

THE CONTEST BETWEEN LITHUANIA-RUS' AND THE GOLDEN HORDE IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY FOR SUPREMACY OVER EASTERN EUROPE*

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Traditional scholarship, in its treatment of the struggles for territorial supremacy in Eastern Europe in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries and, in its assessment of the impact of the non-Slavic neighbors on the destinies of the Eastern Slavs, has concentrated its attention on three subjects:

- 1) the relationships among Suzdal'-Vladimir, Tverian and Muscovite Rus', and the Golden Horde;¹
- 2) the struggle among the Russian competitors, particularly Muscovy and Tver, for hegemony in the Great Russian ethnic territory;² and
- 3) the relationship between the Grand Principality of Lithuania and the Eastern Slavs. Here Lithuania has been regarded as both an outsider

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¹ For the best general surveys of these relations, see A.N. Nasonov, *Mongoly i Rus' (Istorija tatarskoj politiki na Rusi)* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1940); B. Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde (Die Mongolen in Russland, 1223-1502)*, Wiesbaden, 1965²; B.D. Grekov and A. Ju. Jakubovskij, *Zolotaja orda i ee padenie* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1950); G. Vernadsky, *The Mongols and Russia* (New Haven-London, 1953); M.G. Safargaliev, *Raspad Zolotoj Ordy (Učenyje Zapiski Mordovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, vyp. 11)* (Saransk, 1960); I.B. Grekov, *Očerki po istorii meždunarodnyx otnošenij vostočnoj Evropy XIV-XVI vv.* (Moscow, 1963).

² For the most important works and the literature on the subject, see A. E. Presnjakov, *Obrazovanie velikoruskogo gosudarstva (Očerki po istorii XIII-XV stoletii)* (Petrograd, 1920); L.V. Čerepnin, *Obrazovanie russkogo centralizovannogo gosudarstva* (Moscow, 1960); J. L. I. Fennell, *The Emergence of Moscow, 1304-1359* (London, 1968).

and an insider of the east Slavic world with equal justification, particularly after her transformation into a Lithuania-Ruthenian state.³

In comparison, the relationship between Lithuania-Rus' and the Golden Horde, in whose system Muscovy was integrated, has received very little attention.⁴ This comparative neglect appears unjustified since Lithuania, or Lithuania-Rus', and the Golden Horde were the two principal contestants in the struggle for supremacy in Eastern Europe, specifically for the lands of Old Rus', in the fourteenth century. Lithuania-Rus' and Muscovy were also competing for the succession to Old Rus'. However, their conflicts and confrontations cannot be analyzed outside the larger scope of the relations between Lithuania and the Golden Horde. Muscovy, a vassal state of the Golden Horde, played a significant, albeit secondary, role in this peculiar triangular relationship. Nevertheless, Muscovite bookmen and ideologists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries succeeded in magnifying Muscovy's role in the East

³ For the most important works and literature on these relations, see V.B. Antonovyč, *Monografii po istorii zapadnoj i jugo-zapadnoj Rossii*, I (Kiev, 1885); M. Hruševs'kyj, *Istoriya Ukraïny-Rusy* (10 vols., offset rep. ed., New York, 1954-1958), IV (*XIV-XVI viki — Vidnosyny polityčnyj*); M.K. Ljubavskij, *Litovsko-russkij sejm. Opyt po istorii učreždenija v svyazi s vnutrennim stroem i vnešnju žiznju gosudarstva* (Moscow, 1900); *idem*, *Očerki po istorii Litovsko-russkogo gosudarstva do Ljublinskoj unii vključitel'no* (Moscow, 1910); A.E. Presnjakov, *Lekcii po russkoj istorii* (2 vols., Moscow, 1938-1939), especially I, vyp. 1 (*Zapadnaja Rus' i Litovsko-russkoe gosudarstvo*); P.G. Klepatskij, *Očerki po istorii Kievskoj zemli (I. Litovskij period)* (Odessa, 1912); S. Kutrzeba, "Unia Polski z Litwą", *Polska i Litwa w dziejowym stosunku* (Cracow, 1914); O. Halecki, *Dzieje Unii Jagiellońskiej* (2 vols., Cracow, 1919-1920); N. Čubatyj, "Deržavno-pravne stanovyšče ukrajins'kyx zemel' Lytovskoji deržavy pid kinec' XIV st.", *Zapysky Naukovoho Tovarystva im. Ševčenko* 134, 135, 144 and 145 (1924-1926) (and separately L'viv, 1926); L. Kolankowski, *Dzieje Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego za Jagiellonów (I. 1377-1499)* (Warsaw, 1930); H. Paszkiewicz, *Jagiellonowie a Moskwa (I. Litwa a Moskwa w XIII i XIV wieku)* (Warsaw, 1933); S.M. Kuczyński, *Ziemie czernihowsko-siewierskie pod rządami Litwy (Praci Ukraïns'koho Naukovoho Instytutu, 38)* (Warsaw, 1936); H. Jablonowski, *Westrusland zwischen Wilna und Moskau (Die politischen Tendenzen der russischen Bevölkerung des Grossfürstentums Litauen im 15 Jh.)* (Leiden, 1955); O.P. Backus, *Motives of West Russian Nobles in Deserting Lithuania for Moscow, 1377-1514* (Lawrence, Kansas, 1957); V.T. Pašuto, *Obrazovanie litovskogo gosudarstva* (Moscow, 1959); V. I. Pičeta, *Belorussija i Litva XV-XVI vv.* (Moscow, 1961); J. Bardach, J. Ochmański, and O.P. Backus, *Lithuanie; Introduction bibliographique à l'histoire du droit et à l'ethnologie juridique*, (D; 14) (Bruxelles, 1969).

⁴ A few specialized studies should be mentioned in this connection: M. Ždan, "Stosunki litewsko-tatarskie za czasów Witolda, w. ks. Litwy", *Ateneum Wileńskie* (cited hereafter *AW*) 7 III-IV (1930), pp. 529-601; S.M. Kuczyński, "Sine Wody" in *Księga ku czci Oskara Haleckiego wydana w XXV-lecie jego pracy naukowej* (Warsaw, 1935), pp. 81-141; J. Puzyra, "W sprawie pierwszych walk litwinów z tatarami o Rus' w latach 1238-1243", *Przegląd Historyczno-Wojskowy* (cited hereafter as *PHW*) 9 (1937), pp. 345-400; R. Batūra, "Bor'ba Litovskogo velikogo knjažestva protiv Zolotoj Ordy (Ot našestvija poličič Batija do bitvy u Sinix Vod)" (Avtoreferat dissertacii na soiskanie učenoj stepeni kandidata istoričeskix nauk) (Vilnius, 1972).

