

**The Byzantine Empire and Medieval Russia:  
The Political, Religious, and Cultural Influence of the Byzantine Empire on Medieval  
Russia and the Rise of Moscow as the “Third Rome”**

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## Introduction

In the mid-tenth century, Russia stood at the crossroads of her history: was Byzantine Orthodoxy or Roman Catholicism to claim her final political and religious allegiance? To this very day, debate among historians continues concerning the critical points in the relations between Russia and the Byzantine Empire and the truth of four important points in Russian history: (1) Russia's political origins, (2) the extent of Byzantine influence on Russian society, (3) the impact of the Golden Horde on Russo-Byzantine relations, and (4) the prevalence of the "Third Rome" theory in the rise of Muscovite Russia--how this led to the Western interpretation of Russian expansionism during eighteenth- and nineteenth-century imperialism and twentieth-century communism. Understanding Russia's Byzantine-derived cultural and religious heritage yields a clearer understanding of Russia's place in the world today. My focus in this essay will be on the extent of the political, religious, and cultural impact of the Byzantine Empire on medieval Russia and the rise of Moscow as the "Third Rome." I will also be exploring the advancement of Russian self-identification as the center of Orthodoxy after the Turkish invasion of Constantinople. I will investigate various primary and secondary sources highlighting Byzantine influence on Slavic culture, such as the motives of Vladimir I, Grand Prince of Kievan Rus', in adopting Orthodox Christianity as a political control tactic, and the diplomatic connections established between the two political structures, exploring what this meant for subsequent medieval rulers of Russia. Different historiographical perspectives ranging from the opinions of Western, Soviet, and Russian historians take into account the original documents of the Byzantine and Russian medieval Orthodox Church, the Russian Chronicles, and the testaments of Russian princes and tsars. Other issues include the motives for which Byzantium and Russia developed their close relationship and the extent to which their political, cultural, and religious views and traditions became interwoven and therefore, compatible. The fundamental differences between these two lands remain as important as their similarities.

Primary sources here include translated excerpts from many of the Russian chronicles. The

most famous is the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, or *The Tale of Bygone Years*, a history of Kievan Rus' said to have been composed by Nestor, a monk of the historic Crypt Monastery in Kiev, during the end of the eleventh century. Other chronicles include the *Chronicle of Novgorod*, a history from 1016-1471, and the *Nikonian Chronicle*, which encompasses Russian history from the establishment of Kievan Rus' up to the 1520s. *The Testaments of the Grand Princes of Moscow* is a vital primary source which includes information on the development of the Principality of Moscow, the system of taxation and division of land and social classes in medieval Russia through the testaments of multiple Russian rulers; the text describes princely administration and the shifting idea of the state. Further sources are Anselm of Havelberg's *Anticimemon*, a source about the differences between Western and Eastern Christianity, American historian Richard Pipes' translation, *Karamzin's Memoir on Ancient and Modern Russia*, is useful here as a source on an eighteenth-century perspective through the eyes of Nikolay Karamzin (1766-1826), Russian writer, poet, historian, and critic.

I will analyze the viewpoints from several Western and Russian historians regarding this period in Byzantine and Russian history. John Meyendorff (1926-1992), modern Orthodox writer, scholar and teacher, is a significant primary author in this field. Although Russian-born, Meyendorff grew up and was educated in France and subsequently gave lectures throughout Europe and the United States. Thus, he generally offers a Western perspective throughout much of his work. Dimitri Obolensky (1918-2001) is another important historian whose views I consider here. Obolensky was given the title of "Prince" at his birth, as he was descended from the Riurikid line. He received a western education, as reflected in some of his opinions. Eric Voegelin (1901-1985), a prominent German-born American political philosopher, offers a perspective on the Third Rome theory central to my study for its theoretical contribution to organizing the material of the Russian past. British historians Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard provide enlightening details on early Russian history. Other historians whose views I take into account include Russian and western historians Vladimir Valdenberg, R.J.H. Jenkins,

George Vernadsky, Charles J. Halperin, Henryk Paszkiewicz, Robert O. Crummey, Donald Ostrowski, and Janet Martin. I also include Russian historian Mikhail Dmitrievich Priselkov's (1881-1941) work entitled *Troitskaya Letopis'*, a reconstruction of Metropolitan Cyprian's compilation. This text serves as the foundation of various modern analyses of the Russian Chronicles. The original manuscript was destroyed in Moscow in the fire of 1812.<sup>1</sup>

In order to analyze the question of the extent of Byzantine influence on medieval Russia, I will chronologically examine the origins of Russia's political system in Kievan Rus' and how the connection between Byzantium and Russia first developed. Next, I will consider the political relationship that flourished as a result of the well-known trade route from Scandinavian lands to the Greek lands. I will also look at Byzantine relations with Russia during the period of the Golden Horde's successful conquest of Russia, as well as specifics of Russia's religious heritage from the Byzantine Church and the exchange of culture between the two lands. I will then consider the independent Principality of Novgorod and threats to Orthodoxy which arose from Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland, and finally, Moscow's rise to power in relation to the Third Rome theory. I have included an epilogue that addresses the question of the extent to which Byzantine tradition survived the eighteenth century, Peter I (1672-1725) and Catherine II's (1729-1796) reigns. I show that Peter and Catherine's respect for Byzantine heritage was spiritual and based on Orthodox religious beliefs rather than a political instrument in conducting Russia's foreign policy throughout the eighteenth century.

Historical debate encompasses each of the four chronological periods. For example, in respect to the origins of Russia, historians can generally be divided into two groups depending upon their point-of-view: the "Normanists" and the "Anti-Normanists." Eighteenth-century historians Gerhard Freidrich Muller, as well as August Ludwig Schlozer and Gotlib Bayer, are credited with the development of the Normanist theory, while the famous Russian natural scientist, Mikhail Lomonosov, is known to have retaliated by establishing the Anti-Normanist

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<sup>1</sup> M.D. Priselkov, *Troitskaya Letopis': Rekonstruktsiya teksta* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1950).

theory.<sup>2</sup> The Normanist and Anti-Normanist debate centers on the establishment of the first dynasty of Varangian Russes as the rulers of the Kievan Slavic state. Historiographical controversy here also extends to the legal aspect of Kievan Rus', where some historians suppose that changes in independent legislative procedures reflect Varangian traditions, but it is difficult to estimate the degree to which Varangian and Slavic traditions had merged by the mid-1000s.

Another example of scholarly disagreement regards the origin and predominance of the Third Rome Theory. Harvard historian Donald Ostrowski presents four possible origins of this theory: texts from the Latin Church, propaganda created to illustrate the endless authority of the Muscovite Grand Prince, the prevailing political theory of Muscovite rulers, the foremost political theory of imperial Russia. *The Legend of the White Cowl* is another facet of a more mythical background in Moscow's claims. Scholars debate whether the tale is historically valid in Moscow's succession. Additionally, western historians tend to stress the importance of the Church in the political relationship between Byzantium and Russia, while Soviet historians focus instead on the importance of the economic, political, and military contacts between the two. Historians also differ in their opinions as to what degree Byzantine tradition carried over into Russian society and how much of it was modified and altered to fit the needs of both the nobility and peasants. In terms of the influence of the Golden Horde on Russo-Byzantine relations, some scholars assert that the Russian relationship with the Tatars was not purely based on hatred and animosity, but rather was largely positive; and to some degree, the same may be said about the relationship between the Golden Horde and Byzantium. The effect of the Golden Horde on Russia's future and relationship with Byzantium is similarly in dispute.

Likewise, various historians have different opinions on how the years under the Golden Horde affected Russia's cultural progress and advancement into the new era in comparison to the Western Renaissance. For instance, on one hand, Karamzin writes that, despite being under the Mongol yoke throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Russian culture continued to

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Westrate, "The Norman Problem," The School of Russian and Asian Studies, [http://www.sras.org/nationalism\\_and\\_the\\_origins\\_of\\_russia](http://www.sras.org/nationalism_and_the_origins_of_russia) (accessed October 30, 2011).

progress on its own accord.<sup>3</sup> Moscow and Novgorod succeeded in partaking in the discoveries of the time such as the developments of paper, gunpowder, and book printing. Karamzin bases his conclusions on the thinking that Russia progressed, in its own time and place, independently of the Western Renaissance. On the other hand, some historians claim the opposite. For instance, the famous nineteenth-century Russian author and poet, Alexander Pushkin, declared that the Mongol invasion prevented Russia from participating in the achievements of the Western Renaissance.<sup>4</sup> Finally, on the subject of culture, historians debate over the idea that monastic rigor and the revival of hesychasm encouraged artistic creativity.

These various aspects of the problem clarify the impact of the Byzantine Empire on the development of medieval Russia. I argue, in the end, that despite Russia's political independence and preservation of certain purely Slavic traditions, Byzantium nevertheless played a tremendous role influencing medieval Russia due to Russia's conversion to Orthodoxy. Byzantine religion transcended Russia's political and cultural atmospheres in an elaborate and complex manner. Thus religion, politics, and culture cannot be looked upon as separate entities, but rather as intricately interwoven.

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<sup>3</sup> Richard Pipes, *Karamzin's Memoir on Ancient and Modern Russia: a Translation and Analysis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959).

<sup>4</sup> Pipes, *Karamzin's Memoir on Ancient and Modern Russia*.

## Chapter 1: Pre history, the Origins of Russia, Relations with Byzantium and the Golden Horde

### *Pre history and the Origins of Russia*

The earliest recorded documentation of ancient Russian history, found in the Chronicles, noticeably reveals Russia and Byzantium's long-standing and close connection. The Byzantine Greek and Slavic Russian lands were linked due in a large part to their close geographical proximity which fostered an economic relationship based on the well-known trade route “from the Varangians to the Greeks.”<sup>5</sup> The success of this vital trade route resulted in a number of other factors fusing Russia and Byzantium. An exchange of culture and religion as well as multiple political alliances grew from the constant contact and communication between the two lands.

First, it is essential to understand the beginnings of the relationship between Byzantium and the early stages of Kievan Rus' in order to gain a clearer picture of how and why this relationship developed. Second, it is also critical to recognize the ways Byzantium and Kievan Rus' went about establishing mutual contact and how this association developed and expanded over the centuries and to what effects. Third, it is equally necessary to analyze the origins of the Kievan political system in order to see how it became linked to Byzantium. I begin with the *Nikonian Chronicle*, an encyclopedia of the history of Russia and of the Eastern Christian world.<sup>6</sup> The Chronicle describes the arrival of three brothers, Rurik, Sineus, and Truvor who came with their clan from Scandinavia and settled in the Russian lands in the year 862; Rurik was appointed leader of Novgorod, Sineus was the leader of Beloozero, and Truvor was head of Izborsk. The Chronicle states, “And from these Varangian newcomers [*nakhodniki*] came the word, ‘Russia’ [*Rus*’], and since that time it is known as the Russian land because the people of Novgorod are called in such a way to the present time. And before they were called ‘Slovens’ (or

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<sup>5</sup> John Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia: A Study of Byzantino-Russian Relations in the Fourteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 3.

<sup>6</sup> Serge A. Zenkovsky, preface to *The Nikonian Chronicle: From the Beginning to the Year 1132*, vol. 1 (Princeton, NJ: Kingston Press, Inc., 1984), ix.



Slavs), but now they became named ‘Russians’ because of these Varangians, since these Varangians were called ‘*Rus*’.<sup>7</sup> The Chronicle’s mention the arrival of the Varangian brothers who supposedly established order and coherent government is a politically sensitive subject among Soviet and Western historians.

Historians of this phenomenon can be divided into two groups, the “Normanists” and the “Anti-Normanists,” depending on their standpoint on the origins of Russia. Eighteenth-century historians Gerhard Freidrich Müller, as well as August Ludwig Schlozer and Gotlib Bayer, are recognized as the sources of the Normanist theory, while the celebrated Russian natural scientist, Mikhail Lomonosov, is credited with refuting their claims in the Anti-Normanist theory. The Normanists believe that the Scandinavian Vikings were the primary leaders and organizers of Russia’s political system. These historians give greatest recognition to the Norse origins of the Rus’ and focus on the influx of Swedish warriors who traveled southward.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, the Anti-Normanists give more credit to Russia’s Slavic origins in creating and establishing Russian political life. Many Soviet historians oppose the promotion of the Normanist theory, as Alexander Nikolaevich Yakovlev, Soviet politician and historian, stated in the periodical *Bolshevik* in 1947, “The Normanist theory is politically harmful, because it denies the ability of the Slavonic nations to form an independent State by their own efforts.”<sup>9</sup> The Anti-Normanists assert that the Slavs were the source of the Kievan State.<sup>10</sup> The majority of Soviet historians are of the Anti-Normanist persuasion, whereas generally most Western historians prefer the Normanist position.

I consider the perspectives of both the Normanist and Anti-Normanist historians, yet it is crucial to understand that both of these opinions are dependent upon the context in which they were formed. For example, Muller based his views upon certain sections he discovered in the *Primary Chronicle* where the Eastern Slavs are known to have said, “Let us seek a prince who

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<sup>7</sup> Zenkovsky, *The Nikonian Chronicle*, 16.

<sup>8</sup> Henryk Paszkiewicz, *The Origin of Russia* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), 110.

<sup>9</sup> Paszkiewicz, *The Origin of Russia*, 111.

<sup>10</sup> Paszkiewicz 109.

may rule over us and judge us according to the law....Our whole land is great and rich, but there is no order in it. Come to rule and reign over us.”<sup>11</sup> The Varangians then came to fulfill this request. On the other hand, Yakovlev’s opinion was formulated and presented a few years after the end of World War II, when anti-Germanic sentiment still ran rampant in Russia. To assume that Russia never would have developed as a modern civilization without Western influence would be incorrect. Likewise, to declare that the Slavs developed their civilization purely of their own accord is equally unrealistic. The most logical resolution of this argument is a combination of the two perspectives, in that the development of the Kievan state was a blend of Slavic and Scandinavian influence. Nineteenth-century Russian writer, poet, and historian, Nikolay Karamzin, is an example of a scholar who attempts to merge the two theories together as he is of the opinion that Russia’s origins were a combination of the East and West; this appears to be the most objective and logical conclusion.<sup>12</sup>

This debate focuses on the institution of the first dynasty of Varangian Russes as the rulers of the Kievan Slavic state. As mentioned earlier, these Scandinavian warrior-leaders made full use of the trade route which linked the northern Varangian lands with those of the Greeks. This route served as their principal economic, political and military source, and was the primary driver of economic success in the Kievan state. Novgorod and Kiev, the two main fortress cities, controlled the vital trade route from the Baltic to the Black Sea, essentially linking Byzantium with the western world.<sup>13</sup> Because of Russia’s vast resources the Byzantines saw it in their best interest to maintain good relations with Russia, although they did not always do so. The Byzantine Greeks saw the Slavic Rus as dependable allies in guarding Constantinople against the Cumans and Pechenegs, hostile Asiatic nomads.<sup>14</sup> During the time of Macedonian rule, 867-1056 A.D., the Byzantine Empire flourished and expanded into the Middle East, the Balkans, and a

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<sup>11</sup> Michael Westrate, “The Norman Problem,” *The School of Russian and Asian Studies*, [http://www.sras.org/nationalism\\_and\\_the\\_origins\\_of\\_russia](http://www.sras.org/nationalism_and_the_origins_of_russia) (accessed October 30, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> Richard Pipes, *Karamzin’s Memoir on Ancient and Modern Russia: a Translation and Analysis*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959).

<sup>13</sup> Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Meyendorff 9.

large area of former Roman territories. In Central Europe and Russia, "...Byzantine civilization penetrated as a vehicle of Christian mission,"<sup>15</sup> as seen after the religious conversion of Russia in 988 when a Byzantine bishop first presided over the early Russian Church from the time of Vladimir I, the Varangian Grand Prince of Kievan Rus'. It is necessary to point out that Byzantine civilization was comprised of a highly organized political system, a developed justice system, an expanding world of the arts, and a powerful modern army, thus providing the Byzantine emperor with immense authority.

As the Normanists point out, Vladimir succeeded in maintaining the Riurikid dynasty's prestige and authority in the Kievan political system for centuries after his death. This was due to the fact that he made domestic and foreign policy analogous to the exclusive rule of the Riurikid family over the Slavic peoples. The following generation of Vladimir's sons strove to find a functional political organization that could preserve their realm in the face of a continually changing political environment. Even though the Riurikid line was a significant part of Kievan Rus' politics, division among princes of the realm created disunity and potential danger of being attacked by outsiders.<sup>16</sup> Despite Vladimir's successfully established political stability, both internally and externally, for the successful workings of the realm, he made a critical error, as pointed out by many Anti-Normanists. Vladimir's miscalculation came when he delegated princely seats to his sons around Kievan Rus' without showing them how to organize and control the political circumstances inevitable after his death. The major difficulty that they faced was the question of who would be the heir to the Kievan throne.<sup>17</sup> Vladimir's failure to establish a logical system of succession wreaked havoc among his sons.

Vladimir promoted the idea of "shared generational authority" among his sons even though he alone governed Kiev. A "rotation among princely seats" was established as Vladimir's son, Prince Yaroslav, replaced his brother in Novgorod, followed by Boris, Yaroslav's younger

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<sup>15</sup> Meyendorff 4.

<sup>16</sup> Janet Martin, *Medieval Russia 980-1584* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 21.

<sup>17</sup> Martin, *Medieval Russia 980-1584*, 21.

brother, who replaced him.<sup>18</sup> This *rota*, or ladder system of succession, was based on the idea that the throne was meant to be passed laterally from brother to brother depending on their order of birth. Many historians agree that Yaroslav arranged the princely seats for his sons as a hierarchy. The oldest brother governed from Kiev, the leading city, the second oldest ruled from Chernigov, the second most esteemed city, and the third brother at Pereiaslavl' and so on. If a death occurred unexpectedly in one of their cities, the next brother in line took over the deceased's position.<sup>19</sup> During Vladimir's reign, this system appeared to work, but once it was time for a new leader to take Vladimir's place, political uproar among the multiple Russian princes followed.

At the death of Vladimir in 1015 a struggle for authority occurred due to the fact that Vladimir, being a former pagan, had multiple wives and concubines. After his conversion, he married the Byzantine princess, Anna, and they had twelve sons who also had an equal, if not greater, claim to power.<sup>20</sup> Yaroslav was officially next in line for the throne after his father had passed, though the hierarchy for the rest of Vladimir's children remained ambiguous due to their large number and questionable legitimacy. Even though Yaroslav was the primary successor to Kievan Rus', he never actually desired to take the title of emperor, which was traditionally reserved only for the Byzantine emperor. For himself, Yaroslav preferred to remain in the circle of Christian princes; so instead he married off his children to the royal families of France, Norway, Poland, Germany, and Hungary. The creation of a centralized state was prevented by this widespread division of Yaroslav's family into appanages.<sup>21</sup>

Due to the growth of the Riurikid family and the complex family dynamics which accompanied it, often the younger princes declared war on each other over the vicious competition for succession to power.<sup>22</sup> By communicating with neighboring states, each prince

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<sup>18</sup> Martin 22.

<sup>19</sup> Martin 26-27.

<sup>20</sup> Martin 22.

<sup>21</sup> Meyendorff 15.

