

## **The Shifting Present and Written Images of the Mongols**

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The relationship of the Mongols with Rus' is one of those controversial topics that finds no consensus among scholars. On every major point and most of the minor ones, there is ardent and passionate disagreement. Yet, one interpretive framework, for metahistorical reasons, has tended to dominate the historiography. In this paper, I discuss first what I consider to be the evidentiary basis of Mongol-Rus' relations. Other historians with different views would no doubt emphasize different evidence and would dispute the importance of the evidence I present, but it would be incorrect to say that such evidence does not exist. Then I discuss eight main paradigms that I see as having been applied to explaining Mongol-Rus' relations. Finally, I draw some conclusions that are applicable to the present and future of studying those relations. In the process, I hope to provide the reader an understanding of why such divergent opinions exist in the scholarly literature.<sup>1</sup>

### **Historical Background**

The Mongols first made their appearance in the western Eurasian steppe in 1222. Following the death of the defeated Khwarezmshah Muhammed on an island in the Caspian Sea, the pursuing Mongol expeditionary force continued on around the west coast of the Caspian, through the Caucasus Mountains, and into an area that is also known as the Qipchaq steppe (Desht-i-Qipchaq). After wintering near the Crimean peninsula, this expeditionary force, which was

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was prepared as a chapter in Blackwell's forthcoming *A Companion to Russian History*, edited by Abbott Gleason, and therefore maintains the Vancouver system of referencing that was requested by the series editor.

commanded by Jebe and Sübe'etei (two of the Mongols' leading generals), captured Sudak in the Crimea. In 1223, they encountered and defeated a combined Rus'-Polovtsian army on the Kalka River, north of the Black Sea. Leaving the Qipchaq steppe eastward, they fought a battle against the Volga Bulgars and crossed the Volga River on their way back to their homeland in the eastern steppe.

Following two other campaigns against the Bulgars, one in 1229 (including Saksin and the Polovtsians), the other in 1232, the Mongols returned to the western steppe fourteen years after their first visit. An army commanded by Batu (the grandson of Chinggis Khan) and Sübe'etei during the winter of 1237–38 took Riazan', Moscow, Vladimir, Suzdal', and a number of other Rus' towns, but turned back before reaching Novgorod, possibly because the Novgorodians agreed to pay tribute. In December 1240, the Mongols conquered Kiev before heading further west where, in April 1241, they defeated a combined Polish and Teutonic knight army at Liegnitz and a Magyar army at Móhi.

Returning to the area north of the Black Sea, Batu established the Jochid Ulus,<sup>2</sup> which lasted until 1502 when the last remnant of it was conquered by the Crimean Tatars. It survived the longest of any of the four original ulus (khanates) distributed by Chinggis Khan to his sons. Among the successors to the Jochid Ulus, the Kazan' Khanate lasted until 1552; the Astrakhan', until 1556; the Sibir', until 1587; the Kasimov, until 1681; and the Crimean, until 1783.

The Mongols who accompanied Batu and Sübe'etei in the campaigns of 1237–1242 constituted a minority of the forces under their command; the rest of the army was made up of various other steppe peoples, including Qipchaqs, Circassians, Ossetians (Alans and Burtas), and

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<sup>2</sup> Often anachronistically and misleadingly called “the Golden Horde.” I have proposed using the term “Qipchaq Khanate” instead, but after resistance by Halperin and prolonged exchanges with him, we have agreed on the term “Ulus of Jochi” as the historically more accurate. In Rus' sources of the time it is referred to as “Orda” (from the Mongol word *ordo* = camp). For a discussion of the terminological problem, see [1].

others. To the extent that the khans of the Jochid Ulus were Chinggisids (descendants of Chinggis Khan), and that any of the ruling class could trace their ancestry back to the Mongols, they were ethnically Mongol. As a result of intermarriage with local peoples, however, such ethnic distinctions diminished early on and facilitated the generic term “Tatar” being applied in the Rus’ sources. Yet, the khan and ruling class continued to see themselves as carrying on the traditions of Chinggis Khan, and in that respect they were culturally and politically Mongol.<sup>3</sup>

From the time of the conquest until 1327, the khan in Sarai administered the Rus’ principalities through a system of resident military governors (*basqaqs*; also known as *tammači* [sing. *tamma*] in Mongol sources). Following a revolt in Tver’, the Rus’ princes took over the role of the military governors in their own principalities. The grand prince of Vladimir was *primus inter pares* among them and was responsible for keeping the others in line. He and the other Rus’ princes reported to the khan through the intermediary of a civilian governor (*darugha*) who lived in Sarai. This reporting required, if anything, even more extended sojourns than before on the part of the Rus’ princes in the capital of the khanate. A 20th-century historian, A. N. Nasonov, remarked that Grand Prince Ivan I (1328–1341) spent half his reign in the process of traveling to and from and staying at Sarai [4]. Much the same can be said for his successors, Semën (1341–1353) and Ivan II (1353–1359), with envoys (*posoly*) from the khan bringing instructions in the interim. Grand princely visits to Sarai tended to diminish toward the end of

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<sup>3</sup> Thus, in the rest of this article, I will use the form *Mongol/Tatar* to indicate the people of this transitional period in the western steppe. When necessary, I will try to maintain a distinction between *Mongols*, as designating a specific group of people in the eastern steppe, and *Tatars*, as designating the amalgamation of Turkic peoples that the Mongols created when they took over control of the western steppe. The term *Tatar* was initially used as a generic term to apply to pastoral peoples of the eastern steppe as well as to a Mongolian-speaking group who were neighbors of the Mongols. When Chinggis Khan took control of the eastern steppe, he destroyed the Tatars as a political group and discouraged the use of *Tatar* to apply to the pastoralists in general. The term, however, carried over to the western steppe and was accepted by the Turkic-speaking peoples there [2]. The issue of the term’s usage arose again in the early 20th century, as I will discuss below. In Latin sources, the term *Tartar* (with a medial *r*) was used taking advantage of the similarity between *Tatar* and *Tartarus*, but as early as 1247, John of Plano Carpini had made the point to Salimbene that the correct spelling is *Tatar* [3].

the 14th century (as the Khanate dissolved into civil war). Sons of the grand princes and other Rus' princes were kept as hostages at the court to ensure loyalty from their fathers, but it also allowed them to learn the administrative practices of the Jochid Ulus first hand. When the sons took over as rulers of their respective principalities, they were better able to implement the administrative practices of the Khanate.

