



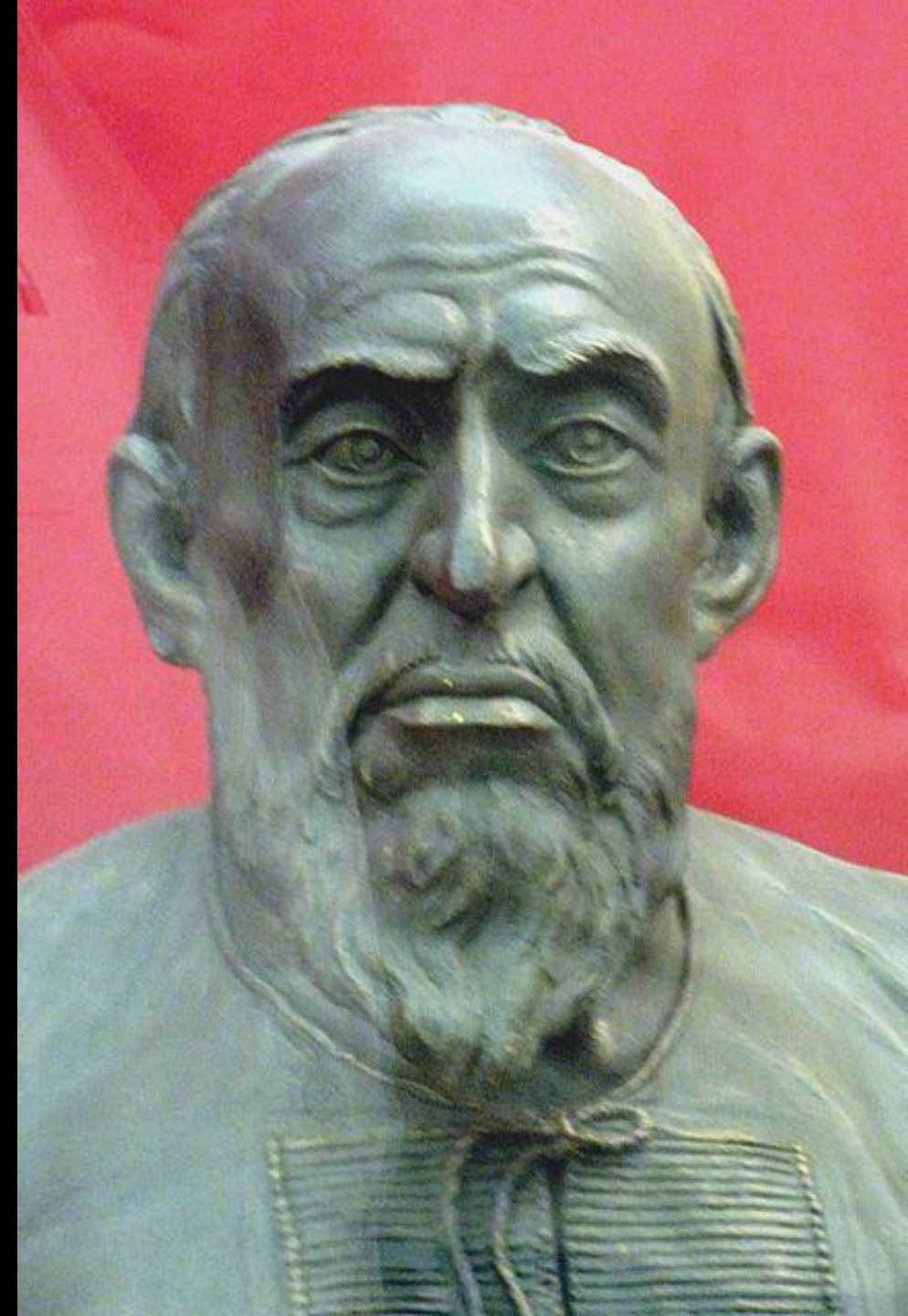
reign of ivan iv the terrible

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Ivan IV

- [Tsar of Russia](#)Reign16 (26) January 1547 – 1575[Coronation](#)16 (26) January 1547PredecessorMonarchy establishedSuccessor[Simeon Bekbulatovich](#)Reign1576 – 28 March 1584Predecessor[Simeon Bekbulatovich](#)Successor[Feodor I Grand Prince of Moscow](#)Reign3 December 1533 – 16 January 1547Predecessor[Vasili III](#)SuccessorHimself as [Tsar of Russia](#)
- Born25 August 1530
[Kolomenskoye, Grand Duchy of Moscow](#)Died28 March [O.S. 18 March] 1584 (aged 53)
[Moscow, Tsardom of Russia](#)Burial[Cathedral of the Archangel](#), Moscow
- Spousesshow*See list*
- Issue
[more...](#)show*See list*
- NamesIvan Vasilyevich[DynastyRurik](#)Father[Vasili III of Russia](#)Mother[Elena Glinskaya](#)Religion[Russian Orthodox](#)

