

By Honor Bound

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State and Society in Early Modern Russia

Nancy Shields Kollmann

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To Sasha and Christopher

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Abbreviations

AAE	<i>Akty, sobrannye v bibliotekakh i arkhivakh Rossiiskoi imperii Arkheograficheskoiu ekspeditsiei Imp. akademii nauk.</i> 4 vols. and index. St. Petersburg, 1836, 1838.
AI	<i>Akty istoricheskie, sobrannye i izdannye Arkheograficheskoiu kommissiei.</i> 5 vols. St. Petersburg, 1841–42.
AIu	<i>Akty iuridicheskie.</i> St. Petersburg, 1838.
AIuB	<i>Akty, otnosiashchiesia do iuridicheskogo byta drevnei Rossii.</i> 3 vols. and index. St. Petersburg, 1857–1901.
AMG	<i>Akty Moskovskogo gosudarstva.</i> 3 vols. St. Petersburg, 1890–1901.
ASEI	<i>Akty sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi istorii severo-vostochnoi Rusi kontsa XIV–nachala XVI v.</i> 3 vols. Moscow, 1952–64.
<i>Chteniia</i>	<i>Chteniia v Imp. obshchestve istorii i drevnostei Rossiiskikh pri Moskovskom universitete. Sbornik.</i> 264 vols. Moscow, 1845–1918.
DAI	<i>Dopolneniia k Aktam istoricheskim.</i> 12 vols. and index. St. Petersburg, 1846–75.
DDG	<i>Dukhovnye i dogovornye gramoty velikikh i udel'nykh kniazei XIV–XVI vv.</i> Moscow and Leningrad, 1950.
DR	<i>Dvortsovye razriady.</i> 4 vols. St. Petersburg, 1850–55.
<i>Forschungen</i>	<i>Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte.</i> 53 vols. to date. New series. Berlin, 1954–.
Veselovskii, ISZ	Veselovskii, S. B. <i>Issledovaniia po istorii klassa sluzhilykh zemlevladel'tsev.</i> Moscow, 1969.
KR	<i>Knigi razriadnye po ofitsial'nym onykh spiskam. . . .</i> 2 vols. St. Petersburg, 1853–55.

PRP	<i>Pamiatniki russkogo prava</i> . 8 vols. Moscow, 1952–63.
PSRL	<i>Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei</i> . 41 vols. to date. St. Petersburg and Moscow, 1841–.
PSZ	<i>Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii</i> . Volume 1 in 40 vols. with 5 additional vols. of indices. St. Petersburg, 1830.
RGADA	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov.
RGB	Rossiiskaia gosudarstvennaia biblioteka.
RIB	<i>Russkaia istoricheskaia biblioteka</i> . 39 vols. St. Petersburg and Leningrad, 1872–1929.
RK	<i>Razriadnaia kniga (knigi)</i> [various years] gg. Moscow, 1966, and other editions.
RZ	<i>Rossiiskoe zakonodatel'stvo X–XX vekov</i> . Ed. O. I. Chistiakov. 9 vols. Moscow, 1984–94.
SbRIO	<i>Sbornik Imp. russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva</i> . 148 vols. St. Petersburg and Petrograd, 1867–1916.
SGGD	<i>Sobranie gosudarstvennykh gramot i dogovorov</i> . 5 pts. Moscow, 1813–94.
SRIa	<i>Slovar' russkogo iazyka XI–XVII vv.</i> 23 vols. to date. Moscow, 1975–.
ZA	<i>Zakonodatel'nye akty Russkogo gosudarstva vtoroi poloviny XVI–pervoi poloviny XVII veka. Teksty</i> . Leningrad, 1986.

Terms and Abbreviations in Manuscript Citations

delo	item
f. or fond	collection
l. or ll.	<i>list, listy</i> : folio
opis'	archive description, catalog
stb.	<i>stolbets</i> : scroll
stol	desk, subsection of Military Service Chancery
v.	verso

Preface

The research that led to this book started off in a somewhat different direction. Having finished a book on Muscovite politics that focused on elite clan genealogies, I decided that the next logical step should be to study precedence (*mestnichestvo*). Precedence was Muscovy's system of assigning military rank according to clan honor—honor calculated according to clan heritage, military service, and an individual's genealogical ranking in his clan. Precedence eventually did find its way into this book in Chapters 4 and 6, but only in the broader context of its underlying theme—honor.

Knowing that Muscovite law also mentioned compensation for the more general crime of insult to honor (*beschest'e*), I explored the secondary literature, finding only a handful of articles using a small number of litigations on insult to honor. Because of this dearth of literature, I did not expect much when I looked for cases of insult in the same Moscow archive in which precedence suits are housed (RGADA, the Russian State Archive of Ancient Documents). However, I found hundreds—case upon case of Muscovite men and women reliving before judges the angers, tensions, and anxieties that compelled them to go to court to defend their good names. Dishonor suits were not an unknown—but certainly an underappreciated—historical source and seemed to me far more interesting than precedence cases. Compared with the generally faceless and dry compendia of genealogy and service records that constitute precedence cases (they are as alike “as peas in a pod,” to borrow a phrase used in another context by the great Russian historian V. O. Kliuchevskii), litigations over dishonor (*beschest'e*) sparkle with real people arguing, negotiating, and working out problems in their own voices. I was drawn to look not at a single judicial institution but rather at a code of values, a social discourse, and a dynamic cultural practice.

This research has convinced me that judicial cases are a source of great potential; in RGADA alone there are thousands extant, concerning a wide range of crimes and disputes from central and provincial courts. They allow us

to build history from the bottom up in a microhistorical way, which seems to me the best way to test our broad paradigms of historical change. This study attempts to move from the local level, from evidence of day-to-day litigation, to make arguments on a macro level, addressing, among other themes, the powerful paradigm of “autocracy” in Russian history.

This work owes much to many scholars who inspired me or helped me along the way. My graduate mentor, Edward L. Keenan, left me the long-standing challenge to figure out “what’s really going on here” in any given Muscovite situation, which I have taken as a charge to look at social praxis at the lived level, behind the screen of received historiography. Numerous colleagues have helpfully read or discussed my ideas with me: Daniel Rowland, Eve Levin, Janet Martin, Hans-Joachim Torke, Robert Crummey, Michael Flier, Paul Bushkovitch, Terry Emmons, Paul Seaver, and Paul Robinson. Two conferences gave me lively forums at which to present my work: the Seventh International Conference on Kiev Rus’ and Muscovite History, held in Berlin in 1992, and the Second Summer Workshop in Early East Slavic Culture, held at Stanford in 1993 with funding from the Social Science Research Council. At the latter, I was particularly inspired by the comments of our “outside expert,” Natalie Zemon Davis, who pushed us to think about Muscovy comparatively. Valerie A. Kivelson has over the years been a good critic and reader, advising on translations, broadening my horizons with theory, and generously sharing original ideas. Each of these colleagues helped make this book better; none, of course, is responsible for its shortcomings.

Numerous institutions have underwritten my work. The History Department at Stanford University has strongly supported my research, and I have received generous leave time as well as fellowship and travel funds. I am grateful to the chairmen who presided over the years of this research: Jim Sheehan, David Kennedy, Keith Baker, and Norman Naimark. Stanford’s Center for Russian and East European Studies, under Alex Dallin’s leadership, generously granted me a Mellon Fellowship in 1985. I received three International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) grants between 1986 and 1995 to support about seven months of research in Moscow and St. Petersburg; I also received Fulbright-Hays Faculty Research Abroad fellowships in 1986 and 1995. The National Endowment for the Humanities supported me in 1985–86 with an academic-year grant that got me launched and a summer stipend in 1993 that helped me work through my precedence database. Finally, I was the grateful recipient of a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship for academic year 1994–95, during which time I wrote most of the text. I am extremely thankful to all these sources of private and public funding that have sustained my work.