<sup>22</sup> Martin 27.

was able to gain political and military alliances.<sup>23</sup> This complicated order of succession and the conflicts which followed indicated the failure of the early Riurikid dynasty to establish an orderly political system for the future of Kiev.<sup>24</sup> To clarify, during Vladimir's rule, the Kievan state was comprised of different tribes who respected his authority as the ruler of Kiev. However, when his death came upon them, the princely seats belonging to his sons were considered to be regional or tribal centers within the Kievan realm and not official principalities.<sup>25</sup> Only after the death of Yaroslav did three powerful principalities form: the Grand Principality of Kiev, the principality of Suzdal, and the principality of Galicia.<sup>26</sup> Kiev remained the most important and respected city. The result of this intricate political system was that certain parts of the dynasty became ineligible to be in line for the Kievan throne. Thus, their principalities became separate and independent, as for instance Novgorod, while the eligible princes continued to fight for control of Kiev.<sup>27</sup> Meanwhile, the connection between the Kievan State and Byzantium was strengthening due to the numerous mutual interests of Kiev and Constantinople, such as securing the Dnieper River for communication and trade. Relations between Byzantium and Kiev remained relatively peaceful for centuries to come.<sup>28</sup>

However, the relationship between Kiev and Byzantium was not always harmonious. Before the "Baptism of Russia," battles between the pagan Varangian princes and the Byzantine Greeks occurred frequently. The first recorded attack on Byzantium by the Russians is said to have been in 852. "In the fifteenth of the indiction, at the accession of the Emperor Michael, the land of the Rus' was first named," according to the Russian *Primary Chronicle*.<sup>29</sup> The attack is said to have been incited by religious differences between the pagan Slavs and the Christian Greeks, as well as the desire to rob Byzantium of its riches. The successor of Vladimir I,

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<sup>23</sup> Martin 45.

<sup>24</sup> Martin 27.

<sup>25</sup> Martin 35.

<sup>26</sup> Meyendorff 7.

<sup>27</sup> Martin 35.

<sup>28</sup> Martin 46.

<sup>29</sup> Samuel H. Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, eds., *The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text* (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America, 1953), 58.

Yaroslav, attacked Constantinople in 1043, the last assault on the city from the Russians. As a result of this battle a political alliance was established between Kiev and Constantinople and further strengthened by the marriage between Yaroslav and the daughter of Constantine IX Monomachus.<sup>30</sup>

From the earliest stages of the history of Kievan Rus' interactions and alliances were established between Kiev and Byzantium which resulted in an influx of political, religious, and cultural influences on medieval Russia. The emperor of Byzantium was continually waging war on neighboring territories in order to expand his lands, yet at the same time he was defending his empire against attacks from the various surrounding "barbaric" tribes. The emperor perceived the Russians as being useful military allies in helping to defend his empire. The Russian princes agreed to provide military support in exchange for the favored status of Russian merchants in the trade route from Varangians to Greeks. During the eleventh century, there were 6,000 Russian warriors in the Byzantine army.<sup>31</sup> Historian Donald Ostrowski notes that despite the Russian alliance, the emperor considered the Russians to be culturally inferior to the advanced Byzantine society. However, with the gradual increase of power in the Russian state, especially through the Muscovite era, the arrogant attitude of the Byzantines slowly changed from superiority to an equal economic and military partnership with Russia. This was especially true as Byzantine influence began to decrease in the Mediterranean world. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the Byzantine emperor openly acknowledged the Russian prince as his "brother."<sup>32</sup> Therefore, the relationship between the Byzantium and Russia was mutually beneficial.

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<sup>30</sup> Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 58.

<sup>31</sup> Donald Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-cultural Influences on the Steppe Frontier, 1304-1589* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 98.

<sup>32</sup> Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols*, 98.

*Political Relations with Byzantium*

Western historians generally highlight the importance of the Orthodox Church in the development of the political liaison between Byzantium and Russia. On the other hand, Soviet historians center their arguments on the significance of the economic, political, and military contacts between the two polities. John Meyendorff, a western historian, emphasizes Russia's "...acceptance of the Byzantine political world-view and of Constantinople's cultural leadership which represents the greatest of all spiritual conquests of the Byzantine Empire."<sup>33</sup> Meyendorff states that Byzantium's spiritual conquest is unique in that the Byzantine emperor never directly assumed authority over Russia; thus a conclusion which may be drawn is that the Church was the primary promoter of the Orthodox faith as seen by the position of the metropolitan of Kiev, who held tremendous power over the administrative structure of the Russian Church. The metropolitan, the religious leader under the patriarch, retained this influential position from the years 989 to 1448, resulting in heavy influence from Byzantium on Russia's cultural, religious, and political life, but the emperor of Byzantium, although being the very representation of Christian unity, did not have true domination or authority over the Russian people.<sup>34</sup> In 1393 Patriarch Anthony affirmed that the Russians' adoption of Orthodox Christianity from Byzantium did not mean that the Byzantine emperor was to be recognized as the supreme leader of Eastern Christianity.<sup>35</sup> Christian universalism and Russia's national unity were linked together under the authority of the Byzantine-approved metropolitan.<sup>36</sup>

According to Byzantine law, the patriarch and emperor were obliged to cooperate with each other for the "good of their subjects," since they were both considered to be "God's representatives on earth."<sup>37</sup> The primary responsibility of the emperor was to defend the Orthodox Church against enemy threats. By assuming the titles "Protector of the Church" and

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<sup>33</sup> Meyendorff 14.

<sup>34</sup> Meyendorff 14-16.

<sup>35</sup> Robert O. Crummey, *The Formation of Muscovy 1304-1613* (London: Longman, 1987), 133.

<sup>36</sup> Meyendorff 17.

<sup>37</sup> Ostrowski 208.

“Promoter of the Orthodox faith,” the emperor was granted universal power made official in legal texts. The universal expansion of the Church was also made official through legal documents. The power of the emperor of Constantinople, the “New Rome,” was additionally sealed in the liturgy of the Church. This idea may be paralleled with the Russian Tsar and who assumed that his power as supreme autocrat of Russia was his God given right. Patriarch Anthony wrote to Grand Prince Basil of Moscow in 1397, “It is not possible for Christians to have the Church and not to have the emperor...; it is not possible for them to be separated from one another.”<sup>38</sup> Russians were therefore referred to as “subjects” of the empire even though they were never under the authority of the Byzantine emperor himself. From the time of the Baptism of Russia, the Kievan Grand Prince “...joined a political and ecclesiastical structure which reflected Christian and Roman universalism.”<sup>39</sup> Byzantine and Russian politics were thus intricately woven together for centuries.

From the earlier stages of Kievan Rus, as Meyendorff notes, Russia faced a period of political disunity following Yaroslav’s death, leaving Russia vulnerable to Asiatic nomads and threatened the security of the trade route of the Baltic to the Black Sea. Therefore, the Russian princes looked to the Orthodox Church for stability and structure in their time of need. Although many of Russian Chronicles, recorded primarily in the court of the metropolitan, illustrate Russia’s independent national identity outside of Byzantine influence, these accounts do not eliminate the importance of the Byzantine Orthodox *oikouméne*, which included Russia.<sup>40</sup> *Oikouméne*, the ancient ideology of the fourth and sixth centuries which existed during the reigns of Constantine and Justinian I, refers to the belief that there is only one universal Christian society which is ruled together by the emperor and the Church. The patriarch was granted power due to his new status as the bishop of the “New Rome.”<sup>41</sup> This ideology influenced the political

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<sup>38</sup> Meyendorff 11-12.

<sup>39</sup> Meyendorff 22.

<sup>40</sup> Meyendorff 19.

<sup>41</sup> “Council of Chalcedon,” Encyclopedia Britannica Online Academic Edition, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/104580/Council-of-Chalcedon> (accessed October 10, 2011).



atmosphere of the realm of the Russian Grand Prince.

The political ideologies in both Byzantium and Russia were dynamic and in continual revision, which is important to understand in terms of the transfer of these political ideas from Byzantium to Russia. For example, Constantinople was not always headed by a government of “caesaropapism,” the supreme authority over church and state by one person, often by a secular ruler.<sup>42</sup> In the case of caesaropapism, the emperor is effectively head of the Church. Official documents, on the other hand, describe the emperor and the patriarch as having joint power over the Church. In reality, the emperor was in a superior political position in terms of title compared to the patriarch. The patriarch, depending on his skill in politics, could occasionally play a crucial role in the political workings of the Church. The patriarch had the authority to question the legitimacy of the emperor's power and could have the emperor removed from power if the emperor did not appear to be upholding the ideals of Orthodoxy. At the same time, the patriarch could provide his approval for the emperor and support his reign. In Russia there were many who were against the idea of caesaropapism, such as the Russian monks, who made up the majority of the Orthodox ecclesiastical hierarchy. They were supporters of Byzantine imperial ideology, yet they were against caesaropapism. This was because they preferred to think of Byzantine imperial ideology as encompassing a “Commonwealth of Orthodox nations” while keeping with the idea of the emperor as supreme ruler as more of a historic and cultural symbol of Byzantium. Accepting caesaropapism in its entirety would mean acknowledging the Byzantine emperor as having political authority over Russia which had not and would never be the case. The monks also thought that Muscovite Russia would be able to defend Orthodox Christianity against the Turks, therefore taking over the role which Byzantium had played as the shield of Orthodox Christianity.<sup>43</sup>

After defending and fighting against the Persians, Avars, Slavs, Arabs, and Turks for the past 900 years the Western Crusaders conquered Constantinople in 1204. In this year, Byzantium

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<sup>42</sup> Meyendorff 263.

<sup>43</sup> Meyendorff 263.

exited the world stage as a main source of political, economic, and military power and remained a relatively minor state afterwards, even after the recapture of Constantinople by Michael Palaeologus in 1261.<sup>44</sup> Future relations between Russia and Byzantium were tarnished due to the fact that the Crusaders established their own empire and patriarch on the Bosphorus making communication between the Byzantine and Russian governments more difficult. The Crusaders' invasion of Constantinople and the Mongol conquest of Russia (1237-1241) not only put a strain on the political and economic ties between Russia and Byzantium, but also altered the entire political structure of Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean world.<sup>45</sup> A transfer of the center of Russia's power occurred following these events when Prince Andrei Bogolyubsky of Rostov-Suzdal moved the capital from Kiev to Vladimir.<sup>46</sup> Byzantium now relied on Constantinople's reputation as the once "imperial city" with its rich history and art. The Slavic nations continued to admire Byzantium for these reasons. The Church and the "metropolitan of the Rus" were undoubtedly the driving force behind the underlying cultural and political preservation of Byzantium. This strong perseverance of Byzantine traditions were carried over to the fourteenth century when Byzantine leaders strove to maintain their independence from the West, including the papacy, Teutonic knights, and the kingdoms of Europe who posed a greater threat than the Turks and Mongols. However, the final capitulation of the Byzantine Empire on May 29, 1453, proved to be a devastating shock to Russia as the Byzantine Orthodox Church, the only remaining reminder of the past relationship to Byzantium, was forced under a foreign Muslim ruler. The Russians further felt the gravity of the situation when Lithuania broke away from its ecclesiastical relations with Moscow and abandoned the Orthodox Church in 1458 in favor of the Uniate Church of Rome.<sup>47</sup>

However, the Crusader and Mongol victories did not turn out to be as destructive as was once imagined. The Byzantine Commonwealth's religious, cultural, and political systems

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<sup>44</sup> Meyendorff 47.

<sup>45</sup> Meyendorff 29.

<sup>46</sup> Meyendorff 16.

<sup>47</sup> Martin 256-257.

remained intact due to the supervision of the Church and the religious tolerance of the Mongol khan. A revival in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was thus possible.<sup>48</sup> Toward the end of the Mongol dominated era, the Byzantine Church encouraged the Russian people to refer to the Byzantine emperor as “tsar,” indicating that he was “the emperor of all Christians” and the patriarch was “the universal teacher of all Christians.”<sup>49</sup> Religious art and literature of Byzantium, as well as monasticism, spread over Northern Russia reflecting centuries of Byzantine cultural inheritance under Ivan Kalita and his successors. Moscow’s loyalty, until 1370, to the Mongol khan occurred at the same time as Byzantine diplomacy of the Palaeologan early age, which focused on a friendly relationship with the khan and the Byzantine emperor. The Russian metropolitans who were appointed by Byzantium maintained a steady friendship with the Golden Horde and were thus able to make sure that Byzantine interests in Eastern Europe were preserved. This they could do easily from their position in Moscow.<sup>50</sup>

Because the metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia was appointed by Constantinople, he was able to maintain a connection among the Golden Horde, Byzantium, the Grand principalities of Moscow and Lithuania, and the Kingdom of Poland in the years to come. Thus, because of this long-standing, respected history, Byzantium could reach new pedestals of respect in the 1300s despite the downfall of Constantinople. Byzantine authorities generally chose Greek candidates to be metropolitans. Russian princes were only able to apply for the position of metropolitan in the thirteenth century after the Byzantine government had been exiled in Nicaea. Byzantine policies in Russia generally strengthened the administrative control of the patriarch over the Russian Church. The reaffirmation of the patriarch’s authority, under imperial ideology rather than law, during the 1300s helped to maintain the administrative unity of the Russian Church as well as increase the political and religious influence of Byzantium on Russia.<sup>51</sup> In spite of all of these different perspectives it cannot be denied that Constantinople, as leader of the

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<sup>48</sup> Meyendorff 30.

<sup>49</sup> Meyendorff 118.

<sup>50</sup> Meyendorff 271.

<sup>51</sup> Meyendorff 85-90.

Orthodox commonwealth, had tremendous political and cultural power in the fourteenth century. This Byzantine inheritance and sense of belonging "...was expressed in the liturgy and hymnography of the Church, and in the powerful administrative apparatus directed by the metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia."<sup>52</sup>

The political situation of the 1300s was further complicated by the Italian city states of Genoa and Venice, which had founded successful commerce posts in the Crimea. Having firmly taken a hold of European Russia, the Mongols were now in a direct line of communication with these two republics and Byzantium, especially since the Mongols governed the Crimean peninsula. The Byzantine court often played Genoa and Venice against each other in order to maintain a balance of power.<sup>53</sup> The conflicts between Genoa and Venice had repercussions on the internal politics and dynastic struggles of Byzantium as both republics sought to win the approval of the Byzantine court. These two Italian republics were of essential geographic, economic, political, and religious significance to the connection between Russia and Byzantium. The Genoese leaders were in the fortunate position of being able to pursue their interests in Sarai and Constantinople. Ecclesiastical officials were able to keep communication between Rome and Byzantium because of their geographical connection.<sup>54</sup> The Genoese and Venetians were interested only in defending Constantinople as an important trading post that would protect their interests in the Black Sea. Since Byzantium was surrounded from all sides, its only means of self-preservation was to turn Venice and Genoa against each other or to submit to their Turkish leader, the sultan. The Byzantines also had the option of asking the West for military assistance-- a distasteful option in that it would require them to bow down before the pope as the supreme Christian leader. The patriarch of Constantinople was the one official who nevertheless managed to maintain and even expand his influence in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. With Genoese assistance, John V Palaeologus (1341-91) claimed the position of emperor in 1354. Due to his

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<sup>52</sup> Meyendorff 261.

<sup>53</sup> Meyendorff 48.

<sup>54</sup> Meyendorff 52.

weakness as a ruler however, his government was in the hands of the Palaeologi and Cantacuzeni families, who partitioned Byzantine cities between themselves and divided their power over Constantinople.<sup>55</sup>

As Patriarch Anthony stated, “It is not possible for Christians to have a Church without an Emperor;” a statement which indicates that the Emperor is entitled to have partial authority over the Church. The fact remains that the patriarch could question the emperor's legitimacy at any time. The patriarch had expressed in a letter of Grand Prince Basil that, “Christians should indeed reject those emperors who became heretics and introduced corrupted doctrines.”<sup>56</sup> This meant that obedience to the emperor was strictly conditioned by his Orthodoxy. Therefore, such emperors like Michael VIII Palaeologus and John V, were looked down upon for having converted to Catholicism. Church representatives strove to keep civil interference at a minimum when it came to the Church. For example, Metropolitan Cyprian demanded independence from civil authority both from Lithuania and Moscow. Meyendorff claims that had Cyprian not been able to keep his power separate and free, he would not have been able to maintain unity over the divided Russian principalities. Cyprian did not want to share his power with a prince from Lithuania. He said that princes should not get involved with religious elections and affairs. Cyprian's ideology, shared by St. Sergius of Radonezh and St. Stephen of Perm, centered on the political and cultural inheritance of Byzantium. This ideology remained ingrained in the roots of Russian society and government and must be understood in order to comprehend even modern politics of Russian culture and politics of the Church.<sup>57</sup> Cyprian's successor Photius (1408-31), a Byzantine Greek, followed in Cyprian's footsteps and was able to maintain unity among the Russian principalities because his power was greater than even the emperor's.

In the centuries that followed, many of the traditional liturgical privileges of the Byzantine emperor were transferred to the Muscovite tsar. For example, when Ivan IV succeeded

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<sup>55</sup> Meyendorff 174.

<sup>56</sup> Meyendorff 264.

<sup>57</sup> Meyendorff 278.

to the throne in 1547 he was anointed in the same way Byzantine emperors had been since the late twelfth century. Ivan was also given the right to converse with religious leaders in the sanctuary of the church.<sup>58</sup> By and large, Ostrowski observes, Byzantine political practices and attitudes, such as the sharing of power between the temporal and spiritual leaders, were transferred to the court of the Muscovite Grand Prince, yet the Boyar Council was a uniquely Russian political council that was added to the Russian political sphere. In theory the Grand Prince, as the temporal leader of the country, was to have unlimited power, but in reality his power was hindered by the Church and the Boyar Council. To clarify, duties that were considered “temporal” included running the state, participating in international diplomacy, and performing military responsibilities as head of the army.<sup>59</sup> During the seventeenth century, for any laws to be passed by the Grand Prince, the Boyar Council had also to be in agreement. Government documents always read “the tsar has decreed and the boyars have assented.” In turn, the Church could often times easily influence the decisions of the Boyar Council. Karamzin adds that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the Grand Prince or Tsar failed take responsibility of his duties, then his advisors and clergy had the full right to speak up--a right that had been derived from Byzantium.<sup>60</sup>

The political atmosphere of medieval Russia was complicated and sometimes contradictory. One of the contradictions of both Byzantine and Russian political thought was the idea that the emperor or tsar was granted absolute authority over their lands and people, but he was allowed this power only as long as he “followed the law of God.” Ostrowski believes this indicates that the Church ultimately held more authority than the ruler.<sup>61</sup> Whenever disagreement and conflict arose between the Church and the emperor or grand prince, the patriarch had the right to state that the ruler was “heretical and non-legitimate,” such as in the case of the Union of Florence where the emperor considered declaring the pope supreme ruler of the Christian world.

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<sup>58</sup> Ostrowski 211.

<sup>59</sup> Ostrowski 208.

<sup>60</sup> Ostrowski 215-217.

<sup>61</sup> Ostrowski 203-204.

