

## **IVAN THE TERRIBLE'S IMPERIAL TITLE AND PROBLEM OF ITS RECOGNITION IN THE WEST AND IN THE EAST**

In 1547 the ruler of Muscovy, Ivan IV, assumed the title of tsar. For almost a century after that the recognition of that title by neighboring European countries became one of the main objectives of Muscovite foreign policy. The best Russian ideologists devised arguments to persuade European rulers to refer to Ivan IV as tsar in official documents. The Grand Principality of Lithuania appeared to be the main stronghold of opposition against recognition of that title.

Titles of rulers played a very important role in diplomatic relations in the Middle Ages and, actually, beyond that period. As the pre-modern «state» was more or less identified with its ruler, so international contacts were seen as personal or dynastic relations between rulers and dynasties [1], and were regulated by norms of customary law. The right to certain lands meant the holding of that territories by the ruler. Territories were considered to be the patrimonial property of the monarch and could be inherited by his descendants. Names of territories were usually included in the ruler's title, which was seen as confirmation of his right to those territories. As a rule, the title was inherited by the successor of the monarch. In times and places when and where the state's territories were subject to frequent change, special attention was paid to the ruler's title.

The legal practice of non-patrimonial and non-dynastic transfer of certain territories between different monarchs included the official removal of the names of these territories from the title of one ruler and subsequent incorporation of these names into the title of the other ruler; the next step was an official recognition of the new titles, i.e. using them in charters, letters, etc. Thus, a new custom had been created that replaced the old one. That usually happened after wars involving significant territorial changes.

However, it was possible to attain the same goal without using the sword, by means of diplomacy. It was necessary to persuade one's counterpart of one's own right to the disputed territories, and the arguments for such a right were usually found in history, whether true or legendary. Sometimes fantastic legends were created to justify the right to the new territories. That was usually followed by self-proclamation, when a ruler officially acquired a title containing the names of desirable lands. The next step was to persuade neighbors to recognize the new title to make it politically real [2]. These steps — from historical argument through self-proclamation to acknowledgment by others in regards to the new title of the Muscovite ruler — are the main subject of this study.

### **The History of the Term 'Tsar'**

The term 'tsar' (царь) — a contracted form from the term 'tsesar' (цесарь) [3] — is one of the earliest borrowings in the Old Slavonic languages. According to Moravcsik [4], it was derived both phonetically [5] and semantically from *Caesar*, the Latin designation for emperor, in the sixth or seventh centuries.

In the first writings in Old Church Slavonic [6], mostly translations from Old Greek of the ninth and tenth centuries, the term 'tsar' was used to define:

1. God.

2. Biblical monarchs.
3. The Emperor of Byzantium.
4. In a few cases — supreme rulers in general (mostly Oriental) [7].

Dmitrii Prozorovskii, one of the first scholars of the term 'tsar', compared translated Old Church Slavonic texts with their Greek originals in order to find out what was used for the term 'tsar'. It appeared that in all cases the term 'tsar' substituted that of 'basileus' (Basileue» in Greek), prevalent meaning of which at that time in Rus' was emperor of Byzantium [8]. In the first and in the second cases the term 'tsar'/'basileus' was used in religious context, while in the third and in the fourth ones it had a political significance. The political meaning of the term was the only one taken into consideration in international relations, which is why the present study will concentrate on the cases of political application of the term 'tsar'; some attention will be paid, however, to the development of other, non-political, meanings of the term, borrowed from the Greek.

The Byzantine Commonwealth was not the only system of Christian states in medieval Europe at the time of the conversion of Southern and Eastern Slavs. Another Christian Commonwealth — the Holy Roman Empire — represented the system of Western and Central European states (including the countries of the Western Slavs) that accepted Christianity from Rome. The border between these two empires was mostly identical with the border of ecclesiastical influence of Constantinople and Rome, that appeared as a border between Orthodoxy and Catholicism soon after the schism of the middle of the eleventh century. At that time mutual relations between the two Christian systems of states were generally built on the principle of one's non-interference into the sphere of influence of the other. In this connection it is necessary to compare the titles of the emperors of the Western and Eastern Christian Commonwealths in the first Old Church Slavonic texts and later narratives in Slavonic.

In the first translations from Greek to Old Slavonic the titles of the emperors of Byzantium and the Holy Roman Empires were different: when the Byzantine basileus was called 'tsar' or 'tsezar,' the Western emperor was styled 'kesar.' However, Dmitri Prozorovskii considered this fact to be a consequence of the 'calque' translation: when term 'basileus' did not exist in Old Slavonic languages and needed translation into the understandable term 'tsar,' the term 'kesar' was closely related to that of 'tsar' and was clear without translation [1]. Prozorovskii's conclusions concerning the equality of the terms 'tsar' and 'kesar' can be confirmed by later writings in Slavonic — chronicles and annals, — where terms 'tsar' and 'tsezar' were applied both to the Byzantine and Western Roman emperors [10].

Thus, starting from the first written sources, the term 'tsar' was used by the Eastern and Southern Slavs in a political sense as a designation for the emperor; however, only the Byzantine basileus-tsar was legitimate to exercise political power over the whole system of Orthodox states. In this connection, the Patriarchate of Constantinople made every effort to confirm the emperor of Byzantium in the status of a supreme power at all territories included into the Byzantine Empire through the local sees. This was clearly shown in the Orthodox iconography [11] and church liturgy [12]. However, the Orthodox church achieved its aims only partly: the rulers of the Southern and Eastern Slavs asserted their political independence from Byzantium, [13] but the supreme power of basileus was generally accepted by them in ecclesiastical matters [14] till the end of the fourteenth century.

In narrative sources a tradition of applying the term 'tsar' to the princes [15] of the Eastern Slavs began with St. Vladimir (d. 1015). This fact was analyzed by Wladimir Vodoff, who compared the usage of the prince's title in the official charters and in the narratives. Vodoff found that until the fall of Constantinople there was no official document issued in the principalities of the Eastern Slavs applying the title of tsar to their ruler. In the narrative sources the term 'tsar' was not used systematically, nor was it used to substitute for the term kniaz' (prince). From the analysis of the cases of application of the term 'tsar' to the rulers of Eastern Slavs (both in the principalities of Eastern Rus' and the Grand Principality of Lithuania) till the end of the fifteenth century, Vodoff concluded that the term 'tsar' was mostly used as an epithet either in a religious-moral [16], or in ecclesiastical [17] sense.

The system of international relations in Europe changed abruptly in the second quarter of the thirteenth century when the major part of Eastern Europe, including the lands of East and South Rus' that used to be a part of the Byzantine Christian Commonwealth, were included into a new system of states. These lands were comprised within the almost universal empire of the Mongol *khaghan* (great *khan*) Djingis. However, that empire was too large to preserve the unity of its territory for a long time and was soon divided between the sons of Djingis Khan, and each of them received a special territorial unit — *ulus*. In the course of time these *uluses* became independent territorial systems, populated by different nationalities and worshipers. From 1240 on the Orthodox lands of the East and South Rus' were entrusted to Juchi, the son of Djingis, and the father of Batu. Juchi's *ulus* (widely known in the western sources as the Golden Horde) was mostly populated by Tatars and governed by the Mongol dynasty. Batu's grandson Mengu-Timur gained independence for the Juchi's *ulus* in 1269 [18] and, consequently, received the title of khan or, more precisely, of the Great White Khan. The term 'white' in the title of the khan came, most probably, from the White Horde which, being situated in the western part of the Golden Horde, was a patrimonial possession of Batu's heirs. [19] At that time Eastern Slavs (even in West Rus', only slightly affected by the Mongol-Tatar conquest) started to apply in a political sense the term 'tsar' — used previously only to define Christian Emperors — to the Great Khans of the Mongol Empire and, from the reign of Mengu-Timur, to the rulers of the Juchi's *ulus* as well [20].

Some scholars (Sobolevskii, Savva, Szeftel) considered the fact of the application of the term 'tsar' to the Mongol khans as a general broadening in the meaning of that term, when from the middle of the thirteenth century the title of tsar started to be applied to «all independent monarchs who did not have in Russian a specific traditional appellation, such as 'king' or 'prince' (*korol'*, *kniaz'*)»<sup>21</sup>. However, Michael Cherniavsky disagreed with this idea and noted that it indicated a specific shift in the meaning of the term 'tsar': being previously used only as a title for a Christian emperor, it started to mean a new emperor — the Mongol khan. In other words, the *basileus* was replaced by the *khan* who achieved supreme political power in Eastern Rus' [22]. In a situation, when the image of the Mongol khan assumed the place of the highest imperial power in the conquered Orthodox lands, both on the secular and ecclesiastical levels, it is scarcely surprising that the term 'tsar,' previously applied only to the Christian emperor, started to be used to define the khan.

Starting from the period of the Mongol rule over the lands of Rus', it is necessary to take into consideration the specific situation when various aspects of life of the population

of the East Rus' started to feel the influence of different cultures. The polycultural approach, proposed by Omeljan Pritsak [23], helps preventing several mistakes in the results of various assessments. This approach has been applied in the present study.

