Ivan le Terrible, ou le Métier de tyran. By Pierre Gonneau. Paris: Éditions Tallandier, 2014. 556 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Chronology. Tables. Maps. €26.00, paper.

This elegantly crafted monograph is the latest in a series of recent studies on the controversial figure of Ivan Vasil'evich IV and his times. Because it follows three books bearing similar titles, authored by prominent political historians—Boris Floria's *Ivan Groznyi* (1999), Maureen Perrie and Andrei Pavlov's *Ivan the Terrible* (2003), and Isabel de Madariaga's *Ivan the Terrible: First Tsar of Russia* (2005)—one might legitimately question whether yet another biography of Tsar Ivan is needed. Against all expectations, Pierre Gonneau's illuminating coverage of themes superficially covered or distorted in Soviet and post-Soviet scholarship, meticulous references to an unusually wide range of primary sources, and comprehensive, updated bibliography enhance our understanding of the period.

The events of the tsar's life are presented in five parts: as heir of the Muscovite political tradition (1530–33); Ivan's minority (1534–46); his coronation, victories, and political reforms (1547–64); the terror (1565–72); and the final years, when the economy collapsed and the tsar extinguished his own dynasty. The basic order is chronological and the periodization follows the traditional divisions, but the division into parts and the retrospective chapters embedded within each call our attention to the continuities underlying the policies of Ivan's predecessors and those reflected in the periods of glory, terror, and decline in Ivan's own reign. Significant themes (religious, dynastic, economic), introduced in part 1 and followed through part 5, correct Soviet historical treatments and provide a baseline for measuring the seeming excesses of the tyrant's reign. The narrative is enriched by the presentation of multiple viewpoints, some culled from less familiar literary sources (such as the life of St. Nikita of Pereslavl'-Zalesskii). Excurses and wonderfully detailed footnotes fill us in on Muscovite institutional organization and protocols (for example, a detailed essay on court structure, ranks, and offices), customs, and foundational documents.

The book stands out from other historical surveys in its handling of religious themes. Floria, Perrie and Pavlov, and de Madariaga duly mention Ivan's fondness for religious ritual and symbolism. Floria goes so far as to suggest that Ivan saw himself as God's agent for ridding the land of unbelievers and sinners. But all three follow the Soviet model that subordinates religion to politics and economics. Gonneau mines royal correspondence, speeches, charters, and official historical narratives produced during the glorious first part of Ivan's reign (*Letopisets nachala tsarstva, Stepennaia kniga*) to document how profoundly the Orthodox faith affected the mindset of the Moscow princes descended from Aleksandr Nevskii's son Daniil. Ivan's piety was nurtured by family tradition and upbringing. A belief in divine providence and miraculous intercession, shared by Muscovites of all estates, dictated his father's search for holy men who could predict whether Elena Glinskaia would bear a son. The birth of a long-awaited heir was interpreted as a miraculous

gift from God to the divinely blessed dynasty. Monks journeyed from the farthest corners of the land to pay their respects to the child. The tsar's belief in divine providence and miraculous intercession, shared by Muscovites of all estates, influenced his behavior at every stage of his life. Ivan's teachers and closest advisors during his minority and the first part of his reign were churchmen: Metropolitan Makarii, the priests Sil'vestr and Andrei (later Metropolitan Afanasii). Beginning in 1542, at the age of twelve, Ivan made regular pilgrimages to holy shrines throughout his life. Generous donations, privileges, and immunities granted by the tsar even in the period of terror are registered in charters and donation books. Records cited here show that Ivan's fascination with monasticism was shared by his ancestors, several of whom—Daniil Aleksandrovich, Ivan I, Ivan II, and Vasilii I, Vasilii II, and his father—asked to become monks on their deathbeds. In the last two cases, churchmen refused to grant this request, evidently because of both rulers' exceptional cruelty to their enemies. The tsar supported Makarii's councils of 1547 and 1549, canonizing native saints as protectors of the tsardom and visiting the graves of the new wonder-workers before battle. The protocol of the Hundred Chapters Church Council (Stoglavyi Sobor) of 1551 and the tsar's letters and conversations confirm his interest in ecclesiastical reforms and questions of canon law. The conquest of Kazan in 1552 is portrayed in official sources, ceremonial protocols, and the icon known as "Blessed Be the Heavenly Host of the Celestial King" as the recovery of lands promised to Vladimir I by God, on the analogy of Moses, and a triumph of the Christian faith over the infidel Tatars.

Gonneau's coverage of the terror, like the chapters in Floria's biography and Pavlov's chapters 6–8, draws heavily on the foundational studies, mostly from the Soviet period, that reconstructed the details of the tsar's parallel state and court known as the Oprichnina: the names of the courtiers (*oprichniki*), their bizarre methods and blasphemous religious ceremonies (all vividly described by Gonneau), the names of their victims (these from lists sent by the tsar with donations to monasteries for commemoration of the dead), and the stories of some more prominent martyrs (Metropolitan Filipp, Vladimir Andreevich Staritskii). The tsar's initiative has inspired a range of interpretations but no consensus. Sergei Platonov and Ruslan Skrynnikov argued that the Oprichnina was intended to break the power of the leading princely families by appropriating their hereditary lands. Vladimir Kobrin and Pavlov contended that the Oprichnina, which included men from leading noble clans, was directed against opponents of centralization. Richard Hellie insisted that the Oprichnina had no rational explanation. Gonneau acknowledges the truth of each viewpoint but presents evidence that suggests plausible rationales and precedents for the land policies. A geographical excursus describes the strategic advantages of the three regions appropriated for the Oprichnina state (schematized in figure 3): the lands between Moscow and Smolensk, providing windows to the western and southern frontiers; the lands formerly belonging to the princes of Rostov and Suzdalia; and the sparsely populated expanse of lands between Vologda and the White Sea, which have rich salt deposits (a commodity of great value) and lie on the routes taken

by English merchants. Ivan III and Vasilii III took parallel measures to appropriate princely lands for the state. The division of the Oprichnina lands into four quarters (*chetverti*), described by the sixteenth-century Englishman Giles Fletcher, writing in 1591, is further comparable to the division of lands under the Holy Roman Empire and the kingdom of France. In contrast, de Madariaga's coverage of the Oprichnina, though relying on essentially the same sources, is erratically footnoted and fragmented by accounts of political and military campaigns.