Such statements encouraged the people to energetically oppose and disobey their secular leader who had been declared a “tyrant and tormentor” by the Church. In both Byzantium and Russia “wise men” were appointed to judge whether the ruler was obeying God’s law or not. These wise men were assigned to four positions: non-critical and silent obedience, vocal criticism but obedience nonetheless, vocal criticism with passive disobedience, and vocal and active opposition.<sup>62</sup>

Even though the grand prince was prohibited from interfering in the Church’s internal policies, he still had power over the Holy Synod and could thus influence who was to be the new metropolitan. The metropolitan was forbidden to intrude upon state business, but he could in turn determine which laws were passed by influencing the Boyar Council. When decisions of the temporal leader directly affected the Church, the metropolitan could come to the Church’s defense. In both Russia and Byzantium, the influence of the patriarch and metropolitan was such that they had the authority to limit the power of secular leaders, such as the princes.<sup>63</sup> One could say that the Church had more power than the grand prince since the patriarch could limit his power. Little evidence exists that the Muscovite Grand Prince ever attempted to inhibit or interfere with any of the Orthodox Church doctrine during the Middle Age. Generally, up until the sixteenth century, the tsars respected the beliefs and decisions of the Church. According to Ostrowski, Ivan IV must have founded his *Oprichnina* (which existed between 1565-72) to keep the power of the Orthodox Church in check, and to expand his secular power.<sup>64</sup>

In Byzantium the emperor was obligated to have the Holy Scriptures by his side as a guide for successful leadership. In Muscovite Russia, the use of the Gospels functioned in the same way as that of a constitution in a modern democratic state. The difference between Muscovite Russia and Byzantium was that Muscovite Russia did not formally take the title of the “kingdom of Christ on earth,” as Byzantium had. Thus the Holy Scriptures were not placed on

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<sup>62</sup> Ostrowski 205.

<sup>63</sup> Ostrowski 199.

<sup>64</sup> Ostrowski 211-215.

the throne beside the Tsar.<sup>65</sup> Depending on the political atmosphere of Muscovite Russia, the Church “selectively adapted” certain features of Byzantine political theory and ignored others. However, the religious principles of Byzantine and Muscovite Churches centered on the cooperation between secular and religious leaders in order to resolve disagreement.<sup>66</sup>

The divide between Church and State was especially convoluted with obscure boundaries which often failed to separate the secular from the religious aspects of life. Tensions between the Church and the State grew over the issue of monasteries’ rights to obtain large quantities of land and properties.<sup>67</sup> This was especially true during the reign of Ivan III who, after having annexed Novgorod, seized the land belonging to the archbishop and redistributed it to his noble advisors. Ivan’s intent was to compensate his army and cavalry by redistributing the Church’s wealth. However, the Church’s power remained a factor too great to overrule completely. Ivan IV shared similar concerns over the power of the Church, but it was only during the reigns of Peter I (1689-1725) and Catherine II (1762-1796) that a divide between Church and State was officially declared. This resulted in the secularization of Russian monastic lands.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ostrowski 127-128.

<sup>66</sup> Ostrowski 218.

<sup>67</sup> Crummey, *The Formation of Muscovy 1304-1613*, 129.

<sup>68</sup> Crummey 131.



*Russia under the Golden Horde*

After having declared victory over the Persians, Genghis Khan, ruler of the Mongolian Empire in the early thirteenth century, defeated a coalition of Russian and Cuman princes in 1223 on the Kalita River. This victory foreshadowed the conquest of all of Russia ten years later by Batu, Genghis Khan's grandson. The capture of Russia was a major turning point in Eastern European history. The Mongol yoke spread rapidly under the diligent armies of Batu and his general, Subudey, and in 1240 they succeeded in capturing and destroying Kiev as a result of Batu's precise, systematic military strategy.<sup>69</sup> More than 500,000 Russians perished during the Mongols' conquest of Russia. By the year 1300, the Mongolian Empire expanded from the Balkans and Carpathian mountains to the Pacific Ocean and from the northern Russian forests to Mesopotamia. Up until the Mongol invasion, the Byzantine emperor had been the only symbol of an imperial ruler for Russia. Afterwards, the Russians referred to both the Byzantine emperor and the Mongol khan as "tsar."<sup>70</sup>

The standard Russian perspective is the idea that the Mongol yoke exemplified an interminable disaster and destroyed the Russian way of life. It is described by many chronicles and hagiographic documents as being, "...divine punishment for human sins and for the weakness and struggles of Russian princes."<sup>71</sup> While Russia had the potential of great strength, the Russian principalities were never united as a whole against the Mongols. Quite to the contrary, certain principalities collaborated with the Tatars in military coalitions and then rebelled when their own interests were not being met. Charles Halperin points out that the principalities were part of a "web of constantly shifting alliances linking them to others of the constantly feuding Russian polities and very possibly to the Golden Horde or even to a fraction within the Horde."<sup>72</sup> The relationship between the Mongols and Russians was complex and at times surprising and controversial. Even though many of the Russian chronicles attempted to

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<sup>69</sup> Meyendorff 29.

<sup>70</sup> Charles J. Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 98.

<sup>71</sup> Meyendorff 67-68.

<sup>72</sup> Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde*, 128.

conceal any peaceful relations between the two, Halperin highlights the fact that, “Russian and Mongol warriors often rode into battle side by side, Russian princes brought home Tatar wives, great trading expeditions traveled between Sarai and the Russian fortresses, and so on.”<sup>73</sup>

Furthermore, the Mongols helped to develop Russia as a whole by encouraging commerce and trade. The one area of life not affected by the khan’s dominance was the Church.

Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that the Mongols wrecked havoc, destroying villages and killing thousands, yet the Orthodox Church was one area that was excluded from the devastation of the nation. The Mongols allowed the Church certain privileges, due to the khan’s religious tolerance, as well as his desire to seek and maintain an alliance with Byzantium, as the Church was led by a Byzantine representative. Although the majority of the Russian population was obligated to pay taxes to the Mongols, the *Primary Chronicle* states that, “...abbots, monks, priests, members of the clergy and those who vow loyalty to the Holy Mother of God and the bishop,” were exempt from taxation and granted other economic privileges due to the decree issued by the khan to Metropolitan Cyril.<sup>74</sup> The Church was therefore, the central place to continue Byzantine traditions. The Byzantine government of Nicaea managed to preserve the “...inheritance of old *oikoumène* in spite of the onslaught of Crusaders coming from the West and the seemingly unlimited power of the Mongol empire.”<sup>75</sup> Loyalty to the Mongol Empire essentially enhanced the exchange of traditional and religious bonds between Byzantium and Russia. Often the Golden Horde cooperated respectfully with Constantinople in terms of the question of Russia, and Russia fell under the military and political control of the Mongols and the religious control of the Byzantine patriarch.

Due to the khan’s acceptance and patronage of the Orthodox religion the Church gained enormous wealth. Even during Moscow’s consolidation of power certain Mongolian institutions were utilized to expand the authority of Muscovite princes. Despite the difficult

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<sup>73</sup> Halperin, 128.

<sup>74</sup> Meyendorff 45.

<sup>75</sup> Meyendorff 31.

beginnings between the Russians and the invaders, the Mongols were of particular help to Moscow by assisting in the suppression of Tver and other competitors in the realm of Vladimir. The khan increased Moscow's finances by collecting tribute from the other principalities on Moscow's behalf, and they also provided it with a strong fiscal and administrative system and kept the resources and resistance of other principalities in check. This established the foundation for the authority of the Grand Dukes of Moscow and the Tatars.<sup>76</sup> The relationship between the Golden Horde and Russia was not purely based on hatred and animosity, but in fact many interactions turned out to be positive. To some degree, the same may be said with the connection between the Golden Horde and Byzantium.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, the adoption of Islam by Khan Uzbek during his reign (1313-41) did not degrade or alter the position of the metropolitan of Russia. In fact this new religion for the Mongols had little to no influence on Russian religious life in general. Relations between the Golden Horde and Byzantium remained strong as it was the Mongols who defeated the Seljuq (Turks) in Asia Minor.<sup>78</sup>

The Mongols contributed to both the survival and demise of the Byzantine Empire. They postponed the Byzantine Empire from vanishing by 200 years because they deterred the Turks in Asia Minor and suppressed their power, but at the same time the Mongols drove Turkish tribes towards the West in the late fourteenth century, thus triggering the advances on Byzantine territory. The rule of the Mongol khans impacted the political system and cultural life of the Russians until the fifteenth century.<sup>79</sup> Meyendorff notes that, "The Mongol empire was there to stay; it had helped weaken the power of the Seljuq Turks, menacing Nicaea and Constantinople; it could be counted on, as a support against Western expansionism; it controlled the communication route between Byzantium and Russia; it was basically tolerant of the Orthodox Church."<sup>80</sup> Interestingly, in their trail of destruction and massacres, the khan left the

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<sup>76</sup> Paszkiewicz 327.

<sup>77</sup> Halperin 128-129.

<sup>78</sup> Meyendorff 69-70.

<sup>79</sup> Meyendorff 37-38.

<sup>80</sup> Meyendorff 44.

political system of Russia as it was. Instead, under threat of prolonged attack, the khan demanded tribute from the princes. The humiliating defeat of Russia by the Mongols and the forced payments of the princes to the khan was a national catastrophe, economically and politically.

In looking towards the West, the Nicaean emperors repeatedly made diplomatic efforts to establish an understanding with the Western powers (e.g. between Emperor Frederick II and Pope Alexander IV in 1256), but it was in vain as the Westerners refused to cooperate. Attempts at cooperation between Pope Alexander IV and Emperor Theodore Lascaris were unsuccessful. Thus the Nicaean government turned eastward and sought negotiations with the Mongol khan, Alexander Nevsky, and the Metropolitan Cyril. In 1257, representatives from Byzantium went to the khan, whose rule of the Golden Horde was “consolidated and extended”. The khan now had control over Novgorod and Galacia-Volhynia.<sup>81</sup> At the creation of the Latin Empire and the Mongol conquest in 1204, Byzantium exited the world stage as a main source of political, economic, and military power and thus remained a minor player afterwards.

After the defeat of the Golden Horde, the Muscovite Grand Princes claimed the power of the Mongol khan, the divine right to rule over the people of the steppe and Central Asia. However, the Grand Princes utilized Byzantine diplomatic practice with the Christian princes because they viewed themselves along with other Russian princes as being part of a “Byzantine family.” This family connection is noted in many Russian chronicles, where, for example, in 1439 the Byzantine Emperor John VIII referred to Grand Prince Vasilii II as “my great brother.”<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Meyendorff 45.

<sup>82</sup> Ostrowski, 97-98.

## Chapter 2: Religion and Culture

### *Religion*

The *Russian Primary Chronicle* describes Olga, widow of Igor, Prince of Kiev, as “The precursor of the Christian land, the morning star before the sun, the dawn before the light.”<sup>83</sup> Princess Olga of Kiev, in 945, was the first recognized Russian ruler to embrace Christianity, and the first of the Kievan royal line to adopt the new Byzantine religion. Her grandson, Vladimir, followed in her footsteps and established Orthodox Christianity as the official Kievan state religion. This newfound religious connection between Byzantium and Kievan Rus’ was further strengthened by the marriage between Vladimir and the sister of Basil II of Macedonia, one of the most powerful and influential Byzantine emperors. This alliance not only fused the two royal households, but also strengthened the religious ties between Kiev and Constantinople. Orthodox Christianity became the means by which Vladimir gained control of the different Slavic tribes and united them under his authority. The baptism of Olga and the account of Vladimir’s decision to institute Orthodoxy as the new Kievan religion are both described in the *Nikonian Chronicle*.

Starting with Olga’s arrival in Constantinople and her encounter with the Emperor Tzimisces, the *Chronicle* discusses Olga’s baptism in the year 955. Actually, this event is debated among historians, but one of the primary accounts states that the Emperor was quite taken with her beauty and wisdom and told her, “You deserve to rule with me in this city,” whereupon she replied, “I am pagan, and if you want to baptize me, you should be my godfather. If you do not want to do so, then I will not be baptized.” Tzimisces agreed to her terms and thus baptized her into the new religion. It is said that she “rejoiced with her soul and body” after the

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<sup>83</sup> Dimitri Obolensky, “Russia and Byzantium in the Mid-Tenth Century: The Problem of the Baptism of Princess Olga,” Apostolic Diakonia of the Church of Greece, [http://www.apostoliki-diakonia.gr/en\\_main/catehism/theologia\\_zoi/themata.asp?cat=hist&NF=1&contents=contents\\_Texts.asp&main=texts&file=10.htm](http://www.apostoliki-diakonia.gr/en_main/catehism/theologia_zoi/themata.asp?cat=hist&NF=1&contents=contents_Texts.asp&main=texts&file=10.htm) (accessed June 7, 2011).

baptism and the patriarch declared to her, “You are blessed among Russian women because you have abandoned darkness and love the light. And you will be blessed by the sons of Russia, until the last days of your grandchildren and of their descendants.” When Tzimisces realized that he had been tricked into being her godfather rather than her husband, he rewarded her for her wisdom and cleverness.<sup>84</sup> The *Primary Chronicle* also gives a similar account of Olga’s baptism that if the emperor, “desired to baptize her, he should perform this function himself; otherwise she was unwilling to accept baptism.”<sup>85</sup> This description is one of the first recorded events of early Kievan Rus’s connection with Orthodox Christianity.

The second earliest report is that of Vladimir’s choice of the Byzantine religion over Catholicism and Islam. This choice of Orthodox Christianity was not only significant for Russia, but for all of Western Europe. Vladimir’s predecessors were interested in Islam and had they converted Russia to the Islamic faith then Christianity in Western Europe might have been threatened. Additionally, the Byzantine Empire might have collapsed at a much earlier stage. Vladimir sent his noble advisors, the Boyars, to seek out a new religion under which he might unify Russia and thus expand his authority. After visiting the Muslim “Bulgars,” the Boyars gave their account of how the Muslims sit down and bow to their god “...without any sense, and there is no joy among them and everything is sad and bad-smelling; and there is no good religion among them.”<sup>86</sup> Next the Boyars tell of their experience with the German “Catholics” and state how they did not see any beauty in their services which were “unimpressive.” Next they recount their meeting with the Greeks by saying:

They led us to the church, where they celebrate the service to their God; and we were amazed and did not know whether we were in heaven or on the earth. There is nowhere such beauty or such harmony on earth, and we cannot even describe it. Verily, God is there with them. We can neither speak of it nor forget such beauty and such harmony. A

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<sup>84</sup> Zenkovsky 55.

<sup>85</sup> Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 82.

<sup>86</sup> Zenkovsky 98.

man who tastes something sweet does not want thereafter to eat anything bitter; and so we cannot remain where we are, but we have to go thither.<sup>87</sup>

Vladimir's founding and spread of Orthodoxy in Kievan Rus' was analogous to the increased dominance of the Russian prince, which was part of Vladimir's entire objective upon his conversion. Establishing Orthodox Christianity as the official religion legitimized Vladimir's claims to authority. Vladimir saw to it that Church leaders and princes treated one another with mutual respect in which churchmen provided moral support and princes accommodated them through their material obligations.<sup>88</sup> Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard illustrate that the Slavs were now under the control of not only the Kievan Grand Prince, but also a metropolitan appointed by Constantinople as well as the Byzantine patriarch. *Vladimir's Statute* lists all of the people who were under the complete control of the Church as being, "monks, priests and their wives and other clergy, widows, pilgrims, the lame and the blind."<sup>89</sup> The Church in the time of Vladimir was led by the metropolitan of Kiev based in St. Sophia. The Byzantine patriarch, head of the Orthodox Church, now had immense power in Kievan Rus'. The patriarch's authority over the Church of Russia and its metropolitan was one of the primary reasons which united the various Russian principalities both spiritually and intellectually.<sup>90</sup> Kievan Rus's conversion from paganism essentially meant that the Russians had become integrated into the Byzantine Commonwealth.

According to the *Primary Chronicle* in the year 996, Vladimir's Church of the Mother of God was named the "Tithe Church" because Vladimir stated he would, "Give to this church of the Holy Mother of God a tenth part of my possessions from my towns."<sup>91</sup> The Church's power was magnified by its ownership of the majority of Russian lands and properties. The Church controlled many aspects of life from the creation of laws and the outcome of legal matters to the influence of monasteries as the main centers of education, art, and social welfare which

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<sup>87</sup> Zenkovsky 98.

<sup>88</sup> Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard. *The Emergence of Rus 750-1200* (London: Longman, 1996), 225.

<sup>89</sup> Franklin and Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus 750-1200*, 234.

<sup>90</sup> Meyendorff 3.

<sup>91</sup> Franklin and Shepard 230.

“remained guardians of the cultural heritage of Orthodox Russia,”<sup>92</sup> The Church’s goal was to influence everyday life which was not affected by the rule of the prince. For example, the Church strove to provide guidance in the home of both the poor and the wealthy by dictating, “What clothes to wear, what food to eat, how to conduct the rituals of birth, marriage and death.” Certain occurrences which could be judged by the Church were, “divorce, adultery, abduction, sorcery, heresy, domestic violence, and disputes over inheritance.”<sup>93</sup> The Church’s “one law” which stated, “We Christians, of whatever land, hold in common,” was taken directly from Byzantium unlike the exclusively Slavic laws found in *Russkaya Pravda*. This law was meant for all the people in the Byzantine Commonwealth so that they would adhere to these religious rules of conduct. The Church sought to enforce the rules it had established by imposing penalties from priests and bishops, and its authority was derived from policies created in Byzantium in order to give credibility and respect to the Church’s rule among Slavic princes.<sup>94</sup> However, the extent of ecclesiastical influence was still under the control of the Russian princes; nevertheless, the princes allowed the expansion of Byzantine religious culture into their principalities.

After Orthodox Christianity had been adopted in Kievan Rus during the tenth century, there was a marked increase of religious texts from Byzantium for the Eucharist and other sacraments, which continued well into the eleventh century. Many of these texts included scriptural, liturgical, theological, and historical writings, all of which had been translated by Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius on their mission to Moravia. It appeared that the bond between Byzantium and Russia, based on Orthodox Christianity and the traditions of “Romano-Byzantine universalism,” was unbreakable by any cultural differences between the two.<sup>95</sup> Franklin and Shepard point out that in theory converting to Christianity meant an acceptance of canon law. In reality it was not so simple, as Byzantine canon law was a “paradoxical mixture of fixity and flexibility,” with no defined set of rules or texts to illustrate the separation of politics and ethics

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<sup>92</sup> Crummey 123.

<sup>93</sup> Franklin and Shepard 234.

<sup>94</sup> Franklin and Shepard 232-233.

<sup>95</sup> Meyendorff 18-22.



as well as the religious from the secular. Therefore, cannon law could not merely be enforced on the Russian population.<sup>96</sup> Thus, in many cases, the Slavs essentially mixed Byzantine customs with their own original beliefs and traditions as “Orthodox Christianity in the Byzantine Empire was [known to be] a varied and complex phenomenon,”<sup>97</sup> often directly benefitting the agenda of the princes and nobility of Russia.