The dominance of the Mongol khans over the East Rus' lands began to fade with the divisions in the Golden Horde in the fourteenth century. It is important that the rulers of the states that emerged in the result of division of the Golden Horde were called khans if they were of Djindiside blood. This showed that the imperial title received an inheritable statute in the post-Juchi's system of states. Consequently, the term 'tsar' started to be applied to the new khans in Slavic languages.

From the same time on the rise of Muscovy began since it, still receiving *iarlyks* on the rule in the East Russian lands from the heirs of the Golden Horde, attained a certain level of autonomy. In addition, the See of the Metropolitan was removed from Vladimir to Moscow, which elevated the Muscovite princes over their counterparts.

From all this the Muscovite princes obtained enough knowledge, military power, and financial backing to start the conquest or submission of the other East Rus' principalities that had been incorporated into Juchi's *ulus*. Having succeeded in that by the 1480s, Ivan III stopped paying tribute to the Mongols [24]. From then on the Muscovite ruler replaced the khan both as an object of praying [25] and on coin images [26]. The Muscovite ruler claimed his power over all East Rus' lands, formerly incorporated into the Juchi's *ulus*. The former had to recognize the supreme power of Ivan III, who, after the conquest of Novgorod and Tver', assumed the title of the Lord (*Gosudar*) of All Rus' [27]. These were the first steps in raising the Muscovite ruler to the position of the supreme authority.

From that time on the Muscovite ruler was perceived as equal heir by the other heirs of the Golden Horde. This can be traced in following change that occurred in the diplomatic relations between Muscovy and the Khanate of Crimea. Previously, the diplomatic ceremonial was humiliating for the Muscovite side, for their envoys had to be kneed in front of the khan all the time while the khan's ambassador had to be met with a high level of honor. Once tribute to the khans ceased, the treatment of the envoys became equal in both countries. However, this did not mean that envoys of both sides were treated with equal respect: vice versa, the Crimean envoy began to receive the same level of humiliation as the one to which his Muscovite counterpart had been previously exposed. The materials of the Crimean embassy of 1519 show that the custom of Crimean ambassadors being on their knees in front of the grand prince of Muscovy was by that time quite natural for them [28].

All these facts were called up by the representatives of the «Eurasian» school of Russian historians, who asserted that Muscovy was in the same way one of the heirs of the Empire of Djingis-khan as the Khanates (in Russian — *tsarstva*) of Kazan, Astrakhan, Siberia, and Crimea [29]. Moreover, Cherniavsky pointed out that «for the Russians of the sixteenth century, the title of 'tsar' was firmly connected with the image of the khan; more than with that of basileus» [30]. However, the image of the Christian tsar-basileus was still present in the consciousness of the Muscovite Orthodox ruling dynasty that started to utilize this title very soon after the fall of Constantinople. Thus, it is possible to sum up that the period of Mongol rule brought about a widening to the political meaning of the term 'tsar', as in addition to the original meaning of 'Christian emperor', it could also be used as a title for the khan.

The Mongol rule in the lands of the East Rus' led to the diminution of the influence of Constantinople. Constantinople's influence had been even openly questioned at the end of the fourteenth century by the prince Basil I of Moscow who stated: 'We have the church, but not the emperor [31]. However, the events of the mid-fifteenth century in the Byzantine empire strongly effected Muscovy and the image of the tsar there.

The increasing Ottoman threat pushed Constantinople to search for aid from the Catholic West. In that situation religious union of the churches was accepted by the delegates of the Orthodox Church headed by Emperor John VIII at the Council in Ferrara and Florence (1438-9). Muscovy was represented there by Metropolitan Isidore. When, on his return to Moscow in 1441, Isidore proclaimed the union, he was dismissed from office, arrested, and imprisoned by Grand prince Basil II, who accused the Orthodox participants of the Council of apostasy, since the 'Latins' were always depicted as heretics by the Greeks [32]. Thus, Muscovy openly rejected the Union of Florence.

The Act of the Union of Florence seriously upset the perception of the Orthodox universe in Muscovy since, to their mind, the highest ecclesiastical powers of Byzantium had betrayed the true faith. This was expressed by the primate of the Muscovian church in 1451: «The Emperor is not the right one, and the Patriarch is not the right one» [33]. In this situation it had to be determined whether to reject the authority of Byzantium completely or to obey the decision of the Council of Florence. The first option was too radical since it broke the customary system of relations in the frame of the Church. The recognition of the Union of Florence was even worse since it meant the betrayal of traditional Orthodoxy. Thus, a compromise decision was taken. Basil II wrote a letter to the Patriarch in which he asked him, as the supreme head of Orthodox Christians, about the possibility of electing the Metropolitan by a national council of bishops [34]. This implied that Muscovy desired to receive a certain level of autonomy in ecclesiastical matters remaining, although, under the supreme jurisdiction of Constantinople. The reaction of the Patriarch to this proposal is unknown, but the native Metropolitan was elected by the council of bishops in 1448 [35]. The fall of Constantinople five years later, when the Patriarch became completely dependent on the Ottoman sultan (or tsar in Slavonic, since he replace the *basileus* in the imperial City of Tsargrad [36]), led to the Muscovite Metropolitanate gaining autonomy *de iure*.

The general reaction in Muscovy to the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans was apocalyptic. The City's fall was considered to be God's punishment for the sin of betrayal of the true faith. Since the Roman Empire (in its continuation as Byzantium) was considered to be the last of the four successive empires predicted by Daniel [37], its fall was perceived as a sign of the coming end of the world, that was expected by some in 1492 (or year 7000 from creation of the world).

However, it was necessary to decide how to continue without the Orthodox empire and to establish the place of Muscovy in a new reality. According to Dmitri Stremoukhoff, there could have been three possible solutions to this situation: «to admit that the fall of Byzantium was not final, and that the imperial city will be freed by Russians; to admit the supremacy of the Holy Roman Empire of the West; or, lastly, to set up Moscow herself as a definite empire, the successor of that of Byzantium» [38]. Reconquest of Constantinople was unrealistic in military terms, 'Latins' were perceived to be as heretical as the 'Hagarenes' [39], and the variant of establishing the Muscovite empire seemed impossible since it was a subject of the empire of the Golden Horde itself. In addition, confidence in the inevitability of the approaching end of the world prompted the submission to God's will.



Nevertheless, the idea of *translatio imperii* from Byzantium to Muscovy appeared in the works of Muscovite publicists as early as 1461. In that year a pamphlet *Eulogy to the Grand Prince Vasilii Vasil'evich of All Rus* was compiled. This writing hinted at the possibility of a transfer of rule over the Christian world from Constantinople to Moscow, and Basil II was called tsar (in the meaning of basileus) in some passages [40].

However, this was just an allusion to the desired course of events, since, as we have seen above, there was still the strong image of another tsar the in the perception of Muscovites — that of the khan. It is evident that the Orthodox Church could not dare to apply the image of the Muslim tsar to the Christian ruler, and that is why it started the work of promoting the image of the Orthodox tsar who had to replace the image of khan. The *Poslanie* (Letter) of Vas'jan Rylo, Archbishop of Rostov, to Ivan III [41] is the most telling example of the image-changing work of the church. It was written on the eve of 1480, the year when Muscovy put an end to its by then only nominal dependence on the Golden Horde, and, according to Ihor Jbevcenko, aimed «to present the Tatar pagan tsar as a usurper, and Ivan, the heir to St. Vladimir's tradition, as the more legitimate, because Christian, tsar of the two» [42].

Another change in the image of the imperial power was inspired by the marriage, arranged in Rome, between Ivan III and Zoe Palaeogina (the niece of the last Byzantine emperor) in 1472. Beginning from the late eighteenth century historians have argued over the role of this marriage in transferring the right to Byzantine's heritage to Muscovy [43], but its contribution towards the general 'Byzantinizing' and 'Christianizing' of the image of the supreme power and of the tsar as its possessor seems generally accepted. The outward sign of the direct consequence of Ivan III's marriage in that context was the assumption of the Palaeologian two-headed eagle on the state seal of Muscovy.

In the meantime, the year 1492 came, but it did not bring the end of the world with it. This meant that the Roman empire, the last of those predicted by Daniel, had not yet fallen. Since Paschal Tables had been prepared in Constantinople only till that year, the Metropolitan of Moscow, Zosima, published them for the following years. In the preface to the Tables, he established a historical sequence from Constantine the Great through Vladimir of Kiev to Ivan III [44]. It was the first in Russian recorded history hint on the later theory that the center of the Roman empire had moved from the Second Rome, Constantinople, to the Third Rome, Moscow. The following factors contributed to the creation of that theory: the constantly increasing strength of Muscovy reflected in the successful annexation of the lands of East and, partly, North Rus'; the significant role that Muscovy started to play in the system of Mongol-Tatar states after putting an end to its nominal dependence on the Golden Horde; Muscovy's leading position among the Orthodox populations after the fall of Constantinople; and the ideological constructions of Muscovite publicists. All these had influenced Philotheus, the monk of a Pskov monastery, who formulated that theory at the beginning of the sixteenth century, during the reign of Basil III, as a «Moscow — the Third Rome» doctrine [45]. But even earlier, in the last decade of Ivan III's reign, the elements of the conception of a *translatio* of the Orthodox empire to East Rus' (namely, the perception of Muscovy as the strongest Orthodox center and its ruler as a new leader of Orthodoxy) started to be recognized both by the Orthodox East and Latin West. Moreover, Ivan III crowned his grandson Dmitrii as a grand prince in 1498 using the ritual modeled on the rite of the coronation of a caesar (younger emperor) in the Byzantine empire; on a ritual Ivan III played the role of the

basileus himself [46]. Even if Ivan III did not assume title of tsar, he was the first who have started the use of the imperial title in a political sense in diplomatic relations with the rulers of some foreign countries.

