

Rakhimzianov, Bulat. *Kasimovskoe khanstvo (1445–1552 gg.). Ocherki istorii. Kazan' Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, Kazan', 2009. 207 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Illustrations. Appendices. Price unknown.*

SOME forty-six years ago I submitted a doctoral dissertation dedicated to the relations between Muscovy and Kazan', in which, *en passant*, I dealt as well with the so-called Khanate of Kasimov. I am embarrassed by Mr Rakhimzianov's flattering words about that work (pp. 30ff.), and pleased that a young Tatar historian has taken up this important subject.

Mr Rakhimzianov seems, despite his kind words, to have missed — or taken issue with — my 'The *Jarlyk* of Akhmad-xan to Ivan III: A New Reading' (*International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics*, 12, 1969, pp. 33–47), where I challenge the authenticity of Akhmad's *Jarlyk* on the basis of Russian poetics and comparison with Tatar originals. (He refers on pp. 113–14 to K. V. Bazilevich's and to A. A. Gorskii's publications of the *Jarlyk*.) He also seems unaware of my old essay, 'Coming to Grips with the *Kazanskaya Istoriya*: Some Observations on Old Answers and New Questions' (*The Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the United States*, vol. 9, nos 1–2 [31–32], 1964–68, pp. 143–83), which would have saved him from reliance on that spurious work.

The author claims (p. 9) to be a 'neopositivist', and not to perceive any distinctive difference between narrative itself (in the contemporary sense) and the narrative sources. He spares himself a good deal of hard work by embracing this view, but he is not entirely consistent, devoting a large number of pages to narrative sources and their study by others, especially by Vladimir Vladimirovich Vel'iaminov-Zernov (1830–1904), his pre-eminent predecessor and author of the still-classic *Issledovanie o Kasimovskikh tsariakh i tsarevichakh* (St Petersburg, 4 vols, 1863–87).

The author's narrative depends heavily upon his view (p. 57ff.) that there existed an understanding between Vasilii II (*Temnyi*) and Ulug-Mukhammad, after the defeat and capture (1445) of Vasilii by the latter, to the effect that Kasim, son of the latter, should be established in an *udel* in the town of Gorodets/Kasimov. He is also of the view that 'Moscow became the fundamental political inheritor of the Golden Horde' (p. 62).

In general, the text seems to be influenced by an odd combination of Russophilia and Tatarophilia, in which the views expressed earlier by the author in an article, 'Nasledi Zolotoi ordy v formirovanii Rossiiskogo gosudarstva' (*Cahiers du monde russe*, 46, 2005, 1–2, pp. 29–38) play a significant role. Surprisingly, Mr Rakhimzainov fails to mention a particularly telling passage that is found in the earliest and most complete chronicle accounts and which places the Grand Principality of Moscow (or, at the least, its court culture) in the context of its Golden-Horde origins: At a formal reception of former khan of Kazan', Shigalei (Shah 'Ali), in 1536, the chronicler puts into the mouth of the young Ivan IV the words 'Tabugh salam' — in the most recent edition, 'tabuch salam' (*Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei*, vol. 29, Moscow, 1965, p. 23) — roughly equivalent of requiring a polite child who has been taught a bit of French to say 'Bonjour, M'sieur'.

A couple of details: the author speaks throughout (pp. 59ff.) of *vykhod*, the 'tribute' that was allegedly paid by Russians to the Khans. This term is apparently a calque in early Russian, formed on the Arabic *kharadja*, which literally means 'to go out' (cf. Ottoman *harac* = tribute, tax paid by non-Muslims). He also mentions (*passim*) the use of the title 'belyi tsar'. In fact, this term has no racial overtones: it is simply the colour of the West in one of the Altaic peoples' systems of orientation (see Omeljan Pritsak, 'Orientierung und Farbsymbolik. Zu den Farbenbezeichnungen in den altaischen Voelkernamen' *Saeculum*, 5, 1954, pp. 376–83) and it was very revealingly used — as 'Albus imperator' (i.e. the *Western* Emperor) — in the earliest correspondence of the Muscovite court with that of the Sforzas, as preserved in Milan ('Lettera di Francesco Sforza a Giacomo zecchiere generale di tutto il regno del Bianco imperatore', in G. Barbieri, *Milano e Mosca nella politica del Rinascimento*, Bari, 1957, pp. 82–84). (Cf. Ottoman 'Aq deniz' = the Mediterranean.)

The monograph is without an index, but contains useful Genealogical Appendices (193ff.) and a number of illustrations, partly from Vel'iamnov-Zernov's work and partly from the private collections of the author and others (on un-numbered pages, 192ff.). These provide a striking visual testimony of the lamentable present condition of relics of Kasimov's Tatar past.

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