I owe a particular debt to colleagues in Russia for their interest in my project and support in the archives. Aleksander Borisovich Kamenskii of the Russian State Humanities University and Iurii Moiseevich Eskin of RGADA helped

make my brief stay in the summer of 1995 immensely productive. Then and in 1986, the staff of RGADA eagerly responded to my every archival request. I am grateful to them all. B. N. Floria and M. E. Bychkova have steadily shown interest in my work and provided helpful advice. R. G. Skrynnikov served as my advisor during my 1986 stay and went beyond the call of duty to help me get access to materials and to set up consultations with scholars in Moscow.

I started this research a year or so before my daughter, Sasha, was born; three years later Christopher joined us. Their coming may well have slowed the pace of this work, but their presence has so enriched my life that I suspect the book is also enriched. It is with delight that I dedicate this book to them. I cannot fail to mention as well the great comfort I received over these years of research from our loyal companions, Kira and Asta. Their trust and love have never faltered. But the greatest gift of support and encouragement came from my husband and closest colleague, Jack Kollmann. Although he will have to be satisfied with having had my first book dedicated to him, nothing has changed—he remains my constant source of support and encouragement. He knows, I hope, that none of this could have been done without him.

Introduction

This is a book about how individuals in early modern Russia—primarily in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—defended their personal honor and how the state participated in that process by providing legal norms and access to litigation. Honor in Muscovy was a rhetoric of personal dignity that accrued to all subjects of the tsar, regardless of social rank; only notorious criminals were denied the opportunity to litigate to defend their good name. Honor and its defense in Muscovy present the historian with a remarkably rich field of meaning. Because honor disputes involved insult, they reveal concepts of identity, social values, and interactions among individuals. Because honor was possessed by individuals in all social ranks, even by slaves, it reflects on the nature of society in Muscovy and the relations of society to the state. The book explores a wide range of aspects of early modern Russia through the prism of honor: litigation and legality, social hierarchy and community, concepts of individual and collective identity, ideology and institutions of governance.

Honor shows itself in the early Russian historical record in two arenas: in legislation and litigation over insult to honor (*beschest'e*), which was primarily verbal insult, and in litigation among members of the landed cavalry elite over precedence in service assignment (*mestnichestvo*). Such elite precedence was based on calculations of genealogy and clan service. Legislation was issued by the grand princes (tsars after 1547), and the judicial venues were the tsar's courts. Judges were grand-princely appointees—governors in the provinces or high-ranking administrators in various offices in the Kremlin. The striking aspect about defense of honor in Muscovy is its social inclusiveness: All subjects of the tsar could litigate, although, as we see in Chapter 1, the institutions of litigation also included significant defense of social hierarchy.

Its social inclusiveness might seem to distinguish the Muscovite concept of honor from commonplace notions of honor in European history. To modern minds, "honor" is associated with medieval chivalry or aristocratic dueling and politesse, not with the everyday activities of the common man or woman. In fact, nonelite groups in premodern Europe defended their honor with a vigor equal to that of noblemen, and it is in this comparative context that one should view the Muscovite defense of honor.¹ In sixteenth-century England, for example, yeoman farmers and artisans clogged the courts with suits for defamation²; in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Dijon and eighteenth-century Paris, master craftsmen and artisans sought recompense for insult³; in Italy, courts entertained suits from prostitutes as well as noblemen⁴; in early modern Germany, guilds asserted corporate honor.⁵ At the same time, across the board, insulted individuals and groups took the law

¹Robert A. Nye gives a good summary of the European historical context: "Honor Codes," in Peter N. Stearns, ed., *Encyclopedia of Social History* (New York, 1994), pp. 325–27. Edward Muir describes the genesis of dueling: *Mad Blood Stirring: Vendetta and Factions in Friuli During the Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1992), chap. 8.

²See J. A. Sharpe, *Defamation and Sexual Slander in Early Modern England: The Church Courts at York*, Borthwick Papers no. 58 (York, n.d. [1980?]); Mervyn James, "English Politics and the Concept of Honour, 1485–1642," *Past and Present*, Supplement 3 (1978); Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570–1640* (Cambridge, England, 1987), chap. 10; W. R. Jones, "'Actions for Slaunder'—Defamation in English Law, Language and History," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 57, no. 3 (1971):274–83; Miranda Chaytor, "Household and Kinship: Ryton in the Late 16th and Early 17th Centuries," *History Workshop Journal* 10 (Autumn 1980):25–60.

³See James R. Farr, *Hands of Honor: Artisans and Their World in Dijon, 1550–1650* (Ithaca, N. Y., 1988), chap. 4; David Garrioch, "Verbal Insults in Eighteenth-Century Paris," in Peter Burke and Roy Porter, eds., *The Social History of Language* (Cambridge, England, 1987), pp. 104–19; Gregory Hanlon, "Les rituels de l'agression en Aquitaine au XVII^e siècle," *Annales: E.S.C.*, no. 2 (1985):244–68; Arlette Jouanna, "Recherches sur la notion d'honneur au XVI^e-ème siècle," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 15 (1968):597–623; Claude Gauvard, "De grace especial": *Crime, état et société en France à la fin du Moyen Age*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1991), chap. 16.

⁴See Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, England, 1987), chap. 8. Guido Ruggiero chronicles insult against the state and nobility: *Violence in Early Renaissance Venice* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1984), chap. 8.

⁵On early modern Germany, see David Martin Luebke, "Serfdom and Honour in Eighteenth-Century Germany," *Social History* 18, no. 2 (1993):143–61; Susanne Burghartz, "Rechte Jungfrauen oder Unverschämte Töchter? Zur weiblichen Ehre im 16. Jahrhundert," *Journal Geschichte* 1, no. 13 (February 1991):39–45; Kathleen E. Stuart, "The Boundaries of Honor: 'Dishonorable People' in Augsburg, 1500–1800," Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1993; Mack Walker, *German Home Towns: Community, State, and General Estate, 1648–1871* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London, 1971), chap. 3; Richard van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag in der frühen Neuzeit*, vol. 2. *Dorf und Stadt, 16.–18. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1992), pp. 194–214; Martin Dinges, "Die Ehre als Thema der historischen Anthropologie. Bemerkungen zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte und zur Konzeptualisierung," in Klaus Schreiner and Gerd Schwerhof, eds., *Verletzte Ehre. EhrKonflikte in Gesellschaften des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne, 1995), pp. 29–62. My thanks to Tara Nummedal for introducing me to the latter two books.

into their own hands, redressing insult with shaming rituals, physical assault, vendetta, and feud.⁶ By the sixteenth century, aristocrats and the socially ambitious began to separate themselves from the rest of society through their stylized reaction to insult (the duel) and by adopting new standards of “civility.”⁷ Thus honor accrued to individuals and collectives, reflecting a societal understanding that people had honor and that it should be publicly defended.

