

Chapter I

THE RUS' LAND (TENTH TO FIFTEENTH CENTURIES)

THE HISTORY OF Old Rus' literature, academician Dmitrii Sergeevich Likhachev observed, is the history of the Rus' Land (*rusaskaia zemlia*).¹ For the type of sources which he had in mind Likhachev was undoubtedly correct: the myth of the Rus' Land does, to an unusual extent, dominate Old Rus' literature. It is the oldest and most frequently used term for the first Rus' state in Kiev. It achieved an enviable longevity, surviving as a description of Muscovy into the seventeenth century. Surprisingly, however, the myth of the Rus' Land itself has been the subject of little scholarly investigation.² This chapter will analyze the development of the myth of the Rus' Land from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries.

Insufficient attention has been attached to the precise form of the phrase, the Rus' Land, despite the fact that scholars almost unconsciously create comparable "land" terminology for regions not so designated in the sources.³ Why should the Kievan state have been called a "land" (*zemlia*)? This nomenclature is far from accidental or unconscious. Despite the existence of alternative, and seemingly more appropriate terms, the *Tale of Bygone Years* (*Povest' vremennykh let*) does not call the Kievan polity the Rus' country (*strana*), the Rus' state (*gosudarstvo*), the Rus' principality (*kniazhenie*), or the Rus' fatherland (*otechestvo*).⁴ Similarly, the *Tale of Bygone Years* calls all states "lands," even when more accurate terms were utilized in other, usually later, Rus' sources.⁵

1 D. S. Likhachev, "Zadonshchina," *Literaturnaia ucheba* 3 (1941): 87–100 at 94.

2 Horace G. Lunt, "What the Rus' Primary Chronicle tells us about the origin of the Slavs and Slavic writing," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 19 (1995): 335–57 at 335.

3 For example, P. P. Tolochko entitled his article "Kievskaiia zemlia" in *Drevnerusskie kniazhestva, X–XIII vv.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1975), 5–56, although he noted that the contemporary sources referred to the Dnieper River valley as the Rus' Land. The phrase "Kievan Land" did occur much later, for example, in *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* [hereafter *PSRL*], vol. 4 (St. Petersburg, 1848), *sub anno* (hereafter "s.a.") 6992 (1482): 134 (Academic manuscript of the Novgorod IV Chronicle). It was just as anachronistic for Tolochko to mention the Kievshchina (Tolochko, "Kievskaiia zemlia," especially 5–7). Similarly, P. V. Alekseev justified the name of his monograph, *Polotskaia zemlia (Ocherki istorii severnoi Belorusii) v IX–XIII vv.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), on the basis of a single chronicle reference to the "Polotskian Land" (5); cf. *PSRL*, 1, s.a. 6626 (1128): 299.

4 The Kievan chronicler was so obsessed with the origin of the "Rus' Land" that he provides two dates of origin: 852 and 862. See *Povest' vremennykh let* [hereafter *PVL*, and vol. 1 is intended unless specified], vol. 1, *Tekst i perevod*, ed. V. P. Adrianova-Peretts (Moscow: Nauka, 1950), 17, 18. *Rusaskaia strana* occurs twice (*PVL*, 35, 39); these are rarities. I have not been able to locate any usage of the words *otechestvo* or *gosudarstvo* in *PVL*, although they do occur in other Kievan texts. *Kniazhenie* is used (*PVL*, 135) to mean "princely reign" rather than "principality"; in any event it does not occur with the adjective "Rus'."

5 *PVL*, 11, 12, *Ugorskaia zemlia*, but never the later form *Ugorskoe korolevstvo*; *Gretskaia zemlia*

In short, we are dealing with a uniform system of nomenclature of states, one probably based upon a projection of the grammatical form of the native term, which calls Rus' a "land." Whatever the significance of this precise terminology, a point to which much of this chapter will be devoted, it is at least reasonably certain that this system of nomenclature is unique in the European context. I have not been able to locate analogous terms of equal importance or similar systems of equal consistency and longevity in the sources of any other medieval people, Slavic or non-Slavic.⁶ The Rus' system of "land"-names did not result from Scandinavian influence.⁷ The uniqueness of the Kievan term is confirmed, albeit indirectly, by the fact that by and large in the Kievan period, or even thereafter, basically the term did not translate. The most common terms for Rus' were, for example, the Latin *Rus*, the Greek *Rhosias* or *Ros*, or the French *Rousie*, which did not reproduce the specific form of the Rus' term.⁸ Therefore, the myth of the Rus'

(27, 116, 246), never the later de rigueur *Grecheskoe tsarstvo*. *PVL* is, I have a feeling, far more rigorous in its use of "land"-terms than the twelfth-century chronicles because it is closer to the roots of this system of nomenclature. Other examples in the *PVL*: Bulgarian Land (19, 23 [which should be "tsardom"; see next footnote], Polish Land (98, 101, 116, 176); Slovenian Land (12, 14), the former meaning Novgorod, the latter Slovenia in present day Hungary, and Derevljan (40), Polovtsian (160), Muromian and Rostovian Lands (168).