Orthodoxy proved to be advantageous to the Russian nobility, who were then able to more easily retain control over the masses through this new religion. As for the commoners, many of the Slavs retained their own pagan traditions, which they practiced alongside Orthodoxy. For example, the sun festival *Maslenitsa*, where old Slavic tribes ritualistically burned an effigy in order to say farewell to the long winter and to greet and welcome the spring, was a blending of both pagan and Orthodox Christian tradition. *Maslenitsa* occurred on two important pagan and Christian dates, on the vernal equinox and on the last week before the Great Lent, the most important fasting season in Eastern Christianity before Easter. The burning of the effigy combined both pagan and Christian ideas of revival through sacrifice and death. This process symbolized the power of nature and the renewal of life through struggle, death, and revival. The effigy was always portrayed as a woman, the bearer of new life. Despite disapproval from strict Orthodox representatives, the Slavs continued to incorporate their own customs into Byzantine religious traditions; they even canonized their own Russian saints into the Church of Russia. The first two Russian saints to be canonized into the Russian Orthodox Church were Boris and Gleb, the favored sons of Vladimir I, who were brutally murdered during the fight for the Kievan throne during the years 1015-1019. Another way in which the Russians retained their independence from Byzantium, as mentioned by Franklin and Shepard, was through their historical roots, which were not in imperial Rome, like those of Constantinople. Russian lands were never part of the Roman Empire and thus the history of pagan Rome and Hellenistic culture could not be related to and was overall ignored. The ties between Byzantium were through the

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<sup>96</sup> Franklin and Shepard 234.

<sup>97</sup> Meyendorff 24.

Orthodox religion and not through classical antiquity.<sup>98</sup>

The implementation of hesychasm in Russia is also an example of the ways in which the Church of Russia modified Byzantine beliefs to fit its own traditions. Hesychasm originated in the monasteries of Mount Athos in the first decades of the fourth century. Hesychasm embodied the idea that the believer could attain a “mystical communion” with God by means of self-restraint and reflection. The believer was encouraged to focus his “spiritual energies” through quiet contemplation in order to achieve this communion.<sup>99</sup> Although hesychasm was adopted in Russia, religious leaders modified many hesychastic practices from the original Byzantine rituals. For example, the Russians retained the “Jesus prayer,” but eliminated the controlled breathing tradition famous in Byzantium. Hesychasm in Russia remained a much more subdued element of religion.

In terms of the hierarchy of the Orthodox Church, the patriarch of Constantinople was at the top of the ladder followed by the metropolitan of Kiev, who oversaw the bishops who were the means of spreading organized Christianity to the public.<sup>100</sup> The bishops, who were also known to the people as the spiritual heads, occupied the fourth prominent position in each principalities government. Since the twelfth century, the Russian bishop assumed the title of ‘Archbishop’. By comparison, in the Byzantine Church, “That title was normally reserved for ‘autocephalous’ prelates who were not dependent upon a metropolitan, but directly responsible to the patriarch.”<sup>101</sup> The formal title of “metropolitan” entered the canonical legislation during the fourth century. During the Council of Nicaea, organized by Emperor Constantine, alliances between the empire and the Church were created under a system where consent was required from several bishops and confirmed by the metropolitan. Local Russian princes and bishops never posed any real threat to the power of the metropolitan, and this was due to the fact that the metropolitan was appointed by Constantinople and therefore was under the immunity of a

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<sup>98</sup> Franklin and Shepard 240.

<sup>99</sup> Crummey 123.

<sup>100</sup> Franklin and Shepard 227.

<sup>101</sup> Meyendorff 83.

foreign diplomat. The metropolitan was even respected by the Golden Horde and controlled vast resources of wealth, thus being in a far superior position than the Russian princes. The authoritative power of the patriarch was more influential than even the rule of the emperor of Byzantium in the lives of medieval Russians. Evidently, the emperor was more of an advocator and promoter of the Church than a tyrant with supreme power over all including the Church. Thus as the hesychastic monks have confirmed, caesaropapism was not the driving force in Russian-Byzantine relations, but rather a strong, unified Church transcending national allegiances and political boundaries.<sup>102</sup> The Russians held fast to the traditional Orthodox hierarchy derived from Byzantium, yet, they began to place their own native Russians into religious positions of power formerly occupied by Byzantine Greeks.

The appointment of Metropolitan Cyril, who led the Russian Church for over thirty years beginning in 1568, is a good example of the Russian people taking control of their own Church. Metropolitan Cyril was in the unique position of being a Russian native where as his predecessors had all been Greeks. As metropolitan, he controlled the only administrative structure which expanded across all of Russia. He decided to move his center of power to the northeastern part of Russia in the principality of Novgorod. Novgorod had only recently emerged victorious in battle with the Teutonic Knights and the Swedes due to the shrewd military leadership of Alexander Nevsky. The knights had hoped to gain control over the few areas of Russia not controlled by the Mongols.<sup>103</sup> The German Teutonic Knights proved to be a direct threat to their pagan Lithuanian and Eastern Orthodox Russian neighbors. By 1249, the Prussian lands and the entire Balkan region came under the control of the Teutonic Order and the Knights of the Sword, who merged into one single Order of Knights. After setting up colonies in their newly occupied areas the knights ruled the native people and waged war on neighboring territories. They finally met their match with the Novgorodian prince, Alexander Nevsky.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Meyendorff 264-265.

<sup>103</sup> Meyendorff 42.

<sup>104</sup> Meyendorff 54.

Nevsky, in an attempt to preserve Byzantine Orthodoxy in Russia, led his armies into battle against the Teutonic Knights on Lake Chud in 1242 and against the Swedish Crusaders on the Neva in 1240, emerging victorious in both. With the permission of Khan Batu, Nevsky became Grand Prince of Vladimir and swore his allegiance to the khan. Unlike Western Christian leaders, the khan was, “fully tolerant of the religious inheritance of Russia and, more generally, of the cultural Commonwealth of Byzantium, to which Russia belonged.”<sup>105</sup> Even after Nevsky’s death in 1263, a policy of fidelity to the Golden Horde against the Western hostilities remained in place. The khan also wanted to prevent the Byzantine emperor from making any agreements with the pope. The bishop of Sarai played a decisive role in establishing communication and agreements between the khan and the Byzantine emperor. Despite the khan’s religious tolerance and Nevsky’s swearing of allegiance to the Golden Horde in order to become Grand Prince of Vladimir, Meyendorff observes, the Russians nevertheless viewed the Greek leaders, primarily the Greek metropolitan as allies, advocates, and possible resources against the Tatar invaders. The Russian Orthodox Church, intimately connected with Constantinople, remained the one door open to Christian Europe for the Russians. The Church also posed as a symbol for the survival of the Christian empire and allowed the Russians to retain their identity as members of the historic Byzantine Commonwealth. These ideas added to the revival of Byzantine culture in the fourteenth century.<sup>106</sup>

Other forms of opposition from the West arose between the Orthodox Slavs and the Western Catholics. For example, in 1348, Magnush, the King of Sweden sent his representatives to Novgorod to debate which religion was the better, Orthodoxy or Catholicism. Magnush’s objective was to provoke conflict and encourage Germanic cities to overthrow their Orthodox neighbors. Magnush told the leaders of Novgorod that if his faith, Catholicism, was better than the Novgorodians’ Orthodoxy, they would be obligated to convert. If they did not agree to these terms, then Magnush would attack. In return, if Magnush’s theologians held that Orthodoxy was

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<sup>105</sup> Meyendorff 44.

<sup>106</sup> Meyendorff 71.

better, then the Swedes would convert. Then *Vladyka Vasili, Posadnik* Fedor Danilovich, and the *Tsyatski* Avraam and all the men of Novgorod replied, “If thou wishest to know whose faith is the better faith, ours or yours, send to *Tsargrad* [Constantinople] to the patriarch, for we received the Orthodox faith from the Greeks; but with thee we will not dispute about the faith. As to what grievances there may be between us, we will send about that to thee to the conference.”<sup>107</sup>

Magnush proceeded to lead a crusade against Novgorod while forcibly converting all he met along the River Neva and capturing the fortress Orekhov. However, in 1349, the Novgorodians recaptured the fortress and preserved their Orthodox faith.

It is necessary to understand certain fundamental differences between the Latin and Orthodox Churches. Anselm of Havelberg identifies the year 1054 as being the time when, “The theological distance between the Greek and Roman communions now emerged as profound.” He claimed that one of the main points of conflict which separated the Western Church from the Eastern Church was, the procession of the Holy Spirit, “. . . which the Greeks understood to be solely from God the Father while the Latin’s believed to be from the Son as well.”<sup>108</sup> Anselm further states that other factors which separated the two churches included various ritual traditions, such as the Eucharist. There was also the dilemma of Petrine supremacy, where the Eastern Greek Church recognized the importance of the See of Peter, but refused to accept the idea that the papacy held the superior position which omitted the authority of Eastern patriarchy and the power of Constantinople.<sup>109</sup> Issues between the two inevitably arose from a power struggle between Rome and Constantinople whose religious leaders each declared themselves to be the true and sole guardians of the Christian faith. Another way in which Eastern and Western Christianity differed from each other was the Eastern incorporation of the Byzantine “fools of Christ (*iurodivyi*).” These saints were on the one hand mocked for their ridiculous actions and

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<sup>107</sup> Robert Michell and Nevill Forbes, ed., *The Chronicle of Novgorod 1016-1471*, vol. 25 (New York: AMS Press, 1970), 141.

<sup>108</sup> Anselm of Havelberg, *Anticimenon: On the Unity of the Faith and the Controversies with the Greeks*, trans. Ambrose Criste and Carol Neel (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010), 9.

<sup>109</sup> Anselm of Havelberg, *Anticimenon*, 10.

attire, yet on the other hand greatly respected for “giving glory to God by making themselves foolish in the eyes of men.”<sup>110</sup> By means of self-inflicted humiliation, their purpose was to endeavor for Christian humility. Their grueling lifestyle and devotion to their faith served to draw attention to the insincerity and dishonesty of society while condemning the “comfortable, lukewarm faith of ordinary believers.”<sup>111</sup> These East-West differences in practice and doctrine explain some of the hostility which was felt between the patriarch and pope. Patriarch Philotheus stated that the patriarch of Constantinople was granted divine authority as leader of all Christians. A common belief at the time was that Byzantium was essentially the kingdom of Christ on earth. From this statement, it may be inferred that Philotheus was declaring his power equal to that of the pope.<sup>112</sup> Although the Church and State had had their fair share of disagreements, the two stood strongly united during Ivan IV ideological crusade against Russia’s Roman Catholic and Muslim neighbors.<sup>113</sup>

Additionally, at many other times in history Byzantine Orthodoxy’s existence was threatened, for example, the siege of Constantinople by the crusaders in 1204, the conquest of Russia by the Mongols in 1223, and Bulgaria and Serbia’s desire to ally themselves with the Western papacy in 1220. At this point it seemed that Byzantine Orthodoxy was on the verge of defeat. However, the dream of Byzantium as the head of the Christian world finally disintegrated as Constantinople fell into Turkish hands in 1453. In 1458, Gregory Bolgarin was elected metropolitan by the Uniate ex-Patriarch Gregory Mamme and given the recognition of the Uniate Metropolitan by the Polish king. The Byzantine Commonwealth fell apart as Metropolitan Jonas of Moscow wrote to the bishops of Poland and Lithuania that Constantinople had been captured by the Turks as “punishment for the betrayal of Orthodoxy.”<sup>114</sup> Simeon of Suzdal, an eyewitness to the Council of Florence, stated that the Byzantine Emperor had betrayed the Orthodox faith by

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<sup>110</sup> Crummey 128.

<sup>111</sup> Crummey 129.

<sup>112</sup> Ostrowski 201.

<sup>113</sup> Crummey 139-140.

<sup>114</sup> Meyendorff 269.

entering into an alliance with the pope and thus, as a penalty, Byzantium was overthrown by the Ottoman Turks. Simeon further stated that “undefiled Orthodoxy survived only in Russia.”<sup>115</sup> It was now up to Moscow, as the new capital of Great Russia, to prove itself as the last defense for Orthodox Christianity as recently consecrated Russian bishops were told not to accept metropolitans “appointed in Constantinople, in the domain of ungodly Turks, by a pagan tsar.”<sup>116</sup> The Russian princes were gradually warming up to the idea of Russia’s replacing Byzantium as the leader of the Orthodox faith.

The Russians viewed themselves as members of a “universal community” with Byzantium and were directly connected through their cultural, political, and religious bonds. Karamzin stated, “The voice of the people is the voice of God,”<sup>117</sup> An official document from Constantinople specified that the universality of the emperor of Byzantium was defined as being separated from other rulers, including the Grand Prince of all Russia. This document’s legitimacy was confirmed in the *Life of St. Stephen of Perm* by Epiphanius the Wise. However, the Russians did not blindly accept this “universalism,” as seen in 1370 when the patriarch of Constantinople retracted his policy of unconditional support for Moscow and replaced it with a policy which favored the needs of the Orthodox Church in Lithuania, in addition to the Church in Moscow. In 1448, the Church of Moscow broke away from Byzantium because the Muscovites were protesting against the Union of Florence. This was an agreement between the Catholic pope and the Byzantine emperor who both wanted to unite Byzantium with the West under the control of the pope in order to fight against the Turks. The Russian princes and metropolitan were much more consistent in terms of abiding by the rules of Orthodoxy compared to the political and religious leaders of Byzantium. Crummey illustrates that the Muscovite Grand Prince was now in a more powerful and respected position after the Church of Russia broke away. The Russian Church gained full equality and independence in 1589 when the Byzantine Patriarch, Jeremiah,

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<sup>115</sup> Crummey 133.

<sup>116</sup> Meyendorff 270.

<sup>117</sup> Richard Pipes, *Karamzin’s Memoir on Ancient and Modern Russia: a Translation and Analysis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 147.

agreed to establish a patriarch of Moscow.<sup>118</sup> However, this desire for national independence was never totally repressed as the ideology of Metropolitan Cyprian, Patriarch Philotheos, and the hesychasts had engrained universality and ecclesiastical Orthodox connections into Russian history.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Crummey 139.

<sup>119</sup> Meyendorff 273-274.



### *Culture*

From the time of the “Baptism of Russia” in 988 and the establishment of Orthodoxy as the official state religion, Grand Prince Vladimir and his heir, Yaroslav, looked to Byzantium as a primary example by which to foster the society of their new Russian nation. Russia’s long-standing loyalty to its “Byzantine inheritance” also affected its relationship with Western Europe and Latin Christendom as Slavic devotion to Orthodoxy turned Russia’s focus to the East, rather than to the West. Therefore, through the ages, the Grand Princes looked to Byzantine culture, based on Roman political tradition, Greek literary heritage, and Orthodox Christian belief as the foundation for Russian society.<sup>120</sup> However, it would be incorrect to state that these three components of Byzantine life directly applied to all areas of medieval Russia. Nevertheless, these aspects influenced and contributed heavily to Russia’s cultural development and foundation.

Since the classical world of ancient Greece and Rome was not and had never been a part of Russian history and culture, the greatest interests for the Russians in terms of Byzantine culture were the fields of religious art, hagiography, orthodox spirituality, and social ethics. Despite the vast number of translated texts coming in from Byzantium, “The speculative, theological and philosophical achievements of Byzantine Christian Hellenism” drew little interest for the Russian Slavs, as this aspect of Byzantine history did not correlate to their own history. Instead, under the guidance of Byzantine masters, Russian artists took up the art of mosaic, fresco, and manuscript illumination. The Orthodox faith of Byzantium was described as “accessible and flexible enough to become a ‘culture’ understood by the learned and the simple alike in Russia.”<sup>121</sup> This accessibility of culture further increased the Slavs’ respect for Byzantium, in turn prolonging the existence of Byzantine cultural influence throughout the eastern lands.

One of the foremost reasons that the Byzantine Empire survived until the mid-fifteenth

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<sup>120</sup> Meyendorff 10.

<sup>121</sup> Meyendorff 23-24.

century was that its people accepted and tolerated cultural differences within their commonwealth. The leaders of Byzantium did not directly force their culture, language, or customs upon their followers and made no attempts to Hellenize their commonwealth. Therefore, rebellions were minimal and peace and order was maintained by allowing the Slavs to pursue their own independent laws and customs as they wished. Additionally, Byzantine policy also allowed non-Greeks to rise in status in the *cursus honorum* of the state and Church. Many Orthodox religious texts were translated from Greek into Slavonic so that the majority of people could understand the meaning of these passages in their native tongue, whereas in the West, knowledge of Latin was essential in comprehending religious rhetoric and manuscripts. Furthermore, the Byzantines' practice of cultural pluralism, also found in Roman ideology, allowed Byzantine officials to pursue their quest of a "universal Christian mission," while the various nationalities within the Byzantine Commonwealth were able to maintain their own cultural identities and traditions.<sup>122</sup> At the same time, the Russians could pick and choose certain aspect of Byzantine culture which fit their way of life.

Frequently, Russia and Byzantium participated in mutual exchanges of culture. From the year 988 Byzantine art was continually transported to Russia. Russian churches were constructed and decorated by Greek architects and artists. Grand Prince Yaroslav of Kiev dedicated his monastery to the Great Church of St. Sophia and employed Greek masters to adorn it with lavish Greek mosaics and frescos.<sup>123</sup> Byzantine Orthodox texts had been translated during the time of St. Cyril and Methodius' mission to Moravia in 860. These Greek texts, which had been translated into Slavonic, existed for centuries afterwards in Russia. In fact, St. Cyril is known as the inventor of the Cyrillic alphabet for the Russians.<sup>124</sup> Byzantine representatives and religious followers repeatedly made trips to Russia and vice versa. Russian royal princes often married Greek royalty and nobility and Constantinople was a popular destination and residence for

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<sup>122</sup> Meyendorff 17-22.

<sup>123</sup> Meyendorff 6.

<sup>124</sup> Franklin and Shepard 218.

Russians. Greek diplomats, merchants, craftsmen, and artists traveled to Russia and many Russian soldiers served in the Byzantine army. Even Mount Athos and other monasteries in the Middle East were popular destinations and homes to Russian monks and pilgrims, who passed through Byzantium on their way to Jerusalem. Much of Byzantine art and literature was brought to Russia and adopted to fit the local culture. Members from the elite of Russian society were influenced by Greek teachers and the Greek literature which they brought with them. When Russia acquired its ecclesiastical independence the traditional custom of remaining true to the 'Greek books' continued to be a part of medieval Russian society.<sup>125</sup> This mixture of Russian and Byzantine culture continued to grow and develop even throughout the conquest of Russia by the Mongols.

The difference between the Golden Horde and Byzantium was that the Russians welcomed and embraced Orthodox Christianity and Byzantine culture for reasons of their own. On the other hand, despite compliance and occasional good relations with the Mongols in politics and on the battle field, the Russian people saw the khans as hostile invaders, imposing their will by force in the form of a despised "yoke" which needed to be driven out of Russia. Just because the Russians gave the name of tsar to the Mongol khan does not imply direct loyalty to him when in fact "tsar" was a title given to any ruling king.<sup>126</sup> Historians have varying perspective on how the years under Mongol control impacted Russia's cultural evolution and development compared to the Western Renaissance.

Karamzin writes that, despite the suppression of Russia under the Mongol khan in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Russian culture continued to evolve. Moscow and Novgorod partook in the breakthroughs of the time including paper, gunpowder, and book printing. "The libraries of the tsar and of the metropolitan, stocked with Greek manuscripts, deserved the envy of other Europeans."<sup>127</sup> During Italy's revival of architecture, many Italian master architects

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<sup>125</sup> Meyendorff 20-21.

<sup>126</sup> Meyendorff 262.