Bertram Wyatt-Brown argues that the sensibility of honor as an attribute of all members of a community, which he calls *primal honor*, has its roots in a common European heritage grounded in, first, an Indo-European association of honor with family, blood, and valor (Tacitus, for example, chronicled Germanic tribes’ keen sensitivity to personal affront and family honor); and second, the moderating influence of the Stoic and Christian values that emphasize personal virtue, civility, and the cultivation of self-esteem distinct from the world’s estimation.⁸ Other writers have seconded the idea of honor as “a pan-European moral code.” James Farr noted that the thirteenth-century Spanish law code, the *Partidas*, defines as insults to honor words and acts that were also considered insults to honor in sixteenth-century France.⁹ Our Russian cases resound with very similar calumnies and insulting actions.

⁶See Elizabeth S. Cohen, “Honor and Gender in the Streets of Early Modern Rome,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22, no. 4 (1992):597–625; Natalie Zemon Davis, “Charivari, Honor and Community in Seventeenth-Century Lyon and Geneva,” in John J. MacAloon, ed., *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals towards a Theory of Cultural Performance* (Philadelphia, 1984), pp. 42–57; idem, “The Reasons of Misrule,” in her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 1975), pp. 97–123.

⁷See C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals, 939–1210* (Philadelphia, 1985); Muir, *Mad Blood*, chap. 8; Marvin B. Becker, *Civility and Society in Western Europe, 1300–1600* (Bloomington, Ind., 1988); Mark Motley, *Becoming a French Aristocrat: The Education of the Court Nobility, 1580–1715* (Princeton, N.J., 1990); Kristen B. Neuschel, *Word of Honor: Interpreting Noble Culture in Sixteenth-Century France* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1989); Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York, 1983); Orest Ranum, “Courtesy, Absolutism and the Rise of the French State, 1630–1660,” *Journal of Modern History* 52 (1980):426–51. Also see James (“English Politics”), who depicts Elizabethan “honor society” as primarily aristocratic, and Donna T. Andrew, “The Code of Honour and its Critics: The Opposition to Duelling in England, 1700–1850,” *Social History* 5, no. 3 (1980): 409–34. Studies of honor as a theme in literature focus on its appeal to the elite: Julio Caro Baroja, “Honour and Shame: A Historical Account of Several Conflicts,” in J. G. Peristiany, ed., *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (Chicago, 1966), pp. 113–16; F. R. Bryson, *The Point of Honor in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (New York, 1935); Curtis Brown Watson, *Shakespeare and the Renaissance Concept of Honor* (Princeton, N.J., 1960); Charles Laurence Barber, *The Idea of Honour in the English Drama, 1591–1700* (Goteborg, 1957).

⁸Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York, 1982), chap. 2; a revised and abridged edition is *Honor and Violence in the Old South* (New York, 1986). Baroja adds a third source, the Roman concept of honor as office and title: “Honour and Shame,” p. 83.

⁹Farr, *Hands of Honor*, p. 182, cites Baroja, “Honour and Shame,” pp. 84–91.

Early modern Russia did not share all of the influences that shaped honor in other European countries. Its elite, for example, never reached the point of social development that drove European noblemen to invent the duel. (Muscovites first encountered the duel in the seventeenth century as a European import.) But Russia's heritage, nevertheless, was Indo-European, whether traced through the East Slavs themselves or through the Normans, who first catalyzed political formation among the East Slavs. It shared with Europe an agrarian, peasant economy. Early Russia's Orthodox Christianity shared with Catholicism a belief in human dignity, which underlay the defense of honor across the European plain. Russia was part of the pan-European culture in which reputation and status, codified as personal honor, were basic building blocks of community and identity.

The social inclusiveness of honor in theory and in the practice of litigation raises issues of its social significance. How did honor function on the local level? How did individuals use such litigation to defend or advance their status? How did honor litigation relate to broader patterns of conflict and conflict resolution? These questions provide one focus of this book: I will explore how honor litigation provided a means for individuals and communities to pursue or resolve tensions and to structure personal relations.

In Muscovy, however, more than in the European states contemporary with it, the state was closely identified with the defense of honor. The tsar's administration codified laws and provided court venues, whereas in Europe venues were myriad. The Catholic Church, local courts, and high courts shared jurisdiction over defamation according to the content of the insult.¹⁰ In Russia also, as Chapter 4 details, the state devised precedence litigation for the elite and maintained official military and genealogical records from which to calculate relative rank. This practice eliminated the need for the elite to generate such extralegal means as vendettas and duels to defend honor. Finally, in Russia, the state itself was imbricated in the rhetoric of honor; the tsar and his representations stood at the apex of the community of honor (see Chapter 5). Thus, the second focus of this book: how honor fits into the broader array of Muscovite political institutions and concepts. I argue that the state used the defense of honor as one of many strategies to integrate the peoples of its growing and diverse empire.

I try to balance these two perspectives through a bottom-up social inquiry into the uses of honor based on the knowledge that a sense of personal dignity was ambient among East Slavs long before Muscovy consolidated power, and through a top-down examination of how the state co-opted honor for its own objectives. Neither approach should be taken as primary. Particularly to be

¹⁰Sharpe, *Defamation*, pp. 3–6.

avoided is a “statist” reading of the latter perspective as maintaining that ideas and institutions such as honor had meaning in Russia only insofar as the state created them and bestowed them on the people. Indeed, individuals and communities were adept manipulators of received discourses and institutions such as honor. Honor can and should be construed both locally and at the macro level, because both coexisted in the complex society of premodern Muscovy. To better understand how honor served both state and community, I first examine the complexity of community and the diversity of governing strategies in the sixteenth century.

Forging Structures of Governance

In Muscovy, the sixteenth century was a period of administrative consolidation over a constantly expanding realm. Like Ferdinand Braudel’s “long sixteenth century” in the Mediterranean world, Moscow’s sixteenth century begins earlier, with Ivan III, who served as heir presumptive with his father from c. 1448 and ruled from 1462 to 1505.¹¹ His administration initiated many of the key goals, strategies, and institutions that endured through the 1500s. In turn, it was a “long fourteenth century” that had prepared the ground for this sixteenth-century consolidation of power.¹² The seminal era from the 1290s to the mid-1400s was one of opportunistic reaction to the political and economic collapse of both the Golden Horde and the Teutonic Knights. Moscow’s grand princes and boyar elite, like their counterparts in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, responded by putting their houses in order domestically and by aggressively expanding their territory.¹³ That Moscow’s rulers reacted

¹¹On date as heir presumptive, see Gustave Alef, “A History of the Muscovite Civil War: The Reign of Vasilii II (1425–62),” Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1956, pp. 332–35, citing *Dukhovnye i dogovornye gramoty velikikh i udel’nykh kniazei XIV–XVI vv.* (DDG) (Moscow and Leningrad, 1950), no. 52, pp. 155–60.

¹²Elsewhere I describe the fourteenth century as “formative” for the political elite: *Kinship and Politics. The Making of the Muscovite Political System, 1345–1547* (Stanford, 1987), chap. 1.