European contest out of all proportion to the real developments, and in creating a myth about her protracted and farsighted "struggle against the Tatar yoke", which has been perpetuated in Russian historiography up to the present day.⁵

Actually, three major interrelated conflicts took place, the overall political significance of which roughly corresponded to their chronological sequence:

1) The struggle between Lithuania-Rus' and the Golden Horde took place in two phases: the first phase covered the second third of the fourteenth century and was resolved by the Lithuanian victory in the Battle of the Blue Waters (na sinej vode) (1362); the second phase came in the last years of the fourteenth century and culminated in the great Lithuanian defeat in the Battle on the Vorskla River (1399).

2) The second major confrontation was the Lithuanian-Muscovite struggle, in the course of which Grand Prince Olgierd attempted to destroy Muscovy's military power in three campaigns (1368, 1370, 1372), to take the city of Moscow, and to impose Lithuanian supremacy over all Rus'. Closely connected with this political struggle were the endeavors of the Lithuanian rulers to establish a second Kiev-based Metropolitanate for the Orthodox population of Lithuania-Rus'. The Lithuanian rulers wanted to create their own ideological center, completely independent from the Moscow-centered Metropolitanate of "Kiev and all Rus'".

3) The third conflict involved the Golden Horde and Muscovy. Muscovy attempted to exploit difficulties in the Horde for her own benefit, and, by doing so, she provoked the Mongol-Tatar punitive campaigns against her. These, however, ended in two victories for Muscovy, one at the Battle on the Voža River (1378) and the other at the Kulikovo Pole (Snipes' Field) (1380). The literary and ideological writings about the latter greatly contributed to the emergence of the myth about Muscovy's determined resistance to the "Tatar yoke".

⁵ The notion of the "Tatar yoke" has become an official one in Soviet historiography and in the history of early Russian literature. For a good example in the field of history, cf. the relevant subheadings such as "Bor'ba russkogo naroda protiv tataro-mongol'skogo iga i litovskoj agresii" and "Osvoboždenie Rusi ot tataro-mongol'skogo iga" in *Očerki istorii SSSR (Period feodalizma IX-XV vv.)*, Part II (Moscow, 1953), pp. 210, and 287. See also the title of Map 2 in that volume "Bor'ba severo-vostočnoj Rusi s tatarskim igom s serediny XIV v. do 1462 g.". Two examples in the history of literature will suffice: M.N. Tixomirov, V.F. Ržiga and L.A. Dmitriev, eds., *Povesti o Kulikovskoj Bitve* (Moscow, 1959) and the collective work *Slovo o Polku Igoreve i Pamjatniki Kulikovskogo Cikla* (Moscow, 1966). For the most recent work stressing Muscovy's role in the struggle against the "Tatar yoke", see I. B. Grekov, *Vostočnaja Evropa i upadok Zolotoj Ordy (na rubeže XIV - XV vv.)* (Moscow, 1975).

This study will be restricted to an analysis of the contest between Lithuania-Rus' and the Golden Horde; subsequent articles will deal with the other two conflicts.

In contrast to Muscovy's cautious and submissive policy vis-à-vis the Golden Horde, which prevailed until the later thirteen-seventies and for most of the century after the Kulikovo battle, the Grand Principality of Lithuania was the first major power to have actively challenged the Mongol presence and sovereignty in the lands of Old Rus' on a large scale prior to the highly publicized and celebrated Battle at the Kulikovo Pole. This challenge was the result both of Lithuanian expansion into the lands of Old Rus' and of an attempt to implement the politico-ideological claims of the Lithuanian rulers, beginning with Grand Prince Olgierd, to rule over "omnis Russia" (1358).⁶

The origins of the Lithuanian expansion into the lands of Old Rus' go back to the Mongol invasion of that territory.⁷ Beginning in the twelfth-forties the Lithuanian ruler Mendog — and later his successors as well — had been with brief interruptions in control of large areas of Black Rus', located on the Upper Nieman River.⁸ Black Rus', similar to Podlattia, Polessia, and the Belorussian core area, *i.e.*, the Polock-Minsk land, as well as ethnic Lithuania, had not originally been conquered by the Mongols, primarily because large areas of these territories were covered by forests which were inhibiting to the Mongol methods of waging war. These lands were not incorporated into the state system of the Golden Horde. In fact, Lithuania became a member of an emerging anti-Mongol coalition which, however, collapsed after the Mongols subdued Danylo of Halyč and Volhynia (1257). The only concrete results of this anti-Mongol move for Lithuania were the granting of the royal crown by Pope Innocent IV to Mendog (1251) and the first major Mongol attack on the Lithuanian lands (1258-1259).⁹ This attack, as well as some others, had no lasting consequences. The Mongols made no all-out effort to conquer either Lithuania or territories such as Black Rus' which had come under Lithuanian sovereignty. The Lithuanian rulers, on the other hand, gradually continued to extend their influence

⁶ The passage outlining Olgierd's political claims reads as follows: "Item postulabant, quod ordo locaretur ad solitudines inter Tartaros et Rutenos ad defendendum eos ab impugnatione Tartarorum et quod nihil iuris ordo sibi reservaret apud Rutenos, sed omnis Russia ad Letwinos deberet simpliciter pertinere; et dicebant: "Si postulata consequi poterimus, voluntatem Cesaris faciemus" (T. Hirsch, M. Töppen, and E. Strehlke, eds., *Scriptores Rerum Prussicarum*, II (1963, p. 80).

⁷ Puzyna, *PHW* 9 (1937), pp. 345-400.

⁸ Ljubavskij, *Očerki...*, p. 13; Pašuto, *Obrazovanie...*, p. 378.

⁹ "Toi že zimy vzjaša Tatarove vsju zemlju litovskuju, a samëx izbiša" (A.N. Nasonov, ed., *Novgorodskaja pervaja letopis' staršego i mladšego izvodov* (cited hereafter as *NPL*), (Moscow-Leningrad, 1950, p. 82).

into the border areas of Old Rus', which had not been directly incorporated into the state system of the Golden Horde.

