimir for the throne over the infant. After taking the oath, boyar Prince Dmitrii Paletskii started negotiating with Ivan's aunt Princess Evfrosiniia, promising to support Prince Vladimir's candidacy if she awarded Paletskii's son-in-law, Prince Iurii Vasil'evich, Ivan IV's brother, the appanages promised him in Grand Prince Vasilii III's testament, which he had never received. The Staritskie began gathering their courtiers. The priest Sylvester of the Annunciation Cathedral objected when boyars prevented Prince Vladimir from visiting Ivan until he had taken the oath. Sylvester favored the Staritskie and had secured their release from prison years earlier. Sylvester wielded all secular and ecclesiastical power in Moscow. Prince Ivan Shuiskii objected to taking the oath in the reception room because Ivan was not present. Associate boyar Fedor Adashev, father of Ivan IV's favorite Aleksei Adashev, proclaimed his willingness to serve Tsarevich Dmitrii but refused to take the oath because a minor ruler would turn power over to the Zakhar'iny, the family of Tsaritsa Anastasiia. From his supposed deathbed Ivan spoke up forcefully, reminding the boyars that they had sworn loyalty to Ivan's progeny and would forfeit their souls should they violate that oath, urging loyal boyars to take his widow and son to safety abroad if Prince Vladimir took the throne and warning the Zakhar'iny that they would not draw breath much longer than his widow and infant son if Prince Vladimir assumed power. The recalcitrant boyars then took the oath. Prince Vladimir had to be threatened with bodily harm to coerce him to swear, and it took

three attempts to persuade Princess Evfrosiniia, in her palace, to affix her seal to a loyalty oath to Tsarevich Dmitrii.³⁰

In 1554 the fleeing Prince Nikita Semenov syn Lobanov Rostovskii was captured and implicated his father Prince Semen Vasil'ev syn Rostovskii for wanting to emigrate. Under torture Prince Semen then implicated seven boyars as well as gentry, courtiers, and princes who supported Prince Vladimir in 1553 for fear that the Zakhar'iny would dominate Tsarevich Dmitrii's minority. From that time forward Ivan did not trust his "people" (servitors).³¹

In 1562 Prince Semen Bel'skii was caught trying to flee to Lithuania. He was convicted of treason, his property was confiscated, and he was imprisoned along with his confederates. The man who advised him to defect had his tongue cut out. His supporters were knouted. In the same year the brothers Princes Vorotynskie were disgraced for treason and imprisoned, one with his wife. Another boyar, Dmitrii Kurliatev, was forced to take the cowl, along with his son, wife, and two daughters.³²

In 1563 Ivan became angry at Princess Evfrosiniia and Prince Vladimir for their improper behavior and put them in disgrace, which he lifted at the request of Metropolitan Afanasii. Princess Evfrosiniia voluntarily requested that she be permitted to take the veil. Ivan consented, and saw to it that she would be provided with material subsistence in the convent of her choice, sending his bailiffs with her. Prince Vladimir's appanage was returned to him but with an entirely new staff.³³

On his own recognizance and without orders from Ivan, in 1563 Prince Peter Shuiskii led a Muscovite army against the city of Orsha in Lithuania. He advanced incautiously, not in formation, all his artillery was on sleds, and he chose a poor location for his route. His army was routed by the Poles and Lithuanians.³⁴

30 Tsar's Book: *PSRL* 13: 522–526, repeated 529–532 as main text; Nevskii: *PSRL* 29: 211–214.

31 Lebedev: *PSRL* 29: 226.

32 Lebedev: *PSRL* 29: 297, 301.

33 Nevskii: *PSRL* 29: 321–322.

34 Nevskii: *PSRL* 29: 329.

Because he did not know that the Crimean khan Devlet Girei was going to violate his truce with Muscovy, in 1564 Ivan withdrew some of his forces from the southwest border. In cahoots with Poland-Lithuania the Crimeans invaded, only to be stopped at Riazan' by improvised local forces.³⁵

Therefore, a variety of circumstances including Ivan's age, health, emotions, and ignorance, and the actions of others, Muscovites or foreigners, created numerous situations which Ivan could not and did not control.