¹³For a useful survey of expansion in the early period, see I. B. Grekov and F. F. Shakhmagonov, *Mir istorii. Russkie zemli v XIII–XV vekakh* (Moscow, 1986). Despite its Stalinist interpretation, good chronological narrative and maps of Muscovite expansion into non-Slavic lands can be found in *Ocherki istorii SSSR. Period feodalizma, konets XV v.–nachalo XVII v.* (Moscow, 1955). Also for good maps, see Allen F. Chew, *An Atlas of Russian History*, rev. ed. (New Haven, Conn., and London, 1970); Martin Gilbert, *Atlas of Russian History*, 2d ed. (New York, 1993); John Channon and Robert Hudson, *The Penguin Historical Atlas of Russia* (London, 1995). M. N. Tikhomirov offers a detailed description of Muscovy’s lands in the sixteenth century: *Rossiiia v XVI stoletii* (Moscow, 1962).

in this way to the regional vacuum of power bespeaks no unusual messianic self-conception, no plan for world domination or nomadic spirit.¹⁴

Moscow's European neighbors were also gobbling up territory by the sixteenth century, even before any had developed theories of mercantilism or absolutism to legitimize expansion of land, people, and resources. The Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and British looked overseas for expansion, while the Habsburgs and Jagiellonians pushed toward the frontier borderlands of the steppe eastward from the Danube toward the Caspian Sea. These empires were driven variously by dynastic imperative, political pressures, and economic needs. In Muscovy's case, economic pressures were excuse enough. Within its fifteenth-century borders, natural resources were scarce and land was relatively unproductive because of poor soil, poorly timed precipitation, and a short growing season.¹⁵ Expansion provided income from the far Northern and Siberian fur trade and from export and transit trade along major trade routes (the Volga River and the Baltic and White Seas).

For more than a hundred years, Moscow was remarkably successful in its drive to expand. The debacle of the Livonian War (1558–82) halted expansion toward the Baltic until Peter the Great's time, but expansion south and east continued with little interruption. By the demise of the Daniilovich line in 1598,¹⁶ the realm stretched from Novgorod and Pskov northwest of Moscow eastward along the White Sea littoral to the Ob' River beyond the Ural Mountains and occupied most of the forested land north of the steppe and east of Smolensk. By the end of the sixteenth century, the Muscovite empire comprised several distinct regions. The Center was the heartland around Moscow, settled primarily by Orthodox East Slavs, where peasant agriculture and a landed cavalry elite dominated economy and society. Another region was the North, the old Novgorodian lands stretching from the Gulf of Finland to the Urals, north

¹⁴Arnold Toynbee popularized the view that Moscow's expansionism was a "Byzantine heritage" of imperialism: *Civilization on Trial* (New York, 1948), pp. 164–83. V. O. Kliuchevskii forged a sort of "frontier thesis" interpretation of the Russian people as constantly colonizing: "Kurs russkoi istorii," in *Sochineniia*, 5 vols. (Moscow, 1956–58), vol. 1 (1956), lect. 2. The "messianic" view is often associated with the "Third Rome" theory, but that is a misreading. The original "Third Rome" text primarily argues for the piety of the ruler; see Nikolai Andreyev, "Filofei and His Epistle to Ivan Vasil'yevich," *Slavonic and East European Review* 38, no. 90 (1959):1–31; Paul Bushkovitch, "The *Life of Saint Filipp*: Tsar and Metropolitan in the Late Sixteenth Century," in Michael S. Flier and Daniel Rowland, eds., *Medieval Russian Culture. Vol. II* (Berkeley, 1994), p. 31; David M. Goldfrank, "Moscow, the Third Rome," *Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History* 23 (1981):118–21.

¹⁵On climate, see Leslie Symons, *The Soviet Union. A Systematic Geography*, 2d ed. (London and New York, 1990), chaps. 3–4, and John C. Dewdney, *A Geography of the Soviet Union*, 3d ed. (Oxford, 1979), chap. 2.

¹⁶The Daniilovich line was a branch of the Kievan Riurikide princely clan, descendants of Prince Daniil Alexandrovich, who died in 1303. The dynasty died out in 1598 with the death of Ivan IV's last and childless son, Fedor Ivanovich.



These spectacular wooden churches and village buildings at Kizhi illustrate the wooden architecture of the isolated villages in the Russian North, an area that Moscow conquered from Novgorod in the late fifteenth century. (Photograph: Jack Kollmann.)

of Moscow, where landed cavalymen were few. Here forest exploitation, fishing, and hunting played a greater role in the economy than agriculture, and communities of peasants free of landlord control were the social norm. Orthodox East Slavs coexisted with converted and non-Christian Finno-Ugric peoples, as well as with non-Christian or recently converted Permian and Zyrian tribes. On the recently conquered western frontier, other Orthodox East Slavs and some Catholic East Slavs who had for several generations lived under the Grand Duchy of Lithuania fell under Muscovite suzerainty. Here cities enjoyed self-government, and nobility and bourgeoisie enjoyed corporate privileges and rights.

The steppe frontier, ever expanding to the south and east, was a land in transition, shared by communities of free Orthodox East Slavic peasants and Cossacks, increasingly joined by members of the elite who brought enserfment and central control of the land fund. The Middle Volga was populated by a variety of peoples subordinate until 1552 to the Khanate of Kazan'; the Mordvinians and Mari were Finno-Ugric, and only some were Christianized; the Tatars and Turkic Chuvash were Muslim. Late in the century and through the seventeenth century, Muscovite control expanded to the Turkic nomadic peoples of the

steppe south of the Urals and to the indigenous peoples of western and eventually eastern Siberia. Siberian natives spoke a variety of indigenous languages and practiced animistic religions.

Muscovite tsars claimed sovereignty over these myriad peoples, expressing this assertion in their official titles with the words *gosudar'* and (by the end of the sixteenth century) *samoderzhets*. Both terms have been construed as claiming a sort of despotic total control, but contemporaries understood the terms to imply "sovereignty" without a connotation of servility.¹⁷ As sovereigns of "all the Rus' lands" and beyond, Muscovy's rulers exercised their power with flexibility and pragmatic accommodation to existing social and political institutions. In so delegating and recognizing local leadership, Muscovite rulers did not divide sovereignty and thereby create political pluralism along a European legal model; they retained a patrimonial claim to unilateral sovereignty. They devolved the execution of power, however, to a startlingly wide array of institutions and practices.

Geography and demography forced their hand to some extent. In the far northern forests, settlement was dispersed and villages were tiny (averaging one to three households), with denser settlement only near major towns and monasteries, primarily in the Center. The rigors of the climate (long winter freeze, short growing season, northern latitude, infertile soil) prevented larger population accumulation.¹⁸ S. B. Veselovskii's image of the fifteenth-century countryside is memorable: "From a bird's eye or airplane's view an area settled with numerous tiny villages must have looked like a leopard's coat, in which the background was forest, and the settlements, scattered among the fields and meadows, were spots of various size and irregular shape." Even as late as 1724, the population density of the Empire averaged fewer than ten inhabitants per square *versta* (a *versta* equals approximately two-thirds of a mile) in areas other than the provinces of Moscow (with twenty inhabitants per square *versta*) and Kiev (with ten to twenty).¹⁹

Governance in such conditions was difficult; add the element of physical expanse, and it became challenging indeed. As Peter Brown cautioned, writing

¹⁷See Isabel de Madariaga, "Autocracy and Sovereignty," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 16, nos. 3–4 (1982):373–74; Marc Szeftel, "The Title of the Muscovite Monarch up to the End of the Seventeenth Century," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 13, nos. 1–2 (1979):70–76; Marshall Poe, "What Did Muscovites Mean When They Called Themselves 'Slaves of the Tsar'?" *Slavic Review* 57, no. 3 (1998):585–608.

¹⁸On peasants' accommodation to the physical setting, see Janet Martin, "'Backwardness' in Russian Peasant Culture. A Theoretical Consideration of Agricultural Practices in the Seventeenth Century," in Samuel H. Baron and Nancy S. Kollmann, eds., *Religion and Culture in Early Modern Russia and Ukraine* (DeKalb, Ill., 1997), pp. 19–33.