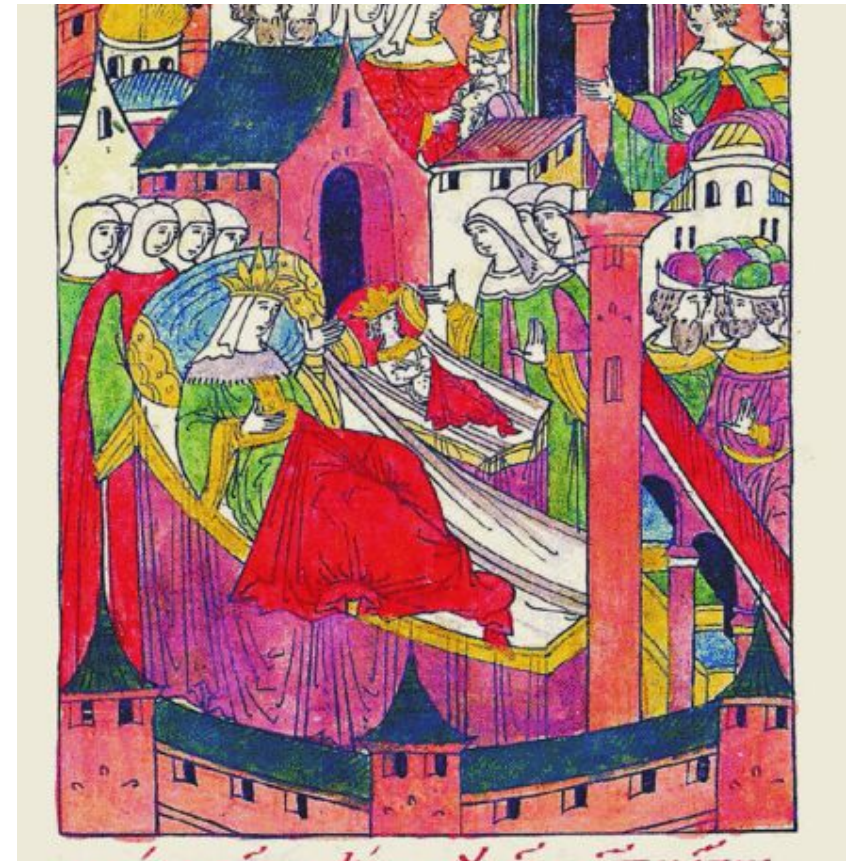


Ivan IV Vasilyevich

- Ivan was the first Moscow ruler born after its independence. The son of [Vasili III](#), the [Rurikid](#) ruler of the [Grand Duchy of Moscow](#), he was appointed grand prince when he was three years old after his father's death. A group of reformers known as the "Chosen Council" united around the young Ivan, declaring him [tsar](#) (emperor) of [All Rus'](#) in 1547 at the age of 16 and establishing the [Tsardom of Russia](#) with Moscow as the predominant state. Ivan's reign was characterised by Russia's transformation from a [medieval](#) state to an [empire](#) under the tsar but at an immense cost to its people and its broader, long-term economy.

Early life

- Ivan was the first son of [Vasili III](#) and his second wife, [Elena Glinskaya](#). Vasili's [mother](#) was a [Greek](#) princess and member of the [Byzantine Palaiologos family](#). She was a daughter of [Thomas Palaiologos](#), the younger brother of the last [Byzantine Emperor, Constantine XI Palaiologos](#) (r. 1449–1453).^[14] Elena's [mother](#) was a Serbian princess and her father's family, the Glinski clan (nobles based in the [Grand Duchy of Lithuania](#)), claimed descent both from Orthodox [Hungarian nobles](#) and the Mongol ruler [Mamai](#) (1335–1380.)^{[15][16][17][18]} Born on August 25, he received the name Ivan in honor of St. John the Baptist, the day of the Beheading of which falls on August 29. In some texts of that era, it is also occasionally mentioned with the names Titus and Smaragd, in accordance with the tradition of polyonyms among the Rurikovich. Baptized in the Trinity-Sergius Monastery by Abbot Joasaph (Skripitsyn), two elders of the Joseph-Volotsk monastery were elected as recipients—the monk Cassian Bossoy and the hegumen Daniel. Tradition says that in honor of the birth of Ivan, the Church of the Ascension was built in Kolomenskoye.



Domestic policy

- Despite calamities triggered by the [Great Fire of 1547](#), the early part of Ivan's reign was one of peaceful reforms and modernization. Ivan revised the law code, creating the [Sudebnik of 1550](#), founded a [standing army](#) (the [streltsy](#)),^[26] established the [Zemsky Sobor](#) (the first Russian parliament of feudal estates) and the council of the nobles (known as the Chosen Council) and confirmed the position of the Church with the [Council of the Hundred Chapters](#) (*Stoglavyy Synod*), which unified the rituals and ecclesiastical regulations of the whole country. He introduced local self-government to rural regions, mainly in northeastern Russia, populated by the state peasantry.