During the reign of Basil III, son of Ivan III and Zoe Palaeogina, the image of the Muscovite ruler as a tsar developed further. First of all, although the imperial title was not assumed by Basil III officially, the term 'tsar' in its political meaning, as a part of the title of the grand prince, started to be applied inside the country beginning in the second decade of the sixteenth century. At that time even a coin with the inscription 'Vasilii bozhie'iu milost'iu tsar i gosudar' vsieia Rusi' (Basil by the grace of God tsar and lord of all Rus') was struck [47]. The fact of the appearance of the imperial title was strongly linked to the conquest of Pskov by Basil III in 1510, the last territory of Rus' that had not been included either into the Grand Principality of Lithuania, or into Muscovy before. In that year the title of the Muscovite ruler was styled 'tsar' in two charters to Pskov monasteries [48]. However, the conquest of Pskov seems to be just one of the factors that contributed to the further evaluation of Muscovy in a system of the Orthodox principalities.

Besides for internal usage, there were some cases of the application of the imperial title to Basil III in diplomatic relations, both on the Muscovite side and by foreigners [49]. However, it was not a central issue, and Muscovite diplomats themselves were not consistent in using that title and, as a result, did not react to the disappearance of the term 'tsar' from the title of Basil III in charters of foreign countries, even if they had utilized it before. This was logical since the title 'tsar' had not been assumed officially by the Muscovite ruler. Moreover, it was dangerous for the Muscovites to insist on the application to their ruler of the title of tsar in the meaning of *basileus*, since this could allow a third side, like some Orthodox subjects of the Turks, to play the card of the possible Muscovite claims on the 'Byzantine heritage' and, consequently, cause a conflict with the Ottoman sultan who possessed Byzantium according to the right of conquest [50]. This seems to be the main cause that prevented Basil III from an immediate assumption of the imperial title.

In this situation Muscovite ideologists proved to be of great help. In the *Poslanie* (Letter) of the noted clergyman Spiridon-Savva [51], written between 1510 and 1523, a legend was presented, according to which the Kievan prince Vladimir Monomakh was proclaimed a descendant of the Roman emperor Augustus. Moreover, it was said there that Vladimir had received the imperial crown and other insignia of the imperial power directly from the Byzantine basileus Constantine Monomach as early as in the eleventh century. Since according to the same pamphlet a direct relation between the houses of the rulers of Muscovy and of Kievan Rus' was established through the house of the grand princes of Vladimir, the right of the Muscovite rulers to the imperial status was proclaimed as a national, dynastic-patrimonial one, and not dependent on the Byzantine heritage. The legend, presented in the *Poslanie* of Spiridon-Savva, was reshaped in the 1520s and appeared at the beginning of the 1530s in the form of a narration called *Skazanie o Kniaz'iaxh Vladimirskikh* (The Tale of the princes of Vladimir) [52]. The *Skazanie* became the basis for the official genealogy of the Muscovite rulers since ever. The importance of that legend as a justification for assuming the title of tsar can be deduced from the inclusion of its parts into the text of the coronation ritual of Ivan the Terrible and from the depiction of scenes from it on Ivan's 'Tsar place' in the Cathedral of the Assumption in Moscow's Kremlin. The *Skazanie o Kniaz'iaxh Vladimirskikh* became the argument of the Muscovite side for the recognition of the Muscovite title of tsar by foreign rulers.

Thus, the ideological grounds for the first official assumption of the title of tsar by Ivan IV in 1547 were prepared during the reigns of his father and grandfather. However, although the procedure of the imperial coronation was modeled on that of the Byzantine basileus [53] and Ivan the Terrible was recognized as basileus by the Council of Patriarchs in 1560 [54], there are some facts that show the influence of the image of the tsar-khan on the process of assuming the title of tsar by the Muscovite ruler.

First of all, by assuming the title of tsar Ivan the Terrible claimed equal status with the khans of Kazan, Astrakhan, Crimea, and Siberia, who recognized that fact and styled him 'khan' in their official documents [55]. This gave him some legal rights to become the ruler of the Khanates of Kazan, Astrakhan, and, later, of Siberia, since he was a recognized tsar-khan, who had received that title from his remote ancestors, as the other tsar-khans had. The difference was in the concrete origin of their imperial power, but the principle meaning remained the same.

Secondly, after the conquest of Kazan (1552) and Astrakhan (1556) the Khan of Siberia Ediger, and, even earlier, the rulers of the Noghai Horde started to apply to Ivan IV the title of the Great White Khan (in Russian translation — the Great White Tsar) [56], which had been the official title of the khans of the Golden Horde.

Thirdly, the early coins of Tsar Ivan IV contained the image of the knight in the three-rayed crown, a symbol of imperial power in Russian iconography. However, in the middle of the 1550s, on coins, produced at three out of the four Muscovite mints, the crown was replaced by a strange cap that looked very similar to that of the khans of Kazan [57]. In the early 1560s that cap was replaced by the crown again, but the existing explanations of the meaning of the crown-cap-crown shift in the iconography of the Muscovite coins are not yet convincing [58]. It seems likely that since coinage was one of the main sources of propaganda, the image of Ivan the Terrible in the cap, which looked very similar to that of the khan, was struck on coins destined for the former Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan immediately after their conquest, in order to promote the perception of a new Orthodox tsar instead of the old Muslim one.

Fourthly, the role of Simeon Bekbulatovich in the history of Muscovy still remains unclear. Omelian Pritsak considered the fact of his enthronement in 1575 as an attempt to gain a general support for the authority of the Muscovite throne, since Simeon was a direct descendant of the khans of the Golden Horde [59]. It is also possible that the presence of a rightful heir of the khans of the Golden Horde could legitimize the Muscovite throne as that of the khan, which was important for the further subordination of the former territories of the Mongol empire.

Therefore, after the fall of Constantinople the political meaning of the term 'tsar' in East Slavic languages underwent certain changes. Being previously used as a definition for the Christian and Mongol emperors, it started to be applied to the Ottoman sultan as a conqueror of the Byzantium and a possessor of the city of Tsar. However, the place of the Orthodox emperor remained vacant, and the idea of its occupation appeared in Muscovy. Because of the strong efforts of the Muscovite ideologists the ruler of Muscovy gradually attained the imperial standing, both inside the country and, as we see in the next chapter, in the diplomatic relations with the Orthodox East and Catholic West. However, the image of the tsar-khan still remained in the mentality of the peoples of the growing Muscovite Empire and it was evoked whenever the Muscovite ruler moved further towards incorporation of the former subjects of the Golden Horde. Thus it seems that the most



fruitful approach to the study of the image of the Muscovite ruler is a polycultural one, in which the influence of every culture that produced impact upon Muscovy — namely, Old Rus', Byzantine, Mongol-Tatar, and their variations — is taken into consideration.

### **The title of tsar of the Muscovite ruler: West and East**

#### *The Holy Roman Empire.*

In diplomatic relations between Muscovy and the Holy Roman Empire the imperial title was applied to the Muscovite ruler for the first time in 1514. It was a time when the anti-Jagellonian coalition (including the Holy Roman Empire and Muscovy) was being created [60]. Maximilian I was strongly interested in Basil III as an ally, and, therefore he did him the favor of calling him *kǫzser*, or emperor of All Rus' in the treaty charter (Maximilian styled himself *kǫzser* in the same charter too). In the Russian variant of the treaty the term 'tsar' stood for *kǫzser* when referring to Basil III, and 'tsesar' when referring to Maximilian I. However, this was the first and the last case of application of the imperial title by the Holy Roman Empire to the Muscovite ruler in the sixteenth century, since the political influence of the Jagellonians soon faded, while that of Muscovy dangerously increased. Although the Muscovite side — first from time to time, and after 1547 regularly — continued to apply the imperial title for their ruler in its charters addressed to the Holy Roman Empire, until 1576 it did not insist that the same be done by the other side. In that year Maximilian II planned to strengthen the anti-Ottoman coalition as well as to receive the support of the Muscovite ruler in realizing the claims of his son Rudolf to the Polish crown [61]; consequently, he offered the title of the Emperor of the East to Ivan the Terrible [62]. Since that title could have caused a conflict with the Ottoman Emperor [63], Ivan demanded to be recognized as 'Tsar of All Rus' [64].