¹⁹S. B. Veselovskii, *Selo i derevnia v severo-vostochnoi Rusi XIV–XVI vv.* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1936), pp. 27–28. On population density, see Gilbert, *Atlas*, p. 38.

about Byzantium, “Distance [is] the First Enemy of all extended empires. . . . Terrifyingly active and peremptory at the center, the imperial system of government found itself becalmed on a Sargasso Sea once it reached the provinces.”²⁰ Distances were daunting in the Muscovite empire: From Moscow to Perm’ in the upper Kama basin today is 1,378 kilometers by rail; to Tomsk in Western Siberia, 3,500; to Vladivostok on the Pacific, 9,297. The Volga River alone, Moscow’s major trade artery, measures over 3,500 kilometers in length. Climate added to the difficulties of communication: Encumbered by mud most of the spring and autumn, dirt roads were easily passable only in May through August; winter freeze speeded transportation, but temperatures inhibited movement. When the need was urgent, huge distances could be covered very quickly by a post system, but as a rule, central government stood at a far remove from most communities.²¹

Nevertheless Moscow’s sixteenth-century rulers were obsessed with the same sorts of issues that beleaguered their European counterparts—that is, how to enlist local elites in their project of state expansion, how to expand their armies, and how to tax to pay for it all. In short, mobilization of resources was their overriding concern. Faced with an apparent dearth of bureaucratic personnel, or perhaps most accurately, of liquid resources with which to compensate a central officialdom, the state reacted by defining its job minimally, demanding only the right to mobilize fiscal, natural, and human resources; to administer high justice; and to monopolize war, peace, and foreign alliances. To accomplish these tasks, the Kremlin delegated, when possible, mundane administrative tasks to the groups best constituted to accomplish them. In most cases those groups existed; in other cases, the state created or enhanced them.

A major priority for Muscovy in the sixteenth century was the cultivation of a metropolitan (Moscow-based) elite who would execute central policy. To do so, the Kremlin both brought new clans into high status and co-opted elites from conquered areas. High-ranking clans were invited to join the court elite, provided that they converted to Orthodoxy. Princely families of the ruling Gedyminide dynasty of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and of the Kazan’ ruling house, princes from the North Caucasus, sovereign princely lines from old Rus’ principalities such as Iaroslavl’, Rostov, and Suzdal’—all added jewels to

²⁰Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity. Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, Wis., 1992), p. 12; on “distance,” Brown paraphrases Braudel (p. 17).

²¹See, for example, how quickly documents travelled from the Center to the provinces when the issue was suspected treason: N. Ia. Novombergskii, *Slovo i delo gosudarevy. Protsessy do izdaniia Ulozheniia Alekseia Mikhailovicha 1649 goda*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1911). See also Paul Shott, “Transportation in Russia,” *Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History* 39 (1985):170–78.

the Moscow grand prince's crown.²² Richly rewarded with status, land, and booty, these new clans and new boyars contributed to stability as the empire was assembled piecemeal. At midcentury, the government moved to bolster elite cohesion by compiling genealogical books and military musters to support the precedence (or *mestrichestvo*) system of status ranking based on family heritage and service.

Moscow's grand princes cultivated and co-opted this metropolitan elite, and delegated administrative power, by tolerating pockets of limited sovereignty. Their kinsmen received appanage principalities,²³ as did some high-ranking princely families (primarily from the Grand Duchy) called *service princes*.²⁴ In the midfifteenth century, a quasi-independent Tatar principality was created at Kasimov to cultivate support among dissident princes in Kazan', and a Nogai counterpart was created at Romanov in the midsixteenth century to serve similar purposes. Even the vast tracks in the Urals awarded to the Stroganov family in return for colonization and trade development were pockets of independent rule that provided Moscow an administrative machine in a

²²On the expansion of the boyar elite, see my *Kinship and Politics*, chaps. 2–3; Ann M. Kleimola, "Patterns of Duma Recruitment, 1505–1550," in Daniel Clarke Waugh, ed., *Essays in Honor of A. A. Zimin* (Columbus, Ohio, 1985), pp. 232–58, and her "Kto kogo: Patterns of Duma Recruitment, 1547–1564," *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte (Forschungen)* 38 (1986):205–20; A. A. Zimin, "Kniazheskaia znat' i formirovanie sostava boiarskoi dumy vo vtoroi polovine XV–pervoi treti XVI v.," *Istoricheskie zapiski* 103 (1979):195–241; idem, "Feodal'naia znat' Tverskogo i Riazanskogo velikikh kniazhestv i Moskovskoe boiarsstvo kontsa XV–pervoi treti XVI veka," *Istoriia SSSR* no. 3 (1973):124–42; idem, "Suzdal'skie i rostovskie kniaz'ia vo vtoroi polovine XV–pervoi treti XVI v.," *Vspomogatel'nye istoricheskie distsipliny* 7 (1976):56–69; idem, *Formirovanie boiarskoi aristokratii v Rossii vo vtoroi polovine XV–pervoi treti XVI v.*, pt. 1 (Moscow, 1988), pp. 28–153; Gustave Alef, "Reflections on the Boyar Duma in the Reign of Ivan III," *Slavonic and East European Review* 45 (1967):76–123; idem, "Aristocratic Politics and Royal Policy in Muscovy in the Late Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Century," *Forschungen* 27 (1980):77–109; idem, "The Origins of Muscovite Autocracy: The Age of Ivan III," *Forschungen* 39 (1986), 362 pp.

²³On the appanage system, see S. B. Veselovskii, "Poslednie udely v severo-vostochnoi Rusi," *Istoricheskie zapiski* 22 (1947):101–31; S. M. Kashtanov, "Iz istorii poslednikh udelov," *Trudy Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo istoriko-arkhivnogo instituta* 10 (1957):275–302; Tikhomirov, *Rossia v XVI stoletii*, chap. 3; A. A. Zimin, "V. I. Lenin o 'moskovskom tsarstve' i cherty feodal'noi razdroblennosti v politicheskom stroe Rossii XVI veka," in *Aktual'nye problemy istorii Rossii epokhi feodalizma. Sbornik statei* (Moscow, 1970), pp. 273–78, and his "O politicheskikh predposylkakh vozniknoveniia russkogo absoliutizma," in *Absoliutizm v Rossii (XVII–XVIII vv.)* (Moscow, 1964), pp. 18–49 (English translation by Susan Zayer Rupp, in Nancy Shields Kollmann, ed., *Major Problems in Early Modern Russian History* [New York, 1992], pp. 79–107). In the seventeenth century, the new Romanov dynasty did not use the appanage system to support males in the family, even though a few males would have been eligible (most surviving Romanov progeny in the seventeenth century were women).

²⁴On service princes, see M. E. Bychkova, *Sostav klassa feodalov Rossii v XVI v. Istoriko-genealogicheskoe issledovanie* (Moscow, 1986), chap. 2.

far-flung corner of the realm.²⁵ The rulers of all such lands wielded judicial authority and the right to grant immunities from their own jurisdiction to landholders within their holdings. They had their own cavalry forces and administrative elites and were limited only by a prohibition against foreign alliances. These various institutions were phased out from the 1560s through the midseventeenth century as their political utility waned, but they reflect Muscovite autocrats' willingness to diffuse administrative authority in ways not threatening to central power. At the same time, secular and ecclesiastical landholders enjoyed broad grants of immunity from the ruler's administrative, fiscal, and judicial authority.