From 1327 until 1406, the khan supplied troops on an ad hoc basis to help the grand prince suppress revolts, maintain order, collect taxes, and defend the area. The last time troops were sent from the Jochid Ulus to support the Rus' grand prince was Emir Edigei's supplying of Tatar forces to Vasilii I against Vitovt, Grand Duke of Lithuania [5]. The grand princes, in turn, were expected to supply troops to the khan when needed. The most famous occurrence of the fulfillment of this policy was when Grand Prince Dmitrii Donskoi mobilized Rus' forces to aid Khan Tokhtamysh in his battle against the Emir Mamai in 1380. At the same time, the prince of Riazan' sent troops to aid Mamai.

The khan also determined who would be grand prince of the Rus' principalities and gave the patent (*iarlyk*) directly to that person as well as separate patents to the princes of the other principalities, each of whom had to make the trip to Sarai to receive it. During the 14th century, on four occasions the grand princely patent went to someone other than the prince of Moscow (specifically, to the prince of Tver' three times and the prince of Suzdal' once). The last time the khan made a determination of who was to be grand prince was in 1431 when Khan Ulug Mehmed decided in favor of Vasilii II over his uncle Iurii Dmitrievich [6]. By 1449, however, Vasilii II was declaring that he was the only one issuing patents to the other Rus' princes, thus effectively eliminating the role of the Jochid Ulus khan. From 1462 on, the prince of Moscow ascended to the position of grand prince of Rus' without the patent of the khan, although he still collected the *dan'* (tax for the khan) and supplied the *vykhod* (tribute) to the khan in Sarai (until 1502) and then to the khan of Astrakhan' (until 1556), as well as to the khan of Kazan' (until

1552), the khan of Kasimov (until 1553), and the khan of the Crimea (until 1700) in acknowledgment of their Chinggisid descent and thereby nominal higher status in steppe diplomatic terms.

### The Eight Paradigms

The period of conquest and rule by the Mongol-Tatars has been a problematic one to describe in the Russian historiography. Those problems can be seen to derive from the earliest attempts to explain what was happening to the Rus' princes and their land. In all, one can discern eight paradigms (or conceptual frameworks) for trying to explain the Mongol conquest and subsequent Tatar rule, arranged here in approximately chronological order.

#### 1. Punishment for sins and the wrath of God

This paradigm was a continuation of the interpretive framework applied by Rus' Churchmen to pre-Mongol western steppe peoples, such as the Pechenegi and Polovtsi. The first mention of the Mongols appears in the Laurentian, Suzdal', and Novgorod I chronicles under the year 1223.

The Tatars are described as defeating the Rus' princes "because of our sins":

That same year, [Novg. I and Suzdal' Chronicles add: for our sins, unknown] peoples (*iazysi*) came, [Suzdal' Chronicle adds: Godless Moabites called Tatars] whom no one knows well, who they are, nor from where they came, nor what their language is, nor of what tribe (*plamene*) they are, nor what their faith is. But they call them Tatars, and others say Taumen, and others Pechenegs, and others say that they are those of whom Methodius, Bishop of Patara, testifies, that they came out from the Etrian Desert, which is between East and North [7-8].<sup>4</sup>

When the Mongols returned home, the chroniclers reported: "we do not know from where they came and to where they went again only God knows [Novg. I adds: whence he fetched them against us for our sins]" [7-8]. Initially the chroniclers used pejorative language about the Mongols couched in Biblical terms [10]. In descriptions of the conquests of 1237–1240, the

Mongols are described as “Godless,” “lawless,” and “accursed,” but phrases like “there was no opposing the wrath of God” also appear [7]. Perhaps the fullest expression of this viewpoint appears in the Novgorod I Chronicle’s account of the Mongol conquest of Rus’:

Let brothers, fathers, and children, whoever see God’s infliction on the entire Rus’ land not weep. God loosed the pagans on us because of our sins. God, in his wrath, brought foreigners against the land, and thus crushed by them they [the Rus’ people] will remember God. . . . God punishes lands that have sinned either with death or famine or an infliction of pagans or drought or heavy rain or other punishment, to see if we will repent and live as God bids us [8].

but this interpretive paradigm ended in northeastern Rus’ within 15 years of the Mongol conquest.

## 2. Realpolitik of Rus’ princes and Church leaders

After 1252, in areas where the Rus’ Church was under the Patriarch of Constantinople, we find an absence in the sources of the pejorative terminology that characterized the initial reception. The English historian John Fennell was the first to point out that from the chronicles of this period “one gets the impression that the Tatars were a benevolent rather than an oppressive force” [11]. He goes on to write that the way the Tatar suppression of the revolt in Tver’ in 1327 is described “reveals an astonishingly neutral attitude towards the Tatars” [11]. The elimination of pejorative terminology and the neutralizing of the descriptions of the Tatars in northeastern Rus’ sources was probably the result of the alliance between Byzantium and the Jochid Ulus. It would not have been appropriate for Rus’ chroniclers to write critically about an ally of the Byzantine Empire. This alliance, except for brief exceptions, remained in place until the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453. In addition, the Church benefitted from the patronage of the khan through freedom of worship, being allowed to own land, and

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<sup>4</sup> The Galician-Volynian Chronicle also refers to them as “Godless Moabites” for the entry under this year [9].

exemption from taxation. Rus' Churchmen, in return, prayed for the well-being of the khan and his family. In addition, the Rus' Church in 1261 established an archiepiscopal see in Sarai, the prelate of which attended to the Rus' princes and their entourages when they journeyed there to fulfill their duties to the khan. The archbishop of Sarai also acted as diplomatic liaison with Constantinople. Before Khan Özbek's conversion to Islam in the early 14th century, there may also have been some hope that the archbishop would have a hand in converting the khans and their court to Orthodox Christianity.

The chroniclers and other writers describe the relationship of the Rus' princes and prelates to the rulers of the Jochid Ulus in a matter-of-fact way, never going into detail about why the Tatars were ruling Rus'. In the 14th century, for example, the chronicles describe many trips of the Rus' princes and grand princes to the capital of the Jochid Ulus but rarely provide a reason for those trips. The closest statement of explanation comes from the author of the Galician-Volynian Chronicle where, sub anno 1287, he writes: "for at that time the princes of Rus' were Tatar subjects, having been conquered by God's wrath" [9, 12]. The *Tale about Tsarevich Peter*, the composition of which can be dated to the mid-14th century, also describes matter of factly the adjudication by the Jochid Ulus khan of a land dispute in Rostov [13-14].

In the grand-princely testaments of the later 14th and early 15th centuries, there are references to what will happen if the Rus' princes manage to extricate themselves from Tatar suzerainty. In Dmitrii Donskoi's second testament (1389) appears the statement "if God brings about a change regarding the Orda [so that] my children do not have to pay tribute [*vykhod*] to the Orda, then the tax [*dan'*] that each of my sons collects in his appanage [*udel'*] will be his" [15]. This formula is repeated in the three testaments of Vasilii I and the testament of Vasilii II [15]. It shows that the Muscovite grand princes' actions were determined by circumstances of realpolitik and that their concern was for keeping the revenue they collected from the subject population, not for "liberating Russia" or "freeing the Russian people from Tatar oppression."