Oprichnina

- The 1560s brought to Russia hardships that led to a dramatic change of Ivan's policies. Russia was devastated by a combination of drought, famine, unsuccessful wars against the [Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth](#), [Tatar invasions](#), and the sea-trading blockade carried out by the Swedes, the Poles, and the [Hanseatic League](#). His first wife, [Anastasia Romanovna](#), died in 1560, which was suspected to be a poisoning. The personal tragedy deeply hurt Ivan and is thought to have affected his personality, if not his mental health. At the same time, one of Ivan's advisors, Prince [Andrei Kurbsky](#), defected to the Lithuanians, took command of the Lithuanian troops and devastated the Russian region of [Velikiye Luki](#). That series of treasons made Ivan paranoically suspicious of nobility.



Diplomacy and trade

- In 1547, Hans Schlitte, the agent of Ivan, recruited craftsmen in Germany for work in Russia. However, all of the craftsmen were arrested in [Lübeck](#) at the request of Poland and [Livonia](#). The German merchant companies ignored the new [port built by Ivan](#) on the [River Narva](#) in 1550 and continued to deliver goods in the [Baltic](#) ports owned by Livonia. Russia remained isolated from sea trade.
- Ivan established close ties with the [Kingdom of England](#). Russian-English relations can be traced to 1551, when the [Muscovy Company](#) was formed by [Richard Chancellor](#), [Sebastian Cabot](#), Sir [Hugh Willoughby](#) and several London merchants. In 1553, Chancellor sailed to the [White Sea](#) and continued overland to Moscow, where he visited Ivan's court. Ivan opened up the White Sea and the port of [Arkhangelsk](#) to the company and granted it privilege of trading throughout his reign without paying the standard customs fees. ^[42]



Conquest of Kazan and Astrakhan

- While Ivan was a child, armies of the [Kazan Khanate](#) repeatedly raided northeastern Russia.^[47] In the 1530s, the Crimean khan formed an offensive alliance with [Safa Giray of Kazan](#), his relative. When Safa Giray invaded [Muscovy](#) in December 1540, the Russians used [Qasim Tatars](#) to contain him. After his advance was stalled near Murom, Safa Giray was forced to withdraw to his own borders.
- The reverses undermined Safa Giray's authority in Kazan. A pro-Russian party, represented by [Shahgali](#), gained enough popular support to make several attempts to take over the Kazan throne. In 1545, Ivan mounted an expedition to the [River Volga](#) to show his support for the pro-Russians.



Livonian War

- In 1558, Ivan launched the [Livonian War](#) in an attempt to gain access to the [Baltic Sea](#) and its major trade routes. The war ultimately proved unsuccessful and stretched on for 24 years and engaging the [Kingdom of Sweden](#), the [Grand Duchy of Lithuania](#), the [Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth](#) and the [Teutonic Knights](#) of [Livonia](#). The prolonged war had nearly destroyed the economy, and the *Oprichnina* had thoroughly disrupted the government. Meanwhile, the [Union of Lublin](#) had united the [Grand Duchy of Lithuania](#) and [Kingdom of Poland](#), and the [Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth](#) acquired an energetic leader, [Stefan Batory](#), who was supported by Russia's southern enemy, the Ottoman Empire. Ivan's realm was being squeezed by two of the time's great powers.
- After rejecting peace proposals from his enemies, Ivan had found himself in a difficult position by 1579. The displaced refugees fleeing the war compounded the effects of the simultaneous drought, and the exacerbated war engendered epidemics causing much loss of life.



Legacy

- Ivan completely altered Russia's governmental structure, establishing the character of modern Russian political organisation.^[72] Ivan's creation of the [Oprichnina](#), answerable only to him, afforded him personal protection but also curtailed the traditional powers and rights of the boyars.^[73] Henceforth, Tsarist autocracy and despotism would lie at the heart of the Russian state.^[74] Ivan bypassed the [Mestnichestvo](#) system and offered positions of power to his supporters among the minor gentry.^[75] The empire's local administration combined both locally and centrally appointed officials; the system proved durable and practical and sufficiently flexible to tolerate later modification.^[25]



Posthumous reputation

- Ivan's notorious outbursts and autocratic whims helped characterise the position of tsar as one accountable to no earthly authority but only to God.^[25] Tsarist absolutism faced few serious challenges until the 19th century. The earliest and most influential account of his reign prior to 1917 was by the historian [N.M.Karamzin](#), who described Ivan as a 'tormentor' of his people, particularly from 1560, though even after that date Karamzin believed there was a mix of 'good' and 'evil' in his character. In 1922, the historian [Robert Wipper](#) - who later returned to his native [Latvia](#) to avoid living under communist rule - wrote a biography that reassessed Ivan as a monarch "who loved the ordinary people" and praised his agrarian reforms.^[79]
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