During the reign of Viten (1293-1316), and particularly that of Gedymin (1316-1341), the founder of the great Lithuanian state, a Lithuanian expansion into most of Belorussia (the Polock-Minsk land, the Principality of Vitebsk), as well as into Podlussia and Polessia, took place; all these became integral parts of the Lithuanian Grand Principality.¹⁰ During Gedymin's tenure the formal transformation of the Lithuanian Grand Principality into a dual Lithuanian-Rus' state was completed.¹¹ Gedymin was the first Lithuanian ruler to assume the title *Lethewinorum et Ruthenorum rex* in his relations with other countries.¹² The addition of 'Rus' in his title best reflects contemporary awareness of this political transformation.

In the reign of Gedymin, a major Lithuanian encroachment into the Golden Horde's sphere of sovereignty took place. Even if one were to follow the Antonovyč-Hruševs'kyj hypothesis and completely reject the accounts in several recensions of the Lithuanian-Ruthenian chronicles regarding the conquest of the Vladimir and Luck Principalities and, most important, of all Kiev and the whole Kievan land in the early 1320s,¹³ the evidence for the existence of a Lithuanian-Mongol (-Tatar) condominium over Kiev and the Kievan land by 1332 can be relatively safely attested. During that time, a prince by the name of Fedor (Hol'shans'kyj?), a relative (brother, half-brother, or cousin) of Gedymin, ruled in Kiev under the supervision of a Tatar *basqaq* and the political sponsorship of the Lithuanian Grand Prince.¹⁴ The establishment of this

¹⁰ Ljubavskij, *Očerki...*, pp. 17-21; Pašuto, *Obrazovanie...*, pp. 391-393.

¹¹ Ljubavskij dated this transformation to coincide with the first annexation of the Black Rus' in the 1240s (*Očerki...*, p. 15). However, no evidence for an awareness of this political change can be found in the sources.

¹² The use of this title begins in 1323. For the various examples, see I. Daniłowicz, ed., *Skarbiec dyplomatów... do... Dziejów Litwy, Rusi Litewskiej i ościennych im krajów* (2 vols., Wilno, 1860-1862), I, pp. 153, 154, and 155 ff. and K. E. Nap'erskij ed., *Russko-livonskie akty* (St. Petersburg, 1868), pp. 30-32, and 49-50. The statement of the Byxovec Chronicle to the effect that "Grand Prince Viten ruled in the Grand Principality of Lithuania, Samogitia and Rus'" represents an assessment of Lithuanian-Ruthenian relations from the perspective of the mid-sixteenth century when the Byxovec Chronicle was composed; it cannot be utilized to date the transformation of the Lithuanian Grand Principality into a Lithuanian-Ruthenian state (*Polnoe sobranie russkix letopisej* (cited hereafter as *PSRL*), XVII (1907), col. 490).

¹³ Antonovyč, *Monografii...*, pp. 47-58; M. Hruševs'kyj, *Očerki istorii Kievskoj zemli ot smerti Jaroslava do konca XIV stoletija* (Kiev, 1891), pp. 470-484; Hruševs'kyj, *Istorija Ukrajinj-Rusy*, IV, pp. 17-19, and 73-74.

¹⁴ The identification of Prince Fedor and his position vis-à-vis Lithuania and the Horde is derived from two principal sources, the Novgorodian Chronicles ("Kievan Prince Fedor with a Tatar *basqaq*", *NPL*, p. 344; *PSRL*, IV (1848), p. 52), and from V.N. Beneševič's

condominium suggests that Gedymin, together with Khan Özbek was at least for a time interested in a peaceful resolution of the Lithuanian-Mongol (-Tatar) competition, and that the two rulers attempted to avoid an immediate political and military conflict over the *ulus Rus'*, or *regnum Russiae*. However, the transformation of the Lithuanian Grand Principality into a Lithuanian-Rus' complex as reflected in Gedymin's title heralded a major change in the policies of the Lithuanian rulers, who, at a propitious moment, would upset this carefully established equilibrium in the Kievan coreland of Old Rus'.

This moment came after the death of Khan Özbek (1341), and was followed by another after the death of his son Khan Ğambek (1342-1357), when the Golden Horde was beset by its first major time of troubles which was to last for two decades.¹⁵ During this time, which coincided with the reign of Grand Prince Olgierd of Lithuania (1345-1377), Lithuania succeeded in gradually expanding into the still unclaimed Belorussian areas and into five major Ukrainian lands, which had been under Mongol-Tatar sovereignty. These were:

1) the Land of Černyhiv (Černigov), which was annexed in three phases: the northwestern part in 1345-1348; the middle region and the Brjansk area between 1355 and 1358, and the city of Černyhiv and the southern part in the early thirteen-sixties and -seventies;

2) Siveria (Siverščyna), including its main city of Novhorod-Sivers'kyj, which must have been in Lithuanian control by the early thirteen-sixties;

3) Kiev and the Kievan land, conquered by the Lithuanian Grand Principality by 1361-1363;

4) the land of Perejaslav, which followed the conquest of Kiev; and,

5) finally, major parts of Podolia, conquered in the first half of the thirteen-sixties.¹⁶

"selections" pertaining to Russian Church history from a Vatican Codex ("Fedor, brother of Gedymin", — M. Priselkov and M. Fasmer, "Otryvki V.N. Beneševiča po istorii russkoj cerkvi XIV veka", *Izvestija Otdelenija russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti Imper. Akademii Nauk* 21 I, 1916, p. 58). For additional comments on this problem, see Paszkiewicz, *Jagiellonowie a Moskwa*, p. 330; Kuczyński, *Ziemie...*, pp. 16-17, nn. 4, 6*; Pašuto, *Obrazovanie...*, p. 396; F.M. Šabul'do, "Vključennja kyjivs'koho knjazivstva do skladu lytovs'koi deržavy u druhij polovyni XIV v.", *Ukrajins'kyj istoryčnyj žurnal* 1973, No. 6, p. 82.

¹⁵ For a discussion of this period of troubles, see Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde*, pp. 109-121; Grekov and Jakubovskij, *Zolotaja orda...*, pp. 261-293; Safargaliev, *Raspad Zolotoj Ordy*, pp. 101-136.