The grand princes wanted to emulate their sovereigns by becoming independent sovereigns themselves and, thus, be able to retain all the expropriated wealth.

This manifestation of a neutral attitude toward the Tatars ended in Church sources in 1448, but continued to be represented in state documents. The state view, as in part represented in the *Posol'skii prikaz* (Foreign Office) documents, contain neither anti-Islamic nor anti-Tatar rhetoric. State documents are written in straight-forward language as though the state representatives/agents were dealing with co-equals. The principle of realpolitik characterized Muscovite state dealings with the Tatars.

### 3. Anti-Tatar view of the Russian Orthodox Church

The beginning of the establishment of the anti-Tatar interpretive framework is 1448. At that time, the Rus' bishops and the Muscovite grand prince, Vasili II, declared the Rus' Church to be administratively autonomous in relation to the patriarchate of Constantinople. The council of bishops nominated one of their own, Iona, the archbishop of Riazan', to be metropolitan, and the grand prince appointed him to that position. As a result, the Rus' Church was no longer constrained by the foreign policy interests of Byzantium. An anti-Islamic, anti-Tatar ideology developed and was featured in such works as *Skazanie o Mamaevom poboishche* (*Legend of the Battle against Mamai*), *Slovo o pogibeli Russkoi zemli* (*Discourse about the Ruin of the Rus' Land*), and *Povest' o razorenii Riazanii Batyem* (*Tale about the Destruction of Riazan' by Batu*), all of which date to the second half of the 15th century. Anti-Tatar remarks were also interpolated into earlier Rus' chronicle accounts. This paradigm, as with paradigm 1, was characterized by calling the Tatars "Godless", "sons of Hagar", "Moabites", etc., but it went much further. While it was admitted that Batu conquered the Rus' land, that is to say "it was God who punished the Rus' for its sins," nonetheless, in the words of the author of *Zadonshchina* (*The Event beyond the Don*), "it will no longer be, as in the early times" [16]. Church writers



developed a manichaeian-like (Rus'-Tatar) dichotomy. Pelenski discerned seven pairs of binary oppositions in the writings of Metropolitan Makarii (1542–1563) in regard to the differences between Muscovites and Tatars: believers vs. nonbelievers; religious vs. Godless; Christian vs. pagan; pious vs. impious; pure vs. unclean; peaceful vs. warlike; and good vs. bad [17].

After 1448, there were two “discourses” or at least two attitudes. The Church’s attitude was that the sons of Hagar were pagan and Godless. It was basically an anti-Islamic ideology. So the Tatars themselves were not inherently bad, in the Church view of things; they were bad insofar as they were Muslim. Once Tatars converted to Christianity, their Islamic background was forgotten. Those born Tatar who converted to Orthodox Christianity were then accepted as Russians.

A prominent feature of the paradigm was to turn the events in the fall of 1480, in which Ivan III and Khan Ahmed and their armies faced off against each other over the Ugra River for a couple of weeks, into a major historical event. Khan Ahmed had moved his army to the southwestern border of Muscovy with the hope of meeting up with a Polish-Lithuanian army under Kazimierz IV Jagiellończyk, the king of Poland and grand duke of Lithuania, and of proceeding together with it against the Muscovite army. But Kazimierz did not show up, possibly because Ivan had arranged for his own ally, Khan Mengli Girei, to attack with his Crimean Tatar forces the southern reaches of Kazimierz’ realm. Eventually, on November 11, according to the chronicle account, Khan Ahmed and his army withdrew. The chronicles of the time depict the Rus’ and Tatar armies as disinclined to fight each other.

Vassian Rylo, the archbishop of Rostov and member of the war council, wrote a harsh letter to Ivan III upbraiding him for his indecisiveness. Although the standoff at the Ugra River was not unlike a number of other steppe military encounters, where neither side obtained military superiority, Vassian viewed the events differently. Not much of political, military, or diplomatic significance occurred at the Ugra in November 1480, other than that it was the last encounter

between the Muscovite grand prince and the khan of the Jochid Ulus. Churchmen, nonetheless, developed their subsequent descriptions of this non-battle into an event of major importance, depicting it as the overthrow of Tatar domination. In the 1550s, an account of the “stand on the Ugra,” written by a churchman, presented it as one of the most significant occurrences in the history of the world [18].<sup>5</sup> Another event that was made prominent by this paradigm was the battle on the Don River in 1380. Instead of the Muscovite grand prince’s providing Rus’ forces in support of Khan Tokhtamysh in a khanate civil war, the battle was depicted as Dmitrii Donskoi’s defeating the Tatars.

Within the period of this paradigm’s preeminence we also see the period of Tatar rule beginning to be referred to as a “yoke.” The phrase “yoke of slavery” (*rabotno igo*) had already appeared in the 16th-century *Life of Merkurii of Smolensk* as applied to the period of Chinggisid hegemony in Rus’. By 1575, the Imperial ambassador Daniel Prinz reported the concept of a “Tatar Yoke” (*jugo Tatarico*) to apply to the period of Chinggisid hegemony [19]. If we consider it likely that Prinz did not make up this term but that he was simply expressing in Latin a term he had heard in Moscow, then we can conclude the Russian version of this term was being used by the second half of the 16th century. Direct evidence of its usage in Russian sources does not appear until the 1660s with an interpolation in one of the copies of the *Skazanie o Mamaevom poboishche*. Subsequently this term appears in the *Synopsis* of Innokentii Gizel’ in 1674 [20]. From there it entered the mainstream of Russian nationalist historiography in the late 18th century through the multi-volume history of Russia by M. M. Shcherbatov.<sup>6</sup> The term “Tatar yoke” sums up the Church’s position about the period of Chinggisid hegemony.

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<sup>5</sup> This work, in the form of a letter addressed to Ivan IV, is generally attributed either to Metropolitan Makarii or to the priest Syl’vester.

<sup>6</sup> For a description of this process, see [21].

#### 4. Russian Nationalist

The Russian nationalist paradigm represents a secular version, and further development, of the Russian Orthodox Church view in that it bases itself on a secular conceptualization of what a “Russian” is. The proponents of this paradigm, however, divide themselves into those who deny any significant Mongol/Tatar influence and those who see only a negative impact of the Mongol/Tatars.