This demand started a new cycle of discussions on the meaning of the term 'tsar' in the Holy Roman Empire. The debate was opened by Sigismund Herberstein in 1549. The noted German diplomat insisted that the term 'tsar' was a traditional one in Rus', and that it was equal in meaning to the term 'king'. He contradicted those interpreters who translated that term as *kǫzser*, or *imperator* [65], but nevertheless Ivan the Terrible was generally perceived as an emperor in the Holy Roman Empire in the mid-sixteenth century, as depicted in German leaflets of that time [66]. However, in the 1570s Herberstein's point was supported by his colleague Printz, who stated that if Ivan the Terrible had equated the term 'tsar' with the meaning of 'emperor', he would have committed the gravest offense against the holders of the supreme power and would have had to face punishment, since there had been only two recognized rulers who had a legitimate right to the imperial title then — the emperors of the Holy Roman and Ottoman Empires [67]. However, Ivan the Terrible did not insist on the imperial meaning of his title, justifying it only as patrimonial and affirmed by the fact of his conquest of the tsardoms of Kazan and Astrakhan. All this allowed the Holy Roman Empire to recognize the term 'tsar' in Ivan the Terrible's title as traditional, having both Old Russian and Asian [68] implications, but lacking imperial meaning. That is why Ivan the Terrible was styled in the official charters issued in the Holy Roman Empire from that time on as a *czar*, that did not imply a term 'emperor'.

*The Holy See.*

Diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Muscovy from the end of the fifteenth and throughout the sixteenth centuries were concentrated around two main issues: the possibility of involving Muscovy in the anti-Ottoman coalition and attempts to persuade the Muscovite ruler to accept the Union of Florence. If the Muscovite ruler would agree, the Pope would offer him the crown of the King of All Rus'. These plans of the Holy See were strongly opposed by the Lithuanian Grand Princes [69], since they realized that the fact of official possession of that title by the Muscovite ruler, who would thus be recognized in the system of catholic states, could give Muscovy the legal claim to the Rus' lands of the Grand Principality of Lithuania. However, neither Ivan III, nor Basil III or Ivan IV accepted the offer of the royal crown from the Holy See, since this would have meant their subordination to the Pope and inclusion into the system of the catholic states, while the Muscovite rulers were building their own empire. Therefore, following one of the Pope's proposals concerning the bestowal of the crown, made by Clement VII in 1524, Basil III used the title of tsar in his charter delivered to the Holy See in 1526. By that title the Muscovite ruler wanted to emphasize his sovereignty.

The first and only case in the sixteenth century in which the Pope applied the imperial title to the Muscovite ruler was in a charter from 1550. In that year Julius III wanted to offer a royal crown to Ivan IV, having heard rumors about his sympathy to the Union of Churches and about his readiness to participate in an anti-Ottoman crusade [70]. However, that charter never reached Ivan the Terrible because of the strong resistance from the Grand Principality of Lithuania [71].

Because of the continuing opposition of the Grand Principality of Lithuania, first direct contacts between Muscovy and the Holy See started only in the 1580s. The title of the tsar (used by Ivan the Terrible in diplomatic relations with all countries by then) was not recognized in the charter sent by the Pope in 1582. However, during the negotiations of the same year, the pope's legate Antonio Possevino, while discussing the possibilities of involving Muscovy in the anti-Ottoman coalition, played the card of Ivan IV's possible claims to the Byzantine heritage and offered Ivan IV the title of Emperor of the East (as had been done six years earlier by Maximilian II) under the condition that he recognize the authority of the Holy See [72]. Ivan the Terrible did not accept that proposal, since it would have led to the abandonment of his imperial plans, as well as to a war against the stronger forces of the Ottoman Empire, including those of the Crimea. Thus, the title of 'tsar' was not recognized for Ivan the Terrible by the Holy See.

*Northern Europe.*

Although the Holy Roman Empire resisted recognition of the imperial title for the Muscovite ruler (except in the treaty of 1514), its northern subjects, Livonia, Prussia, and Hansa cities, as well as Denmark and Sweden, started using that title as early as in the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century and, in the majority of cases, this practice continued throughout the sixteenth century. This could be explained by their wish to please the Muscovite ruler and prevent him from taking possible aggressive action by recognizing him already as emperor. North European countries were much weaker than Muscovy [73], and their remoteness from Vienna gave them little hope that the Holy Roman Emperor could assist them in case of war.

*England.*

In relations with England the application of the imperial title to the Muscovite ruler was started by both sides in 1554, when diplomatic relations between these countries had been established (see Table 3). The imperial title was also applied to Ivan the Terrible in British internal state documents [74] and chronicles [75].

The reasons for such quick recognition of Ivan IV as emperor were practical. England was strongly interested in trade with Muscovy, so they tried to preserve friendly relations with Ivan the Terrible by all means, including flattering him by using the imperial title [76]. Since England was a Protestant country (i.e., it was not a member of the system of Catholic states), and was situated far away from Muscovy, its rulers were not afraid of the consequences of the emergence of a new empire in Eastern Europe.

*The Orthodox East.*

Relations between Muscovy and the Orthodox East did not stop after the fall of Byzantium. By the beginning of the sixteenth century Muscovy had constant contacts with the Patriarchate of Constantinople as well as the monasteries of Athos and the Orthodox Churches of Serbia and Egypt [77]. Since Muscovy was the strongest Orthodox country by then, Christian monasteries from the conquered territories were looking forward to benefit from the patronage of the Muscovite ruler, who had been perceived by them as a new basileus. That is why, as early as in 1509 the first cases of the use of the imperial title were recorded in Muscovite relations with Eastern Orthodox Churches, and in 1516 the title of tsar was applied to Basil III in the charter of the patriarch of Constantinople. However, Muscovite rulers did not assume the imperial title in their affairs with the Orthodox East in the first half of the sixteenth century because they did not want to appear officially as the heirs of Emperor of Byzantium, since that could cause a serious conflict with the official sovereign of Constantinople — the Ottoman Emperor.

However, after the assumption of the title of tsar, which, as we have seen before, was intentionally not claimed through the right of the Byzantine heritage, Ivan the Terrible started the official usage of the imperial title in his relations with the Orthodox East. It appeared for the first time in the charter to the Panteleimon monastery in 1554. Moreover, three years later Ivan IV asked for official recognition of his title of tsar from the Orthodox Church. The main argument for approval of that title, stated in the charter of Ivan the Terrible to the Patriarch of Constantinople, was based on the conquest and possession of Kazan and Astrakhan Tsardoms [78]; the charter of confirmation of the tsar's title, however, issued to Ivan IV the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate in 1560, omitted the 'khan' roots of the title of the tsar and recognized Ivan IV's title as basileus [79] on the basis of the legend about the patrimonial possession of the imperial status inherited from his ancestor St. Vladimir [80]. Dmitrieva considers that this legend, created at the times of Basil III, was additionally presented in Constantinople by the Muscovite ambassador, since it was not included into the official charter to the Patriarch [81].

The charter of recognition of the imperial title was accompanied by the letter of Patriarch Joasaph of Constantinople, in which he criticized the emergence of the Protestant movements on the Orthodox territories of the Grand Principality of Lithuania and summoned Ivan IV, as a Christian emperor, to restore the traditional faith there [82].

Thus, the recognition of Ivan the Terrible as an emperor gave him a religiously justified legal right to take aggressive action against the Grand Principality of Lithuania. The same model of anti-Protestant reasoning was used by Ivan the Terrible in his charter of 1560 to the Emperor Ferdinand, where he justified Muscovite aggression against Livonia by the necessity of restoring true Christianity there [83], although the Livonian Order had never been a subject of any Orthodox empire.

Thus, the Patriarchate of Constantinople perceived the tsar's title of Muscovite ruler only as that of basileus and completely disregarded its oriental roots.

*The Tatar Khanates and the Ottoman Empire.*

The title of tsar was recognized by the Tatar heirs of the Golden Horde immediately after its official acquisition by Ivan the Terrible [84]. Moreover, they used the term 'tsar' in the meaning of 'khan' [85], although that title was traditionally applied only to rulers of Djingiside blood. This happened because the Muscovite rulers were perceived as rightful heirs of the Golden Horde, although they were of Christian faith.

It seems that the Ottoman emperor had the same reasons for recognizing the title of tsar assumed by the Muscovite ruler: the Turks, too, primarily perceived that title as that of one of the khans of the former Golden Horde. The use of the tsar's title in relations with the Ottomans was started by Basil III, and it led to the recognition of that title by Selim I. That practice persisted during the reign of Suleiman the Great. However, the Ottomans stopped using the term 'tsar' in relation to Ivan the Terrible after the death of Suleiman in 1566 [86]. It seems likely that this change was influenced by the official recognition of the term 'tsar' in the title of Ivan the Terrible as that of the Orthodox basileus by the Patriarchate of Constantinople six years earlier. In that situation the use of the term 'tsar' by the Ottomans could have given a legal right to the possible claims of the Muscovite ruler to the Orthodox populations of the Ottoman empire.