¹⁶ For an analysis of sources pertaining to the Lithuanian conquest of the Ukrainian lands, the dating of the takeover of individual lands and the literature on the subject, see

These extraordinary successes, particularly the takeover of the city of Kiev, were made possible by a number of factors, including the previous relatively peaceful penetration of the Lithuanians into these lands; non-interference with local, traditional, social and legal arrangements; relative religious tolerance (a practice that the non-Christian Lithuanian rulers shared with the Mongols); a concern for the welfare and organizational structure of the Orthodox church; and, finally, the abolition of the *vyxod* (taxation system) from which the Golden Horde, the local ruler and, in certain areas under the Muscovite influence, a khan and a Muscovite grand prince, as well, had profited. Furthermore, Olgerd's exceptional political and diplomatic abilities, attested by the author/compiler of the *Rogožskij letopisec*, who can be credited with having been one of the most astute observers of the contemporary political scene, as well as of Olgerd's expansionist policies, played an important role in the extension of the Lithuanian sphere of domination.¹⁷

However, the decisive factor that assured the transfer of the Ukrainian territories to Lithuanian sovereignty must have been the obvious military equality and at times even superiority of the Lithuanian military forces over the Mongol-Tatars, which manifested itself in the Battle of the Blue Waters (1362). This battle has never received due recognition in historical scholarship on account of the scarcity of source material about it, and because the so-called "Tale about Podolia" of the Lithuanian-Ruthenian chronicles, which is the chief source, contains misleading information.¹⁸ Individual scholars have placed this battle into Witold's period and confused it with his campaigns of 1397 and 1398 in

Antonovyč, *Monografii*, ..., pp. 74-132; N. Molčanovskij, *Očerki izvestij o Podol'skoj zemle do 1434 goda* (Kiev, 1885), pp. 169-227; Hruševs'kyj, *Istorija Ukrajiny-Rusy*, IV, pp. 14-19, and 63-99; Klepatskij, *Očerki*, ..., pp. 14-24; O. Andrijašev, "Narys istoriji kolonizaciji Kyjivs'koji zemli do kincja XV viku", in M. Hruševs'kyj, ed., *Kyjiv ta joho okolycja v istoriji i pam'jat'kach* (*Zapysky Istoryčnoji sekciji Ukrajins'koji Akademiji Nauk* 22 (1926), pp. 33-79, especially pp. 62-63; Kuczyński, *Ziemie*, ..., pp. 15-28, 103-122, and 172-234.

¹⁷ "I tako, vjuja xitrostju i skradyvaja, Olgerd mnogi zemli i mnogi města i grady i strany poplěnil; ne tolma siloju jeliko uměnem vojevaša" (*PSRL*, XV, (1922/1965), col. 88).

¹⁸ The basic texts of the "Tale about Podolia" were included in the Suprasl' and Uva-rov manuscripts of the Lithuanian-Ruthenian Chronicles (*PSRL*, XVII (1907), cols. 81-84, and 99-101). For an analysis of the texts of this "Tale", see T. Sušyc'kyj, *Zaxidn'o-rus'ki litopysy jak pam'jatky literatury* (*Zbirnyk Istoryčno-Filolohičnoho Viddilu Ukrajins'koji Akademiji Nauk*, vyp. 2, Parts I-II, Kiev, 1921-1929), II, pp. 305-317. A new volume of *Polnoe sobranie russkix letopisej*, containing chronicles pertaining to the history of Belorussian and Ukrainian Rus', has been recently published (*PSRL*, XXXIII — *Xroniki: Litovskaja i zmojtskaja, i Byxovca; Letopisi: Barkulabovskaja, Averki i Pancyrnogo*, ed., N. N. Ulaščycyk (Moscow, 1975)). These chronicles, however, were compiled at a later date than those which are crucial for, and which have been utilized in this study. The materials of these chronicles, therefore, do not influence my finding.

the southern Ukraine.¹⁹ S.M. Kuczyński, the author of the single specialized study on the Battle of the Blue Waters, raised every possible doubt regarding the veracity of the Suprasl' recension of the Lithuanian-Ruthenian chronicle, but was compelled to concede that Olgierd indeed victoriously campaigned against the Tatars in 1362, most probably in connection with the takeover of the city of Kiev.²⁰ Kuczyński's error lay in assigning equal value to the testimonies of the Suprasl' and Uvarov versions, as well as of the later recensions of the Lithuanian-Ruthenian chronicles.²¹ He could have avoided this and other mistakes had he consulted the authoritative textological study of the Lithuanian-Ruthenian chronicles by T. Sušyc'kyj.

The earliest versions of the Lithuanian-Ruthenian chronicles report the following event: "When Grand Prince Olgierd [ruled as] the sovereign in the Lithuanian land, he, together with the Lithuanian army, embarked upon a campaign, and defeated the Tatars at the Blue Water (*na siněj vode*)".²² While the names of the three Tatar commanders mentioned in the chronicles may not entirely be correct, and the narrative about Podolia may have been edited to support the Lithuanian claims to this land, the fact that such a battle took place has been substantiated by the testimony of the *Rogožskij letopisec*, which, under the year 1363, reads as follows: "This fall Olgierd [successfully] fought at the Blue Waters and on the White Banks".²³ Since several rivers were known as "Blue Waters", the scholars dealing with this battle were confronted with the problem of locating the battlefield itself. Two of the rivers referred to as "Blue Waters" in the sixteenth century were the Sinjuxa, a left-bank tributary of the Buh River and the Snyvod', a small river located on the border of the Kievan land, Volhynia and Podolia (both names *sin/juxa* and *sny/vod'* are apparent derivatives of *sinja voda*). The distance between the two rivers is approximately one hundred miles. Karamzin and his followers thought that the battle between the Lithuanian and the Tatar forces took place on the Buh tributary; Hruševs'kyj opted for the Snyvod',²⁴ basing his argument on a reference found in Podolian cadaster documents.

¹⁹ For a survey of such views and interpretations, cf. Kuczyński, "Sine Wody", pp. 85-93.

²⁰ *Idem*, pp. 130-133.

²¹ Kuczyński apparently disregarded the warning of Molčanovskij concerning the use of the testimony in later versions of the Lithuanian-Ruthenian Chronicles regarding the Battle of the Blue Waters (*Očerk...*, pp. 178-179).

²² *PSRL*, XVII (1907), cols. 81, and 99.

²³ *PSRL*, XV/1 (1922/1965), col. 75.

²⁴ Hruševs'kyj, *Istorija Ukrajinj-Rusy*, IV, pp. 81-82; Kuczyński's hypothesis about the city of Zvenyhorod ("Blue Water Town") is rather artificial ("Sine Wody", p. 131).