The Russian nationalist view holds that Russian institutions are all indigenously generated and were established to meet particularly Russian needs. The nationalist school does not allow that “outside” influences, especially the Mongols, had any impact. S. M. Solov’ev, professor of Russian history at Moscow University (1844–1879), represented the “no impact” point of view when he wrote: “we have no reason to assume any great influence [of the Mongols] on [Russia’s] internal administration as we do not see any traces of it” [22]. He believed that Russian political culture was all indigenously generated and followed its own logic of development free of foreign influences.

S. F. Platonov, professor of Russian history at the University of St. Petersburg (1889–1916), carried this argument further:

And how could the Tatar influence on Russian life be considerable when the Tatars lived far off, did not mix with the Russians, and appeared in Russia only to gather tribute or as an army, brought in for the most part by Russian princes for the princes’ own purposes?... Therefore, we can proceed to consider the internal life of Russian society in the thirteenth century without paying attention to the fact of the Tatar yoke [23].

In these cases, both Solov’ev and Platonov were referring specifically to the 13th century, but the principle they espoused holds for later centuries in their work as well. B. D. Grekov and A. Iu. Iakubovskii also categorically denied any direct influence of the Mongols on Muscovy, but they did see an indirect result: “The Russian state with Moscow at its head was created not with the assistance of the Tatars but in the process of a hard struggle of the Russian people against the yoke of the Golden Horde” [24]. We can compare this view with N. M. Karamzin’s statement

about the Mongol invasion that “the calamity was a blessing in disguise, for the destruction contained the boon of unity.... Another hundred years of princely feuds. What would have been the result.... Moscow, in fact, owes its greatness to the khans” [25]. The proponents of this interpretation, seeing only a negative, destructive impact of the Mongols, credited the positive result of this struggle to the Russians themselves. V. I. Koretskii iterated this negative assessment of the Mongol impact on Russian development: “The Mongol Yoke and its effects were among the main reasons why Russia became a backward country in comparison with several of the countries of western Europe” [26]. In a variant of this interpretation, the impact of the Mongols is seen not only as destructive of Russian society and political culture but also detrimental to the development of the Russian themselves. The military historian Christopher Duffy summed up such views this way:

The princes of Muscovy became the most enthusiastic and shameless of the Mongol surrogates and much that was distinctive and unattractive about the Russian character and Russian institutions has been attributed to this experience. Mongol influence has been held variously responsible for the destruction of the urban classes, the brutalisation of the peasantry, a denial of human dignity, and a distorted sense of values which reserved a special admiration for ferocity, tyrannical ways and slyness [27].

V. O. Kliuchevskii, who was professor of Russian History at Moscow University (1879–1911), and who many consider to have been the greatest Russian historian, was a prominent proponent of this Russian nationalist paradigm. Scholars have noted two significant absences in his 5-volume *Course of Russian History* and other major scholarly writings: his neglect of the Russian Church and his neglect of the Mongols and Tatars [28–32]. The reasons for these two absences may be related. Kliuchevskii biographer Robert F. Byrnes refers to him as “a pious Christian” [31]—Kliuchevskii’s father had been a priest, and he himself had studied in a seminar, “attended religious services faithfully, read scriptures every day, and honored all religious obligations,” believed in miracles, and kept “icons in every room” [31]. In some of his minor writings, Kliuchevskii discussed aspects of Russian religious life, which he apparently

considered important. Byrnes concludes that Kliuchevskii accepted the “scientific obligations” of his time, which among his contemporary scholars meant assigning a minor role to the Church in the historical and cultural formation of Russia. Byrnes points out that in the first volume of the *Course*, Kliuchevskii announces that it is “an introduction to sociology” and that he is out to uncover “the laws, regularity, and mechanics of historical life,” which meant for him as for Solov’ev emphasis on “geography, climate, harsh conditions, and external forces” [31]. Such forces were considered more scientific, and they did not include the Church.

As with the Church, Kliuchevskii displayed a keen interest and knowledge of the Mongols and Tatars in a number of his minor writings, yet they are almost completely absent or mentioned only in passing in his major works. Kliuchevskii grew up in Penza, which had a large Tatar population, so he presumably would have known something about them. Charles J. Halperin, in exploring Kliuchevskii’s neglect of the Mongol/Tatars, cited evidence of Kliuchevskii’s writing and speaking knowledgeably about Tatars in his minor works and occasional lectures. But in his major works, in addition to the reasons for his avoiding writing about the Church, there seems to have been another dynamic at work. Halperin indicates that Kliuchevskii, like many of his contemporaries, was concerned about Russia’s image vis-à-vis Europe. Russian intellectuals were sensitive to how the idea that Russia may have been influenced by the Mongols would appear to Europeans. Kliuchevskii’s views on the Tatars were indistinguishable from those of Solov’ev, as Halperin points out. Like Solov’ev, Kliuchevskii eliminated the “Tatar period” from his periodization of Russian history [32]. The decline of Kiev and the rise of the northeast begins for Kliuchevskii in the 12th century with an imaginary migration of Russians from the area around Kiev to the northeast. Just as Russians tended to treat Tatars as “invisible” in their society, so Kliuchevskii, Solov’ev, and others tended to treat the Mongols and Tatars as invisible in Russian history, although at some level they evidently knew better.

Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, professor of Russian history at the University of California, Berkeley (1957–1994), does accept an era of Mongol rule in his periodization of “Russian” history, but he has been just as adamant in denying any substantial Mongol influence. In his widely used textbook, Riasanovsky elaborated a negative variant of Karamzin’s interpretation:

It is tempting, thus, to return to the older view and to consider the Mongols as of little significance in Russian history. On the other hand, their destructive impact deserves attention. And they, no doubt, contributed something to the general harshness of the age and to the burdensome and exacting nature of the centralizing Muscovite state which emerged out of this painful background [33].

In a recently published summation of his views on Russian history, Riasanovsky confirms that he sees *Russia* as an entity stretching back at least to the 10th century: “Russians also fought for their country, Rus, Russia, or the Russian land, which, in the course of centuries, became coterminous with Muscovy. All these elements, family and home, Orthodoxy, motherland, for which one was to live and die, went back at least to 988 or beyond that date” [34].<sup>7</sup> He considers the invasion by the Mongols to have been “utterly devastating” and that the subsequent “Mongol yoke” was “a uniquely catastrophic experience in Russian history...” (p. 60). Throughout the struggle with the Mongols, according to Riasanovsky, “Russians also regarded them as defenders of Orthodoxy” and “there was no doubt in the Russian mind who were the defenders and who were the aggressors, even when Russian armies counterattacked deep into the steppe or, for that matter, seized Kazan and Astrakhan” (p. 61). It is clear from Riasanovsky’s presentation that he has a low opinion of the Mongols. For example, in characterizing them, he quotes Pushkin in seeing them as “Arabs without Aristotle and algebra” (p. 69). He declares that they “remained nomads in the clan stage of development” and that “[t]heir institutions and laws could in no wise