<sup>127</sup> Pipes, *Karamzin's Memoir on Ancient and Modern Russia*, 111.

traveled to Moscow from Rome to demonstrate their trade to local Russian architects. Russia was not, as many may think, completely isolated from Western Europe during this time and Russia continued to grow and expand, contrary to the view that it stagnated in the dark ages or lacked a “renaissance.” “In the days of our slavery, laws were silenced-but now Ivan III issued new civil statutes, and Ivan IV a complete code, whose principal departure from the laws of Yaroslav consisted in the introduction of the *punishment by the knout*, an institution which the ancient independent Russian had not known.”<sup>128</sup> At the same time Ivan IV established an impressive army divided into regiments according to provinces. Culturally, during this time, icon painters, engravers, goldsmiths, and others prospered as well. Karamzin bases his analysis on the idea that Russia’s progress took place outside of the Western Renaissance.

From a different perspective, the renowned nineteenth-century Russian author and poet, Alexander Pushkin, stated that the Mongol invasion deterred Russia from becoming involved in the Western Renaissance. However, the expression “Western Renaissance” suggests that Russia could not have taken part in this rebirth of classical western culture and ideas as Russia had never been part of Latin Christendom or of the Roman Empire. As the *Novgorodian Chronicle* states, there was an overall prejudice against Latin Christianity and it was pointless to rejoice in Latin heritage which was not their own. However, it must not be thought that Russia was left in a period of darkness while the rest of Europe moved into the light; Russia had continued to develop in its own way and time, and Russia’s cultural revival was influenced instead by Byzantium, the Orthodox religion, the southern Slavs (Serbs, and Bulgarians), and ancient Kievan memory.<sup>129</sup> This “renaissance” commenced in the mid-1300s when the building of churches flourished all over Russia, but especially in the cities which were involved in the oriental trade fostered by the Mongols. These cities included Moscow, Tver, Novgorod, and Nizhni Novgorod. The recording of new chronicles was under the patronage of the northeastern Metropolitanate, cities, and princes. Despite the somewhat provincial outlook of these regional

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<sup>128</sup> Pipes 111.

<sup>129</sup> Halperin, 122.

chronicles Halperin states that, “the cultural efflorescence of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was a phenomenon of Russia as a whole.”<sup>130</sup> One may therefore ask how the Russians were able to maintain their cultural independence when under the suppression of the Mongol khan.

Consequently, it may seem unusual that during the occupancy of the Golden Horde and their political control of the country, Russian culture, particularly the Russian “Renaissance,” remained free from Tatar interference. A fact overlooked by many historians is that Mongol culture, before and after its conversion to Islam, was detailed and richly intricate. A supposed “lack of culture” in Mongolian society as the reason for Russia’s cultural freedom is incorrect. The explanation as to why the Russians did not adopt Mongolian culture was that it was “inapplicable” and “unavailable,” so the Russians confirmed their ties to Orthodoxy from which their art, texts, and daily life centered around. Incorporating Mongolian architecture and art was considered to be a religious taboo, whereas in other more secularized areas, such as military organization and tactics, Mongol influence was accepted and at times embraced. Therefore, Orthodoxy was the key element in Russia’s independent cultural world.<sup>131</sup> The famous hagiographer Epifanii Premudrii the Wise employed in his work “a purer Church Slavonic, with a linguistic inventiveness, literary extravagance, and more humanistic conception of human nature.” Andrei Rublev, one of the greatest Russian painters of Orthodox icons and frescos, “brought out the evocative mystical and lyrical elements of Byzantine and Slavic Hesychasm (a monastic movement).”<sup>132</sup> Thus, as one may observe, cultures that are left in a “period of darkness” so to speak do not produce such works. Therefore, Byzantium and Russia continued to maintain their cultural connection even in the face of Mongol oppression.

Furthermore, the Russian Chronicles also speak of the numerous artistic connections between Byzantium and Russia. As stated in a letter from Epiphanius the Wise, author of the

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<sup>130</sup> Halperin, 122.

<sup>131</sup> Halperin, 123-124.

<sup>132</sup> Halperin, 123.

Lines of St Sergius, and St. Stephen of Perm to the abbot Cyril of Tver in 1415, in 1344 Metropolitan Theognostos brought Greek masters to Russia in order to decorate the famous Church of the Dormition in Moscow. Theophanes “the Greek,” as he was often referred to, was one of the most well-known Byzantine artists employed to design and adorn various churches around Russia. After leaving Constantinople, in 1378, Theophanes journeyed to Novgorod to work on the Church of the Transfiguration. Having overseen the design and decoration of the churches in Nizhni-Novgorod and Moscow, most specifically the Churches of the Annunciation and Archangel Michael respectively, Theophanes achieved prominence and reverence from the Russian metropolitan and Orthodox community at large. He is known as one of the greatest iconists and artists of all time and is credited with, “showing man’s quest for God and God’s gift of ‘deification’ to man, in an unequalled way,” in his icons during the remarkably rich artistic environment of the Palaeologan era.<sup>133</sup> Iconography was especially important because it was the primary means of communication between the Church and the Russian people, since many peasants were illiterate during the Middle Ages. Iconography was equally important among royalty as seen in the *Zolotaia palata* of the Moscow Kremlin where the ceilings of the vestibule and throne room are to this day covered with images of Russia’s long history and representations from the Old Testament that have been filtered through Byzantine political thought. The iconography of the throne room embodies special symbolic meaning which depicts that the rulers’ authority is sanctioned by God.<sup>134</sup> Thus with a few modifications, Byzantine Orthodox religious art carried over quite effortlessly into Russian society.

After the Crusaders conquered Constantinople, the Palaeologi government of Byzantium became politically and economically weakened during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Nevertheless, its’ cultural and intellectual renown among the Slavic nations remained fully intact. During the “Palaeologan Renaissance” Byzantine and Russian artists focused on recovering the beauty of the ancient world and strove to create new and innovative techniques in order to fully

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<sup>133</sup> Meyendorff 141.

<sup>134</sup> Ostrowski 203.

portray this ancient beauty in this new era.<sup>135</sup> It is of particular interest that the artistic style of the Palaeologan period was adopted by the Russians, especially since many of the Greeks interests centered on their Hellenistic history and classical heritage, which were insignificant and often irrelevant to the Slavs. However, the Russo-Byzantine connection was based on the monastic revival in Russia, which centered on the spiritual and religious restoration of hesychastic ideals portrayed through religious art. The triumph of “monastic rigorism” the belief that, “God could be known ‘directly’, through a life of piety in the bosom of the Church and through the sacraments lead every believer to a mystic communion with Christ.”<sup>136</sup> This conviction, supported by Palamite theology, was promoted throughout the fourteenth century in Russia.

The Byzantine monastic revival of the fourteenth century promoted the expansion of artistic creativity. It was depicted as both a world view and as a renewal of personal religious faith, through prayer, in order to gain a better understanding of the Byzantine Christian world. Hesychasm, in essence, is the “intellectual, ideological and spiritual impact of the Byzantine religious movement,” and this powerfully influenced Russian history. Hesychasm was seen throughout the great works of Theophanes the Greek, Andrei Rublev and in the monastic circles of St. Sergius in the artistic “renaissance” of the Palaeologan period and the monastic movement. This connection to Byzantium may be seen through the “patristic, ascetical, hagiographic and liturgical texts” which were translated in large quantities by Russian monks. The copying continued for centuries after the monastic movement.<sup>137</sup> The prosperous Grand Principality of Moscow was the leader of this movement as Muscovite officials provided the necessary conditions needed for Theophanes and Rublev to create their masterpieces. These great artists intended to prove that communion with God was possible and that, “It depended both on divine grace and upon human desire to achieve it, and that it concerned not only a disincarnated human

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<sup>135</sup> Meyendorff 138.

<sup>136</sup> Meyendorff 143.

<sup>137</sup> Meyendorff 272.

spirit, but the totality of human existence, body and soul, assumed by God in Jesus Christ.” The monastic movement was a form of progress not in the “secular” sense as defined in the Enlightenment, but in a religious sense which must be understood within its context so as to see Russia’s medieval era and connection with Byzantium not as being in the dark ages, but rather as progressive.<sup>138</sup>

However, certain historians oppose the thought that monastic rigorism and the revival of hesychasm promoted artistic creativity. For example, P. A. Underwood states that, “A program of this kind, which would conform to the Byzantine traditions of the early Middle Ages, obviously cut religious art off from real life and prevented it from renewing itself by means of individual initiative.”<sup>139</sup> Meyendorff also states that monastic rigorism was perhaps “detrimental to artistic creativity in the fourteenth century.” He states:

Such a violent contrast between the hesychast movement and the most creative aspects of Palaeologan art can be upheld only if one accepts a much too narrow definition of what the religious movement in the fourteenth century really was: we have insisted earlier on the fact that it was a movement promoting not the cause of exclusive asceticism (‘Hesychasm’, as eremitic monasticism), but wide religious, cultural and social principles....but the principles and the theology of Palamite Hesychasm cannot be accused of deliberately stifling artistic creativity.<sup>140</sup>

Whether this is true or not, it cannot be denied that Byzantine art and culture blended smoothly into Russian society due to their mutual adherence to the Orthodox faith. Yet at the same time the humanistic style of Russian art was also considered to be, “spiritually contradictory with monastic literature and ideology of Constantinople as may be seen in the some of the works of Andrei Rublev in 1405.

Despite Russia’s acquisition of several Byzantine traditions, it must be understood that Russia’s ruling elite were not merely followers of Byzantium, but actually retained their ability to choose certain aspects of Byzantine life that suited the needs of the Slavic people. The

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<sup>138</sup> Meyendorff 144.

<sup>139</sup> P. A. Underwood “The Artistic Climate in Byzantium during the Palaeologan Period,” *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, Princeton, N.J., 1975: 89.

<sup>140</sup> Meyendorff 142.



Russians retained their independence through, for instance, the legal system, as may be seen in *Russkaya Pravda*:

Article I of SP deals with homicide. It allows revenge-killing by a close relative (brother, father, son or nephew), or a payment of 40 grivnas if nobody is available (or able, willing) to exact revenge. Articles 2-10 specify sums to be paid in respect of assault or physical injury: 12 grivnas, for example, is the payment for a blow with a sword-handle or goblet, 40 grivnas for serious injury to an arm, 3 grivnas for a finger, 12 for a beard. Articles 11-18 deal with procedures and payments for violation of property: how to recover a slave who has fled to a Varangian, or who has been taken and illicitly sold; payment for stealing a horse, a master's obligation to pay for injury caused by his slave.<sup>141</sup>

This small example taken from *Russkaya Pravda* is part of the legal codex derived purely from Slavic and Varangian heritage without Byzantine influence. This legislative independence gradually increased the influence of the prince in medieval Russian communities and allowed for growth of “investigative, judicial and administrative procedures, the use of monetary sanctions (fines) and eventually physical punishment in place of compensation.”<sup>142</sup> These changes in autonomous legislative procedures reflect elements of Varangian traditions, but it is difficult to approximate the extent to which Varangian and Slavic traditions had compounded by the mid-1000s. Nevertheless, the procedure found in Yaroslav's code was strikingly Slavonic in origin as were the legislative practices in *Russkaya Pravda*.

Furthermore, the *Testaments of the Grand Princes of Moscow* are excellent accounts of the divisions of territory and administrative authority in medieval Russia during the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries. Valuable information such as the division of Moscow into thirds and the members of the prince's household, his officers, slaves, and tenants, and the tax system of Old Russia can be found in these testaments. These accounts also provide some idea as to the material wealth of the various social classes during the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries. Equally important, one may acquire a sense of the “changing concept of the state and the

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<sup>141</sup> Franklin and Shepard 219.

<sup>142</sup> Franklin and Shepard 220.

changing role of the grand-prince between the time of Ivan of Kalita and Ivan the Terrible.”<sup>143</sup>

The testament of Ivan III, who married Sophia Paleologa, a relative of the last emperor of Constantinople, illuminates Ivan’s desires to adhere to the Byzantine tradition of dividing his lands and property to his sons; traditionally, the eldest son had priority over the rest. Ivan is noted to have said, “I bless my oldest son, Vasiliy, with my patrimony, the grand principalities, with which my father blessed me and which God gave me. And I give to him the city of Moscow with its volosts, and with its *puti*, and with its *stans*, and with its villages, and with all its city courts [*dvory*], and with its *slobodas*...”<sup>144</sup> It may be asserted that one of the ways in which Russian princes retained their cultural independence was through the legal system.

Nevertheless, Byzantium remained an ideal example of what a Christian civilization should be, according to the early Russian princes and founders of Russian culture. “Prince” Dimitri Obolensky, twentieth century historian, states that, “The Christian culture of the Rus’, like that of the other peoples who had followed the same path to faith, was formed in the Byzantine image, as a likeness-an icon-of the Byzantine prototype.” This was even seen as the basis of Yaroslav’s urban planning through which he designed his Russian cities after Tsargrad, the Kievan name for Constantinople, the “imperial city of Byzantium.”<sup>145</sup> It must not be overlooked or denied that this Byzantine image had profound effects on the life of medieval Russians.

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<sup>143</sup> Robert C. Howes, introduction to *The Testaments of the Grand Princes of Moscow* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), xvii.

<sup>144</sup> Howes, *The Testaments of the Grand Princes of Moscow*, 269.

<sup>145</sup> Dimitri Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe 500-1500* (London: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1971), 272-370.

### Chapter 3: Novgorod and Moscow's Rise as the Third Rome

#### *The Principality of Novgorod and Opposition from Lithuania and Poland*

Despite the autocratic rule of the early Grand Princes of Kiev, Oleg, Vladimir, and Yaroslav, certain elements of democracy existed outside of the power of the Grand Prince. Novgorod was one of the two cities, the other being Pskov, which retained its freedoms and privileges from the khan and exhibited a “libertarian spirit” among Russian principalities. Karamzin noted in his memoir that after the death of Vladimir, the Kievan state disintegrated into various autonomous regions. Lacking respect for weak princes, the people saw the opportunity to regain the ancient right of calling the Veche, or city assembly, and to implement their own supreme legislative power.<sup>146</sup> Throughout much of Russia's medieval history, Novgorod was able to preserve its unique status of being a relatively independent principality. Compared to the rest of Russia, Novgorod had several advantages; it was never militarily occupied by the Mongols due to its far northern location and surrounding forests, its economic strength was based on its commercial relations with several western countries, it maintained a close relationship with the Baltic lands, it enjoyed a remarkable level of political independence and upheld a policy of democracy through the Veche.<sup>147</sup>

The democratic aspect of the Veche in the Novgorodian principality is emphasized by the *Chronicle of Novgorod* which depicts the city as an “elective principality” that demonstrated qualities of a “democratic republic;” this was due to the General Assembly of citizens which were known to have held immense power in the city despite some limitations by ecclesiastical, commercial, aristocratic, and princely authority. The *Chronicle* also states that, “Every rank, power, and interest in Novgorod rests upon the sovereign people. As no dynasty can establish itself permanently, still less any aristocracy of western type, the Republic preserves with peculiar

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<sup>146</sup> Pipes 108-109.

<sup>147</sup> Meyendorff 49.

purity the ancient democratic ideas and institutions.”<sup>148</sup> Similar to the democratic arrangement in Athens, the Veche had the power to elect, imprison, or expel any prince, the *Posadniks*, officers of state, and the *Vladykas*, Archbishops, at their will. The Veche also had the right to declare war or settle peace and to punish criminals by throwing them off the Great Bridge, also known as being “put out of the way.”<sup>149</sup> However, Novgorod’s democratic political practices ceased to exist when the principality was annexed in 1478 by Ivan III when he declared to the Russian people, “There will be no Veche bell in our patrimony of Novgorod. There will be no *posadniks*, and we will conduct our own government.”<sup>150</sup> Novgorod's democratic tradition was in opposition to Moscow's autocracy which was under tsarist rule at that time, but eventually this northern territory was incorporated into the state of Moscow.

Another competitor for Moscow’s goal of supremacy was Lithuania. Lithuania developed into a “major multiethnic power” under the kings Gedymin and Olgerd. The largest part of the population was Russian. At this time that paganism in Lithuania decreased. The *Russian Chronicles* record the baptism of Olgerd and his twelve sons into the Orthodox Church by 1377, but his conversion was strictly a political move in order to gain supremacy over Russia. Olgerd’s desire to be the “unifier of Russia” was met with aggression from Moscow supported by Byzantium and the Church. Olgerd’s ambitions to control “Little Russia” (essentially Volhynia, since Galicia was solidly in Polish hands already), were challenged by Poland with whom Olgerd was in constant competition for this control. At the same time, Lithuania was continually being threatened by the Teutonic Knights.<sup>151</sup>

Secret negotiations between the Polish and Lithuanian leaders began in early 1383 and resulted in a document stating alliance, drafted on 14 August, 1385, in Krewo near Vilna. A marriage was arranged between Jagiello of Lithuania and Jadwiga of Poland, the eleven-year-

<sup>148</sup> Michell and Forbes, *The Chronicle of Novgorod 1016-1471*, viii.

<sup>149</sup> Michell and Forbes xiv.

<sup>150</sup> Serge A. Zenkovsky, *The Nikonian Chronicle: From the Year 1425 to the Year 1520*, vol. 5 (Darwin Press, Inc., 1989), 195.

<sup>151</sup> Meyendorff 241-242.

old-daughter of Louis of Hungary, who had already been crowned “King,” not “Queen” of Poland on 15 October, 1384. Jagiello promised that he, along with his brothers, all his relatives, and every noble and dignitary of Lithuania would convert to Roman Catholicism. He pledged to, “Reunite forever his own lands of Lithuania and Russia to the crown of the Kingdom of Poland.”<sup>152</sup> It became clear after this alliance that the Orthodox Christian population of Lithuania did not have much hope of retaining its identity in the face of Lithuania’s conversion.

Nonetheless, the battle for rule of Russia did not come from Lithuania alone, it also came from Tver. Tver was another competitor against Moscow and strongly challenged its leadership. However, in Moscow's fight with Tver the Muscovite princes took full advantage of the Tatar Mongols favor, as the right to collect taxes belonged to the Muscovite officials. Yet this favoritism from the Mongols was not stable because the Mongols feared that if Muscovite princes acquired too much power the princes would then turn on the Mongols themselves; so from time to time the Tatars supported princes from different principalities. Through skillful manipulation the Muscovites gained the most favored status among the Mongols. In the final analysis Moscow's triumph over Lithuania and Tver was due to the strong and constant support it received from not only the khan, but also from Byzantium.