For a variety of reasons, which cannot be dealt with at length in this paper, most Slavic historians have tended to minimize the significance of the Battle of the Blue Waters, an attitude difficult to justify. Although the sources on this event are scanty, the circumstances surrounding the conquests of the city of Kiev and the Kievan land, as well as of the other four Ukrainian lands, indicate that a major Lithuanian victory would have been necessary in order for the Golden Horde to have accepted such a large infringement of its sovereignty over the lands of Old Rus'. It would be difficult to conceive of the Golden Horde, even with its internal difficulties, as having accepted the loss of such a significant part of its state system without a struggle. Since the Golden Horde later attempted and, in some cases, intermittently succeeded in reimposing the collection of tribute from territories incorporated by the Lithuanian-Ruthenian state during Olgierd's period, it is safe to assume that the Golden Horde resisted the conquest of these lands by the Lithuanians.

It may be argued that the Battle of the Blue Waters was a Mongol-Tatar response to the Lithuanian penetration of the Kievan land and Podolia. The Golden Horde must have been particularly disturbed by the Lithuanian takeover of Kiev, the capital of Old Rus', which still had considerable political and symbolic significance. Apparently, a Tatar army, under three commanders with orders to contain the Lithuanian advance into Ukrainian Rus', was dispatched by the Horde's rulers. Olgierd mounted a counteroffensive and defeated this army decisively. The central Ukraine definitely ceased to be a part of the Golden Horde's East European empire after the Battle of the Blue Waters.

Lithuania-Rus' was the only major power to have made a serious attempt at militarily subduing and politically subordinating the Golden Horde. This attempt occurred during the reign of Grand Prince Witold (1392-1430). Witold's offensive move against the Golden Horde was thoroughly prepared both diplomatically and militarily. He undertook major intelligence operations in southern Podolia, the territories around the mouth of the Dnieper River, and in northern Crimea, in 1397 and 1398. Witold had his own candidate for the position of Khan of the Golden Horde, namely Tohtamiş, a contender for the control over the Horde, who had earlier failed to gain the throne. Tohtamiş was a tool in Witold's hands; the latter could extract many concessions from Tohtamiş, who, at this time, was merely a political emigré, living off Witold's patronage.

In 1397 or 1398, Witold concluded an agreement with Tohtamiş, according to which the latter would receive the support of the Grand Prince of Lithuania in his bid for the throne of the Golden Horde. Tohtamiş, on his part, issued Witold a *yarlık* for all the Rus' lands, and, by doing so, granted him the territories in which the Lithuanian ruler

was vitally interested.²⁵ This agreement can be interpreted in different ways. The partners entering into the agreement had different conceptions of legal arrangements and different state ideologies. From Witold's perspective, it could be interpreted as reciprocal investiture, signifying an expression of equality and mutual respect between the two rulers, or even Tohtamiş' acknowledgement of his submission to Witold. From Tohtamiş' point of view Witold was a convenient ally supporting his legitimate political aspirations. For his support, Witold received a *yarlık* for the Russian lands which meant that Tohtamiş was simply replacing the Muscovite client with a Lithuanian one in the Russian *ulus*. The Muscovite ruler was the khan's client and could be deprived of his status at the khan's pleasure. As the Lithuanian ruler, Witold was Tohtamiş' equal partner; so far as Rus' and, in particular, Muscovy were concerned, he could be looked upon only as a client.

Witold organized an impressive army for the steppe campaign of 1399 and the conquest of the Golden Horde, and set out from Kiev to destroy the Mongol-Tatar forces in a single great battle. Khan Temir Kutlu and Emir Edigü, the latter the actual ruler of the Golden Horde, advanced with their combat troops against Witold's forces, and the two hostile armies clashed in the open steppe on the banks of the Vorskla River (a tributary of the Dnieper) on August 12, 1399. (Another historic confrontation was to take place nearby, in 1709, namely the Battle of Poltava.) Witold suffered a crushing defeat in the ensuing battle, and was forced to flee with the remnants of his army. This event represented the greatest political and military setback in his colorful and dramatic career.²⁶

The battle on the banks of the Vorskla River decided the outcome of Witold's campaign and terminated his ambitions to create a powerful East European empire controlling the Black Sea, including all of Rus', and to become the overlord of the Golden Horde. The latter retained its independence; in spite of constant domestic troubles and gradual internal decay, the Horde was obviously still a power to be reckoned with. In overcoming Witold, the Horde decisively defeated one of the most outstanding East European rulers. Witold organized a strong army with the

²⁵ The *yarlık* of Tohtamiş is no longer extant. Its contents were deduced from later *yarliks* of the Crimean khans from the years 1481 and 1472; see A. Prochaska, "Z Witoldowych dziejów. Układ Witolda z Tochtamyszem 1397", *Przegląd historyczny* 15 III (1912), p. 260. Hruševs'kyj was the first to advance the hypothesis that Tohtamiş issued such a *yarlık* (*Istorija Ukrajiny-Rusy*, IV, p. 87).

²⁶ A discussion of Witold's foreign policy with regard to the Golden Horde can be found in J. Pfitzner, *Grossfürst Witold von Litauen als Staatsmann (Schriften der philosophischen Fakultät der deutschen Universität in Prag*, VI, Prague, 1930, pp. 145-164). A general survey of Tatar-Lithuanian relations was provided by Żdan, *AW* 7 III-IV (1930),

support of many powerful princes of the Rus' lands. Muscovy remained formally neutral and most probably rejected Witold's proposal to participate in the struggle against the Horde.

A number of Russian princes took advantage of Witold's defeat in the Battle on the Vorskla River to weaken his position of overlordship in the Russian lands.²⁷ Witold probably appeared to them at that time as a greater threat than the Muscovite ruler. In addition, many of his prominent supporters from the Rus' lands had been killed in the Vorskla battle, thus contributing to the narrowing of his political base in the lands of the Old Rus'. In short, the Battle on the Vorskla River shattered Witold's all-Russian ambitions. His interference into the internal affairs of the Golden Horde and his later successes in the investiture of Tohtamiš' sons Ġelāl-ed-Dīn (1412) and Kerīm Berdi (1412-1414/1417) as khans, as well as his political sponsorship of Khan Ulu Mehmet (1419-1424; 1427-1437/1438), the later Khan of Kazan, had no significant consequences for his imperial policies.