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<sup>7</sup> Much of what Riasanovsky includes in *Russian Identities* is a verbatim recapitulation of what he wrote in his textbook, but he does include additional material.

be adopted by a much more complex agricultural society” (p. 69).<sup>8</sup> He asserts that the “Mongol states” were not “particularly well organized, efficient, or lasting.” Instead, they were “relatively unstable and short-lived” (p. 69) and “rent by dissension and wars and to suffer from arbitrariness, corruption, and misrule in general” (pp. 69–70). Furthermore, according to Riasanovsky, they did not “contribute a superior statecraft” and “had to borrow virtually everything, from alphabets to advisers, from the conquered peoples to enable their states to exist” (p. 70). He acknowledges that “cruelty, lawlessness, and at times anarchy, in that period, also characterized the life of many peoples other than the Mongols, the Russians included” (p. 70). Yet “most of these peoples managed eventually to surmount their difficulties and organize effective and lasting states” (p. 70), in contrast to “the Mongols, who, after their sudden and stunning performance on the world scene, receded to the steppe, clan life, and the internecine warfare of Mongolia” (p. 70).

Riasanovsky sees the term *tsar*’ as deriving solely from Byzantium and denies that the term has any connection with the Mongols: “Their title was *khan*” (p. 67). He argues that although the term *tsar*’ was used in reference to the Mongol rulers, they were also called “khans or great khans, as the occasion demanded” and it does not “change the basic situation” (p. 67). He declares that “[t]he search for Mongol roots of Muscovite tsars, tsardom, and identity has been essentially illusory” (p. 70). For Riasanovsky, the battle at Kulikovo Field in 1380 was a “successful campaign against the Mongols [and] bore certain marks of a crusade” (p. 61). Furthermore, it resulted in the destruction of the Mongol army (p. 37). Riasanovsky, likewise, accepts that Ivan III “threw off the Mongol yoke in Russia” in 1480 (p. 37) and that he “ended any kind of Russian submission to the Golden Horde” (p. 65). He sees no change or

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<sup>8</sup> Here Riasanovsky does not mention the views of those who attribute to the Mongols the negative impact of reducing the Rus’ principalities to agricultural status.

development in Russian-language sources about the Mongols: “As to the Mongols, a single attitude toward them pervades all Russian literature: they were a scourge of God sent upon the Russians as dreadful punishment for their sins” (p. 70).

Riasanovsky, does discuss some possible Mongol influences on Russia. He mentions that the Mongol suzerains “granted it [the Church] certain advantages and privileges, notably an exemption from the tribute levied on the conquered Russians” (p. 61). He points out that certain Mongol terms “in the fields of administration and finance have entered the Russian language” and that there were “restricted Mongol influences” on “military forces and tactics,” conducting a census, constructing roads, and setting up “a kind of postal service” (p. 67). But even these must be “qualified” in his opinion since, for example, conducting a census “must have exceeded the resources of the Mongols” so they “probably” allowed “the Russians themselves do the counting and the registering, with the Mongols acting as supervisors and perhaps doing some checking” (p. 69). To the degree that Riasanovsky engages with the evidence, he must be given credit. Yet too often this engagement is accompanied by fallacious arguments and by misrepresenting some and passing over other source testimony that is unsuitable to be used as evidence for the purpose of demonstrating Russian superiority.

In the Russian nationalist view, the Muscovite grand princes had dedicated themselves to freeing Russia from the oppression of the Tatar yoke. If there were any alliances between a grand prince and a Tatar khan, they were only ones of expediency in the cause of the larger goal. Thus, the encounter of the Ugra River in the fall of 1480 between the forces of Ivan III and those of Khan Ahmed is seen as a pivotal moment in Russian history, leading soon to the conquest of Kazan’ and Astrakhan’ and the beginning of the Russian Empire.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Besides the works of the Russian nationalist historians that I have already mentioned, one may also find this view-point represented in the following works: [35-39].



The Russian nationalist view has had a stranglehold on the historiography. Its main criterion for historical study of Mongol-Tatar relations with Russia is Russian superiority in ethics, morals, intelligence, battle prowess, inventiveness, and righteousness. To maintain the appearance of this superiority, Russian nationalists have to ignore certain inconvenient pieces of evidence. They will argue, for example, that the Mongols defeated the Rus' princes because of their being disunited, yet the chronicles say the Rus' princes would have been defeated anyway. They will argue, for example as the military historian A. N. Kirpichnikov did, that the Rus' armies could not have borrowed anything from the Mongols, because that would not have been in keeping with the "heroic struggle of the Russian people against foreign enemies" [40], while ignoring that certain weapons, armor, tactics, and formations that are the same as those used by the Mongols were not used by the Rus' before the Mongol invasion. They will claim that many of the genealogies of Russian aristocratic families tracing their ancestry back to the Mongols were manufactured, overlooking that the family names were Tatar in origin. In short, the conclusions they reach must advance the glory of a greater Russian nation. In that respect, they bear a striking similarity to the Marxists in subordinating the integrity of historical study to prefigured outcomes.

## 5. Marxist

Two aspects of the theories of Karl Marx affected Soviet Marxist historiography: class struggle and materialism. The first aspect resulted in characterizing stages of historical development as progressive or regressive depending upon whether any particular society was entering a new stage or leaving an old one. The second aspect resulted in focusing on the importance of economic relations. N. A. Rozhkov was among the first historians to attempt a Marxist interpretation of Russian history. Yet Rozhkov hardly mentions the Tatars in his 12-volume *History of Russia* and sees them as only continuing the processes that had begun in

Rus' before the Mongol conquest—of turning southern Rus' into a wasteland [41]. Yet, one should not judge Rozhkov too harshly as he made a good faith effort to place Russia within the context of world history. B. Ia. Vladimirtsov (d. 1931) formulated the concept of “nomadic feudalism” in applying Marxist historical stages to the steppe [42]. But his basis for applying the concept of “feudalism” to the Mongols necessitated imputing institutions, fiefs, vassalage, serfs, as well as related traits such as oaths of fealty and mutual obligations to evidence that did not support those interpretations.

M. N. Pokrovskii explained Mongol influence in terms of his theory of merchant capital and the role it played in Russian history. He discussed the benefit of Mongol rule to the Russian Church in economic terms—specifically, freedom from taxation. He also pointed to collaboration between the Rus' princes and their boyars with the Tatar khans. In Pokrovskii's view, it was the people who opposed Tatar rule. He saw the Moscow grand princes' benefitting from the support of the Tatar khans against his rivals in the northeast, especially the princes of Tver' [43]. Although Pokrovskii was knowledgeable about the sources for Russian history, he displayed little awareness of the non-Russian sources for Mongol/Tatar history.