However, at the same time in Russia, Metropolitan Cyprian’s main objective for the Kingdom of Poland was to preserve the Orthodox religion during the years of 1396-1397 and 1404-1405. Cyprian maintained Orthodoxy in Poland by using his close connections with the Polish king and Grand Prince of Lithuania who respected him even though they had converted to Catholicism. Cyprian speculated that Poland could convert from Catholicism to Orthodoxy again as was the ideology of “the great tradition of the Byzantine mind.” He disregarded the political interests of Poland, Lithuania, and Moscow in order to achieve the “greater good,” or for what he believed to be the greater good. Despite the many tough and seemingly impossible political struggles, Cyprian utilized Russia’s Byzantine connection as a way to maintain independence

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<sup>152</sup> Meyendorff 243.

from the aggressive forces of both the West and East.<sup>153</sup> He managed to ease the tension and division between Moscow and Lithuania temporarily during the reign of Roman of Lithuania, Michael-Mityai, and Pimen of Great Russia. Because of Cyprian's success alliances were created between Lithuania and Moscow. Cooperation between the two was an important factor in the victory of the Battle of Kulikov and the eventual demise of the Golden Horde's power in Russia. In 1385, things began to change and Moscow and Lithuania once again went their separate ways due to the Polish-Lithuanian Union of Krewo and the Union of Florence. Ultimately, Cyprian's goal of a unified Russia was not accomplished as Great Russia and Ukrainian cultures went their separate ways.<sup>154</sup>

Gregory Tsamblak (1365-1420), a Bulgarian candidate, was elected as metropolitan in 1414. Tsamblak was different in that he and Grand Prince Vitovt proclaimed that a metropolitan could be elected in Lithuania just as Cyprian had in 1375. However, Tsamblak's rise to power was a direct result of help from his cousin Jagiello, the Polish king, who orchestrated these happenings. To make matters worse Tsamblak was under the control of a Catholic monarch who also justified the right for a pagan Lithuanian representative to rise in power. Tsamblak's and Jagiello's objective was to convert Russia to the Latin Church though their schemes disintegrated as well as the power of Tsamblak.<sup>155</sup> This entire event exemplifies why the Russians demanded an independent Church of Russia as they confronted Byzantium on what appeared to be caesaropapism and corruption. In 1458, Lithuania's goal in establishing a second metropolitan was achieved. As a result, seven of the episcopal sees came to be under the authority of the new Lithuanian metropolitan. Before this time, Orthodoxy had been the primary factor which unified the Slavic territories. The Church had been the one stable element in Russian society which had

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<sup>153</sup> Meyendorff 251-259.

<sup>154</sup> Meyendorff 272.

<sup>155</sup> Meyendorff 266.

existed before and after the centuries of the Golden Horde's long domination. Now, the establishment of this second metropolitan shook the internal stability of Russian Orthodoxy.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Crummev 117.

*Moscow's Rise as the Third Rome*

During the tenth century, Constantinople was known as the center of the civilized Christian world and for this reason it became recognized as the “New Rome.” Byzantium adopted the Roman philosophy and objective of creating a universal empire designed to “supersede the disorderly competition between nations and establish world peace.”<sup>157</sup> Thus, the emperor of Byzantium and his patriarch endeavored to extend their influence to eastern cultures by means of their Orthodox Christian religion, international trade, and political alliances. Many of these Slavic people were integrated into the Byzantine Commonwealth of various Eastern European territories, such as the lands of modern-day Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Ukraine, and, of course, Russia. Upon first entering Constantinople, the northern Slavic tribes were astonished by the magnificence of the city. The glorious palaces, the hippodrome and the Cathedral of Saint Sophia impressed all who arrived. These Slavic “barbarians,” as they were called by the Byzantines, allied themselves to the powerful city of Constantinople. The early Russian princes of Kievan Rus’ established an alliance with Byzantium in order to protect their own political interests. For the Kievan princes, Constantinople was an ideal example of the perfect Christian city in terms of beauty, political organization, religion, and culture. There was much to be gained from this alliance. By means of instituting Orthodoxy as the official state religion, the Grand Prince of Kiev, Vladimir I, gained control of his people, resulting in the unification of early Russian tribes under the Kievan state.

Latin Christendom, which recognized the pope as the supreme leader of the Christian world, was rejected by Byzantium and her followers, since this belief was irreconcilable with Orthodox ideals. The Byzantine Greek notion of their empire, defined in the age of Constantine and Justinian, was that, “Constantinople was the only ‘New Rome’; its emperor was the only ‘autocrat of the Romans’ and the Church was governed by a consensus of the five patriarchs - Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem.” Thus the Roman pope could not be

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<sup>157</sup> Meyendorff 11.



accepted as the true Christian leader.<sup>158</sup> Byzantium's centuries-long connection with Russia led to the eventual proclamation of Moscow as the Third Rome.

Various historians have had diverse opinions as to the extent of Byzantine influence in Russia. For example, the early twentieth century Russian historian, Vladimir Valdenberg, stated, "The Muscovites inherited from Byzantium the idea that imperial power is limited and subject to the superior religious values protected by the Church."<sup>159</sup> He was incorrect to presume that the Byzantine government and emperor had any control over Russia since Russia and Byzantium were always two separate countries. As Valdenberg saw it, Byzantine authority came only from the Church.

On the other hand, R. J. H. Jenkins sees Byzantium as a symbol for imperial absolutism, implemented by the Russian tsar, and later on used by Soviet government representatives. Jenkins further states, "The modern Russian state merely carries on the tradition of tsarist days....The age-old structure is essentially the same and this structure is, very recognizably, the Byzantine Palace of the Third Rome."<sup>160</sup> Valdenberg apparently perceived the question of the extent of Byzantine authority over Russia in a more literal sense than Jenkins. It is true that the Byzantine emperor never actually ruled Russia, but the Byzantine political model of government was most likely seen by the Russian tsars as an example of a secure way to delegate authority.

To understand how Moscow came to be known as the "Third Rome," it is necessary to understand the difficult circumstances the city faced in order to rise in power. Moscow's acquisition of authority in the 1300s was strewn with numerous obstacles to rise above, such as the relentless power struggles with Tver, Lithuania, and other northern principalities, as well as the endless political scheming of the Mongol khan.<sup>161</sup> According to the Russian chronicles, Moscow began as a rather small and politically insignificant city when it was first founded in

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<sup>158</sup> Meyendorff 30.

<sup>159</sup> Vladimir Valdenberg, *Drevnerusskie Ucherniia o Predelakh Tsarskoi Vlasti* (The Hague: Russian Print Series, 1966), 1.

<sup>160</sup> Romilly J. H. Jenkins, *Byzantium: the Imperial Centuries AD 610-1071* (London: University of Toronto Press, 1966), 4.

<sup>161</sup> Meyendorff 145.

1147 by Yuri I Dolgorukiy. The principality of Moscow was a gift from Alexander Nevsky to his youngest son Daniel. Daniel's skillful political handling of the Mongol khan allowed him to provide his son, Yuri Danilovich, the title of "Grand Prince of Russia." Despite its relatively minor reputation in the political workings of Russia, Moscow had many features which supported its climb to recognition as the "chosen" city. For instance, Moscow's central geographical location made it such that in the 1300's it was situated directly on the trade routes which connected the Volga, Don and Dnieper Rivers to the Baltic Sea and the important principality of Novgorod. Additionally, Moscow had abundant natural resources and a rapidly growing population. It has been noted that the Muscovite princes were particularly quick and adept learners in terms of outmaneuvering their opponents in the vicious game of politics.<sup>162</sup> These reasons, indicated by Meyendorff, illustrate Moscow as almost the natural successor of Russian cities.

Ivan I of Kalita and Metropolitan Peter were two individuals who increased Moscow's prominence among Russian principalities in the early 1300s. In 1325, Ivan I was granted the title of "Prince of Moscow." A year later, in August 1326, the Chronicles state that Ivan I laid the foundation of the Cathedral of the Virgin's Dormition in Moscow "with his own hands" symbolizing the city's growing importance as the religious center of Russia.<sup>163</sup> In 1326, Metropolitan Peter died. Peter's love for Moscow extended to his request to be buried in the city rather than to follow tradition and be buried in Vladimir. He had the permanent residence of the metropolitan moved to Moscow. These events greatly heightened the prestige of Moscow.

In 1309, it was announced that Peter was to be the new metropolitan, head of the Russian Orthodox Church. He immediately faced the power struggle between Moscow and Tver. Historians note that Michael of Tver, the current Grand-Prince of Vladimir, aided by his bishop Andrew, continually tried to overthrow Metropolitan Peter. Yet Peter stood strongly behind Moscow in the battle with Tver, and in 1311 he was able to establish a relationship based on

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<sup>162</sup> Meyendorff 147.

<sup>163</sup> Meyendorff 153.

honor and respect with the Golden Horde. Andrew, the bishop of Tver and a descendant of Lithuanian princes, is an example of the close ties that persisted between Lithuania and Tver during the 1300's. Apart from Tver's obvious opposition to Metropolitan Peter, there does not appear to be much evidence for Byzantine support of Moscow in particular over the other principalities. The hostility between these two principalities, Moscow and Tver, convinced the patriarch of Constantinople and other Byzantine officials to support Moscow over Tver's Catholic connections with Lithuania.<sup>164</sup> Moscow's purely Orthodox connections, safe from the threat of Catholic neighbors, were essential to Moscow's stability within the Russian lands.

Although the rivalry between Tver and Moscow was extraordinarily antagonistic, it seemed almost minimal in comparison to the aggression between Moscow and Lithuania. Moscow's conflicts with Lithuania centered on the future of the principality of Novgorod, which had maintained relative independence when measured against other Russian principalities. Novgorodian territory encompassed vast resources of timber, wax, and fur, all useful in trading with the West. Thus, as a resource-rich principality, Novgorod was valuable to both Moscow and Lithuania.<sup>165</sup> When it came to the transfer of the Russian capital from Kiev to Vladimir to Moscow, the Muscovite Grand Prince, Ivan III, an Orthodox Christian, proved to be more appropriate for the position than the pagan Lithuanian leader, Olgerd. Although Olgerd the Fire-Worshipper, as he was known, had such great desire to have power over Russia that he agreed to convert to Orthodoxy, yet the patriarch of Constantinople was unwilling to risk Olgerd's gaining power because the Catholic missionary expansion which had almost succeeded under the pagan's father Gedymin made him fearful that Catholicism would prevail. Therefore, Moscow was the better choice to be the new capital and official residence of the metropolitan.<sup>166</sup> The Muscovites fully expected unquestioning support from the Church of Byzantium, as had been the case during the lives of the Metropolitans Peter, Theognostos, and Alexis in their rivalry with

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<sup>164</sup> Meyendorff 149-152.

<sup>165</sup> Meyendorff 148.

<sup>166</sup> Meyendorff 271.

Lithuania. Among the Muscovite ruling elite, a nationalistic prejudice against Lithuania had been promoted.<sup>167</sup> Lithuania's geographical location, pagan religion, as well as its being threatened by Latin Christendom were three observable features that removed it as the center of Russian power and authority.

Meanwhile in Byzantium, the final stages of the civil war between Andronicus II and Andronicus III were coming to a close. In 1328, Theognostos, a Byzantine Greek, was chosen to be the next metropolitan. This proved to be a time of change as a new generation had obtained control of Byzantium with the help of John Cantacuzenos, chief executive official of Andronicus III. Cantacuzenos encouraged the imperial ideology which religiously and culturally bound Byzantium with her commonwealth of the Eastern Orthodox countries of Europe. Metropolitan Theognostos was warmly received in the year 1328 as the hostile divisions between the Russian princes led to the decision to choose a Byzantine foreigner as the new metropolitan. Theognostos, during his term between the years 1328-53, was noted to have kept up the traditional Byzantine policies in Russia, where "one metropolitan united all the dioceses and transcending the political feuds between the princes of Moscow, Tver, Lithuania and Galicia."<sup>168</sup> This idea reflected Cantacuzenos' own personal views. As Peter had done during his tenure, Theognostos also chose Moscow as the metropolitan's official residence, strengthening Moscow's placement with the other Russian principalities. It was no secret that Theognostos preferred Moscow as the chosen city, since he actively pursued a favorable relationship with the khan in hopes of gaining support for Moscow. The Church of the Dormition was completed by 1333 and four more churches were constructed during Theognostos' first years as metropolitan. The canonization of Metropolitan Peter, by the request of Theognostos, provided the developing city of Moscow with even more recognition, now rivaling the status of the city of Vladimir.<sup>169</sup> Slowly, Moscow was gaining recognition in the 1300s due to the unrelenting labor of the metropolitans and princes who

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<sup>167</sup> Meyendorff 199.

<sup>168</sup> Meyendorff 154.

<sup>169</sup> Meyendorff 156.

pursued the goal of strengthening their city through shrewd political maneuvers.

As Moscow gained recognition, Byzantine officials observed the value of Moscow's policy of appeasement of the Golden Horde and positive relationship with the khan; therefore these officials maintained an optimistic view both before and after the success of hesychasm. This show of loyalty to the khan in order to remain on his favorable side was of great importance because the interests of the Byzantine Commonwealth and the Orthodox Church had to be protected from the uprisings of Alexander of Tver and the pro-western policies of the Lithuanian Prince Gedymin. Only with the khan's support was this possible. The Byzantine government was further convinced by the accounts of tranquility mentioned in the Russian chronicles: "[When] grand-prince Ivan Danilovich [Kalita of Moscow] obtained the grand-principality of all Russia, there came a great peace for forty years; the infidels ceased to fight against the land of the Rus' and kill Christians; the Christians found relief and appeasement away from the great troubles, the many oppressions and from Tatar violence, and there was a great peace in all the land."<sup>170</sup> Thus, it appears that Meyendorff is correct when he reasons that it was more favorable to remain loyal to the khan and allow acts of violence against principalities such as Tver and Rostov rather than risk the displeasure of the Golden Horde.

At the same time, the Mongol khans of Sarai were also determined to protect their interests and so they cleverly turned the Russian princes against each other so as to preserve their control over Russia. The khan switched his allegiance between Moscow, Tver, and Lithuania in order to maintain a balance of power where none of the principalities would gain too much strength to have the potential of overthrowing the Golden Horde. This idea of a balance of power was most unfortunate for Moscow's progress. Nevertheless, the khan supported the principality which demonstrated to him the most loyalty out of respect for his diplomatic relationship with Byzantium. Thus, the khan supported the metropolitan's decision to establish Moscow as his

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<sup>170</sup> M. D. Priselkov, *Troitskaya Letopis': Rekonstruktsiya teksta* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1950), 359.

administrative domain.<sup>171</sup> Unfortunately for the khan, Moscow managed to defeat the Golden Horde in the famous Battle of Kulikovo which placed Moscow as the city of central importance to Russia in 1380. This victory reestablished the metropolitan in Moscow, who now regained his authority to journey to Lithuania and control the country by reclaiming power over the western and southwestern dioceses. The Battle of Kulikovo occurred on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September, 1380, on the Kulikovo Field near the Don River in which Dmitri Donskoi, the son of Ivan II, led his armies to victory. This battle drastically increased the Moscow's reputation as a powerful military force.<sup>172</sup> Thanks in a large part to the Golden Horde's own doing, Moscow replaced Sarai as the new power of Russia.

Under the domination of the khans, Moscow's princes had acquired better knowledge of state affairs and clever leadership skills needed to run the nation. The Tatars held the idea of encouraging world peace, which they thought could be accomplished by creating "a federation of kingdoms and nations under their hegemony." The Muscovite Grand Princes continued to proceed in their policies along the lines of Tatar ambitions, developing their own programs which centered on religion and on Byzantine political traditions. According to the Polish historian and medievalist, Henryk Paszkiewicz, the demise of both the Mongol and Byzantine Empire left Moscow as the evident heir of Sarai and Constantinople.<sup>173</sup> Paszkiewicz further clarifies the reasons why Moscow did not look to the West for inspiration, which was because the city's newly acquired authority was considered to be, "inspired by Constantinople with hostility against the Roman Church and its followers, and linked to Asia by the Tatars."<sup>174</sup> Thus, the Muscovite government did not have any need of being a part of the Western European community.

On December 2, 1375, the Bulgarian monk, Cyprian, was chosen by Patriarch Philotheos I of Constantinople, despite the existence of Metropolitan Alexis, to be the next metropolitan of

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<sup>171</sup> Meyendorff 172.

<sup>172</sup> Meyendorff 226.

<sup>173</sup> Paszkiewicz 328.

<sup>174</sup> Paszkiewicz 329.

Kiev, Russia, and Lithuania.<sup>175</sup> Metropolitan Cyprian is credited with reviving the policy of undying loyalty to Byzantine ideals during a time in which the goal of a “united Orthodox world” and the “symbolic political leadership” of the emperor of Byzantium, as well as the “centralized ecclesiastical administration of the patriarch,” were all steadily losing prestige.<sup>176</sup> In the rivalry for power, Constantinople’s support of Moscow was an additional reason to promote Russia’s inheritance. Since Lithuania had already accepted the pope as the supreme Christian leader, Moscow was the one remaining prominent principality to have the advantage of rightfully claiming its Byzantine legacy. Metropolitan Cyprian took advantage of these claims to retain control over the western dioceses threatened by Poland and their Catholic king. Russia’s Byzantine inheritance was officially recognized and signed in the Union of Florence in 1439 with the encouragement of Metropolitan Isidore, who proclaimed this connection between the two as a “major historical event.”<sup>177</sup> The official recognition of this event was a huge step forward for the Muscovite princes.

Consequently, Vasily II (1415-62) essentially “replaced” the Byzantine emperor in his role of responsibility over the entire Orthodox population.<sup>178</sup> This new authority over the Orthodox community increased even more during the reign of Ivan III’s (1440-1505). Ivan himself partook in various ceremonial acts such as referring to himself as “tsar,” marrying the Byzantine princess Zoe-Sophia Palaeologa, the niece of the two last Byzantine basileis and the granddaughter of Manuel II, and establishing the use of Byzantine symbolism and traditions to prove his claims as the successor of Byzantium. Throughout the next century Russia’s multiple princes understood that a centralized government, located in Moscow, was forming and that they were going to have to accept the transformation that their divided dynastic realms were to become a single government with the prospect of soon becoming an empire.<sup>179</sup> Moscow’s

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<sup>175</sup> Meyendorff 200.

<sup>176</sup> Meyendorff 267.

<sup>177</sup> Meyendorff 268.

<sup>178</sup> Martin 258.

<sup>179</sup> Martin 258.

triumph in overcoming internal struggles between the Russian principalities, as well as the city's revival of their Byzantine connection, were no doubt two of the most critical reasons for its success.

After Byzantium fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, Russian officials were faced with the dilemma about the position of the Russian Church should be in the changing Christian world. This position would be the determining factor not only in relations with other Orthodox nations, but also with the West. The Muscovite princes and metropolitan had three choices. They could either attempt to free Byzantium from the invaders, surrender to Holy Roman Empire and the supremacy of the pope, or they could transform Muscovite Russia into the successor of the Byzantine Empire.<sup>180</sup> Russian religious officials went with the last option and subsequently took on the task of justifying Muscovite Russia's newfound authority and validating the Muscovite princes' title of "defenders of the faith."<sup>181</sup> Toward the end of the fifteenth century Metropolitan Zosima declared that Moscow was, from that point on, to officially be called an imperial city with Ivan III as "the new Emperor Constantine of the new Constantinople-Moscow."<sup>182</sup> As the successor of the Grand Prince of Kiev, Ivan III determinedly pursued his goal of having the Hapsburg emperors of Western Europe recognize him and his heirs as worthy opponents in this new age by aggressively laying claims to all Russian lands, including Novgorod and Lithuania. Ivan justified his acquisition of these territories by claiming them in "defense of Orthodox lands and people" who he stated were threatened by "the menace of Roman Catholicism."<sup>183</sup>

Moscow's destiny was defined in the works of Metropolitan Macarius, who stated that the Muscovite Grand Prince ought to "rule all of the Russian lands" and conduct a "crusade against Islam."<sup>184</sup> The idea of this crusade continued well into the reigns of Peter I and Catherine II who, although having drastically reformed the country, nevertheless kept with this particular

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<sup>180</sup> Crummey 133.