While the most important facts about Witold's ill-fated campaign against the Golden Horde are well known, his political intentions are somewhat obscured by the divergent testimony of the sources. It is necessary to realize that Witold's, as well as Tohtamiš' political plans have to be deduced primarily from east Slavic chronicles. Some details of these accounts are perfectly accurate and can be utilized for the factual reconstruction of the circumstances surrounding the Battle on the Vorskla River.²⁸

Actually, one can extract from the sources two political programs attributed to Witold with regard to the Golden Horde and the Russian lands integrated into its system. The sources chronologically closest to the Vorskla battle credit Witold with plans for establishing a protectorate over the Golden Horde and with the intention of imposing his rule

pp. 529-601. For the military aspect of the campaign, see V.G. Ljaskoronskij, "Russkie poxody v stepi udel'no-večevoe vremja i poxod kn. Vitovta na Tatar v 1399 g.", *Žurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosvješćenija* (cited hereafter as *ŽMNP*) 1907 IX, pp. 21-45; *idem*, "K voprosu o bitve kn. Vitovta s tatarami na r. Vorskla v 1399-m godu", *ŽMNP* 1908 XVI, pp. 70-77. Ljaskoronskij's studies on Witold's campaign and the Vorskla battle should be treated with caution because of their speculative character. For a recent analysis of the international relations in Eastern Europe at the end of the fourteenth and in the early fifteenth century, including a discussion of the Battle on the Vorskla River, confer Grekov, *Vostočnaja Evropa . . .* Chapters 2 and 3.

²⁷ Presnjakov, *Obrazovanie...*, pp. 331 ff.; Pfitzner, *Grossfürst Witold...*, p. 153.

²⁸ The most important Western account of the events leading to the Battle on the Vorskla River and of the battle itself is to be found in the work of the fifteenth-century Polish historian Jan Długosz, *Historia Polonica, X, Opera Omnia*, III (1874), pp. 526-529. This account requires special analysis which the present author hopes to present in the near future.

over "all the Russian lands".²⁹ The success of his endeavors would have represented a successful realization of Olgierd's claim to "omnis Russia".

However, the text devoted to the Vorskla battle to be found in the famous Nikon Chronicle (second third of the sixteenth century) attributes to Witold more ambitious and grandiose autocratic imperial plans.³⁰ Of all the narrative sources, the Nikon Chronicle is the most de-

²⁹ The individual east Slavic accounts of this battle, whether they have a separate title or not, may be conveniently referred to as "The Tale About the Battle on the Vorskla River". This is how the corresponding texts in the Western Rus' chronicles were named by Sušyc'kyj, who devotes a special chapter to them (*Zaxidn'o-rus'ki litopysy...*, Part II, pp. 333-339). The earliest available accounts in terms of the chronology of their compilation are those of the Muscovite chronicles: M.D. Priselkov, ed., *Troickaja letopis' (Rekonstrukcija teksta)* (Moscow, 1950), pp. 450-451; First Sophia Chronicle (*PSRL*, V (1851), p. 251); Nikanor Chronicle (*PSRL*, XXVII (1962), pp. 89-90); the Muscovite Codex of 1479 (*PSRL*, XXV (1949), pp. 229); the Voskresensk Chronicle (*PSRL*, VIII (1859), pp. 72-73). Actually all the Muscovite accounts have as their source the version of the First Sophia Chronicle. The text of the *Troickaja letopis'* represents a reconstruction.

The Lithuanian-Ruthenian version of the events is represented by the "Tale" from the Western Rus' Chronicle (manuscript of the Suprasl' Monastery) compiled around the middle of the fifteenth century, but based upon an "all-Russian" compilation from the early part of that century (Sušyc'kyj, *Zaxidn'o-rus'ki litopysy...* Part I, pp. 55, and 120-121); for the most recent analysis of the Lithuanian-Ruthenian chronicles, see also V.A. Čamjarycki, *Belaruskija letapisy jak pomniki literatury* (Minsk, 1969). Sušyc'kyj was of the opinion that "The Tale About the Battle on the Vorskla River" contained in the Suprasl' manuscript was written at the end of the fourteenth century, quite possibly in 1399, because the author was well-acquainted with the details of the battle and may have participated in it (*Zaxidn'o-rus'ki litopysy...* Part II, pp. 333-339).

The third group of accounts can be found in the Novgorodian chronicles. The earliest text was included in the First Novgorod Chronicle of a later recension (*NPL*, pp. 394-395) and a later one in the Fourth Novgorod Chronicle based on a manuscript of the last quarter of the fifteenth or the beginning of the sixteenth century (*PSRL*, IV, vyp. 2 (1925²), pp. 384-386). Finally, the text of the Russian Chronograph of 1512 represents an independent "Tale" (*PSRL*, XXII 1 (1911), p. 423).

³⁰ *PSRL*, XI (1897/1965), pp. 172-174. For an English translation and analysis of the "Tale" of the Nikon Chronicle and its dating, see J. Pelenski, *Russia and Kazan: Conquest and Imperial Ideology (1438-1560s)* (The Hague-Paris, 1974), pp. 139-143, n. 1, and 161-170. An attempt to date the composition of the Nikon Chronicle (namely the Obolenskij manuscript concluding with entry for events of 1520) the later part of the 1520s has been recently undertaken by B.M. Kloss, "Dejatel'nost' mitropolič'ej knigopisnoj masterskoj v 20-x - 30-x godax XVI veka i proisxoždenie Nikonovskoj letopisi", in O.I. Podobedova and G.V. Popov, eds., *Drevne-russkoe iskusstvo (Rukopisnaja kniga)* (Moscow, 1972), pp. 318-337; *idem*, "Mitropolit Daniil i Nikonovskaja letopis' ", *Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoj literatury* 28 (1974), pp. 188-201. There is need for additional study of the Nikon Chronicle and its dating. For a thoughtful but debatable assessment of the applicability of the concept ideology to the period from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century in connection with Pelenski's, *Russia and Kazan...*, and Grekov's, *Vostočnaja Evropa ...*, confer G. Stokl, "Imperium und imperiale Ideologie-Erfahrungen am Beispiel des vorpetrinischen Russland" in *Vom Staat des Ancien Regime zum modernen Parteienstaat, Festschrift für Theodor Schieder zu seinem 70. Geburtstag*, eds. H. Berding, K. Düwell, L. Gall, W. J. Mommsen, H. — U. Wehler (Munich-Vienna, 1978), pp. 27-39.

tailed in terms of imperial ideology. A great many historians (Hruševs'kyj being a notable exception) have accepted the "Tale About the Battle on the Vorskla River" from the Nikon compilation without reservation and without the necessary critical evaluation. The "Tale" represents a miniature of the Nikon Chronicle itself. The editors combined materials from several earlier sources to produce this literary and publicistic work. They also made a number of adaptations and included some text of their own; most important were, of course, their ideological conclusions, which they disguised as Witold's grand imperial design.