Though written for a broad range of readers, Gonneau's monograph benefits from his unusually diverse research experience. He has authored highly regarded studies of the political history of Rus′ from its inception through the seventeenth century, but he has also published in the fields of historical geography, diplomatics, philology, economics, religious history, and iconography. He has worked in-depth with a wider range of primary sources, published and unpublished, than most scholars. Statements of fact and opinion are precisely footnoted with references to ongoing discussions and to primary sources (chronicles, hagiography, charters, letters, laws, church records, diplomatic protocols, contemporary testimony, narratives) meticulously described in the introduction. An extensive bibliography includes a generous selection of the vast secondary literature on Ivan IV and his reign, from the eighteenth century to the most recent publications. Among the classic studies consulted by Gonneau but missing from Floria's and Perrie and Pavlov's books are Gustave Alef's *The Origins of Muscovite Autocracy: The Age of Ivan III* (1986); Inge Auerbach's study on Ivan IV's nemesis, *Andrej Michajlovič Kurbskij: Leben in osteuropäischen Adelsgesellschaften des 16. Jahrhunderts* (1865); H. W. Dewey's articles on administrative and legal institutions; the research of Aleksandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay on Muscovite-Ottoman relations, including *La presse et le mouvement national: Chez les musulmans de Russie avant 1920* (1964); and Gonneau's *La maison de la Sainte Trinité: Un grand-monastère russe du moyen-âge Tardif, 1345–1533* (1993) and his studies of monasticism and princes, such as his *Moines et monastères dans les sociétés de rite grec et latin* (1996).

In contrast, Floria's book, following the format of the popular series "Zhizn′ zamechatel′nykh liudei," has no footnotes or indices. A one-and-a-half-page bibliography cites a fraction of the primary sources, among them some hymns of questionable attribution, and a small number (fifteen) of Soviet secondary sources. Perrie and Pavlov offer only a scattering of notes (no more than twenty per chapter), mentioning only three western European scholars (Andreas Kappeler, Hans-Joachim Torke, and Bjarne Norretranders—all cited in translation). Not a single French scholar makes the cut. A short English-language bibliography, mostly limited to synthesizing scholarship, stops in the 1990s. One recent publication, Sergei Bogatyrev's study *The Sovereign and His Counsellors: Ritualised Consultations in Muscovite Political Culture, 1350s–1570s* (2000), is included. De Madariaga's history is based on published sources, primarily secondary. Her bibliography, though current to 2005, contains a number of errors, as do the notes.

Of the four recent histories, Gonneau's is the most vivid, the fullest, and

the most suggestive to the specialist. If translated into English or Russian, it would make an exemplary monograph for classroom use more widely.

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Empire of Extinction: Russians and the North Pacific's Strange Beasts of the Sea, 1741–1867. By Ryan Tucker Jones. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. xiv, 296 pp. Appendix. Notes. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Maps. $55.00, hard bound.

"On an unrecorded day in the 1760s, the last Steller's sea cow (*rhytina borealis*) died" (1). With this haunting opening sentence, Ryan Tucker Jones embarks on a fascinating, masterful, and profound study of Russia's presence in the North Pacific from 1741 to 1867. As the book's title suggests, Jones explores the deep interrelations of empire and environmental change: the material and biological outcomes that accompanied tsarist colonial expansion and the arrival of Russian *promyshlenniki* (fur traders), the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge about the North Pacific, and the use of extinction and extirpation as cultural metaphors and conceptual categories for both justifying and challenging empire. He analyzes the "environmental catastrophe that, in some ways, was the defining story of Russia's eighteenth-century North Pacific empire.... The total extinction of the sea cow, as well as the cascading sea otter population crashes that accompanied the increasingly complex fur trade as it proceeded eastward from the Commander Islands to the Alaskan mainland" (61). Moreover, he traces the ways in which the very idea of extinction—and the possibility of human-induced extinction—gained a certain acceptance among European naturalists in part as a result of Russia's rapid, clearly observable environmental transformation of North Pacific ocean life.[1]

The end of the sea cow—killed for its bountiful protein and fat by fur hunters with little other means for sustenance—serves as the book's beating heart and symbolic soul. It was, as Jones notes, "one of only three known megafaunal extinctions to occur in the modern era before 1800" (3) and therefore an event of global zoological importance. It was also a powerful symbol of the larger environmental effects of Russian expansion in the North Pacific. The dramatic environmental changes that occurred during the tsarist period served as fodder for other imperial powers to delegitimize Russian imperial aspirations in the region as "savage," "barbaric," and lacking the ability to manage their colonial territories. "As early as the 1780s, Europeans were already using the Russian North Pacific as an example of empire's havoc and wastage, with the sea cow, fur seal, and sea otter at the center" (3). Europeans judged extirpation as a failure of Russian civilization. Taken together, "the sea cow's extinction represents at once both the flattening effects that early

1. For a popular discussion of extinction and the shift in human understandings of it, see Elizabeth Kolbert, *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* (New York, 2014).