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Thus, in the sixteenth century the title of 'tsar' of the Muscovite rulers was perceived as that of the Christian emperor in the Holy Roman Empire (before 1576), the Holy See, England, the countries of the Orthodox East and Northern Europe, and, most probably, by the Ottomans after the 1560s. The Tatar Khanates and the Ottoman Empire (at least before 1560) applied the term 'tsar' to the rulers of Muscovy in the meaning of the Orthodox 'khan'. After 1576 the Holy Roman Empire officially started to perceive the term 'tsar' as a traditional Russian one, equal in meaning to the western notion of 'king'. Nevertheless, Muscovite attempts to justify their right of possession of the 'tsar' title by the right of conquest of Kazan and Astrakhan hinted at the possible Oriental roots of the meaning of the term 'tsar'.

The question of recognition of the title of the tsar was closely related to the perception of that title's meaning. It was recognized as an imperial one only by the countries of the Orthodox East, Northern Europe, England, and, only once, by the Holy Roman Empire; each of those countries had its own peculiar reasons for that. In other cases the title of tsar was either recognized as a traditional one (by the Holy Roman Empire after 1576), or as synonymous with the title of khan (by the Tatar Khanates and the Ottoman Empire before the 1560s); otherwise, it was not recognized at all.

### **The problem of recognition of the imperial title of Ivan IV in the Grand Principality of Lithuania**

In diplomatic relations between the Grand Principality of Lithuania [87] and Muscovy the problem of recognition of the tsar's title of Ivan the Terrible appeared for the first time during the negotiations in Moscow in January-March 1549, two years after the official assumption of the title by Ivan.

In the final stage of negotiations the Lithuanian scribe Hleb Esmanov found that the Muscovite side had entered the title of the tsar as a part of the *intitulatio* of Ivan IV in their version of the truce charter. The scribe protested against that and refused to style the Muscovite ruler a 'tsar' in the Lithuanian version of the charter. He argued that since there was no precedent for the use of that title in Muscovite-Lithuanian relations, he had no right «to add or remove anything» from the established custom [88].

Muscovite diplomats responded that Ivan IV had not used that title earlier because he had not yet held it on previous occasions, but now he assumed it due to ancient custom, according to which his ancestor Vladimir Monomakh had been a tsar [89]. They added that the same had happened in Lithuania to Jagailo, who was first a grand prince but later assumed the royal title and began to use it [90].

The Lithuanian scribe responded that he had no right to make a decision by himself and that he needed to take counsel with the ambassadors. After consultations the Lithuanian diplomats said that their ruler Sigismund-August was not informed officially about the change in the title of Ivan IV and they, consequently, did not have the authority to use a new title for the Muscovite ruler. The ambassadors said that Ivan IV should consult their ruler on this question directly; otherwise they could not style Ivan IV tsar in the charters [91]. Exchanges went to and from and threatened to lead to the failure of negotiations.

However, at the end of the 1540s Muscovy was preparing a military campaign against the Khanate of Kazan and therefore needed badly to secure peace with the Grand Principality of Lithuania. Thus, although Ivan the Terrible insisted on the use of his new title in the charters, he accepted a proposal of his councilors. They suggested that the tsar's title be entered only in the Muscovite version of the treaty and that the Lithuanian variant of the charter would have the old *intitulatio*. It was a skilful decision, since the procedure of exchanging charters meant that the Lithuanian copy would be kept in Moscow and, thus, nobody could use it against the claims of the tsar [92]. The Lithuanian ambassadors agreed to the proposal, as it offered the only possibility for a compromise. The parties signed a truce for five years, and the problem of the tsar's title was thus postponed for a while. However, the request of the Lithuanian ambassadors for an official document justifying the «imperial» coronation of Ivan the Terrible [93] was not granted, because the tsar wanted to prevent his opponents from finding arguments against the recognition of his title [94].

Still, the Lithuanian side managed to prepare arguments against Ivan's title and presented them during the negotiations with the Muscovite embassy held in Cracow in September 1549. First of all, the Lithuanians said that there was no precedent for the use of the title of tsar in Lithuanian-Muscovite relations, since Ivan IV's ancestors did not hold it [95]. Moreover, they denied the right of the Muscovite grand prince to the heritage of the Kievan rulers: «*And, concerning the Kievan Grand Prince Manamakh: the Kievan seat is and, if God allows, will be the holding of his Royal majesty [Sigismund-August],*



*and nobody, except his Royal majesty, has a right to that name and to the title of the Kievan Tsardom. However, it does not bring any glory and profit to write that [title], and [that is why] his majesty does not use it»* [96].

Second, the Lithuanian diplomats referred to the meaning of the term 'tsar'. They said that among Christian rulers only the Holy Roman Emperor could be called tsar by other Christian rulers; otherwise that term was applied only to Muslim rulers. Since Ivan IV was a Christian ruler, he could not be styled tsar in any sense [97]. If Ivan the Terrible had intended to introduce something new while assuming that title, Sigismund-August stated that he was not going to break with custom and accept the new title [98].

Thus, from the very first round of Muscovite-Lithuanian negotiations the perception of the tsar's title as ambiguous by the Lithuanian side became apparent — it could refer to the Emperor of All Rus', to a Christian emperor, and a khan. Each of that title's meanings implied a threat to the GDL. The perception of that threat by the Lithuanian side was the real reason for their refusal to recognize the tsar's title of Ivan IV.

The presentation of the title of tsar as the Old heritage of Muscovy («tsar of All Rus'») implied Muscovite claims to the Rus' lands of the Grand Principality of Lithuania. The recognition of the title in its 'Kievan' meaning could thus result in the recognition of Muscovy's dynastic rights to the territories of the Old Rus' state, including those in the GDL.

The Lithuanian side also argued against the use of the new title by the Muscovite ruler in the meaning of 'Christian emperor'. The recognition of the title in this meaning would have involved recognition of a new system of Christian states, replacing the Orthodox empire of Byzantium. That, in turn, would have meant the acknowledgment of Muscovy's possible claims to be the defender of all Orthodox believers. Such a claim would have implied changes in the established order in Europe, since Muscovy could question the borders of the Holy Roman Empire as the only Christian system of states, as well as the territories of certain states with an Orthodox population, such as the Grand Principality of Lithuania.

While the 'oriental' meaning of the term 'tsar' was also taken into consideration, not much attention was paid to it for the moment.

At the next round of negotiations in the early 1550s both sides insisted on their previous arguments and did not want to yield. In 1550 the Muscovite ambassador Iakov Ostafiev did not accept the charter without the title of tsar [99], and the Lithuanian envoy Matush Gedroits had to bring it to Ivan IV personally. In Moscow, he was told the legend about the coronation of Vladimir Monomakh as a right confessed by custom, as an argument for the use of the title of tsar by Ivan the Terrible, but he did not respond to it. He, in turn, received a charter for Sigismund-August without the royal title [100]. Once he left Moscow, he threw away the charter [101]. The same scenario was repeated a year later, when the Lithuanian envoy openly refused to accept a charter without the royal title for Sigismund-August, which was issued in response to the king's charter without the title of tsar [102]. After that, because of the problem of the *intitulatio*, official diplomatic relations between the two countries were broken for about two years.

However, when the truce of 1549 was about to expire, both sides decided to restore these relations. This was initiated by the Lithuanian magnates, who were afraid of a possible war with Muscovy. The Muscovite side was also interested in peace on its western borders since the eastern orientation in its foreign policy was the top priority by then. Moreover, Muscovy was faced with disturbances in the recently conquered Kazan. That

is why negotiations with the Lithuanian embassy headed by Stanislav Kishka, who arrived in Moscow in July 1553 [103], were more constructive than the previous ones. The Lithuanian side was not so strict about the non-recognition the title of tsar as before and informed the Muscovites that Sigismund-August would agree to accept that title as an innovation in the customary *intitulatio* of the Muscovite ruler, but only under two conditions: the approval of the new title by the pope and Emperor Charles V [104], and the return of the lands of GDL, conquered by Ivan III and Basil III [105]. These conditions showed that Lithuanians wanted to avoid two possible dangers. First, the recognition of that title by the spiritual and secular powers of the Holy Roman Empire would have meant either Muscovy's consequent inclusion into the western system of states with a statute of kingdom, or certain guaranties of its coexistence (even with the status of an Empire) with the western states. However, since the subjects of the Holy Roman Empire were mostly national states, the Grand Principality of Lithuania was not interested in the emergence of Muscovy as a kingdom of all Rus' since that would have meant official legitimization of the Muscovite claims to the Rus' territories of the GDL by the western system of states [106]. That is why the Lithuanians wanted to protect themselves from the second possible danger — that of the probable loss of Rus' lands — by demanding that Muscovy restore and officially recognize the territory of the GDL as it was in 1492, when all Western Rus' was a part of the Grand Principality of Lithuania.