4 Part 2: Visual Evidence

The visual evidence of *LLS* conforms to this portrayal of Ivan as sometimes in control, and sometimes not in control. The miniatures in *LLS* present a cohesive image of the Public Ivan, despite the various stages of completion of individual segments, efforts at revision that were underway when the project was abandoned, and its fragmented preservation thereafter, whether from accidental loss or decisions of various later editors and compilers to keep some folia and not others.³⁶ Pierre Gonneau concluded that the corrections and erasures on pages of the *LLS* covering Ivan's reign constitute the "most spectacular proofs of editorial activity at the time of Ivan the Terrible." Unfortunately, intermediate copies have not been preserved, and the dispersal of folia created "additional obstacles to reconstruction of the editorial process."³⁷ There is no consensus on why the project was never finished or when work on

³⁵ Nevskii: *PSRL* 29: 338–339.

³⁶ For the facsimile edition, see *Litsevoi letopisnyi svod xvi veka. Russkaia letopisnaia istoriia*, ed. E.N. Kazakova et al., 24 vols. (Moscow: AKTEON, 2009–2010), available online at <https://runivers.ru/lib/book19785/> [hereafter *LLS*; page references here refer to the online edition.] On the dating of the compilation see Boris M. Kloss, *Nikol'skii svod i russkie letopisi xvi–xvii vv.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), 245–249; Elena V. Ukhanova, "Vodianye znaki Litsevogo letopisnogo svoda," in *LLS* 24: 382–398, and "Problemy izucheniia bumagi Litsevogo letopisnogo svoda," *Revue des études slaves* 87, no. 3–4 (2016): 321–335. For a survey of the evolving views on the history of *LLS*, see Morozov, *Litsevoi svod v kontekste otechestvennogo letopisaniia xvi veka*.

³⁷ Pierre Gonneau, "Sergius of Radonezh illuminated from the *Litsevoi Letopisnyi svod* to the *Litsevoe zhitie*," *Revue des études slaves* 87, no. 3–4 (2016): 366–367.

it ended. “The forceful editorial interventions in the final volumes suggest that the depiction of more contemporary sixteenth-century events became highly contentious. Whole sequences of completed pages were rejected, scuttled, and redesigned. Not all of them could be redrawn and repainted before the project was abandoned.”³⁸ Overall, however, the illustrations adhere closely to the accompanying text and generally maintain the Muscovite façade of the God-given ruler who is the center of the tsardom and makes no mistakes. When something goes wrong, the boyars or “evil people” are at fault.

Several aspects of the miniatures in general are germane to an analysis of Ivan’s portrayal in the illustrations. It has long been noted that the *LLS* illustrations shed light on many details of everyday life, costume, even new architectural construction.³⁹ For example, the miniatures confirm that an honor guard of boyar women rode alongside the conveyances of royal women,⁴⁰ and show how oaths were administered with kissing the cross.⁴¹ Prescribed punishments for state crimes shown in the miniatures include flogging, hanging, and beheading, along with being burned alive. The axe apparently was the usual instrument for chopping off heads, while swords and clubs helped to restore order when needed. Trouble-makers pelted both Ivan’s uncle, Iurii Glinskii, and Metropolitan Ioasaf with stones. But we see no depiction of personal weapons. Hunting, a common royal activity, is frequently mentioned but rarely shown, and even then apparently unarmed huntsmen hold only leashed dogs, no knives or boar spears.⁴² Apart from military activities, there seems to have been a prohibition on depicting

38 Brian J. Boeck, “Problems and Possibilities of a ‘New’ Muscovite Source,” *Kritika* 19, no. 1 (2018): 10–11.

39 See O.I. Podobedova, *Miniatiury russkikh istoricheskikh rukopisei. K istorii russkogo litsevogo letopisaniia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1965); S.O. Shmidt, “K izucheniiu Litsevogo letopisnogo svoda,” in *Drevnerusskoe iskusstvo: Rukopisnaia kniga*, Sb. 3 (Moscow: Nauka, 1983), 204–211; A.E. Zhabreva, “Miniatiury Litsevogo letopisnogo svoda kak istochnik po istorii russkogo kostiuma xvi veka: predvaritel’noe issledovanie,” *Rossiiskaia natsional’naia biblioteka i otechestvennaia khudozhestvennaia kul’tura* 5 (St. Petersburg: Rossiiskaia natsional’naia biblioteka, 2013): 10–56.