The account of the Nikon Chronicle concerning Witold's imperial plans is the most detailed and farreaching. All the future Tatar state organizations are accounted for in this Chronicle: Astrakhan, Kazan (the term used for the Bulgar land, as well), the Jaik Horde, and the Crimea. Furthermore the "Tale" maintains that Witold wanted to rule over the Germans, Poland, other unidentified territories, and, of course, over all Rus'. Witold's political aims as described in the Nikon Chronicle are ambitious in the extreme. Those who accepted this version could develop theories about his *universale Weltherrschaftspläne*.³¹ The Nikon Chronicle, in contrast to other chronicles, does not even mention the idea of reciprocal investiture. According to it, Tohtamış was to receive the Horde as a grant from Witold, along with all the other Tatar political organizations. The Horde, together with its satellite territories and its new ruler Tohtamış, becomes in this version the direct possession of the Lithuanian ruler. Witold was not to be invested by Tohtamış with the principalities of Rus', but he was to rule there by virtue of his own authority. In the context of the East European history, this was nothing short of a program for world domination.

Strangely enough, the Western Rus' chronicles, which tended to eulogize Witold and his deeds, reported nothing approaching such a plan. The Nikon Chronicle was otherwise very pro-Muscovite and would have been rather reluctant to enhance the virtues of a Lithuanian, Polish, or non-Muscovite Rus' ruler. In addition, the authors/compilers of the Nikon Chronicle substituted the modern term "Kazan" for the ancient and more appropriate term "Bulgar" in order to substantiate their theory of Bulgar-Kazan continuity.³² The "Tale About the Battle on the Vorskla River" in the Nikon Chronicle is therefore one of the most revealing literary and ideological documents of Muscovite political thought of the sixteenth century. It extols a historical figure, whose policies threatened the position of Muscovy. At the same time, Witold's domestic and for-

³¹ Pfitzner, *Grossfürst Witold...*, pp. 151-152.

³² For a discussion of the Muscovite theory of Bulgar-Kazan continuity, see Pelenski, *Russia and Kazan...*, pp. 139-170.

eign policies are formulated in such a way as to make them understandable and acceptable to the Russians in the age of Vasilij III and Ivan IV.

According to the "Tale", Witold received his lands from God; he was to rule over the Russian princes in strictly autocratic fashion ("according to our will"), and over the Horde in the same manner. Witold made apparent his intention to put the Horde "to the sword" in case of insubordination. He would collect annual tribute, and his emblem would be struck on the coins of the Horde. One can infer from all these declarations that he intended to centralize the government of the future empire.

Centralization and autocratic rule at home were to be coupled with expansion to the east, to the west, and even to the south. Witold's domestic and foreign policy programs almost matched those planned and partly carried out by Vasilij III and Ivan IV. The use of the name "Kazan" instead of the name "Bulgar" is good evidence for the hypothesis that contemporary political considerations were used to buttress Witold's grand imperial design. Although Witold's designs proved to be a failure, similar expansionist schemes were more successfully carried out by Russian tsars in their struggle against the east. The editors of the Nikon Chronicle used Witold's "grand design" to introduce continuity into their own political thinking. The design ascribed to Witold was in fact a reflection of contemporary Muscovite ideas. In any case, this particular text of the Nikon Chronicle reveals what Muscovite bookmen of the second third of the sixteenth century thought about *Weltherrschaft* they utilized this notion for their own ideological purposes.

But why did the Lithuanian Grand Principality contest the Golden Horde's position in Eastern Europe, and why did Witold attempt the political subjugation of this Mongol-Tatar empire? The decision arose out of the desire on the part of the Lithuanian rulers to build a great Lithuanian state that would include the territories of Old Rus'. In particular, the claim of the Lithuanian grand princes to "all Rus'" and their program of "gathering of all Russian lands", advanced even before Muscovite Russia had developed an equivalent program of her own, promoted the Lithuanian Grand Principality into the role of successor state to Kievan Rus', and this represented a direct challenge to the Golden Horde. Having embarked upon a policy of expansion into Old Rus', Lithuania also faced Muscovy as a competitor. Both Gedymin and Olgierd tended to support the Grand Principality of Tver against Muscovy's attempts to subjugate that land. The Lithuanian rulers were aware that in order to reign over all Rus' they had either to subdue or to conquer Muscovy. Since Muscovy was the most trusted and obedient sub-

ject of the Golden Horde, this expansionist policy of Lithuania challenged the *status quo* in Eastern Europe and collided with the interests both of the Horde itself and its chief Russian client, Muscovy. The Lithuanian grand princes proceeded by attacking the two states separately. They began by attempting to roll back the Golden Horde's sphere of sovereignty and take over the strategically located Černyhiv-Siveria lands, which would make possible the encirclement of Muscovy by the Tver-Lithuania-Rjazan'-Suzdal' coalition. Then Olgierd directly attacked Muscovy in three major campaigns (1368, 1370, 1372) at a time when she was distracted by her final struggle with Tver for domination of the Great Russian territories. In the first two campaigns the Lithuanian army, together with its Russian allies, the Tverians, and the Smolnians, reached and besieged the city of Moscow,³³ the first such threat to the city to come from the West. However, the combined Lithuanian-Russian armies were unable to take Moscow or to destroy the Grand Principality of Muscovy. Witold made another attempt at subduing Muscovy and all northeastern Rus' by defeating the Golden Horde, but he apparently overestimated both his forces and his resources, and thus failed in the attempt.

In their quest for the supremacy over the lands of Old Rus', the Lithuanian rulers, regardless of their religious beliefs (Olgierd formally adhered to ancient Lithuanian nature worship and was called "the great king of fire adorationists", while Witold formally acknowledged Roman Catholicism) consistently conducted a policy aimed at establishing an Orthodox metropolitanate, preferably in the city of Kiev, and completely independent from Moscow.³⁴ Their religious tolerance, however, did not prevent them from recognizing the role of the church hierarchy and the value of religious ideology in the political conflict with Muscovite Russia. The khans of the Golden Horde both before and after their conversion to Islam displayed a relative tolerance toward Orthodox Christianity, as did the Lithuanian grand princes, and their support was very helpful to the Muscovite ecclesiastical establishment, which

³³ For an account of the campaigns, see Paszkiewicz, *Jagiellonowie a Moskwa*, pp. 414-433.