With Pokrovskii, what I am calling the “Marxist” interpretive framework toward the Mongol/Tatar impact on Russia ends. As Soviet historians began to adopt a nationalist frame of reference, the framework of Solov'ev and Kliuchevskii re-emerged, although now adorned with Marxist terminology. A seminal essay that marked the beginning of the transition from a Marxist to a nationalist interpretation in Soviet historiography regarding the Mongols and the Rus' principalities was published by A. N. Nasonov in 1940 [44]. Yet, as Halperin pointed out, rather than criticize Pokrovskii's Marxist understanding of Russian history, Nasonov seemed “to adumbrate his own original conclusions and criticize Pokrovskii for not having anticipated them” [45]. One of the ironies of this transition is that no one was more a pure Marxist historian than Pokrovskii. Yet, because he was not nationalist enough and did not always toe the party line, he

was accused of being anti-Marxist when the transition to a nationalist interpretation occurred in Soviet historiography. This transition meant a further diminution of the chances for Russian historians to make an accurate assessment of Russia's Mongol/Tatar heritage.

## 6. Eurasian and Modified Eurasian

The Eurasian and Modified Eurasian paradigm posits a dominant role for Russia in the history of Inner Eurasia. The Eurasianists began as a political-cultural position in opposition to the dominant Eurocentric views of the early 20th century. Eurasianism's influence on serious scholarship was narrow but deep. Nicholas Trubetskoi claimed "the Russian state" to be "the inheritor, the successor, the continuator of the historical work of Chinggis Khan" [46]. George Vernadsky devoted a volume of his 5-volume *History of Russia* to an exploration of the Mongol/Tatar role [47]. Although Vernadsky was influenced by the Eurasian movement, he maintained, for the most part, his own scholarly independence [48-49]. He accepted that the Mongols had many positive influences on Russia and even accepted uncritically some of the claims of the Eurasianists in that regard. Yet he still attributed some negative impact to Mongol rule: "the regimentation of the social classes which started during the Mongol period and was originally based on the Mongol principles of administration, was carried further and completed by the Muscovite government. Autocracy and serfdom were the price the Russian people had to pay for national survival" [47]. Elsewhere in the volume he writes: "inner Russian political life was never stifled but only curbed and deformed by Mongol rule" (p. 344). While acknowledging the destructiveness of the Mongol conquest and negative aspects of Tatar hegemony, Vernadsky discussed a number of positive Mongol influences on administration and the army (pp. 344-366). Previously Vernadsky, echoing Trubetskoi, had written that Russia "in a sense, might be considered an offspring of the Mongol Empire" [50]. Now in *The Mongols and Russia*, Vernadsky considered a number of significant changes in the Rus' principalities (which he called

“Russia”) of “the Mongol period” to be a result either directly or indirectly of Mongol influence. Vernadsky saw that the “growth of manorial industries was a characteristic feature of the Russian economy of the 14th to 16th centuries” (pp. 340–341). In his view, the Mongols had effectively destroyed the free market for the services of crafts by conscripting the majority of craftsmen while many others fled. Rus’ princes used their connections with the khans to increase the size of their estates and recruit returning craftsmen and artisans, both in getting those who fled Rus’ initially and those who were able to flee the Mongols after being conscripted. Vernadsky asserted that the “destruction of most of the major cities of East Russia during the Mongol invasion was a crushing blow to the urban democratic institutions which had flourished in the Kievan period all over Russia (and continued to flourish in Novgorod and Pskov during the Mongol period)” (p. 345). According to Vernadsky, the Mongols crushed the opposition of townspeople and eliminated their *veches* (town assemblies). Vernadsky pointed to the “increase in relative importance of the large landed estates in Russia’s political setup” (p. 346). He claimed that “[w]ith the decline in cities, agriculture and other branches of exploitation of natural resources of the land and the forests came to the fore” (p. 346). He saw that “[t]he existence of the supreme Mongol power was ... a leading” factor that “prevented” the boyars from “clearly defining their political rights” (p. 347). In addition to the personal ambition of the grand princes in attempting to unify the Rus’ principalities, Vernadsky figured that “[t]he grim political situation required unity of the nation’s effort [for] without it the task of freeing Russia from Mongol rule could not be achieved” (p. 350). Vernadsky accepted Vladimirskii-Budanov’s conclusion that both corporal and capital punishment (applicable to more than just slaves) came into Muscovy as a result of the Mongols (p. 355). He attributed the introduction of torture to the Mongols although acknowledging that it “was widely used in the West in this period” (pp. 356–357), as was corporeal and capital punishment. According to Vernadsky, the Muscovite “system of taxation and army organization” as “developed in the late 14th to 16th centuries” was

based on “Mongol patterns” (p. 358). He pointed out that the grand princely treasury as an institution “was created after the Mongol pattern,” evident from the terms for treasure (*kazna*) and treasurer (*kaznachei*) (p. 359). He suggested that the departments of administration known as *puti* may well have been based on “a certain influence of Oriental patterns” (p. 361). Vernadsky also discussed the influence of the Mongols on the army including organization, weapons, and universal conscription (pp. 363–365). One is, thus, justified in designating Vernadsky’s views “modified Eurasian.”

## 7. Anti-Russian, anti-Eurasian

Those who hold an anti-Eurasian, anti-Russian nationalist position do not accept the beneficial role of Russia in regard to the history of Inner Eurasia. They can be divided into three groups: Despotists, Tatarists, and Bulgarists.<sup>10</sup>

The Despotists argue for a negative impact of Mongol influence in contributing to, even creating, the despotism of Russian autocracy. The most prominent non-Marxist use of the concept of *Oriental Despotism* has been by Karl Wittfogel. He asserted that “Tatar rule alone among the three major Oriental influences affecting Russia was decisive ... in laying the foundations for the despotic state of Muscovite and post-Muscovite Russia” [52]. Wittfogel asserted that the “oriental despotism” the Mongols introduced into Muscovy came from China via the Mongols [52]. Ukrainian nationalist historians have also made use of the concept of “oriental despotism” to account for what they see as Muscovite and Russian despotism. Boleslaw Szczesniak, for example, calls Mongol rule “one of the greatest evils not only for Russia, but for many nations” and refers to “[i]ts devious traditions, embodied in the Muscovy state, ... [being]

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<sup>10</sup> I am indebted to the work of Marlies Bliz for her analysis of the latter two groups. See her Ph.D. dissertation [51].

visible even today.” He denies that the term “Western Russia” should be applied to Belarus, Lithuania, and Ukraine, asserting that “[t]his fantastic claim cannot be supported since the evil forces created by the Tatar yoke did not reach these countries” [53]. In contrast, Dmytro Doroshenko, moderate in relation to Szczesniak, points to geography, harsh climate, and the fact that “life was excessively primitive” as “peculiar conditions” that influenced the formation of the Russian “national type”; that is, “a strongly developed solidarity, a tendency to support common interests, a readiness to sacrifice the individual to the welfare of the community, and give preponderance to common interests over the individual.” He does blame close contact

with the Tatars and centuries of submission to their control that the Russians owe their autocratic form of their own government. From this experience all the Asiatic or Eastern features of their character and philosophy, features that were entirely foreign to the Eastern Slavs, distinguish the Russians from the Ukrainians and from other Slavs [54].