40 *LLS* 19: 536, 538; 20: 296; 21: 532, 534.

41 *LLS* 20: 162; 21: 539 ff.

42 *LLS* 19: 242, 244–245.

arms, even when Ivan and his entourage were on the road.⁴³ Given the dangers of Muscovite highways, carrying personal weapons would seem to have been a sensible precaution even if an armed guard (not illustrated) accompanied the procession. While this may be a convention reflecting the general policy that weapons should not be carried in the presence of the ruler, possibly riding cloaks or knife sheaths in boots provided “concealed carry” options. In any case, none of the illustrations depicts a threat to Ivan from an armed antagonist, whether on the road or at home.

The illustrations likewise conceal most of what we might expect to see in depictions of people. They offer few clues regarding personality or relationships. Facial features differ little. Russians and Tatars look alike, and the dividing line between the quick and the dead, e.g., as portrayed in severed heads or hanged traitors or even those sitting in the flames, is imperceptible. Gestures offer only a limited range of expression. A raised finger or pointing hand can indicate the issuing of commands or authorizing of action, as Nancy Kollmann has shown,⁴⁴ while Valerie Kivelson, examining the tale of Kazan’ tsaritsas and their reception in Moscow, concluded that they greeted good news about their fate with hands upraised and open palms to express amazement and relief.⁴⁵ Yet, as we shall see, these gestures can have additional connotations.

To depict Ivan in his minority the illustrators drew upon iconographical conventions. Royal newborns appeared as small adults in poses mirroring the traditional Nativity images.⁴⁶ As young children Ivan, his brother Iurii, and his cousin Vladimir Andreevich Staritskii all traveled with their mothers and nursemaids in carriages or sledges.⁴⁷ The artists’ portrayals of the adult Ivan fall into two categories. The first stage, the image of the young

43 See, for example, journeys to the Holy Trinity Monastery: *LLS* 19: 66; 20: 191–192, 234–235; 21: 532, 534.

44 Nancy Shields Kollmann, “Representing Legitimacy in Early Modern Russia,” *Russian Review* 76, no. 1 (2017): 7–21.

45 Valerie A. Kivelson, “Expressive Gestures: Affect and Hierarchy in the Litsevoi letopisnyi svod,” *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 52, no. 2–3 (2018): 234–260. For the miniatures, see *LLS* 22: 156–160.

46 See, *inter alia*, *LLS* 19: 32–33, 150; 20: 66; 22: 273, 409; 23: 160.

47 *LLS* 19: 35, 43, 66, 233, 235–237, 264, 277, 283–284, 293, 540, 542; 21: 532, 534.

Ivan, lasts considerably longer than we might have predicted, given Muscovite expectations that readiness for military service began at age fifteen. In most of the illuminations covering the years from Ivan's childhood through 1557 (vols. 19–22 in the facsimile edition), the tsar continues to appear young, lithe, and beardless, features also characteristic of his younger brother Iurii and cousin Vladimir. The second variant (illustrations in vol. 23, 1557–1567) presents an older, full-figured Ivan with a short rounded beard, depicted in a more muted palette than the vibrant painted illustrations in the preceding volumes. This older image makes an unexpected cameo appearance much earlier, in July 1552, when the tsar prayed at numerous holy sites en route to the siege of Kazan'.⁴⁸ But Ivan is once again beardless at the conquest of Kazan' and the victory celebrations upon his return to Moscow.⁴⁹ Only in the illustrations for March 1558 does the bearded Ivan become the standard.⁵⁰

Despite the various limitations of the illustrations, the editors and artists for the most part portrayed Ivan as a monarch in charge of his realm and his government, consulting with his advisors, handling his duties as head of an Orthodox state, and dealing with both threats and opportunities arising in the area of foreign affairs. On those occasions when he was not in charge, mostly from the years of his minority, they found ways to account for events without any negative assessment of his role, often suggesting that he was not a participant and thus not responsible.

The so-called "Staritskii Rebellion," culminating in the arrest on charges of treason and subsequent death in chains in 1537 of Ivan's uncle Prince Andrei Ivanovich of Staritsa, capped several years of escalating suspicions and accusations on the part of both the prince and Elena Glinskaia. The chronicle text, however, absolved both parties from responsibility for the unfortunate outcome, placing blame on the machinations of "evil people" at the appanage and grand princely courts. The illustration made the

48 *LLS* 21: 169–189, beginning with an illustration of a bearded Ivan consulting a beardless Vladimir Staritskii.