³⁴ For a discussion of the political and ecclesiastical ramifications of the creation of a new Metropolitanate of Kiev and its competition with Moscow, see K. Chodyncki, *Kościół prawosławny i Rzeczpospolita Polska (1370-1632)* (Warsaw, 1934), pp. 11-49; D. Obolensky, "Byzantium, Kiev and Moscow: A Study in Ecclesiastical Relations", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 11 (1957), pp. 21-78; I. Ševčenko, "Russo-Byzantine Relations after the Eleventh Century", *Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, ed. by J.M. Hussey, D. Obolensky, and S. Runciman (London, 1967), pp. 93-104; F. Tienefeld, "Byzantinisch-russische Kirchenpolitik im 14. Jahrhundert", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 67 (1974), pp. 359-384.

cooperated closely with the Grand Prince and was dependent on his political authority. Thus, in ecclesiastical policy matters, the Lithuanian rulers were handicapped by the assistance extended by the Greek Patriarchate to the Muscovite side and by the latter's reliance on the Tatars' benevolent neutrality. This similarity of attitudes toward religious matters placed the conflict between the Lithuanians and the Tatars squarely on political and economic grounds; it was devoid of that religious passion that was to characterize Muscovy's struggle with the Tatar world later on.

In addition to conquering the Old Rus' lands, Lithuania was also vitally interested in gaining access to the Black Sea. Witold partially succeeded in occupying, at least for a time, the northern region of the Black Sea, between the Dniester and Dnieper rivers. The Lithuanian ruler was obviously trying to gain complete control of the trade routes which led from Poland and the Rus' lands to the Black Sea. The most important of these was the so-called "Tatar route", which ran from L'viv to the Crimea by way of southern Podolia. Another led from Poland by way of Luck in Volhynia and merged with the "Tatar route" on the lower Buh River.³⁵ Firm control of the territory extending over the areas where the Dniester, Buh and Dnieper discharge into the Black Sea would have amounted to the control of the northern Black Sea trade by the Lithuanian-Ruthenian state, a development that would have endangered vital economic and commercial interests of the Golden Horde and of the emerging Khanate of the Crimea. Had the plans of the Lithuanian rulers for imposing their supremacy over Novgorod succeeded, a secure access to the Black Sea could have contributed to the revival of the Dnieper trade and the reestablishment of the old *put' iz varjag v greki*, the cutting off of which by steppe peoples had contributed to the decline of Kievan Rus'.

So far as the Eastern Slavs were concerned, the Lithuanian-Tatar contest had a number of lasting consequences:

1) The Lithuanian conquest of central Ukrainian Rus' and of Belorussia terminated the Golden Horde's rule in these lands approximately a century before Muscovy's emancipation from the Golden Horde's supremacy. After the Battle of the Blue Waters, the Ukrainian Rus' and Belorussia became part of the "West", while Muscovy remained "East".

2) While Lithuania's intervention into the Golden Horde's internal affairs had not been crowned by notable success, it did contribute to the Horde's weakening and disintegration and to its transformation into being only one of many East European states.

³⁵ Zdan, *AW* 7 III-IV (1930), p. 595.

3) The struggle between them marked the end of the age of empires built by small, often nomadic peoples, on the basis of military prowess alone.

4) Lithuania was able to expand into Belorussia and the Ukraine, although in the course of this expansion her elite became slavized; in this respect, the conquerors were overcome by the conquered. Lithuania's resources were too limited to accomplish the conquest of the steppe.

5) Muscovy profited most from the contest between Lithuania-Rus' and the Golden Horde at a time when the outcome of her own struggle for supremacy in Great Russia was still in doubt. In contrast to Lithuania's offensive posture vis-à-vis the Golden Horde, Muscovy refrained from actively resisting the Mongol-Tatar domination and carefully avoided challenging the political supremacy of the Golden Horde throughout most of the fourteenth and a good part of the fifteenth century. The Battle at the Kulikovo Pole had no significant political consequences. The Lithuanian involvement, the diplomatic negotiations preceding the battle, and the military activities immediately following it have not been sufficiently studied, but they also have been too freely interpreted, at least by some scholars. Such scholars have seen in these events an alliance between Jagiełło and Mamai and conclusive evidence for the existence of a deliberate Lithuanian-Tatar effort to encircle Moscow.³⁶ The Kulikovo battle did not represent the first defeat of a Tatar army by Russians coming from the Vladimir-Muscovite Grand Principality — the Battle on the Voža River in 1378 was not only earlier, but may be regarded as equally important. Two years after the Battle at the Kulikovo Pole, in 1382, Tohtamış was able to take Moscow, and twenty-seven years later, in 1409, Edigü conducted a devastating invasion of Muscovy. Both these events indicate that the defeat at the Kulikovo Pole had only minor effects upon the relations between Muscovy and the Golden Horde. Muscovy remained in the state system of the Golden Horde, paid it tribute, and continued to rely upon its support and that of its successor states in her conflicts with other Russian states. Even after the considerable weakening of the Golden Horde that followed the formation of its daughter khanates, Muscovy attempted to become the successor, not the challenger, of the gradually disintegrating Golden Horde. It was only after the actual dissolution of the Golden Horde that Muscovy dared to take the offensive by annexing the Horde's successor states. Muscovy's successes, such as the conquests of the khanates of

³⁶ For two examples of such interpretations, see Kolankowski, *Dzieje...*, pp. 19-20, and Grekov, *Očerki...*, pp. 61-62.

Kazan (1552) and Astrakhan (1556), came, however, at a much later date and had little to do with her alleged struggle against the "Tatar yoke". In more recent decades, interest in Russo-Tatar relations, particularly the "Tatar yoke" as seen from the Russian perspective, has overshadowed the study of all other aspects of East European territorial conflicts. This emphasis on the confrontation between Muscovy and the Golden Horde and on the enhancement of Muscovy's role in the struggle against the "Tatar yoke" can be partially explained by the relative abundance of historical and literary materials dealing with the Battle at the Kulikovo Pole, although these originate from a much later period, by an impressive literature on these materials written predominantly from a devotional point of view, and by the glorification of this historical event in Russian historical and literary scholarship. All these factors have contributed to the consolidation of the view that Muscovite Russia, beginning in the later part of the fourteenth century, actively resisted the Mongol-Tatar domination, conducted a protracted liberation struggle into the late fifteenth century, and eventually threw off the oppressive "Tatar yoke". This view, which incidentally represents a belated national response to external challenges and resulting self-doubts, certainly does not reflect the realities of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but rather serves as an example of the perpetuation of national mythology in East European history.