It is obvious, that the Muscovite side could not accept these conditions, since this would have meant the loss of its conquests, secured after much effort in the preceding sixty years. That is why they continued to insist on their patrimonial right to all Russian lands, closely connected with the claim for the dynastic possession of the imperial tsar's title by Vladimir Monomakh. In this connection, new arguments were presented by the Muscovite side to support their customary right to the possession of the title of tsar. They announced that the Emperor Maximilian I styled Ivan's father Basil III 'tsar' in his charters [107]. However, this argument was not accepted by the Lithuanians and, finally, the parties decided not to conclude a peace treaty, but only a truce for two years on the basis of that of 1549, when Ivan the Terrible was styled tsar only in the Muscovite exemplar [108].

The following years were characterized by the further construction of arguments for the traditional possession of the title of tsar by the Muscovite ruler. They were based on various new legends created during the first half of the sixteenth century and developed in the 1550s. [109]. Thus, during the negotiations of January-May 1554, Muscovite diplomats presented a legend of the possession of the title of tsar by St. Vladimir, and at the negotiations in May-September 1556 the genealogy of Muscovite rulers was traced back to the Roman emperor Augustus [110]. This was the first step towards the development of the claims on the territories at the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea, presented as patrimonial possessions of the mythical brother of Augustus — Prus, who, according to the *Tale of the Princes of Vladimir*, was a direct ancestor of the Kievan princes [111].

Arguments for the traditional possession of the tsar's title were supported by charters in which either Ivan the Terrible, or his ancestors were styled tsars both by Western and Eastern monarchs [112].

However, neither the patrimonial and dynastic arguments, nor the facts of usage of that title in the western correspondence with the Muscovite ruler were accepted by the Lithuanian side. They continued to deny the right of the Muscovite rulers to the Kievan heritage and repeated that Ivan IV's ancestors never styled themselves tsars in relations

with the GDL [113]. Concerning the cases of styling the rulers of Muscovy as tsars by the western rulers they said that Sigismund-August did not know about those treaties and requested that they be sent to him [114]. On the use of the title of tsar in documents issued by Muslim rulers, the Lithuanians replied that they knew about it, but that it had been done because the Muslims always wanted to cause conflict among Christian rulers, and that was the only reason for them to use that title for the Muscovite rulers [115].

A principally new argument for the recognition of the title of tsar for Ivan the Terrible was proposed during the diplomatic negotiations with the GDL in 1554. It was based on the right of conquest of the Tsardoms of Astrakhan and Kazan and the subsequent acquisition of tsar title resulting from that conquest. This argument was used to strengthen the claims to the customary possession of the title of tsar by the Muscovite rulers. It is evident from the following passage that Muscovite rulers did not make a distinction between their title of tsar as a traditional one (that was recognized in 1560 by the Patriarchate of Constantinople as that of *basileus*) and the title of the tsar in the meaning of khan: *In addition to the Rus' land God gave a Tsardom of Kazan to our ruler . . . and our ruler is styled now tsar of Rus' and Kazan . . . and that seat of Kazan had been an eternal seat of tsars, like that of Rus'* [116].

This point was noted by the Lithuanian diplomats, who protested against the practice according to which a Christian ruler would style himself by a title of a Muslim khan. The Grand Principality of Lithuania had never used the term 'tsar' towards Ivan the Terrible in the meaning of 'ruler of the Tatar states'. Moreover, thereafter one of the main arguments expressed against the recognition of the title of tsar was the fact that it was a title of Muslim rulers [117].

Thus, the struggle for the tsar's title did not bring the expected results for Muscovy — it did not obtain legal recognition of its territorial claims by means of diplomacy. That is why Ivan the Terrible decided to acquire the desired lands by the sword. In 1561 in the frame of the Livonian war Muscovy initiated military action against the Grand Principality of Lithuania.

The first period of the Livonian war was successful for Muscovy; it conquered Northern Livonia and the Polotsk region of the GDL. The grand prince of Lithuania wanted to conclude a peace treaty with Muscovy, and in 1563 the Lithuanian ambassadors told Ivan IV that their ruler was willing to recognize him tsar after consultations with other European rulers, if Ivan the Terrible would return Rus' lands of the GDL conquered by him and his ancestors [118]. In other words, Lithuanians wanted to separate the title of tsar and the possession of the lands of Western Rus' in order not to create a base for possible claims of Muscovite rulers to the territory of the GDL. Since Muscovy was in an advantageous military position, Ivan did not want to accept any conditions from the GDL and broke off the negotiations [119]. The same was repeated in 1566 [120].

Two years later one case was recorded, in which Ivan the Terrible was called 'tsar' by the Lithuanian envoy, but only orally [121]. Apparently, the Lithuanian side wanted to conclude peace with Ivan IV and decided to appease him. However, the fact that the Muscovite ruler was styled tsar only orally showed that the Lithuanians did not want to establish a precedent in accepting the new form of *intitulatio*. The demand of Ivan the Terrible that the title be recognized officially was rejected, and this refuse prevented the parties from concluding the peace [122].

The problem of the title persisted in diplomatic relations between Muscovy and the GDL during the next years and was inherited by the new state — the Commonwealth of

Poland and Lithuania, — after the union of 1569. The position of the new country concerning the question of the title of tsar remained the same, since its recognition could have led to the same danger of territorial claims by Muscovy. The most successful king of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania, Stephan Bathory, refused to recognize the title of tsar of Ivan the Terrible, either as tsar of All Rus', or of Kazan or Astrakhan, using the same reasons as did his predecessors [123]. Moreover, he did not recognize the dynastic line from the Roman Emperor Augustus and his mythical brother Prus down to Ivan the Terrible [124] that would made the claims of Muscovy on Livonia legal. During peace negotiations with Muscovy in 1582 his ambassadors proposed to recognize Ivan the Terrible's title of tsar if he would return Smolensk and his possessions in Livonia to Bathory [125]. However, that would be recognized not as a 'tsar of All Rus'', but simply as a 'Russian Tsar' [126] in order to prevent Muscovy from possible future claims on the Rus' territories of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania. Ivan rejected this proposal, and thus, he had never achieved the recognition of his tsar's title by the Grand Principality of Lithuania. It was finally recognized by the Republic of Poland and Lithuania only in 1634 after an unsuccessful war, but this is another story.

### Conclusion

The Old Slavonic term 'tsar' went through several stages of development in its political meaning. Being primarily used as a definition of a Christian emperor, it also started to be applied to the Mongol khans by the Eastern Slavs after the 1240s. With the fall of Constantinople, the Byzantine legacy was bequeathed upon the Ottomans, who held «the City of the Tsar» and the imperial by right of conquest. However, the ideas of Moscow becoming the Third Rome and the subsequent elevation of Muscovy, as a rightful heir to the Golden Horde to the level of Tatar Khanates (Tsardoms), led to the application of the term 'tsar' in its political meaning to the Muscovite ruler. Nevertheless, the official assumption of the title of the tsar in the meaning of *basileus* was dangerous for the rulers of Muscovy, as it could have caused a military conflict with the Ottomans, rightful possessors of Byzantium. That is why Muscovite ideologists had to invent a theory that would justify the imperial title of their ruler, without claiming the Byzantine inheritance. These efforts resulted in the legend according to which the possession of the imperial title — that of the tsar — was linked to the Kievan heritage of Muscovy.

Official assumption of the title of tsar by Ivan the Terrible and his intensive campaign aimed at obtaining international recognition for it was received in various ways abroad. Since self-assumption of the title was generally perceived as a self-claim of its bearer, the reaction to that claim on the part of the foreign rulers was determined by their perception of the meaning of the term 'tsar'.

Catholic states of the West perceived the title of tsar as the title of a Christian emperor. Since these states acknowledged only one emperor — that of the Holy Roman Empire — legal recognition of another Christian emperor would have resulted in altering the existing system of states. That is why the new title with its implied imperial significance was recognized only by weak members of the Catholic system of the states.

Muslim countries in the East — the Tatar Khanates and the Ottoman Empire — had a different perception of the term 'tsar'. It had the meaning of 'khan' in their vocabulary. Since Muscovy was perceived by them as an heir of the Golden Horde, they recognized

the tsar's title of the Muscovite ruler in the meaning of 'khan', which meant legal recognition of the right of a new Christian khan to fulfill the same functions as the other khans did — namely, to be a ruler of a khanate and to develop claims to other khanates. This was in fact done by the conquest of the khanates of Kazan, Astrakhan, and Siberia during the reign of the first Muscovite tsar. After these conquests the Muscovite ruler started to use the argument, based on his possession of 'tsargrads', i.e. Kazan and Astrakhan, as a legitimization of his title in his dealing with the West. This had the consequence that this title of the Muscovite tsar endowed him with an Oriental image by inasmuch as Ivan the Terrible was perceived as a 'khan'.

For the Grand Principality of Lithuania the term 'tsar' had a specific meaning. Since its justification by Muscovites was connected with their claim to 'Kievan' legacy, its recognition would have meant an additional danger for the GDL — namely, the acknowledgment of Muscovite claims on its Rus' lands. That is why, being faced with all possible consequences of recognition of the imperial title of the Muscovite ruler, the Grand Principality of Lithuania (and its successor — the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania) resisted doing that; and as long as it resisted, it retained its rights to preserve its territorial sovereignty and even to recapture some of the lands that it had lost before.