49 *LLS* 21: 461, 498–503.

50 Cf. *LLS* 22: 475 and earlier (no beard) and 22: 479 and following (with beard).

situation crystal clear, using a two-tier representation featuring Ivan, his mother, and their courtiers gathered in the Kremlin on top, Andrei Staritskii and his retinue in Staritsa in the lower register. Figures on both sides point the finger of accusation at their opposite number, creating a scene of mutual recriminations in which the grand prince was definitely not in charge but at the same time not responsible.⁵¹

A similar explanation accounts for the replacement of Ivan in a carriage or sled by the image of him on horseback. When the Crimean forces under Saip-Girei approached the Oka in 1541, an early illustration showed Ivan on horseback for the first time, heading for Kolomna upon hearing the news. In reality he was unable at age eleven to lead his forces in person, but fulfilled his royal duties in other ways. A subsequent illustration shows him in the Dormition Cathedral in tearful prayer before the icon of the Vladimir Mother of God, asking Her intercession on behalf of his Orthodox realm.⁵²

The pattern of absolving Ivan is particularly interesting in cases occurring after the death of his mother, Elena Glinskaia, in 1538. Ivan's minority devolved into the so-called period of "boyar misrule," with court factions competing for power while engaging in verbal abuse, disorderly conduct, and various forms of unauthorized activity. We have two renderings of the murder of the secretary Fedor Mishurin in 1538. As part of their quarrel with the court faction headed by Prince Ivan Fedorovich Bel'skii, Princes V.V. and I.V. Shuiskii ordered Mishurin dragged out of his residence, disrobed, placed on the executioner's block and beheaded by one of their party with an axe, all done without the Grand Prince's knowledge. Thus, in the earlier version, Ivan does not even appear

51 *LLS* 19: 516, 520; 20: 32. V.V. Morozov noted the effort to remove blame from Ivan and his mother in an earlier case. In the revised illustration of the 1535 campaign against Lithuania, which was unsuccessful, representations of little Ivan and his mother Grand Princess Elena, first shown in the upper register of the miniature, were whited out and then replaced with buildings, while the editor's correction plainly accuses the boyars of malice. Removing the image of the Grand Prince, Morozov noted, underlined that he was not involved in the unfortunate campaign; V.V. Morozov, "Ivan Groznyi na miniaturakh tsarstvennoi knigi," *Drevnerusskoe iskusstvo: Rukopisnaia kniga*, sb. 3 (Moscow: Nauka, 1983), 239.

52 *LLS* 19: 582, 606; Morozov, "Ivan Groznyi," 239.

in the illustration.⁵³ In the revised version, Ivan appears in the top register, discussing something, not necessarily Mishurin, with his men. In the middle section, Mishurin is dragged out under boyar orders and stripped naked. In the bottom register he awaits his fate, held down by five men, one with an axe raised. The fence behind him suggests that he is perhaps in the Shuiskii compound – in any case, not in the same location as the Grand Prince – and the text notes that the execution was unauthorized.⁵⁴

The purpose of the revisions in part seems to have been to emphasize the centrality of Ivan to everything that was happening, while at the same time providing cover for his lack of action, attributable to youth and fear, while suggesting that he tried to temper the outcome through prayer. In 1542 Ivan was able to do nothing to help two more victims of the boyar violence. When they attacked Metropolitan Ioasaf, shaming him and pelting him with stones, Ivan was not shown in the illustration, nor in the scene after the metropolitan took refuge at the Trinity Monastery's Moscow legation, where boyar servitors yelled abuse and almost killed him. When the boyars eventually came to seize the metropolitan in Ivan's chambers, the terrified young grand prince is standing aside in the top register, unable to stop them from seizing Ioasaf and dragging him off amidst disorders in Moscow.⁵⁵ He is absent from the image depicting the murder of boyar Ivan Bel'skii, done in Beloozero "without Ivan's knowledge."⁵⁶

Ivan was once again powerless to stop the boyar quarrels in 1543 and the seizure of F.S. Vorontsov, who was also stripped naked. In the illustration Metropolitan Makarii prays, while the young ruler, frightened by what is happening, apparently also turns to prayer (possibly here making the two-fingered sign of the

⁵³ *LLS* 20: 73.