At the local level, Moscow used similar strategies of cultivation, co-optation, and devolution of administration.²⁶ In the North, they relied on existing communes of free peasants (*volosti*) under the supervision of governors (*namestniki*); even monasteries and cathedrals in some places participated in secular administration. Georg Michels has shown that even in the late seventeenth century, the communities of the North were far removed from central governance.²⁷ In the Middle Volga and Siberia, local elites were co-opted. Tatar and Siberian elites kept their indigenous institutions, laws, and practices as long as they stayed loyal; these populations were taxed through a system different from that employed in the Center, paying in furs or their equivalent. This levy was called a *iasak*, while peasants in the Center paid a "tax burden" (*tiaglo*) in cash, kind, or service. In Smolensk and other western areas, noblemen and burghers maintained their corporate privileges and institutions. Such an eclectic and laissez-faire policy was a mainstay of colonial practice into the eighteenth century.²⁸ On the steppe frontier, governors enjoyed wide authority in the absence of local gentry, and frontier military forces straddled the social categories of peasant, townsman, and privileged cavalry. Moscow put most of its energies into the Center, however, working to forge strong provincial communities of landed gentry cavalymen, who both constituted the army and served as a quasi-bureaucracy.

²⁵On such independent principalities, see Tikhomirov, *Rossiiia v XVI stoletii*, pp. 42–52; Kash-tanov, "Iz istorii poslednikh udelov"; Veselovskii, "Poslednie udely"; V. B. Kobrin, *Vlast' i sobstvennost' v srednevekovoi Rossii (XV–XVI vv.)* (Moscow, 1985), chap. 2. On Kasimov, see V. V. Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie o Kasimovskikh tsariakh i tsarevichakh*, 4 pts. (St. Petersburg, 1863–87); Janet Martin, "Muscovite Frontier Policy: The Case of the Khanate of Kasimov," *Russian History* 19, nos. 1–4 (1992):169–80.

²⁶I survey these practices in "The Rus' Principalities [in the Fourteenth Century]," *The New Cambridge Medieval History* Vol. VI (Cambridge, England, forthcoming); "Russia," *ibid.*, Vol. VII, c. 1415–c. 1500 (Cambridge, England, 1998):748–70; and "Muscovite Russia, 1450–1598," in Gregory L. Freeze, ed., *Russia: A History* (Oxford and New York, 1997), pp. 27–54.

²⁷Georg B. Michels, "The Violent Old Belief," *Russian History* 19, nos. 1–4 (1992):203–30.

²⁸See Andreas Kappeler, *Russlands erste Nationalitäten: Das Zarenreich und die Völker der mittleren Wolga vom 16. bis 19. Jahrhundert* (Cologne, 1982); *idem*, "Das Moskauer Reich des 17. Jahrhunderts und seine nichtrussischen Untertanen," *Forschungen* 50 (1995):185–98; George V. Lantzeff, *Siberia in the Seventeenth Century* (Berkeley, 1943).

For the cavalymen of newly conquered lands, Moscow pursued a gradualist policy of political integration: For the first several decades after conquest, principalities in the Center and towns such as Novgorod and Pskov in the northwest were ruled through separate “courts” (*dvortsy*) and majordomos (*dvoretskie*)²⁹; only gradually over the century were these offices blended into the growing system of central bureaus.³⁰ An even more powerful mechanism of forging local elites, however, was the service tenure land system (*pomest'e*), grants of populated land held on condition of military service. Muscovy used these grants to create new provincial gentries or to reshape existing elites significantly. The land and peasant labor needed to expand the *pomest'e* system were obtained not only through conquest, but also by transferring free peasant communes to newly recruited cavalymen. From Novgorod, eight thousand men were deported to various provinces in the Center (Vladimir, Nizhnii Novgorod, Pereiaslavl', and others) and replaced with about two thousand men from Moscow. Throughout the century, such population resettlements served as a tool to populate newly conquered areas or to bolster frontier economies shattered by war. In the 1570s, for example, petty landholders from the Novgorod environs were moved into the newly conquered western frontier (Velikie Luki, Toropets, Dorogobuzh, Smolensk, and Viaz'ma), while others were moved to recently captured territories in Livonia. When Russian settlers were driven out of Livonia, they were resettled on the Novgorod frontier as border guards and used to restore the local economy. These relocations disrupted regional attachments and provided the opportunity to create new regional solidarities.³¹

²⁹Zimin, “O politicheskikh predposylkakh,” pp. 33–35; idem, “Lenin,” pp. 284–85; idem, “O sostave dvortsovykh uchrezhdenii Russkogo gosudarstva kontsa XV i XVI v.,” *Istoricheskie zapiski* 63 (1958):180–205; Gustave Alef, “Muscovite Military Reforms in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century,” *Forschungen* 18 (1973):93–101; B. N. Floria, “O putiakh politicheskoi tsentralizatsii Russkogo gosudarstva (na primere Tverskoi zemli),” in *Obshchestvo i gosudarstvo feodal'noi Rossii* (Moscow, 1975), pp. 281–90; Ia. S. Lur'e, “Rol' Tveri v sozdanii Russkogo natsional'nogo gosudarstva,” *Uchenye zapiski Leningradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* 36 (1939):85–109.

³⁰See A. K. Leont'ev, *Obrazovanie prikaznoi sistemy upravleniia v Russkom gosudarstve* (Moscow, 1961); N. P. Likhachev, *Razriadnye d'iaki XVI veka* (St. Petersburg, 1888); A. A. Zimin, “O slozhenii prikaznoi sistemy na Rusi,” *Doklady i soobshcheniia Instituta istorii Akademii nauk* 3 (1955):164–76; Peter B. Brown, “Early Modern Russian Bureaucracy: The Evolution of the Chancellery System from Ivan III to Peter the Great,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1978, and his “Muscovite Government Bureaus,” *Russian History* 10 (1983):269–330.

³¹See Janet Martin, “Mobility, Forced Resettlement and Regional Identity in Muscovy,” in A. M. Kleimola and G. D. Lenhoff, eds., *Culture and Identity in Muscovy, 1389–1584*, UCLA Slavic Studies, n.s. 3 (Moscow, 1997), pp. 431–49. On the *pomest'e* system, see Vincent E. Hammond, “The History of the Novgorodian *Pomest'e*: 1480–1550,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1987; V. N. Bernadskii, *Novgorod i novgorodskaiia zemlia v XV veke* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1961), chap. 11, pp. 314–52; S. V. Rozhdestvenskii, *Sluzhiloie zemlevladienie v Moskovskom gosudarstve XVI veka* (St. Petersburg, 1897); K. V. Bazil'evich, “Novgorodskie pomeshchiki iz posluzhil'tsev v kontse XV veka,” *Istoricheskie zapiski* 14 (1945):62–80; A. A. Zimin, “Iz istorii pomestnogo zemlevladieniia na Rusi,” *Voprosy istorii* no. 11 (1959):130–42.

The state enlisted such local elites to carry out central policy in fiscal and criminal matters, thereby cultivating group solidarity. Loyalty to clan and region was a latent consciousness that Muscovy accentuated. In the early decades of the sixteenth century, the collection of taxes for fortification was shifted from centrally appointed governors to local elites; in the 1530s, criminal jurisdiction was transferred to locally selected boards of landed cavalrymen. In the 1550s, local collection of taxes in the Center and the North was transferred to boards of taxpaying peasants or townsmen selected by their communes.³² Increasingly, as the state transferred peasant communes to landlords, administrative and judicial power over peasants shifted away from the central apparatus; private landlords maintained such immunities from grand-princely administration even after midcentury, when the state was revoking fiscal immunities.³³ By overseeing petty judicial issues, landlords in essence saved the state from maintaining an extensive local bureaucracy.