The present study's goal was to show how Muscovy attempted to legitimate its imperial claims by means of a diplomatic struggle for acknowledgment of the imperial title of its ruler. The complex process of evolution of the term 'tsar' added extra meanings to the title of Muscovite rulers in the sixteenth century and, consequently, enabled its possessor to raise new claims. The Grand Principality of Lithuania felt the danger coming from the complex of meanings of the term 'tsar', and that is why it did not recognize the imperial title of Ivan the Terrible.

### Literature

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2. See on the theory of self-proclamation H. Wolfram, *Intitulatio*, vol. 1, Wien-Köln-Gratz: BV, 1967, s.11-3.
3. Prozorovskii, *O znachenii*, s.211.
4. Gy. Moravcsik, «Zur Geschichte Des Herrschertitels 'Caesar > Царь',» *Zbornik Radova Vizantologičkog Instituta* 8 (1963): 235.
5. The pronunciation of the word Caesar as 'kesar' was palatalized and changed into Cesar, 'tsesar', in the Germanic languages, where from it went over to the Slavic languages. See Ibid., 230.
6. E.g., *Vita Constantini*: IV (1), VI (5)., see also the texts of the Old and New Testaments.
7. V. Vавшнnek, «Угърскыѣ король dans la vieux-slave de Мѣthode,» *Byzantinoslavica* 25 (1964): 267; W. Vodoff, «Remarques sur la valeur du terme 'tsar' appliqué aux princes russes avant le milieu du XVe siècle,» *Oxford Slavonic Papers. n. s.* 5.9 (1978): 5.
8. Prozorovskii, *O znachenii*, 208.
9. Prozorovskii, *O znachenii*, 210-3.
10. E.g. *Suprasl'skaia letopis'*, *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* [hereafter *PSRL*], v.35. Moscow, 1980, 59.
11. The emperor of Byzantium was depicted in luxurious clothes with the main insignia of imperial power — five-rayed crown — on paintings and coins, that were the leading sources of imperial propaganda all over the Byzantine Commonwealth. See M. Cherniavsky, *Khan or Basileus*, 461; A. V. Art-sikhovskii, *Drevnerusskie miniatiury kak istoricheskii istochnik* Moscow, 1944), 113, I. E. Grabar', ed., *Istoria Russkogo iskusstva*, vol. 3 Moscow, 1955, 511.



12. Orthodox churches all over the Byzantine Commonwealth had to glorify the ruler of Christendom — the Byzantine basileus — in its diptychs. See Cherniavsky, *Khan or Basileus*, 461; Diakonov, *Vlast' Moskovskikh*, 24.
13. In the periods of weakness of the Byzantine Empire the rulers of Bulgaria and Serbia even assumed the titles of tsar in political meaning, pretending to the role of the Christian Emperor. See D. Stremoukhoff, «Moscow the Third Rome: Sources of the Doctrine,» *Speculum* 28.1 (1953): 86
14. Vodoff, *Remarques*, 6.
15. I will use term 'prince' for 'kniaz' and 'grand prince' for 'velikii kniaz' in present thesis in relation to Kievan, Muscovian, and Lithuanian princes. Such translation was proposed by Nicholas Riasanovsky in his *A History of Russia*, (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
16. The term 'tsar' in moral-religious sense was applied to the deceased princes who either were martyred for Christianity and were canonized, or achieved something important for Christianity (Vladimir the Saint — baptizer of Rus'; Dmitrii Donskoi — the victor of the Kulikovo Battle against Tatars). See Vodoff, *Remarques*, 40.
17. The term 'tsar' was applied to a living prince in cases when his position within the Muscovite Metropolitanate was compared with that of basileus in the whole Christian Commonwealth. See Vodoff, *Remarques*, 41.
18. In that year a *kurultai* (a council of the high ranking Djingisides, the main collective ruling body of the empire) on the river Talas recognized *uluses* of Juchi, Ugedei, and Chegotai as independent legal persons as well as defined and acknowledged the borders of their possessions. See M. G. Safargaliev, «Raspad Zolotoi Ordyy», *Na styke kontinentov*, 322.
19. Ibid., 289, 321-2.
20. A. N. Nasonov, *Mongoly i Rus'*. Moscow-Leningrad, 1940, 30.
21. For the arguments see Szeftel, *The Title*, 70.
22. Cherniavsky, *Khan or Basileus*, 464-5.
23. O. Pritsak, «Moscow, the Golden Horde, and the Kazan Khanate from a Polycultural Point of View,» *Slavic Review* 26.4 (1967): 581.
24. The influence of the Muscovite post-Byzantine ideology on stopping the paying of tribute to Mongols will be touched upon in the subchapter 1.3. above.
25. Cherniavsky, *Khan or Basileus*, 472-3.
26. The name of the Grand prince appeared there instead of the Arabic inscription of the khan's name. E.g., one of the coins minted during the reign of Ivan III (in 1480s) had the image of a Muscovite horseman wearing a crown (!) spearing a dragon on the obverse and the Arabic inscription meaning «Iban» (i.e., Ivan) surrounded by the Slavonic inscription «Ospodar' vseja Rusi» (Lord of All Rus') on the reverse. See G. Fedorov, «Moskovskie den'gi vremeni velikikh kniazey Ivana III i Vasilija III» (Muscovite coins from the time of the Grand princes Ivan III and Basil III), *Kratkie Soobshcheniya Instituta Istorii Material'noj Kul'tury* 30 (1949): 72.
27. Very soon the possession of that title by Muscovite rulers started to be used as a justification for claiming the right of Muscovy over the Russian lands of the Grand Principality of Lithuania. See Khoroshkevich, *Russkoe gosudarstvo*, 85.
28. G. F. Karpov and G. F. Stendman, eds., *Pamiatniki diplomaticheskikh snoshenij Moskovskogo gosudarstva s Krymom, Nagajami i Turtsiei*, vol. 2, 1508-21, *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obshchestva* [hereafter *SIRIO*] 95. St. Petersburg, 1884, 632-3.
29. Hara-Davan, *Chingiz-khan*, 273.
30. Cherniavsky, *Khan or Basileus*, 473.
31. D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500-1453* (New York-Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 264.
32. Stremoukhoff, *Moscow the Third Rome*, 87.
33. *Russkaia istoricheskaia biblioteka* [hereafter *RIB*], 6:559, as cited Obolensky, *The Bizantine Commonwealth*, 268.
34. Ibid., cols. 525-36, as cited Ibid.
35. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 269.

36. This interpretation seems to be legitimate, since Ivan the Terrible grounded his claims to the title of tsar by the fact that he possessed two other Tsar's cities — those of Kazan and Astrakhan.
37. The other tree were the Babylonian, Persian, and Macedonian empires. For details see Stremoukhoff, *Moscow the Third Rome*, 84.
38. Stremoukhoff, *Moscow the Third Rome*, 88.
39. Moslems, both Arabs and Ottomans, were perceived as the sons of Hagar.
40. I. Jevcenko, «A neglected Byzantine Source of Muscovite Political Ideology», *Harvard Slavic Studies* 2 (1954), 153-4.
41. P. G. Vasenko, ed., «Poslanie Vas'jana arkhiepiskopa Rostovskago», *PSRL*, Vol. 21.2 Moscow, 1913, 557-64.
42. Jevcenko, *A neglected Byzantine Source*, 154.
43. For the arguments of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries see Savva, *Moskovskie Tsari*, 1-57. For a modern point of view see Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 363-5.
44. See I. Jevcenko, «Byzantium and the Eastern Slavs after 1453», *Ideology, Letters and Culture in the Byzantine world* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1982), 10.
45. V. Malinin, ed., *Starets Elizarova monastyrja Filofej i jeho poslanija*. Kiev, 1901: 45.
46. Savva, *Moskovskie Tsari*, 121-8.
47. A. V. Oreshnikov, *Russkie monety do 1547 goda*. Moscow, 1896, 19.
48. S. M. Kashtanov, A. N. Robinson «Dve zhalovannye gramoty 1510 goda pskovskim monastyriam». *Zapiski Otdela Rukopisei Gosudarstvennoi Biblioteki SSSR imeni Lenina* 24 (1961): 252-5; Khoroshkevich, *Russkoe gosudarstvo*, 121.
49. See subchapter 2.1. and Table 2 for details.
50. For this interpretation see N. S. Chaev «Moskva — tretii Rim v politicheskoi praktike Moskovskogo pravitel'stva XVI veka», *Istoricheskie Zapiski* 17 (1945): 3-23; see also subchapter 2.1. beneath for examples of playing the card of the 'Byzantine heritage' by the Holy Roman Empire and Holy See.
51. *Skazanie*, 159-70.
52. *Ibid.*, 171-8.
53. For comparative analysis see Savva, *Moskovskie Tsari*, 129-54 and E. V. Barsov, «Istoricheskii ocherk chinov sviashchennogo venchaniia na tsarstvo v sviazi s razvitiem idei Tsaria na Rusi», *Chtenia v imperatorskom obshchestve istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh* [hereafter *HOIDR*] 1 (1883): XV-XXIV.
54. M. Obolenskii, ed., *Sobornaia gramota dukhovenstva pravoslavnoi vostochnoi tserkvi utverzhdaushchaia san tsaria za velikim kniazem Ioannom IV Vasil'evichem 1561 goda* Moscow, 1850, 11; *L'idea di Roma a Mosca secoli XV-XVI*. Rome, 1989, 99-101.
55. M. A. Usmanov, *Zhalovannye Akty Dzhuchieva Ulusa XIV-XVI vv.* Kazan, 1979, 198.
56. See *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Drevnih Actov* [hereafter *RGADA*], fund 130 «Sibirskie dela», description 2, unit 1:1; fund 127 «Nogaitskie dela», description 2, unit 3:1; unit 14:1.
57. See picture 35 in Khoroshkevich, *Simvol*, 71.
58. For existing explanations see A. S. Mel'nikova, «Mesto monet Ivana Groznogo v riadu pamiatnikov ideologii samoderzhavnoj vlasti», *Vspomogatel'nye Istoricheskie Distipliny* 17 (1985): 121-33, tab. 2. See Figure 7 in Appendix.
59. Pritsak, *Moscow, the Golden Horde*, 578.
60. On the creation and development of the anti-Jagelonian coalition in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries see A. Dziarnovich «'Vialikaja antyagelonskaia kaalitsyia' kantsa 15 — pachatku 16 stagoddziaw», *Nash Radavod*, 7 Grodna, 1996: 173-9.
61. B. N. Floria, *Russko-pol'skie otnoshenia*, 114.
62. M. Obolenskii, ed., *Pamiatniki diplomaticheskikh snoshenii drevnei Rossii s derzhavami inostrannyimi* [hereafter *PDS*], vol. 1. St. Petersburg, 1851, 528-9.
63. See next sububchapter for details.
64. *PDS*, 1:604.
65. S. Herberstein, *Zapiski o Moskovitskikh delakh*. St. Petersburg, 1908, 24-5.

