Though the literature on Ivan Groznyi is by now impressive enough, little research has so far been devoted to the tsar's political testament. The valuable translation by R. C. Howes (*The Testaments of the Grand Princes of Moscow* [Ithaca, N.Y., 1967], pp. 304-360) has a short general introduction and a rather detailed commentary on its material stipulations, i.e., the division of his votchina among his heirs. The dating of the document—1572 or several drafts between 1564 and 1572—as put forward by Veselovskii and Skrynnikov remains controversial: the question has to be left open whether Ivan in fact had the documents from the archives at hand during his flight in August, 1572, to check all details about the allocations of his innumerable votchina. (cf. Grigor'ev, *Voprosy istorii*, 4 [1972], pp. 211-212).

Professor Stoekl focuses his attention on some special problems. One is the ruler's stipulations as to the symbols of his regal power (regalia), which hitherto have not been fully explained. Another is an interpretation of the introductory admonition to his sons (pouchenie), its tradition in older testaments of Russian princes, its likely relations to the apocryphical Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and the special message of the pouchenie, based on a synopsis of its citations from the New Testament. Ivan appears to compare himself with Christ the High Priest sacrificing Himself. The author wonders whether the tsar really made such an effort of humble self-adulation after he had had a Metropolitan murdered, the country ravaged by the oprichnina, etc., etc.

The second part of the book interprets Ivan's official seal as another source of his self-image. The Western origins of the double-headed eagle have been established by Alef and Hellmann. The significance of the rider killing the dragon (St. George or the tsar?) remains doubtful, as well as that of the unicorn. The center of this seal is surrounded by twenty-four local coats of arms, although there was no genuine Russian heraldic tradition—so many symbols were picked up more or less at random. Reval was mixed up with Wenden, and Riga is represented by the escutcheon of the Fuerstenberg family, a member of which had been the next to last Landmeister of the Teutonic Order—to name only Ivan's personal acquisitions. Most interesting is the three-armed-cross in the top medallion of the seal, which symbolizes the ruler's closeness to God as well as the uniqueness of the Orthodox Empire vis-à-vis the dynasties of the West.

Professor Stoekl, a leading specialist in his field, has used many not easily accessible older Russian secondary sources and taken advantage of discussions with some eminent scholars in ecclesiastical history, so his splendid interpretation is not likely to be superseded in the foreseeable future.

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