Through legislation on inheritance and the transfer of hereditary property, the state constituted stronger local gentry communities in the Center. From the 1550s to 1570s, edicts prohibited landholders in certain areas and most princely clans from selling patrimonial lands to individuals not of the given region or clan. The effect was to enhance what some scholars call local "corporations" of gentry who mustered to war together, maintained law and order, and dominated local offices.³⁴ By the seventeenth century, in the Center and on the frontier as gentry moved southward, these policies created vigorous local power networks. Valerie Kivelson has described, for example, how gentry factions dominated office-holding and local politics in seventeenth-century Vladimir-Suzdal'. Brian Davies and Carol Belkin Stevens graphically describe how frontier governors bent central policy to local conditions. Davies cites a

³²On governors, see A. A. Zimin "Namestnicheskoe upravlenie v Russkom gosudarstve vtoroi poloviny XV–pervoi treti XVI v.," *Istoricheskie zapiski* 94 (1974):271–301; H. W. Dewey, "The Decline of the Muscovite *Namestnik*," *Oxford Slavonic Papers* 12 (1965):21–39. On local reforms, see Robert O. Crummey, "Reform under Ivan IV: Gradualism and Terror," in idem, ed., *Reform in Russia and the U.S.S.R.* (Urbana, Ill., and Chicago, 1989), pp. 12–27; N. E. Nosov, *Ocherki po istorii mestnogo upravleniia Russkogo gosudarstva pervoi poloviny XVI veka* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1957), and his *Stanovlenie soslovno-predstavitel'nykh uchrezhdenii v Rossii* (Leningrad, 1969).

³³On immunities and fiscal policy, see S. B. Veselovskii, *Selo i derevnia*, and his *K voprosu o proiskhozhdenii votchinnogo rezhima* (Moscow, 1926); Alexandre Eck, *Le moyen âge russe* (Paris, 1933); Iu. G. Alekseev, *Agrarnaia i sotsial'naia istoriia severo-vostochnoi Rusi XV–XVI vv. Pereiaslavl' uezd* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1966); Horace W. Dewey, "Immunities in Old Russia," *Slavic Review* 23 (1964):643–59; Jerome Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1969), chaps. 5–6; S. M. Kashtanov, *Finansy srednevekovoi Rusi* (Moscow, 1988).

³⁴The legislation: *Zakonodatel'nye akty Russkogo gosudarstva vtoroi poloviny XVI–pervoi poloviny XVII veka. Teksty* (ZA) (Leningrad, 1986), no. 1, p. 29 (not before June 1550); *ibid.*, no. 5, pp. 31–33 (1 May 1551); *ibid.*, no. 36, pp. 55–56 (15 January 1562); *ibid.*, no. 37, p. 56 (9 October 1572). Debate on these laws: Kobrin, *Vlast' i sobstvennost'*, pp. 68–88.

particularly striking example in which a local community complained that its new governor refused to accept the customary bribes that had previously ensured that incumbents would be beholden to local interests.³⁵

These strategies allowed Moscow to develop a larger army, with attendant social stratification and tension. In the sixteenth century, Muscovy's military was primarily a cavalry, composed of a landed elite that served seasonally and provided its own equipment, horses, and training. The cavalry army grew steadily in the sixteenth century.³⁶ Its leadership elite—the "sovereign's court" (*gosudarev dvor*)—grew from a handful of boyars and their courts to about 3,000 men at midsixteenth century.³⁷ By the seventeenth century, the sovereign's court had evolved a series of ranks (*stol'nik*, *striapchii*, and the like), and contemporary documents distinguished these men as those "who serve from the Moscow list" (*po Moskovskomu spisku*) as opposed to those who serve from a provincial town (*po gorodu*).³⁸ According to the remuneration scale of the end of the century, the highest ranks received 3.5 times more land than the lowest provincial gentry. Legislation on dishonor enforced this social hierarchy.

Paralleling this growth of the Moscow-based and provincial cavalry was the creation in the sixteenth century of an expansive noncavalry army with more modern equipment and techniques. At midcentury, musketeers, artillery, and Cossack regiments numbered around 30,000, outnumbering the ca. 21,000 cavalry servitors; by the end of the century, there were about 30,000 cavalrymen, 20,000 musketeers, 3,500 artillerymen, and significant numbers of frontier Cossacks and non-Russian troops (e.g., Bashkirs, Tatars).³⁹ Often called in English *contract servitors*, these troops did not enjoy tax privileges or the right to own land or peasants. They straddled urban and rural society. Some, such as

³⁵Valerie Kivelson, *Autocracy in the Provinces: The Muscovite Gentry and Political Culture in the Seventeenth Century* (Stanford, 1996), chaps. 2–5; Carol Belkin Stevens, *Soldiers on the Steppe. Army Reform and Social Change in Early Modern Russia* (DeKalb, Ill., 1995); Brian L. Davies, *State Power and Community in Early Modern Russia* (Cambridge, England, forthcoming); idem, "Village into Garrison: The Military Peasant Communities in Southern Muscovy," *Russian Review* 51 (1992):481–501; idem, "The Politics of Give and Take: *Kormlenie* as Service Remuneration and Generalized Exchange, 1488–1726," in Kleimola and Lenhoff, eds., *Culture and Identity*, pp. 39–67 (example in his n. 55).

³⁶On the cavalry elite, see Richard Hellie, *Enserfment and Military Change in Muscovy* (Chicago and London, 1971); idem, *Slavery in Russia, 1450–1725* (Chicago and London, 1982), pp. 4–18; John L. H. Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar: Army and Society in Russia, 1462–1874* (Oxford, 1985).

³⁷On the *gosudarev dvor*, see Bychkova, *Sostav*; V. D. Nazarov, "O strukture 'Gosudareva dvora' v sereдинe XVI v.," in *Obshchestvo i gosudarstvo*, pp. 40–54; A. P. Pavlov, *Gosudarev dvor i politicheskaiia bor'ba pri Borise Godunove (1584–1605 gg.)* (St. Petersburg, 1992).

³⁸On the absence of class tension within the metropolitan or Moscow-based elite, see Zimin, "O politicheskikh predposylkakh," pp. 21–27; V. B. Kobrin, *Vlast' i sobstvennost'*, chaps. 3, 6; Pavlov, *Gosudarev dvor*.

³⁹On these ranks, see Stevens, *Soldiers on the Steppe*; Kliuchevskii, *Istoriia soslovii v Rossii in Sochineniia*, vol. 6 (1959), lect. 17; Hellie, *Enserfment*, pt. 3, pp. 151–234; Keep, *Soldiers*, chaps. 3–4.

regiments of Cossacks, tended farm plots to supplement income; others lived off the revenues of artisanal work in the off-campaign season. These new communities created social diversity, especially on the frontiers, that blurred the more rigid social distinctions maintained in the Center.