<sup>181</sup> Crummey 132.

<sup>182</sup> Crummey 135.

<sup>183</sup> Crummey 134.

<sup>184</sup> Crummey 137.



medieval tradition. Macarius went as far as to create intricate myths in his *Tale of the Princes of Vladimir*, where he traced Ivan IV's ancestry back to Augustus, the Roman emperor. Other myths included the story of how the Byzantine Emperor, Constantine Monomakh, had bestowed a royal crown upon the Kievan prince, Vladimir Monomakh. In truth, the two princes were divided by about half of a century and Vladimir's authority actually came from central Asia. Of course these myths that ennobled and glorified the ruler's family roots, also popular among Western European monarchs during the sixteenth century, were grossly lacking in historical accuracy. Perhaps in this case though, the historicity of these myths is not quite as important as how these stories affected the future course that the Muscovite leaders and metropolitan were to take in terms of Russia's role and placement in the Christian world. Indeed, these myths gave legitimacy to the "glory of Muscovite Tsardom" and validated the importance of the Russian Orthodox Church.<sup>185</sup>

The Grand Prince of Moscow did not actually call himself the natural successor emperor even after the demise of Constantinople and the Union of Florence. Actually the claim to succession of the Russian Grand Prince was mentioned in documents found in the Venetian Senate and not in Moscow as noted by Meyendorff. Even the idea of Moscow as the Third Rome, mentioned in monk Philotheos of Pskov's letters to Grand Prince Basil III in the early 1500s, were never officially accepted by the Muscovite government. The Muscovite princes maintained the tradition of Roman and Byzantine political awareness, which "excluded the right of any nation to monopolize the leadership of the universal Orthodox Christian Commonwealth."<sup>186</sup> At Ivan IV's coronation, he took the title of "tsar of all Russia" and not "emperor of the Romans." After the capture of Constantinople by the Turks on May 29, 1453, Moscow was the most obvious choice to become Byzantium's successor as the Third Rome. If Constantinople is successor to Rome, then Moscow is the natural successor to Constantinople. Even during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when the Russian "Middle Ages" came to a close and Western

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<sup>185</sup> Crummey 138.

<sup>186</sup> Meyendorff 274-275.

ideas flowed into Russia, Byzantine political philosophy was not disregarded and forgotten, but remained the foundation of Russian political thought.

An additional feature of Moscow's claims to power is *The Legend of the White Cowl*. This tale is a more contentious aspect in the history of Moscow's succession, disputed among scholars as to its historical truth. Meyendorff states that the cowl was originally a gift from Emperor Constantine to Pope Sylvester of Rome after the latter converted to Orthodoxy. Later, the cowl was bestowed upon the Emperor John Cantacuzenos and Patriarch Philotheos, the predictor of the fall of Constantinople. The cowl was then sent to Archbishop Basil Kalita of Novgorod (1330-52). The legend states that, "All the kingdoms will be reunited into the one kingdom of Russia where a patriarch will also be established."<sup>187</sup> Essentially all of the kingdoms were to be reunited in the Third Rome. Ivan IV brought life to this theory by providing the metropolitan of Moscow the honor of wearing the white cowl to strengthen his authority as the head of the imperial Church of Russia. This tradition was continued by the Muscovite patriarchs long after 1589.

Some historians, such as the twentieth-century Russian historian Serge A. Zenkovsky, speculate that Dmitri Gerasimov, one of the advisors to the archbishop Gennadius of Novgorod, actually invented the *Tale of the White Cowl* instead of finding and translating it in the Vatican Archives. The White Cowl, symbolizing Orthodoxy and the "radiant Resurrection from Rome to Constantinople," was to finally end up in Novgorod.<sup>188</sup> The patriarch of Constantinople is said to have had a vision in a dream, in which he heard the following message: "You must send this holy White Cowl to the Russian land, to the city of Novgorod the Great... And when you send it to the Russian land, the Orthodox Faith will be glorified and the cowl will be safe from seizure by the infidel... and from the intended profanation by the Latin pope."<sup>189</sup> The dream continued by informing the patriarch that, "The grace, glory, and honor which were taken from Rome, as well

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<sup>187</sup> Meyendorff 277-278.

<sup>188</sup> Martin 260.

<sup>189</sup> Serge A. Zenkovsky, *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1974), 328-329.

as the Grace of the Holy Spirit, will be removed from the imperial city of Constantinople after its capture by the sons of Hagar [in this case, the Turks]. And all holy relics will be given to the Russian land in the predestined moment.”<sup>190</sup> Then, when the time is right, the Russian tsar will be chosen by God over other “heathen kings” and will be granted authority as the leader of Orthodoxy, along with the Russian patriarch as its overseer. This was implied by the statement that Russia, “By the Grace of God, will be glorified with blessings. And its majesty will be strengthened by its Orthodoxy, and it will become more honorable than the two Romes which preceded it.”<sup>191</sup> It appears that the legend is most likely a political tool fashioned to increase the evidence of Russia’s rights to succession. The legend was then supposedly edited to imply that Moscow, not Novgorod, was the true successor of Constantinople.<sup>192</sup>

According to Martin, the tale had been retold and elaborated upon numerous times and by the end of 1525, it gained recognition as the “Third Rome theory.” Martin notes that the Abbot Filofei of the Eleazarov Monastery in Pskov fully articulated this theory in his letter to the Muscovite state secretary in Pskov, Misiur’ Munekhin (d. 1528), in which he stated that all Christian realms in history have ended at one point or another and that they, “have been reduced to a single realm of our Sovereign, according to the Books of Prophecy, that is to the realm of Russia: for two Romes have fallen, the Third stands and there shall be no Fourth.”<sup>193</sup> This legend is an example of the political symbolism that Muscovite officials used in order to add to their growing prestige.

In addition to the legends which cloud the accuracy of the political tactics that the Muscovite princes took in order to declare their city the Third Rome, yet another theory supposedly supports this Trinitarian view of history. Joachim of Flora is credited with incorporating the symbolic Trinity in the path of history. It is important to understand the

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<sup>190</sup> Zenkovsky, *Medieval Russia’s Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*, 328-329.

<sup>191</sup> Zenkovsky 328-329.

<sup>192</sup> Martin 261.

<sup>193</sup> Nikolay Andreyev, *Filofey and His Epistle to Ivan Vasil’yevich*, vol. 38 (*Slavonic and East European Review*, 1959), 28.

backdrop of Joachim's theories in order to get a clearer picture of how the Muscovites interpreted the course of events as leading up to their city. As the political philosopher Eric Voegelin states, Joachim theorized that human history was split into three time periods, each representing one part of the Trinity. Joachim represented that the initial period was the "age of the Father." When Christ was born, the second "age of the Son" came into being. The "age of the Spirit" would then proceed after the second age had come to a close. Thus would come a boost of spiritual fulfillment: "The first age unfolded the life of the layman; the second age brought the active contemplative life of the priest; the third age would bring the perfect spiritual life of the monk."<sup>194</sup> Joachim stated that each age would commence with one leader of the age and his two wingmen, in which "the leader of the first age was Abraham; the leader of the second age was Christ...."<sup>195</sup> Voegelin notes that Joachim's use of symbolism in his theories is seen even in modern political science.

Voegelin goes on to write that Joachim's first symbol was "the conception of history as a sequence of three ages, of which the third age is intelligibly the final Third Realm."<sup>196</sup> Variations of this symbol are traceable in the categorization of history into ancient, medieval, and modern periods. Voegelin states that Joachim's symbolism is also found in Turgot's and Comte's scientific theological practices, in Hegel's three stages of freedom, and Marx's three stages of Communism.<sup>197</sup> Joachim's second symbol of the leader is applicable to many events in history such the coming of St. Francis, who was viewed by the Franciscan spirituals as the leader of the new age in Joachim's terms. The symbol of the leader is also evident in Dante's "Dux of the new spiritual age." Voegelin retells that the leader is comparable to the "*Homines spirituales* and *homines novi*, of the late Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and Reformation; it can be discerned as a component in Machiavelli's *principe*...."<sup>198</sup> However, when the world became more

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<sup>194</sup> Voegelin 111.

<sup>195</sup> Voegelin 111.

<sup>196</sup> Voegelin 111.

<sup>197</sup> Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 111.

<sup>198</sup> Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics*, 112.

secularized and began to distance itself somewhat from religion, Condorcet, Comte, and Marx are said to have been examples of the new leading men. Joachim's third symbol is the "prophet of the new age" in which he speculates that the Third Realm can only be proven to be true if "the course of history as an intelligible, meaningful whole must be assumed accessible to human knowledge, either through a direct revelation or through speculative gnosis." The "brotherhood of anonymous persons" is the fourth symbol in which the age of the spirit "will transform men into members of the new realm without sacramental mediation of grace."<sup>199</sup> Joachim prophesies that mankind will no longer be in need of religion because it will have obtained fulfillment by leading an ideal life.

As one may observe, Joachim's theory on the course of history is applicable to the idea of Moscow as the successor of Constantinople. The Byzantine idea of caesaropapism was basically equivalent to the former authority of the Roman emperor. Constantinople was appointed the title of the Second Rome: "By Rome, however, must be understood not only the old one but also our royal city,"<sup>200</sup> as stated in the declaration of Justinian. When the Turks assumed control of Constantinople, the Russian Church speculated that Moscow was to succeed Constantinople as the leader of Orthodoxy as seen in a letter from Filofei of Pskov to Ivan the Great:

The church of the first Rome fell because of the godless heresy of Apollinaris. The gates of the second Rome at Constantinople were smashed by the Ishmaelites. Today the holy apostolic church of the third Rome in thy Empire shines in the glory of Christian faith throughout the world. Know you, O pious Tsar, that all empires of the orthodox Christians have converged into thine own. You are the sole autocrat of the universe, the only tsar of all Christians....According to the prophetic books all Christian empires have an end and will converge into one empire, that of our *gossudar*, that is, into the Empire of Russia. Two Romes have fallen, but the third will last, and there will not be a fourth one.<sup>201</sup>

Voegelin's application of Joachim's Trinitarian political theory to Moscow as the Third Rome is plausible, yet at the same time this view of history is perhaps too generalized, as it is applicable to numerous instances.

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<sup>199</sup> Voegelin 112.

<sup>200</sup> Voegelin 114.

<sup>201</sup> Voegelin 114-115.

However, the idea of Moscow's succession, as Voegelin notes, was not made official until a hundred years later, when Ivan IV of the Riurikid was crowned as "Tsar of the Orthodoxy" in 1547. Forty-two years later the "first autocephalous patriarch of Moscow" was recognized as the leader of the Orthodoxy in Moscow, the official Third Rome which was made clear by the patriarch of Constantinople, as described by George Vernadsky.<sup>202</sup> Western leaders, such as Maximilian I, the Holy Roman Emperor, attempted to incorporate Russia into the West by offering a crown to Ivan the Great in 1488. Ivan refused, as his perspective was that he had been blessed with power by God and had rightfully inherited his authority from his predecessors, so was not in need of Western approval. During the Turkish wars with the powers of Western Europe in 1576, Maximilian II again offered Ivan IV the title of the "Emperor of the Greek East" in exchange for an alliance against the Turkish armies. Ivan refused a second time as he was already on the path of constructing his own Russian Empire by establishing his *Oprichniki*, secret police who undermined the influence of the Old Russian aristocracy, as the "new service nobility" Ivan's goal of eradicating the feudal nobility was a terrifying and violent period for the Russian court and has left its mark on modern Russian politics today. In comparison to Western European nations, Vernadsky states, Russia was defined as the "imperial representative of Christian truth," in which the tsar was the leader; thus Russia did not follow the path of Western "representative institutions."<sup>203</sup> This may be seen, as Voegelin notes, in the year 1802 when Napoleon Bonaparte, proclaimed that the world was divided into only two nations: "Russia and the Occident."

Like Joachim, in his Trinitarian view of history, another twelfth-century author, Anselm of Havelberg depicts similar ideas in his work *Anticimenon*, written in 1149, which illustrates the division between the Greek East and the Latin West by discussing differences in Christian

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<sup>202</sup> George Vernadsky, *Political and Diplomatic History of Russia* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1936), 149-180)

<sup>203</sup> Vernadsky, *Political and Diplomatic History of Russia*, 149-180.

doctrine and ritual practices throughout times.<sup>204</sup> Just as Joachim had predicted “an apocalypse imminent in his own age” in the time of the Holy Spirit, Anselm was most noted for having “emphasized doctrinal and institutional development as the hallmark of Christianity’s unfolding toward the apocalypse.”<sup>205</sup> Anselm viewed the development of the church in the course of history, in which six days of creation were parallel to various historical eras mentioned in significant biblical events. Furthermore, Anselm used other symbols in his works such as “six days of creation as analogous to historical periods articulated in great biblical events, three stages analogous to the persons of the Trinity, four horsemen of the Apocalypse, seven apocalyptic seals.”<sup>206</sup> Anselm claimed that it was the Holy Spirit who was the driving power behind “secular developments.” He sought to, “discern the mechanisms of the Spirit’s agency as means to time’s interpretation.”<sup>207</sup>

From another point of view, Ostrowski declares that even though the idea of the Third Rome can be found in certain texts from the sixteenth and seventeenth century, “...it is too strong to say, as Crummey does, that it ‘entered the mainstream of Russian ecclesiastical thinking.’” Ostrowski justifies his statement by pointing out that an iconographical representation of Moscow as the Third Rome does not exist. He further argues, “To say that the ‘Third Rome’ influenced governmental policy in any way is simply incorrect, because we have no evidence whatever that it became operative in any policy, foreign or domestic, of the secular government.”<sup>208</sup>

Debate as to the extent and popularity of the Third Rome theory in Muscovite Russia’s diplomatic policies has continued. Ostrowski highlights several potential origins of the Third Rome theory including the following: written records from the Latin Church, propaganda created to exemplify the infinite power of the Muscovite Grand Prince, or the widespread political theory

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<sup>204</sup> Anselm of Havelberg 1.

<sup>205</sup> Anselm of Havelberg 24.

<sup>206</sup> Anselm of Havelberg 25.

<sup>207</sup> Anselm of Havelberg 25.

<sup>208</sup> Ostrowski 218.

of Muscovite rulers that developed into the leading political theory of imperial Russia.<sup>209</sup> The Latin origins of the Third Rome are derived from The Book of Daniel (7:1-23) where four beasts symbolize the Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, and Roman empires. The Apocalypse of Ezra (12:33) attributes the three heads of the fourth beast as the origin of the Third Rome theory. Ostrowski agrees with Richard Pope's analysis of why Ezra is not the source of the Third Rome theory. In Pope's evaluation he states that the three heads of the fourth beast survive concurrently, "... which does not fit the image of successive kingdoms." Additionally, the three heads symbolize the evil kings in Ezra, "...whereas the three Romes are protectors and saviors of Christianity." Pope further points out that the third head is described as "dying by the sword" which he states is, "hardly a propitious model for the Third Rome, which is not to fall."<sup>210</sup> Ostrowski holds fast to his opinion that the theory of the Third Rome originated exclusively from the Orthodox Church and not the Apocalypse of Ezra, derived from the Latin Vulgate. He notes that despite the Decree of 1589, overall, the Muscovite Church dismissed the notion of the Third Rome throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Ostrowski notes that the Third Rome was applied to the Muscovite state rather than the Russian Church in the mid-seventeenth century. Yet this application was much more of a "historical fantasy" rather than officially acknowledged. The theory was brought up again in the nineteenth century during the reign of Catherine II to explain the Russian Empire's territorial expansion. Despite the ghost of the Third Rome theory that has haunted centuries of Russian history, "the fact remains that we have no reliable evidence that it was used at any time in the decision making or as a justification for Russian governmental policy or action."<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Ostrowski 219.

<sup>210</sup> Ostrowski 220.

<sup>211</sup> Ostrowski 243.



## Conclusion

My discussion of these aspects of Russian history and historiography suggests that the Byzantine Empire greatly influenced Russian life from the Grand Prince of Kiev to the peasants largely due to Russia's conversion to Orthodoxy, which remained the one strong and constant bond between Byzantium and Russia. Byzantium's influence derived from accepting non-Greeks from its Commonwealth into the high ranks of the Church, allowing scriptures to be translated into Slavonic, and maintaining a respected position of great economic and military power for many centuries. However, Russia's political, religious and cultural atmosphere was not a mere replica of Byzantium, is rather blended Byzantine and Russian tradition to fit the lives of medieval Russians.

Culturally, Russia adopted various artistic and ideological beliefs from Byzantium such as iconography and hesychasm, as seen through the works of Theophanes the Greek and Andrei Rublev. Yet at the same time, the Russians created their own saints, combined Russian pagan and Byzantine Christian traditions, and used of their own Church Slavonic instead of Greek--a few examples of fundamental differences between the two. Despite the exclusion of Byzantine and Roman values of the classical world during the Western Renaissance, Russia nevertheless continued to progress outside of the Western Renaissance period. Russia's Byzantine inheritance continued to play a key cultural and religious role in society for centuries to come. Religion was so intricately woven into the political and cultural fabric of the country that I often found it to be difficult to separate the three categories as they are so intricately linked with one another. The Church was the chief promoter of the Orthodox faith, which flowed and blended into Russian culture, as seen in the role of the metropolitan of Kiev, who held tremendous power over the administrative structure of the Russian Church. In both Russia and Byzantium, the influence of the patriarch and metropolitan was such that they had the right to limit the authority of secular leaders, such as the princes. I conclude that the Church held greater political power than the Grand Prince.

I have shown as well that Russia's political origins are best explained by a combination of both the Normanist and Anti-Normanist theories. As Karamzin points out, a blending of Varangian and Byzantine influence shaped Kievan Rus' political and cultural atmosphere which remained, however, inherently Slavic with their own set of laws, *Russkaya Pravda*, rulers, and traditions. It cannot be denied that Byzantium played a key role in many aspects of Russian life, yet the Byzantine emperor never formally ruled Russia. Religion was, again, the key element that bonded the Grand Prince and Emperor. The metropolitan and in later years the Russian patriarch continued to carry out their Byzantine-inherited tradition, Orthodoxy. The Kievan Grand Prince essentially accepted a political atmosphere that reflected Christian and Roman universalism when he joined a political alliance with Byzantium.

Although the years under the domination of the Golden Horde were viewed as an oppressive yoke, I must agree with Karamzin's view that Byzantine-Russian relations were still allowed to grow and were in fact fostered by the Mongol khan who saw this alliance as politically beneficial to the Golden Horde. Christian Orthodoxy also survived due to the khan's religious tolerance, permitting Russia a connection with not only Byzantium, but also the Latin West. The leniency of the khan towards Orthodoxy further allowed Russia to develop culturally independent of the Golden Horde. Without the help of the khans, it would have been practically impossible for Moscow to successfully fight against the principality of Tver and the Lithuanian king. Nevertheless, I agree somewhat with Pushkin in that the course of Russia history would have taken a different path had not the Mongols invaded.