The Despotists rarely question whether Mongol or Tatar governments were despotic; they simply assumed they were.

Tatarists reject the notion of the Eurasianists and Neo-Eurasianists that Russia had a special role in Inner Eurasia [55-56]. According to the Tatarists, the Tatars were the real leaders of the Jochid Ulus, which represented the transformation of the Western steppe peoples into a Tatar ethnic identity. For the Tatarists, the Jochid Ulus was a major empire, in its own right, that had a significant impact on both Asia and Europe. In the early 20th century, the Tatarists questioned whether they should accept the name *Tatar* precisely because it was associated with the notion of the “Tatar yoke.” One of the ways this group has challenged the Russian nationalist view is through a letter sent in April 2001 from the president of Tatarstan, Mintimer Shaimiev, to the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, asking him to cancel the annual celebration of the battle of Kulikovo [57].

The Bulgarists, in contrast, accept the idea of a “Tatar yoke” under which the Muslim Volga Bulgars suffered as well as the Christian Russians [58]. The notion that Orientalism (in Edward

Said's sense of Europeans' feeling of superiority toward non-Europeans) represents Russian nationalist views is characteristic of Tatar and Bulgar treatments. Neither the Tatarist nor the Bulgarist position has yet attained the stature of a full-fledged paradigm, but may represent a separate paradigm in the making.

#### 8. Analytical source-based studies of the Mongol Empire and its relationship to the Rus' principalities

This group includes to a certain extent those scholars who cannot be subsumed under any of the preceding paradigms. It is, thus, a catchall paradigm, but one that can be characterized by the absence of preconceived notions of the superiority or inferiority of particular ethnic groups, the absence of any particular religious, ideological, or nationalist bent, and the relative absence of present-day political considerations. Within this paradigm, one can distinguish two categories. The first is made up of those who focus on areas of the Mongol Empire other than the Rus' principalities (Mongolists) but whose work touches on those principalities. Most prominent among previous scholars one may include V. V. Bartol'd and Bertold Spuler, while the most prominent present scholars include Thomas Allsen, Christopher Atwood, Peter Jackson, David Morgan, and Timothy May. Of those, only Allsen has used Russian-language sources in his work. The rest are dependent on translations of Russian-language sources into Western languages. This dependency limits somewhat, and at times significantly, their access to those sources. As in Russia [59], studies of Mongolists have not had much influence on those of the Russianists in the West.

A second category is made up of those who focus more or less primarily on the Rus' principalities (Russianists) and as a consequence deal with their relationship with the Mongol/Tatars. This group is characterized by a focus on the Russian-language sources and a general inability to use Persian-, Mongol-, and Chinese-language sources in the original. This

drawback hinders them from analyzing these sources and doing original, innovative work on them. That problem is mitigated considerably by the excellent translations that the first group has produced and is producing, but there are gaps.

Among earlier Russianists who tried to provide an impartial evaluation of Mongol influence are Alfred Rambaud, Francis Dvornik, and Michael Cherniavsky [60-62]. Among Russianists presently working on this topic are A. A. Gorskii [39], Bulat R. Rakhimzyanov [63], V. Trepavlov [64], and I. Zaitsev [65]. Janet Martin, professor of Russian history of the University of Miami, presents an even-handed discussion of the Russian nationalist stand on national liberation in her textbook on early Russian history. As a contrast to that position, she provides the reader with an “alternate interpretation” that sees Muscovite diplomacy during this period within the context of steppe diplomacy [66]. This “alternate interpretation,” she acknowledges, owes much to the views expressed by Edward L. Keenan [67-68]. But she also cites the work of other historians, including Halperin, Alexandre Bennigsen, and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejaye as being along the same lines. In her research, Martin has focused on specific aspects of Tatar refugee assimilation into the Muscovite political system.

Halperin has studied this issue across a broad range of topics. He sees Muscovite borrowing of

a variety of Mongol political and administrative institutions, including the *tamga*, the seal for the customs tax as well as the tax itself; the *kazna*, the treasury; the *iam*, the postal system; *tarkhan*, grants of fiscal or judicial immunity; and *den'ga* for money. Muscovite bureaucratic practices, including the use of *stolbtsy*, scrolls to preserve documents, and perhaps some features of Muscovite bureaucratic jargon, may also derive from the Jochid Ulus, as well as selective legal practices such as *pravezh*, beating on the shins. Certainly Muscovite diplomatic norms for dealing with steppe states and peoples were modeled on Tatar ways. Finally, the Muscovites had no choice but to study Tatar military tactics and strategies,... but the Muscovites also copied Mongol weapons, armaments, horse equipment, and formations [69-70].

Halperin has questioned, however, the relevance to the Rus' of most of what was being done elsewhere in the lands the Mongols ruled. He has asserted that the Rus' principalities were “not



an integral element in the Golden Horde” and that “Russian declamations of fealty to the ulus to which they belonged, the *tsarev ulus*, must be invented fantasies, exercises in bending the truth to suit tendentious political purpose” [71]. As a result, according to Halperin, evidence from sources about other parts of the Mongol Empire have limited value for understanding the Mongol influence on Muscovy.