⁵⁴ *LLS* 19: 570. Morozov, "Ivan Groznyi," 237–238. Kollmann saw the inclusion of young Ivan as suggesting he gave "no gesture of verdict"; Kollmann, "Representing Legitimacy," 7–21. Shmidt saw it as visual reminder that young Ivan witnessed the enmity of the boyars; S.O. Shmidt, "Litsevye letopisi o kazni d'iaka Mishurina v 1538 g.," in D.S. Likhachev, ed., *Rossiiskoe gosudarstvo v seredine xvi stoletia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1984), 223–238.

⁵⁵ *LLS* 20: 166–168.

⁵⁶ *LLS* 20: 169.

cross). He is absent when Vorontsov is dragged off.⁵⁷ The illustration suggests that Orthodox prayer was the only option for this God-given ruler at the time. But his image as the source of justice is restored in the sharply contrasting illustration of his “in control” decision at the end of December that he would no longer abide the constant disorder and willful abuse and killing of his advisors. He ordered A.M. Shuiskii seized and turned over to his kennel-men, who dragged the disgraced prince out toward the prison and killed him.⁵⁸

A similar reversal of image occurs in the illustrations depicting events in the spring and summer of 1547. During and after the great Moscow fires for which the Moscow crowd blamed his Glinskii relatives, Ivan was literally out of town, in his village of Vorob’evo where he had taken his new wife for safety. His uncle Iu. V. Glinskii was first stoned by an angry mob and subsequently dragged out of a church and murdered. In one illustration Ivan is not shown; in a second he is depicted in the upper right corner, a witness, but, as the text explains, in Vorob’evo, not on the scene. Justice is restored, however, after Ivan returns, orders an investigation, and decrees that those guilty of murder and robbery be executed.⁵⁹

The “crisis of 1553” was the point in his reign when Ivan was most “not in control,” and how to present these events may have been the question upon which the entire *LLS* project foundered. The tale of Ivan’s deathbed scene and its dynastic implications is found only in the interpolations to the text of the *LLS* in the *Tsar’s Book*. There are no other sources against which to assess its veracity, and by the time it was composed most of the participants had probably passed from the scene. Erasures, rubbed-out drawings, pages of text with blank spaces left for illustrations, and the famous “interpolations,” marginal notes to be inserted in the text of the intended clean copy, indicate that active revision was in progress when this part of the project was abandoned.⁶⁰ Whether there

⁵⁷ *LLS* 20: 204–206, 234–235; Morozov, “Ivan Groznyi,” 238.

⁵⁸ *LLS* 20: 211–212.

⁵⁹ *LLS* 20: 315–319; Morozov, “Ivan Groznyi,” 238.

⁶⁰ *LLS* 21: 535–562. For an index to editorial changes in the *LLS*, see “Tablitsa listov Litsevoogo letopisnogo svoda s redaktsionnymi pripiskami skoropis’iu i listov s ikh ‘belovym’ vosproizvedeniem,” *LLS* 24: 379.

was in fact opposition to taking the oath of allegiance to Ivan's infant son Dmitrii or whether this account was a retrospective effort to explain the later fate of various participants remains an open question, as does the issue of how the editors and artists might have resolved their illustrative and textual dilemmas.

The *Synodal Copy* lacks the narrative of the creation of the *oprichnina*, so there are no miniatures of the greatest manifestation of Ivan's feeling and being portrayed as feeling "not in control." The word *oprichnina* does not occur in the remaining annals of LLS after 1565. When Ivan in 1567 visited the new *oprichnina* headquarters constructed outside the Kremlin, in the Arbat district, the LLS text identifies it as his "new court" opposite the Rizpolozhenskie (now Trinity) Gates.⁶¹ The surviving illustrations most characteristic of the LLS representations of Ivan "not in control" are probably those depicting the death and burial of his first wife, Anastasiia Romanovna. After she died on 7 August 1560 the tsar is shown standing behind her coffin, with his left hand to his cheek in the expected gesture of grief. She was buried in the Ascension Cathedral and Ivan followed her bier, walking with his hands held out palm up in front of him, probably in a gesture of supplication.⁶² His posture is in sharp contrast to the words of the text, which describe the tsar as totally overcome by grief, hardly able to stand and needing to be supported on both sides. The graphic image of dignified bereavement held true to the over-all effort to present the tsar in the best possible light on those occasions when he was "not in control."

