



0. THE GOOD REIGN - Story Preface
1. BEGGAR IN THE PALACE
2. THE FIRST TSAR
- 3. THE GOOD REIGN**
4. DEATH BY POISON
5. ARCHITECTS BLINDED
6. ART AT THE TIME OF IVAN IV
7. THE BAD REIGN
8. LEGACY and MURDER
9. OLD BEFORE HIS TIME
10. I'M SORRY

Muscovy, in its infancy, was little more than a wooden fort when [Daniel Aleksandrovich](#) (1261-1303) became the forefather of all the Grand Princes of Muscovy. He was also the father of Ivan I. This image depicts a painting by Apollinari Vasnetsov (1864-1933) entitled "Court of a Feudal Russian Prince." [Image online](#), courtesy Wikimedia Commons. [Click on it for a full-page view.](#) PD

When Ivan took power in his own right, he faced massive problems in a tumultuous country that was nearly bankrupt.

There were no banks, no roads, no infrastructure. After all, less than a century had passed since his grandfather, Ivan III, began to integrate other Russian lands into the Muscovy Principality. It was next to impossible for any ruler - including the new Tsar - to exert meaningful authority in the realm. The country badly needed reforms, which Ivan began to introduce.

Complicating the situation further were religious differences between Muscovy and its neighbors. During the previous century, Constantinople (the "Rome of the East") had fallen to the Ottoman Turks (who were practicing Muslims). Constantinople was renamed *Islambol* ("Islam Abounds") or, as it is known today, Istanbul.

With prior Christian territory now under Muslim control, Muscovy (a country of Orthodox Christians) considered its capital city (Moscow) to be the "Third Rome."

On the 21st of June, 1547 - about a year after Ivan's lavish coronation - Moscow was massively damaged by a sudden, terrible fire. The city's mostly wooden buildings quickly succumbed to the flames. Even part of the Kremlin - the walled-in fortress looking down over the city - was damaged.

With two-thirds of the city destroyed, the young Tsar was furious. Thinking the fire had been deliberately set, Ivan retaliated by having people executed in Red Square.

Meanwhile, terrorists were storming the gates. Problems in the north harmed the country's Baltic trade. Problems in the east, with the Tatars - Russia's traditional enemy - prevented expanded Asian trade.

Facing such circumstances, Ivan declared a holy war against the Muslim Tatars of Kazan (where the Kazanka joins the Volga River) and Astrakhan (where the Volga flows into the Caspian Sea).

Only 22 years old when he took his newly organized army to the Khanate of Kazan, Ivan IV greatly benefitted from the abilities of his general, Prince Andrei Kurbsky, and the use of Dutch gunpowder. Tunneling under Kazan's garrisoned walls during a siege of the city, the Russians gained the upper hand.

After five months, Kazan - gateway to the Urals and Siberia - fell. (Sergei Eisenstein later made a famous movie about Ivan the Terrible, including his Kazan conquest.) Decimating Kazan's Muslim culture (and annexing the city as part of Muscovy), Ivan showed no mercy.

Perhaps people in Kazan recalled the legendary comments of the Khan's wife when she learned of Ivan's birth. Clearly he had used one of those envisioned "two teeth" to "devour us."

The other tooth, for the most part, was still idle. Anastasia, by all accounts, was a calming influence on her husband. While she was alive, she was able - for the most part - to control him.

With his many accomplishments, Ivan was effectively ruling Muscovy and expanding the realm. Scholars refer to the first part of his reign (1547-1562) as the “Good Reign.”

But palace intrigues, resulting in Anastasia's death, would soon alter the course of history. *With* Anastasia, Ivan was manageable. *Without* her, he would descend into madness.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-GOOD-REIGN-Ivan-the-Terrible>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/THE-GOOD-REIGN-Ivan-the-Terrible>

Media Stream

Muscovy in Its Infancy - Daniel Aleksandrovich

Muscovy was in its infancy when Daniel Aleksandrovich—the youngest son of a Rurik prince called Alexander Nevsky (Prince of Novgorod, Grand Prince of Kiev and Grand Prince of Vladimir)—became its ruler (and forefather of all the Grand Princes of Muscovy).