66. In the leaflet from 1563 Ivan the Terrible was depicted in the laurel wreath of the first Roman emperors. See A. Kappeler, *Ivan Groznyj im Spiegel der ausländischen Druckschriften seiner Zeit*. Bern-Frankfurt/M, 1972, picture 5. See Figure 4 in Appendix.
67. Kappeler, *Ivan Groznyj*, 221-2.
68. The perception of the meaning of the term 'tsar' as Oriental can be traced from pictures in the German leaflets of 1582 and 1589, where the Muscovite ruler was depicted in the dress of an Asian (most probably Tatar) ruler. See Kappeler, *Ivan Groznyj*, pictures 10 and 11.
69. The Grand Principality of Lithuania prevented the pope's legates from establishing direct contacts with the Muscovite rulers in 1514, 1519, 1550, 1561, 1570, 1576. See Khoroshkevich, *Russkoe gosudarstvo*, 199, 207-8; Savva, *Moskovskie tsari*, 326, 327, 330, 334.
70. Szeftel, *The title*, 75.
71. Savva, *Moskovskie tsari*, 326.
72. PDS, vol. 10. St. Petersburg, 1871, 281, 300.
73. The German diplomat Printz stated that the Muscovite ruler's imperial title was recognized by the countries which «sich vor seiner Macht fürchteten.» Printz, 211 as cited A. Kappeler, *Ivan Groznyj*, 222.
74. M. A. Evert Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the reign of Elizabeth, 1601-1603; with addenda 1547-1565*. London, 1870, 439; R. Lemon, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the reigns of Edward VI., Mary, Elizabeth, 1547-1580*. London, 1856, 338.
75. L. A. Nikitina, «Angliiskie khroniki o titule russkikh tsarei», *Obshchestvo i gosudarstvo feodalnoi Rossii*. Moscow, 1975, 171-7.
76. For details of this explanation see Savva, *Moskovskie tsari*, 340-1.
77. Khoroshkevich, *Russkoe gosudarstvo*, 202.
78. Obolenskii, *Sobornaia gramota*, 32-3.
79. Ibid., 11.
80. *L'idea di Roma*, 99.
81. *Skazanie*, 122.
82. S. F. Platonov, ed. *Tsarstvennaia kniga*, PSRL, vol. 13, p. 2. St. Petersburg, 1906, 335-9.
83. S. Ciampi, ed., *Bibliografia Critica delle Antiche Reciproche Corrispondenze*, vol. 1 (Firenze, 1834, 253-4).
84. Unfortunately the documents of the Khanate of Crimea of 1549-62 are not available in the Russian State Archives of Old Records, so I can not establish the date when the tsar's title began to be applied to Ivan the Terrible there. According to the Nikon Chronicle, Crimean ambassadors called Ivan the Terrible tsar immediately after the conquest of Kazan, but this information has to be checked against other sources.
85. The fact that there was no original document issued in Tatar states at the disposal of researchers in the Russian State Archives of Old Records prevented me from checking the term that was used for the Russian term 'tsar' in the original Tatar documents, but I rely on the study of M. A. Usmanov (Usmanov, *Zhalovannye akty*, 198), who had worked with the original Tatar documents of the sixteenth century and found that the term 'tsar' in Russian translations stood for 'khan' in the originals.
86. N. A. Smirnov, *Rossija i Turcija v XVI-XVII vv.*, *Moskovskij Universitet. Uchenye zapiski* 94 (1946): 126.
87. The official name of the country was the Grand Principality of Lithuania, Ruthenia, and Samogitia [henceforth GDL]. Although only the southern part of today's Lithuania and the north-western part of today's Belarus were called *Lithuania propria* (*Litva*) in internal official documents, the whole country was called Lithuania in the broad meaning; the same was characteristic to the name of the inhabitants of the GDL, who were called Lithuanians in the broad meaning of those terms. I use terms Lithuania and Lithuanians in the broad meaning in my thesis. On the title of the Grand Principality of Lithuania see M. Spiridonov, «Litva i Rus' na Belarusi 16 stagoddzia», *Nash Radavod* 7:206-11.
88. G. F. Karpov, ed., *Pamiatniki diplomaticheskikh snoshenij Moskovskogo gosudarstva s Pol'sko-Litovskim*, [hereafter PMPL] vol. 2, 1533-60, SIRIO 59. St. Petersburg, 1887:287.
89. It seems to be the first case of usage of that legend taken from the *Letter* of Spiridon-Savva and the *Tale of the princes of Vladimir* in diplomatic relations of Muscovy with foreign countries. See *Skazanie*, 159-78 and subchapter 1.3 above.

90. *PMPL*, 2:288.
91. *Ibid.*, 289.
92. *Ibid.*, 297.
93. *Ibid.*, 296.
94. *Ibid.*, 297.
95. M. Obolenskii and M. Danilovich, eds., *Kniga posol'skaia metriki Velikogo kniazhestva Litovskogo*, vol. 1, 1545-72. Moscow, 1843, 229.
96. *Ibid.*
97. *Ibid.*
98. *Ibid.*, 52.
99. *PMPL*, 2:349.
100. See the copy of the charter *Ibid.*, 353.
101. *Ibid.*, 354.
102. *Ibid.*, 359.
103. See description of the embassy *ibid.*, 381-420.
104. *Ibid.*, 395.
105. *Ibid.*
106. The same reasons were at play when the GDL attempted to prevent the Holy See from offering the crown of the King of All Rus' to the Muscovite rulers.
107. *PMPL*, 2:397.
108. *Ibid.*, 411.
109. *Skazanie*, 143-7.
110. *PMPL*, 2:519.
111. *Skazanie*, 175.
112. During the negotiations of January-February 1556th Muscovite side presented the charters with the tsar title from Emperor Maximilian I, the English King Philip, the Danish King Chrestern along with the charter from the Ottoman Emperor Suleiman the Great. See *PMPL*, 2:503-5; M. Obolenskii, ed., «Dnevnik litovskikh poslov 1556», vol. 5 of *Sbornik Kniazia Obolenskogo*, Moscow, 1838, 13.
113. *PMPL*, 2:503.
114. *Ibid.*, 506.
115. *Ibid.*
116. *Ibid.*, 437.
117. *Ibid.*, 446.
118. G. F. Karpov, ed., *Pamiatniki diplomaticeskikh snoshenij Moskovskogo gosudarstva s Pol'sko-Litovskim*, vol. 3, 1560-1571, *SIRIO* 71. St. Petersburg, 1892: 269.
119. *Ibid.*, 296.
120. *Ibid.*, 377-80.
121. *Ibid.*, 578-80.
122. *Ibid.*
123. M. Pogodin and D. Dubenskii, eds., *Kniga posol'skaia metriki Velikogo kniazhestva Litovskogo*, vol. 2, 1573-80. Moscow, 1845, 229.
124. *Ibid.*, 27-8.
125. *Ibid.*, 249.
126. *Ibid.*