The Third Rome theory, I have thus concluded, was a political myth that played a certain role in the augmentation of Muscovite Russia's power. It is difficult to assess the origin of the Third Rome theory along with the Tale of the White Cowl because little or contradictory evidence exists as to their origin and effect on Russian rulers. Meyendorff points out that the Russian Grand Prince's claim as the successors of Byzantium came from the Venetian Senate

rather than Moscow. On the other hand Ostrowski determined the theory to have originated exclusively from the Orthodox Church rather than the Latin Vulgate. Although the question of the truth of this theory is muddy and convoluted, whether these stories are fictional or real is not as important in this case as their political implications for Muscovite Russia's future in the fourteen hundreds. After all, many "nations" of this time based their national histories on politically charged legends which morphed into national identity over the centuries. In my epilogue, I touch on the topic of the extent and prevalence of the Third Rome theory in Muscovite Russia and how this led to the Western interpretation of Russian "expansionism" during eighteenth and nineteenth century imperialism and twentieth century communism.

## Epilogue

The influence of the Byzantine Empire had been so profound on Russia's Middle Ages that this inheritance continued to play a role in the eighteenth century during the reigns of Peter I and Catherine II. Throughout Peter's kingship, the influence of Byzantium on Russia emerged in the inclusion of various elements of Byzantine law into Russian military jurisdiction.<sup>212</sup> After Russia's unsuccessful campaign against Sweden in the Northern War in the 1700s, Peter I initiated radical military reforms. With the advanced strategies, tactics and high level of discipline of several European countries, Peter began his campaign for military advancement. He found that almost all outstanding military leaders in Europe based their strategies on ancient models. Moritz Saxonsky in Germany, Henry Turin in France, and Yevgeni Savoysky in Austria, successfully implemented the military legacies from Greek and Roman successes, so Peter the Great, in his campaign for reform, also paid notice to these ancient traditions.<sup>213</sup> He ordered the translation of three famous documents: Caesar's *Gallic Wars*, the Byzantine military charter, *The Tactics of Leo*, used during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Leo the Peacekeeper; and the *Strategicon*, written during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Mavricos. Peter studied a millennium of Byzantine military experience and knowledge of European military science to help establish his military reforms. Using *The Tacitics of Leo* and the *Strategicon* as a basis, Peter added a third Byzantine document of importance, *Military Law*, to create his own military regulation codes, *Article Voinsky*.<sup>214</sup>

Adoption of the *Article Voinsky* under the auspices Peter the Great helped establish a strong, professional military. This code lasted from 1715 until 1839, when it was replaced by the *Military Field Charter*, but this later charter retained some of the articles from the *Military Law*. Thus, until the middle of the nineteenth century, Byzantine legal tradition had deep roots in Russian military and civilian legislation. Despite this, the influence of Byzantine tradition on

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<sup>212</sup> Hugh Ragsdale, *The Slavonic and East European Review* (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1988), 91-117.

<sup>213</sup> Ragsdale, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 91-117.

<sup>214</sup> Ragsdale 91-117.

Peter's military reforms has still been questioned. Adopted in 1715, the military code was considered by some a purely Russian invention, independent from any foreign influence. On the contrary, other scholars declared that the *Article Voinsky* was a direct translation into Russian from various foreign military codes.<sup>215</sup>

Writing in 2001, V. Kuchma, a modern Russian legal scholar, disagrees with both perspectives. Kuchma claims that Peter the Great invited military experts from Western European countries to Russia. Together with Peter's advisors, they studied the foreign military codes, including Byzantium's. From this study Peter established his own military charter tailoring it to the specific needs and requirements of Russia.<sup>216</sup> Presenting the countless similarities between Russian and Byzantine military rules, Kuchma demonstrates the differences between them. For instance, he notes that Byzantine military law permitted the reduction of a punishment from the death penalty to corporal punishment and a decline of military rank if the person was intoxicated, but in the Russian military charter, if intoxication was involved, the punishment was increased. In the case of adultery, Byzantine law allowed no mitigation. On the contrary, the Russians accepted some softening of responsibilities for the crime depending upon the concrete circumstances of the case.<sup>217</sup>

Differences in social and economic organization between Russian and Byzantine military law are evidence of Russia's independence from the original code. Since Byzantine military law was established beginning in the seventh century and Russian military law from the early eighteenth century, Russia had to alter the code to fit its own situation. The high level of military strategies of the Russian charter was a result of the general evolution of both European and Russian criminal law theory. Yet Byzantium's everlasting legacy and influence in Russian civil and military law theory and practice reflects the historical connections between the two.

Furthermore, Peter's rule and Russia's connection with Constantinople suggests broader

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<sup>215</sup> Ragsdale 91-117.

<sup>216</sup> V. V. Kuchma, *Military Organization of the Byzantium Empire* (St. Petersburg, 2001), 338.

<sup>217</sup> Kuchma, *Military Organization of the Byzantium Empire*, 338.

interpretations of Russia's aim and place in the world to this very day. The 'Testament of Peter' was considered as an authentic document showing the indisputable aims of Russian and/or Soviet foreign policy by statesmen from Napoleon to Harry S. Truman, and in December 1979, the *Christian Science Monitor* found in it the motivation of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.<sup>218</sup> This controversial document was first mentioned after Peter's death by Count A.I. Ostermann, Peter's chief adviser in foreign affairs, and Count B.C. Munnich, a senior officer and close associate of Peter's during his last years. Munnich claimed that Peter wanted to conquer Constantinople and to push out the infidel Turks and Tatars of Europe, in order to reestablish the Greek monarchy.<sup>219</sup> However, from the eighteenth century to the present day, the actual existence of this document has been debated among historians. The myth of this testament, dating from the early 1700's, has incessantly affected Russian foreign policy and may well continue to do so up to the present day as described by Emanuel Sarkisyanz, professor of history at the University of Heidelberg:

The notion that tsarist imperialism has a unique character remains deeply rooted. From the time of the Napoleonic Wars, and earlier, a political mythology has grown up around it....Soon after the proclamation of the Cult of Reason in Western Europe, qualities of diabolical cunning or inscrutable motives for an international plot with unseen forces came to be attributed to the gigantic and therefore fear-inspiring empire of the tsar...[In the nineteenth century] the so-called 'Testament of Peter the Great' continued to circulate, seeming to present Russia's conquests of the eighteenth century as proof that its tsars aspired to world domination.<sup>220</sup>

This statement illustrates with clarity the conventional image of Russian politics throughout the years of tsarist and Soviet rule. The characterization of Russia's desire for "world domination" is not a new belief, yet it is a belief which is grounded in fear and often lacking in substantial historical proof as seen in the possible fabrication of the 'Testament of Peter the Great.'

The spirit of the Byzantine legacy can be found in another aspect of Russian foreign policy of the eighteenth century. 'The Greek Project,' connected with Catherine the Great, has

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<sup>218</sup> Ragsdale, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 91-117.

<sup>219</sup> Ragsdale 91-117.

<sup>220</sup> Taras Hunczak, *Russian Imperialism from Ivan the Great to the Revolution* (New Brunswick, 1974), 46.

“disturbed the annual of European diplomacy long after the age that generated it.”<sup>221</sup> The seriousness of the Russian government about ‘The Greek Project’ throughout the reign of Catherine II, nevertheless, also remains controversial. Credence was given to ‘The Greek Project’ when it appeared in 1779 that Catherine, under the influence of Prince Grigory Potemkin, developed an interest in this project. Completely turning away from Romanov dynastic tradition, Catherine named her second grandson Constantine after the eleven Byzantine emperors before him, and in the privacy of her personal correspondence, she sometimes called him Constantine II. Constantine was given Greek nurses and tutors to help prepare him for his role as emperor of the Greek empire as supportive of Russia, yet independent from Russian rule. He learned to speak Greek before he spoke Russian, and coins were minted to commemorate both his birth and his destiny, which was identified unmistakably with Constantine the Great and the legendary Tsargrad on the Bosphorus.<sup>222</sup>

Many scholars and political analysts still believe that ‘The Greek Project’ of Catherine the Great was fashioned from the legacy of the Byzantine Empire. However, this project was never officially documented, only mentioned in the private correspondence between the Austrian Emperor Joseph II and Catherine the Great. Joseph II was interested in forming an alliance with Russia that focused on their common designs in the Balkans. Joseph wanted to push out the Ottoman Empire from the Balkans and establish Austrian control over the area, while Catherine sought to form a friendly Greek Orthodox state, placing the capital in Constantinople. In 1781 this alliance was realized through the exchange of Joseph’s and Catherine’s personal letters rather than by an official treaty that would require the signatures from both.<sup>223</sup>

Fulfilling this scheme was impossible because neither Russia nor Austria was militarily prepared for war with the Ottoman Empire, and in 1787 the implementation of ‘The Greek Project’ was postponed. Additionally, further complications arose as there was a serious harvest

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<sup>221</sup> Isabel Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (Moscow, 2002), 92.

<sup>222</sup> Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, 610.

<sup>223</sup> Isabel Madariaga, *Slavonic and East European Review* (London, 1960), 114-45.

failure in parts of the Russian Empire. Catherine and her supporters recognized that the time appeared inopportune for bold ventures of Russian conquest.<sup>224</sup> Before long, obstacles for the pursuit of Constantinople increased. The French could no longer be counted on to become involved as beginnings of the French Revolution were underway. Even though Austria had declared war on the Turks in 1788, they abandoned their efforts as a result of the death of Joseph, a revolt in the Low Countries, and the chaos of the French Revolution. Furthermore, the power of the Triple alliance between the English, Dutch, and Prussians was rapidly growing as the political fortunes of Austria and France were weakening. Most significantly, Gustavus III declared war on Russia in 1788. The Prussians took a step further by supporting the Polish rights to a constitution which directly threatened Russia.<sup>225</sup>

These circumstances illustrate the sequence of events and changing conditions that prevented 'The Greek Project' from being accomplished. The French Revolution, Joseph II's death, Sweden's declaration of war on Russia, and growing hostilities to Russia's heightened authority prevented Catherine from fully achieving her goal. These hostilities are some examples of Emanuel Sarkisyanz's statement of a generalized view of Russian politics based on fear and suspicion. While Catherine the Great was both pragmatic and clever, she was stubborn and tenacious as well, and in the spring of 1790 she revised 'The Greek Project' and instructed her delegation to negotiate with the Ottoman Empire a more modest version of the project in which she demanded the Rumanian kingdom of Dacia for her grandson Constantine.<sup>226</sup>

Following the reign of Catherine the Great, Alexander I's representatives declared that Russia already possessed more territory than could be govern well and that the interests of the Russians would be best served by maintaining peace. This traditional thought is both less obvious in Russian policy and even less well-known abroad than such designs as 'The Greek

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<sup>224</sup> Ragsdale, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 100.

<sup>225</sup> Ragsdale 111.

<sup>226</sup> Ragsdale 111.



Project.’<sup>227</sup> Later Soviet historians considered ‘The Greek Project’ as proof of imperial Russia’s policy of expansionism, but today this project is no longer taken as seriously as it used to be. Catherine’s plan is no longer thought to be an effect of the tsar’s expansionism, but a policy created from nostalgia for the Byzantine Empire, its primary goal being to establish a Christian-Greek state under the auspices and protection of the Russian Empire. In the West ‘The Greek Project’ often continues to symbolize Russia’s desire to conquer, although in reality it became a turning point from the practice of direct conquer to the strategy of supporting the creation and revival of Christian states in this region.<sup>228</sup>

Neither Peter’s ‘Testament’ nor Catherine II’s ‘Greek Project,’ was directed by the influence of the Byzantine legacy, but rather by the pragmatic ideas of those two great leaders who wanted to establish a guaranteed security for their enormous empire. Their respect for Byzantine heritage was spiritual and based on the Orthodox religion rather than a political instrument in conducting the foreign policy of Russia in the eighteenth century. In spite of these drastic reforms, the spirit of Byzantium could not be completely eliminated and still affected the reign of Peter I and Catherine II as well as their successors.

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<sup>227</sup> Ragsdale 116.

<sup>228</sup> *The Slavic People of South-Eastern Europe and Russia in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century* (Moscow: Nayuka, 2003), 109.

## Appendix

Timeline of Medieval Russian History:

### **Kievan Rus': 860-1240**

- 862 - Legendary arrival of Riurik of the Varangians
- 980-1015 - Vladimir is Grand Prince of Kiev
- 988 - Official Conversion to Christianity
- 1019-1054 - Yaroslav is Grand Prince of Kiev
- 1037-1046 - Foundation of Church of St. Sofia in Kiev
- 1051 - Hilarion consecrate as metropolitan of Kiev and all Rus'
- 1055 - Polovtsy appear on the steppe
- 1061 - Polovtsy attack Rus'
- 1072 - Canonization of Princes Boris and Gleb
- 1096 - Polovtsy attack Kiev and burn Pecherskii Monastery
- 1097 - Princely conference at Liubech
- 1113-1125 - Vladimir Monomakh is Grand Prince of Kiev
- 1132-1136 - Novgorod becomes semi-autonomous
- 1147 - Moscow first appears in the chronicles
- 1156 - First Kremlin walls in Moscow
- 1169 - Prince Andrei Bogoliubskii of Vladimir sacks Kiev
- 1191-1192 - Novgorod signs treaty with Hanseatic League
- 1204 - Constantinople falls to the 4th Crusade
- 1221 - Nizhni-Novgorod founded
- 1223 - Battle of Kalka - first Mongol victory over Kievan Rus'
- 1237-1240 - Mongol conquest of Kievan Rus'
- 1240 - Prince Alexander Nevsky defeats Swedes on the Neva

**Mongol Rus': 1240-15th century** (a clean break between the period of Mongol Rus' and the period of Muscovite Rus' does not exist)

- 1242 - Prince Alexander Nevsky defeats Teutonic Knights at Lake Peipus
- 1300 - Moscow conquers Kolomna
- 1305 - Metropolitan moves from Vladimir to Moscow
- 1327 - Ivan I Kalita of Moscow designated Grand Prince of Vladimir by khan
- 1359 - Dmitri Donskoi is Grand Prince of Moscow
- 1380 - Battle of Kulikova, first victory over the Mongols, demonstrates Moscow's preeminence
- 1448 - Bishop Iona chosen to be metropolitan without approval of Constantinople
- 1453 - Constantinople falls to the Turks
- 1462 - Ivan III The Great is Grand Prince of Moscow
- 1478 - Moscow annexes Novgorod
- 1480 - Battle of Ugra, final victory over the Mongols

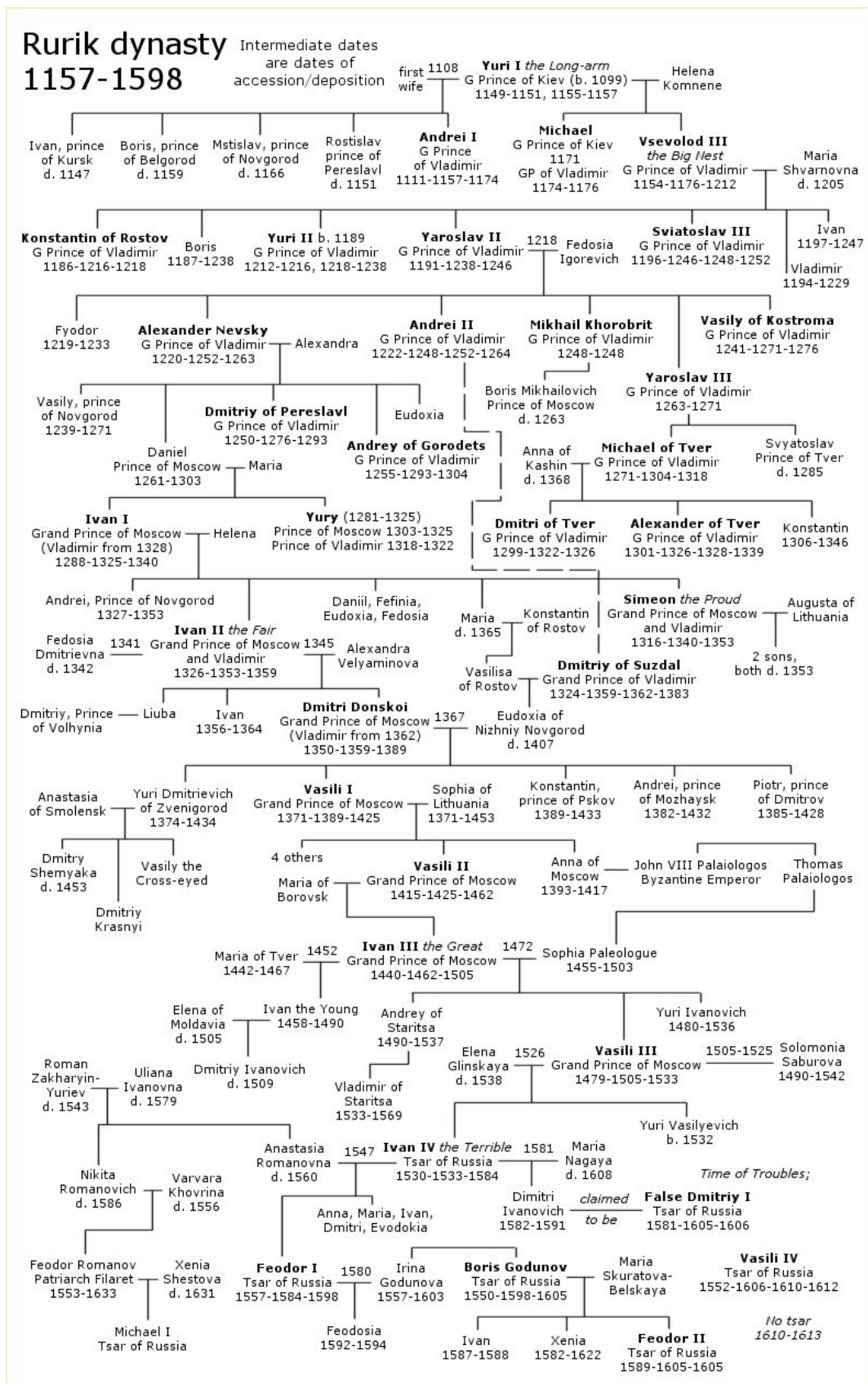
### **Muscovite Rus': 14th century (Battle of Kulikova) onward**

- 1497 - Ivan III issues the Sudebnik
- 1533 - Ivan IV the Terrible is Grand Prince
- 1547 - Ivan IV is crowned Tsar
- 1584-1613 - Time of Troubles
- 1598 - Boris Godunov becomes Tsar
- 1613 - Mikhail Romanov elected Tsar <sup>229</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Gregory Freeze, *Russia: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

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230

230 “Ruriks” [map]. Visual Scale. Wikipedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ruriks.jpg>. (March 19, 2012).

## Principalities of Kievan Rus' (1054-1132):



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<sup>231</sup> "Principalities of Kievan Rus' (1054-1132)" [map]. Visual Scale. *Wikipedia*. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Principalities\\_of\\_Kievan\\_Rus%27\\_\(1054-1132\).jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Principalities_of_Kievan_Rus%27_(1054-1132).jpg). (March 19, 2012).

Varangian Trade Routes (8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries):



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<sup>232</sup> "Varangian Routes" [map]. Visual Scale. *Wikipedia*. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Varangian\\_routes.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Varangian_routes.png). (March 19, 2012).

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