5 Conclusion

It should not be surprising that LLS presents a positive image of Ivan, emphasizing above all else his piety and its resulting generosity, mercy, and wisdom. Ivan's competence at civilian and especially military affairs accords him primacy of place in his political activities. This flattering portrait of Ivan dominates all segments

⁶¹ LLS 23: 484.

⁶² LLS 23: 247–248.

of LLS on Ivan's reign, even of his childhood. The presence of criticism of Ivan in LLS akin to that in foreign tirades against him or the works of émigré Prince Andrei Kurbskii would be inconceivable.

However, Ivan was not always portrayed as in control of the situation, and sometimes, as a result, he committed blameworthy acts. Of course he could not have been held responsible for any decision made when his mother was in charge, or for a few years following, until he was a teenager. Yet specific acts deserving of criticism then are attributed to evil advisors and the interference of the Devil, certainly not to his own credulity or fallibility.

Too much emphasis should not be placed on the description of Ivan as afraid in 1542 during the Shuiskii coup. LLS and other Muscovite chronicles fully appreciated that Ivan was a child then. The actions of the elite in 1542 attest to that realization quite well.

It is easy enough to attribute such episodes to Ivan's youth, especially between 1538, when his mother died, and at least 1543, when Ivan first demonstrated an independent will in ordering the arrest of Prince Andrei Shuiskii. It is not too damaging to his reputation that he did not at the tender age of thirteen assume full command of the Muscovite state. He could still be manipulated by evil advisors who committed unjust acts without his permission, even without his knowledge. The 1546 Kolomna affair demonstrates as much.

However, in 1547 Ivan was, by LLS's own account, mature enough to propose his coronation and marriage. In the wake of the 1547 fire Ivan lost control of Moscow during the riot. He could not protect his own clan and he certainly did not dictate the behavior not only of the lower-class Moscow mob, but also of the boyars, even of his own confessor, who enabled that mob to murder his relative. Ivan only reasserted his authority afterward at Vorob'evo, when he had bodyguards and gentry units at his command. Moreover, even after the spectacular demonstration of his leadership skills in the 1552 Kazan' campaign, when he became ill in 1553, if we follow the interpolations, he still could not control his relatives, the Staritskie, many of the boyars, and the priest Sylvester, who, according to interpolations in LLS, controlled both church and state at the time. As during his minority, Ivan had to cajole, implore, and plead to get people to do what he wanted,

although he could also threaten. Even after this episode Ivan literally did not command the loyalty of his Staritskii relatives or of all boyars, who continued to commit improper treasonous acts resulting in their disgrace. In December 1564 when Ivan started down the road to Aleksandrovskaiia sloboda to the *oprichnina*, according to LLS Ivan impugned his own control over the court and the church elite who facilitated their misdeeds. Ivan's resounding success in 1563, the capture of Polotsk, the high point of Muscovite success in the twenty-five-year Livonian War, had not earned him the "obedience" of his elite according to an LLS interpolation dated to 1553. Repression after 1565 suggests continued elite resistance to Ivan's discipline.

Yet to the compiler/editor of LLS Ivan's lack of control of people and situations, including implicitly retrospectively when his justice restored that control, even as an adult, even as a war hero, even as a crowned and divinely-inspired tsar, did not impair his virtues of piety, maturity, and leadership. LLS never assigned responsibility to Ivan for the evil-doers who sabotaged Ivan's plans or whose crimes he punished. Ivan, as far as the text of LLS was concerned, stood above reproach. Even when diverging from the text, the illustrations remained faithful to this stance of making Ivan look good. Indeed, LLS strove by word and painting to make Ivan look good even when he appeared to be a weak ruler, unable to prevent abuses of power by his elite, including his relatives, and his clergy, violent protests by his lower servitors, and lethal riots by his commoner subjects. Although LLS did not idealize Ivan's reign, it still managed to idealize Ivan.

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