My own research has led me to be in agreement with Halperin concerning the fundamental influences that he sees. Where we differ is over the extent of those influences and whether they extended to other Muscovite political institutions. I have argued for comparing the administrative practices of the Mongol empire with those of early Muscovy [72-74]. Mongol/Tatar influence on Muscovy, as I see it, can be divided into two periods. The first period of influence dates to the 14th century. Weaponry, such as the recurved composite bow and flail, along with the saddle with short stirrups (for standing in the saddle while shooting) came from the steppe pastoralists of the Jochid Ulus as the result of direct contact with the Mongols [78]. Military strategy, tactics, and formations came from direct contact with Mongol-led armies. As a result of their trips to Sarai, as well as being hostages while their fathers were grand prince, the grand princes were able to observe the operations of khanate administration first hand, and introduced a number of innovations into the Muscovite principality. A dual system of administration as practiced in China came by way of the Mongols and was introduced into Muscovite administration by the grand princes. It included overlapping responsibilities for military and civilian governors. Grand princes, also probably as a result of their trips to Sarai, introduced a council of state (known, according to Giles Fletcher, in Muscovy as *Boarstva dumna* [Boyar Duma]) [75], which had the same functions and responsibilities as the divan of qarachi beys in the steppe khanates. The grand prince continued the tax system that was practiced in the Mongol Empire and that had been introduced by the Jochid khans into the Rus’ principalities. Thus, *poshlina* was the Russian name for traditional, non-Mongol taxes that were

equivalent to Qipchaq Turkic *qalan* and Mongol *alban*. The *dan'* was the name for Mongol-imposed taxes and tributes that were equivalent to Qipchaq Turkic *yasaq* and Mongol *qubčirin* [74]. The administrative structure of the government as established in the Jochid Ulus was introduced by the Muscovite grand princes. The *iam* (or system of post stations) as it functioned in China was introduced by the Jochid Ulus khans and revived by Ivan III. Shin beating, a punishment that was practiced in China, was imposed by the agents of the Jochid Ulus khans on Rus' and was continued by the Muscovite grand princes. The *chelom bit'e* (petition) known in China as the *k'ou t'ou* [76] was introduced into Rus' by the Mongols and was continued by the Rus' princes. Clan ranking within the polity was derived from the steppe pastoralists and was most likely introduced by the Muscovite grand princes. Commercial and financial terms, such as *bazar*, *balagan*, *bakaleia*, *barysh*, *kumach*, *stakan*, and so forth, derive from the Turkic languages of the Jochid Ulus and were introduced by Rus' merchants who traveled to Kaffa, Tana, and Sarai.

The second period of Tatar influence dates to the late 15th and 16th centuries and resulted from the influx of Tatar refugees into Muscovy. The Chinggisid principle (the notion that only descendents of Chinggis Khan can be rulers) as practiced among the Mongols entered Muscovy probably via the Kazan' Khanate as the result of Turkicized Jochids who entered Muscovite service. *Pomest'e* (or military land grants), as issued in Muscovy from 1482 on, and called *iqta* in the *Dar al-Islam*, was most likely made known to the grand prince by refugee Tatars from the disintegrating Jochid Ulus. Certain record-keeping methods (such as scrolls) as used initially by the Uighurs were introduced by refugee Tatars from the Jochid Ulus. The principle of *beschestie* (dishonor) as practiced by the "courage cultures" of the steppe was probably introduced by Turkicized Jochids and refugee Tatars from the Kazan' Khanate. The institution of the *zemskii sobor* (Assembly of the Land) known among the Mongols as a *quriltai* was practiced among the steppe pastoralists and most likely described was described to the Muscovite court by Turkicized

Jochids from the Kazan' Khanate [77]. The taking over the Khanate of Kazan' and then of Astrakhan' would have lacked legitimacy without it, since only a *quriltai* could select a khan/tsar'.

Already in the reign of Ivan III (1462–1505) the administrative practices that characterized the Muscovite principality began to be modified and replaced as Ivan and his successors transformed Muscovy into a dynastic state. Some practices like *pomest'e* were transformed. Others like scroll records continued to be used through the 17th century. The *zemskii sobor*, the last of the Mongol/Tatar institutions to be introduced (1549), ended in the 1680s. The army stopped using the recurved bow as its primary weapon by the early 17th century and Mongol/Tatar military organization was replaced with European-style methods of military organization under Tsar Aleksei (1645–1682). Clan politics as practiced in early Muscovy continued to be practiced in much the same way through the 18th and into the early 19th century.

### Conclusion

A major difficulty in discussing and analyzing Mongol/Tatar influence on Russia is pre-existing prejudice toward one or another group. Perhaps the main point of the present chapter is that meta-scholarly reasons contribute to the lack of any kind of consensus on Mongol-Rus' relations. The storied British notion that “the wogs begin at Calais” finds an analogue in Russian views such that *mutatis mutandis* “the wogs begin at the steppe.” But cross-paradigm attitudes toward the Mongols as “cruel” and “revenge-seeking” has also played a role. Another major difficulty is the number of languages one is required to master to do specialized research on the sources.

In addition, each of these paradigms is, to one degree or another, connected with the political and cultural circumstances of the time contemporary to it. The paradigm “Punishment for sins and the wrath of God” emerged from attitudes articulated by Church writers toward

steppe pastoralists from the 11th through the early 13th centuries. The “Realpolitik of Rus’ princes and Church leaders” paradigm reflected the contemporary relations between the Byzantine Empire and the Ulus of Jochi from the middle of the 13th through the middle of the 15th centuries. The “Anti-Tatar view of the Russian Orthodox Church” paradigm was created by Rus’ clerics after the Ottoman Turks took Constantinople in 1453, thus freeing the Rus’ Church from the obligation to reflect Byzantine Church policy. The “Russian Nationalist” paradigm was a secular version of the “Anti-Tatar view of the Russia Orthodox Church” as Russian national sentiments developed in the 19th and 20th centuries and carried through into the 21st century. Exposition of the “Marxist” paradigm correlated with the fortunes of Marxism in Russia but were dropped after 1933 when the “Russian nationalist” paradigm re-emerged to supercede it. The “Eurasian and Modified Eurasian” paradigm originated in the Eurasian political and intellectual movement of the early 20th century but found its strongest academic boost from George Vernadsky who was influenced by that movement. The “Anti-Russian, anti-Eurasian” paradigm includes anti-Marxists of the Cold War period like Wittfogel but expanded among the Turko-Tatar academics after the fall of the Soviet Union and in direct discourse with the question of the relationship of those nationalities to Russia. Finally, the “Analytical source-based studies of the Mongol Empire and its relationship to the Rus’ principalities” paradigm developed from, on the one hand, anthropological interest in pastoral nomads, and, on the other, a non-vested interest approach to restudying the evidence concerning the historical relationship between the Eastern Slavic and Turko-Tatar peoples that developed mainly in Western academia in the second half of the 20th century. This is not to suggest that those who find themselves within this paradigm do not have disagreements with each other over the best way to interpret the evidence, but for the most part they are free of tendencies to convolve the evidence to a religious, ideological, or nationalist prefiguration.

Differing opinions on the value of specific sources tend to widen the differences in interpretation. And differing interpretative paradigms tend to influence scholars' view of the value of specific sources. One hopes that, in the future, disputes concerning the impact of the Mongols on Rus' can be carried on without resort to prejudices, ideologies, or national or religious predilections. Ironically, the Tatarists, Bulgarists, and Mongolian historians may assist this development as they provide a direct counter position to the Russian nationalist paradigm that has dominated the historiography for so long.

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