Born in 1261, Daniel was given the tiny principality of Muscovy when his father died. He created peace in Moscow, without bloodshed, and ruled for about 30 years.

Legends tell us that Daniel was popular with his subjects and respected for his humility, meekness and peacefulness. He died in 1303.

He and his wife, Maria, had six children. The youngest was Ivan I of Muscovy.

This painting, by Apollinari Vasnetsov (1864-1933), depicts how Daniel may have interacted with his subjects.

Called *Court of a Feudal Russian Prince*, the painting reflects a time when Russian towns were mostly made of wood (and Moscow was little more than a fort in the middle of Central Rus').

Click on the image for a wonderful view.

Image of painting, described above, online via Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Muscovy-in-Its-Infancy-Daniel-Aleksandrovich>



Portrait of Ivan III

Image of Grand Prince Ivan III, online courtesy Russian State Archives.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Portrait-of-Ivan-III>

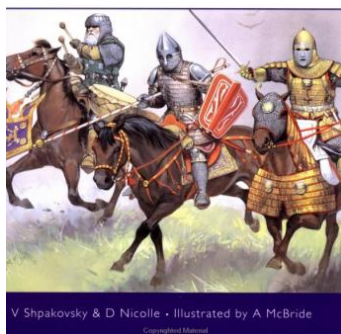


Ivan the Terrible - His Throne

Image online, courtesy Russian State Archives.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Ivan-the-Terrible-His-Throne>

Medieval Russian Armies 1250–1500



Medieval Russian Armies 1250-1500 - By V. Shpakovsky

Image online, courtesy Google Books.

View this asset at:

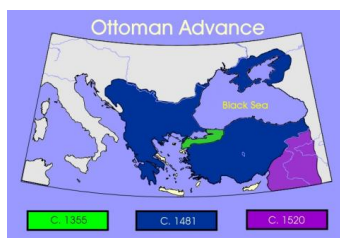
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Medieval-Russian-Armies-1250-1500-By-V.-Shpakovsky>



Eastern Europe Map, Circa 1490

Map online, courtesy University of Calgary.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Eastern-Europe-Map-Circa-1490>

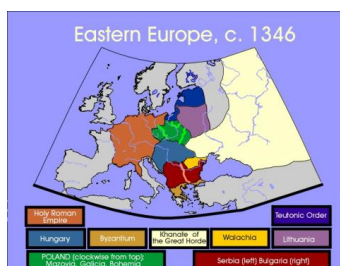


Ottoman Movement: 1355, 1481, 1520

Map image online, courtesy University of Calgary.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Ottoman-Movement-1355-1481-1520>



Map of Eastern Europe circa 1346

Map online, courtesy University of Calgary.

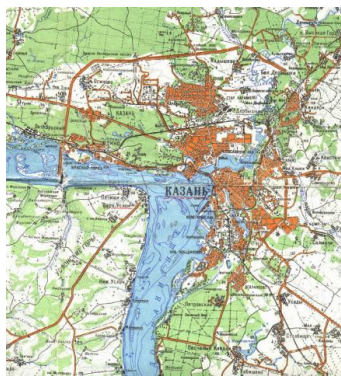
View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Map-of-Eastern-Europe-circa-1346>



Map of Eastern Europe and Russia

Map online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

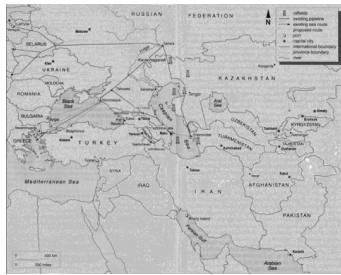
View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Map-of-Eastern-Europe-and-Russia>



Map Showing Kazan

Image online, Russian-language Wikipedia.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Map-Showing-Kazan>



Map - Moscow as It Relates to the Middle East

Map image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Map-Moscow-as-It-Relates-to-the-Middle-East>