While Muscovy aggressively cultivated its metropolitan and provincial cavalry elite as a means of expanding its military forces and of mobilizing peasant labor, it left a wide range of administrative activity in the hands of communities themselves. In towns, for example, the state cultivated a small elite of merchants (*gosti*), who served as the grand prince's factors, overseeing international trade, collecting tolls and revenues from state monopolies, and the like. They enjoyed tax and land privileges similar to the highest elite. Muscovy's urban artisans and small merchants, however, paid taxes and suffered competition from the artisans and tradesmen of landlords and ecclesiastical institutions such as monasteries who enjoyed tax immunities. Towns enjoyed limited self-government through communes (*posady*), which oversaw day-to-day governance and constituted a liaison with the grand prince's governor.⁴⁰

Communal organization similarly provided the backbone of day-to-day administration among the peasants, whether in the far North where peasant *volosti* persisted or on landlords' properties. Landlords often governed through peasant communes and their boards of elders, with only the wealthiest among them employing bailiffs. Peasant communes had oversight in day-to-day issues of law and order, cooperative agrarian endeavors, and tax collection.⁴¹ At the level of individuals, a wide degree of authority was left to landlords, family patriarchs, communal elders, and the church. Family patriarchs exerted authority over households of slaves, serfs, women, children, and other dependents; social welfare was left to families, neighbors, communes, landlords, parishes, monasteries, and the religious hierarchy. The Orthodox Church itself constituted a nexus of diffused power. It wielded extensive authority as a landlord over its peasant villages and urban settlements, and it acted as the societal arbiter of cultural expression, promoting a theocratic, patriarchal, and hierarchic view of society and state that complemented the ruler's assertions of autocracy. By age-old statutes and tradition, the Orthodox Church, with its law codes derived from Byzantium, had jurisdiction over all the Muscovite Orthodox pop-

⁴⁰On townsmen, see P. P. Smirnov, *Posadskie liudi i ikh klassovaia bor'ba do sere diny XVII veka*, 2 vols. (Moscow and Leningrad, 1947–48), and J. Michael Hittle, *The Service City: State and Townsmen in Russia, 1600–1800* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1979). On merchants, see Samuel H. Baron, "Who were the *Gosti*?" *California Slavic Studies* 7 (1973):1–40, and Paul Bushkovitch, *The Merchants of Muscovy, 1580–1650* (Cambridge, England, 1980).

⁴¹On peasant communes, see L. V. Cherepnin and V. D. Nazarov, "Krestianstvo na Rusi v sere dine XII–kontse XV v.," in Z. V. Udal'tsova, ed., *Istoriia krest'ianstva v Evrope. Epokha feodalizma*, 3 vols. (Moscow, 1985–86), 2:250–86; Blum, *Lord and Peasant*, chap. 6; Veselovskii, *Selo i derevnia*. See Steven Hoch's argument on the tyranny of communes: *Serfdom and Social Control in Russia: Petrovskoe, A Village in Tambov* (Chicago, 1986).

place in crimes declared church related and nearly total jurisdiction, save for the highest crimes, for individuals living on its lands. Thus the picture is of a centralized state mobilizing only a narrow range of essential resources and services, devolving administrative authority or tolerating local autonomies as expedient. The same situation of calculated decentralization is evident in legal practice.

In legal reform, for example, Muscovite rulers moved toward standardization by issuing two law codes (1497, 1550) that served as judge's handbooks, sketching out procedure, court fees, and laws on particular issues. At the same time, however, other codes served different purposes or communities. Church courts used ecclesiastical law codes, portions of which dated back to Kiev Rus'. The *Ruskaia pravda*, a compendium of East Slavic customary law dating from the Kievan era, continued to circulate in Muscovite lands, presumably for village courts (a new redaction was done in the early seventeenth century). In 1589, a version of the 1550 Moscow law code, adapted to the social structure and economic patterns of the North, was compiled but not officially sanctioned; contemporary sources also cite a separate Perm' law code (*Zyrianskii sudebnik*).⁴² Thus, even Muscovy's striving toward judicial uniformity was belied by the multiplicity of judicial venues, without, apparently, interfering with its overall project of mobilization. All in all, sixteenth-century governance amounted to a patchwork quilt of forms and practices: peasant communes in the North; corporate estates in the west; *iasak*-paying tribes and indigenous elites on the Middle Volga and in Siberia; governors presiding over a motley array of Cossacks, musketeers, and siege forces on the steppe frontier; and provincial gentry and boyar elite with their dependent peasants in the Center. The Kremlin maintained its claims to high justice, taxation, and military and diplomatic affairs, and local communities bore the brunt of mundane administration.⁴³

All this evidence suggests that the tsars' claim of autocracy encompassed a remarkably varied political economy. Although this approach was pragmatic and functioned in the sixteenth century, it existed in tension with the state's continued desire to mobilize resources. The better Moscow's rulers could knit together their disparate lands, the better they would accomplish their goals. They had a

⁴²On codes, see Daniel H. Kaiser, *The Growth of the Law in Medieval Russia* (Princeton, N.J., 1980); idem, "Law, Russian (Muscovite), 1300–1500," in Joseph R. Strayer, ed., *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, 13 vols. (New York, 1982–89), 7 (1986): 506–12; Hans-Joachim Torke, "Sudebnik," in idem, ed., *Lexikon der Geschichte Russlands* (Munich, 1985), pp. 370–71. Perm' code: S. K. Bakhrushin, "Komi," in *Ocherki istorii SSSR. Period feodalizma. Konets XV v.–nachalo XVII v.* (Moscow, 1955), p. 648.

⁴³As difficult as it was when the prevailing orthodoxy exaggerated Muscovy's centralization, some Soviet scholars tried to argue for the diversity of Muscovy's governing strategies: Tikhomirov, *Rossia v XVI stoletii*; Veselovskii, "Poslednie udely"; Zimin, "Lenin"; idem, "O politicheskikh predposylkakh."

hard row to hoe, however, as they tried to forge even minimal cohesion. Leaving to Chapter 5 a consideration of the strategies of integration that the state employed, one among them being the rhetoric and practice of honor, let us here reflect on what this means for an understanding of Russian autocracy.

The Nature of Autocracy

On one hand, the nature of Muscovite autocracy seems self-evident: It was despotic, nearly totalitarian. Such a conception has a long heritage. Marshall Poe has demonstrated that the trope of Muscovy as a despotic state was imposed by European (English, German) travelers to Muscovy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and grew as much from their local prejudices and classical education as from their familiarity with the practice of Muscovite autocratic power. This view was sustained by nineteenth-century statist scholarship and reinvigorated in the twentieth century because of Cold War tensions between the West and Stalin's Russia.⁴⁴ The most salient feature of this approach is the sharp distinction it draws between Muscovy and Europe, which is idealized as the normative model of development.

This contrast is based by and large on abstract concepts of legality, rather than on an analysis of the practice of autocracy. It emphasizes the inadequacies of Russia's juridical development in comparison with that of Europe, particularly with regard to the rights of communities and individuals. Muscovy did not share the traditional hallmarks of the European (read French, British, and to some extent, German) path of development: There were no legal limits on the power of the tsar, and Muscovy had no enfranchised corporate bodies or representative institutions of a truly constitutional, parliamentary type. From a juridical point of view, Muscovy did not have feudalism, with its implicit guarantees of reciprocal political rights, private property, and sanctity of law. In sum, Muscovy would seem to live up to the interpretation that holds that government was arbitrary, rule uniformly administered, and society disenfranchised and passive.

On the other hand, the above description of Muscovite governance strikes a dissonant chord, inasmuch as it depicts Muscovy in terms that should sound familiar to readers of current early modern European historiography. Simply put, current work on early modern European politics is moving beyond the traditional juridical focus and evolutionary framework to explore the complexities

⁴⁴Richard Pipes' *Russia under the Old Regime* (New York, 1974) is a classic statement, but his work culminates a line of interpretation that goes back to the sixteenth century. See Marshall Poe, "Russian Despotism: The Origins and Dissemination of an Early Modern Commonplace," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1993.