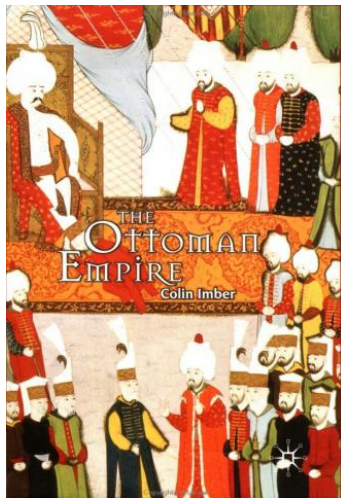


Kazan Khanate: The Land Conquered by Ivan IV

Map image online, courtesy Russian-language Wikipedia.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Kazan-Khanate-The-Land-Conquered-by-Ivan-IV>



The Ottoman Empire - Colin Imber

Image online, courtesy Google Books.

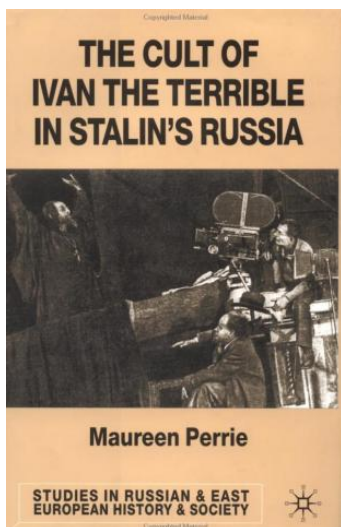
View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/The-Ottoman-Empire-Colin-Imber>



Map of Major Russian Cities

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Map-of-Major-Russian-Cities>



Cult of Ivan the Terrible in Stalin's Russia

Image of book cover online, courtesy Amazon.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Cult-of-Ivan-the-Terrible-in-Stalin-s-Russia>



Ivan the Terrible - 1552 Military Plan for Kazan

Map, online courtesy Russian-language Wikipedia.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Ivan-the-Terrible-1552-Military-Plan-for-Kazan>



Kazan - Recreation of the Walled City

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

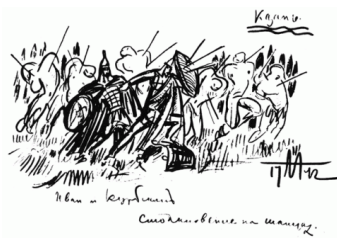
View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Kazan-Recreation-of-the-Walled-City>



Drawing of the Inhabitants of Kazan

Image online, Russian-language Wikipedia.

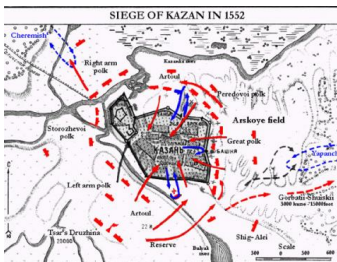
View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Drawing-of-the-Inhabitants-of-Kazan>



Ivan the Terrible - Siege of Kazan

Image online via Russian-language Wikipedia.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Ivan-the-Terrible-Siege-of-Kazan>



Kazan Attack Plan in 1552

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Kazan-Attack-Plan-in-1552>



Ivan IV in Kazan

Image online, via Russian-language Wikipedia.

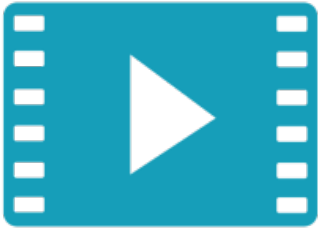
View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Ivan-IV-in-Kazan>



Ivan the Terrible - His Good Reign

From *Ivan the Terrible* - part of the series *The Most Evil Men in History*. Copyright, [Discovery Channel](#), all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the program. Online, courtesy hbavishi's Channel at YouTube.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Ivan-the-Terrible-His-Good-Reign>



Ivan the Terrible Captures Kazan

Clip from Sergei Eisenstein's film, "Ivan the Terrible," online courtesy European Heritage Library, via YouTube. Film is now in the public domain.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Ivan-the-Terrible-Captures-Kazan>