6 For an alternative but undocumented view, cf. A. V. Soloviev, "Le dit de la ruine de la terre russe," *Byzantion* 23 (1952): 105–28 at 125, and numerous other articles by Soloviev. Those specialists I have consulted have been unable to locate, for example, the phrase *terra Franciae*, which Soloviev invokes as an analogue. Soloviev is fundamentally correct that there seems to have been a common Slavic "land"-state system, but its development in each Slavic state differs: The "Czech Land" is used in Cosmas of Prague but was superseded by the concepts of the Crown and Kingdom (*corona* and *regnum*); see any edition or translation of Cosmas of Prague, *Chronicle of Bohemia*. The earliest Polish chronicle does not use a phrase like the "Polish Land"; see any edition or translation of Gallus Anonymus, *Deeds of the Princes of the Poles*. Bulgarian sources refer exclusively to the "Bulgarian *tsarstvo*"; see G. A. Il'inskii, *Gramoty bolgarskikh tsarei* (Moscow: Sinodal'naia, 1911). Serbian sources do refer to the "Serbian and Dalmatian Land" but use other terms, such as kingdom, indiscriminately: see any edition of Danilo, *Zivoty kraljeva i arhiepiskopa srpskih*. Obviously there is no pattern to this aspect of nomenclature: the evolution of the terms differs among the Czechs and Poles, whose earliest chronicles are in Latin, and in the South Slavs between the Serbs and Bulgars.

7 It is true that medieval Scandinavian sources (in the "old" versions of Icelandic, Swedish, Norse, and Danish plus perhaps German, Anglo-Saxon and perhaps other languages) commonly used geographic-political names which included land/long/la, but the names of the three Scandinavian states had other forms: Danmark (Denmark), Svithjob/Svithjoth (Sweden, sometimes Scythia), and Noregr (Norway), and the East-Slavic area of the Rus' was Gardarik. Therefore, despite innumerable terms such as Serkland (Land of Islam), Grekland (Greek Land), and of course Iceland, Finland, Gotland, Greenland, Vinland/Wineland, etc., the medieval Scandinavians do not seem to have had a system of politicized land-names. See the numerous quotations from sources in Omeljan Pritsak, *The Origins of Rus'*, vol. 1: *Old Scandinavian Sources Other Than the Sagas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1981).

8 Alexandre V. Soloviev, *Le nom byzantin de la Russie* (Den Haag: Mouton, 1957), 16–19, and numerous other articles, although Soloviev does not always point out that the terms are not literal translations of the "Rus' Land." There were exceptions, though, mostly from the post Kievan-period. Obolensky has even located a Greek equivalent, *ge Rosike* (Apollinaris of Laodicea, *litterpretario in Psaltem*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 33, col. 1412, as quoted in Obolensky in

Land seems to have carried some particular intellectual baggage the nuances of which were not understood and hence not translated by the neighbours of Rus'. Where can we turn to try to uncover what those connotations of the myth were?

It is best to begin with the geographic dimension of the myth of the Rus' Land, partly because here at least there is some relevant and cogent scholarship. Arsenii Nasonov showed that the original meaning of the Rus' Land in geographic terms was that triangle of territory bounded by Kiev, Chernigov (Chernihiv), and Pereiaslavl'. As the area under the sovereignty of the Kievan dynasty expanded in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, newly acquired territories were "incorporated" into the Rus' Land, until eventually the patrimony (*otchina*) of the Volodimerovichi encompassed all East Slavdom.⁹

At the same time the Rus' Land retained its earlier meaning of the Kievan triangle, so that twelfth-century chroniclers record princes from Vladimir-Suzdal' in the Northeast, Novgorod in the North, and Galicia-Volhynia in the Southwest, among others, as going to the Rus' Land when Kiev is meant.¹⁰ How the tension between these two sets of geographic coordinates of the Rus' Land was resolved is best demonstrated in the *Lay of the Host of Igor'* (*Slovo o polku Igoreve*), the lay epic "commemorating" the defeat of Prince Igor' Sviatoslavovich of Novgorod-Seversk, in the Chernigov region, by the Polovtsy in 1186.¹¹ Igor' and his retinue fight for the Rus' Land in the narrow sense of the term, that

Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando Imperio*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1967), 2:20: commentary on *terra Russiae*, 7; see below on *terra Russiae* for Galicia.

9 Arsenii Nikolaevich Nasonov, *"Russkaia zemlia" i obrazovanie territorii drevnerusskogo gosudarstva* (Moscow: Nauka, 1951). Nasonov's conclusion was accepted by B. A. Rybakov, "Drevnye Rusi," *Sovetskaia arkheologiii* 17 (1953): 23–104 at 33–39; L. V. Cherepnin, "Istoricheskie uslovia formirovaniia russkoi natsional'nosti do kontsa XV veka," in *Voprosy formirovaniia russkoi narodnosti i natsii* (Moscow: Nauka, 1958), 7–105 at 20–21, 61–62; M. N. Tikhomirov, "Proiskhozhdenie nazvaniia 'Rusi' i 'Russkaia zemlia,'" *Sovetskoe etnografiia* 6–7 (1947): 60–80 at 61–62, and M. I. Artamonov, *Istoriia Khazar* (Leningrad: Gosudarstvenii Ermitazh, 1962), 289–90, among others. The opponents, who contend that the broader meaning of all East-Slavdom is older, include: D. S. Likhachev, commentary in *PVL*, 2:204, 239–42, although cf. 312; and A. V. Soloviev, "Natsional'noe samosoznanie v russkom proshlom," in *Russkaia kul'tura* (Iz Ob'edineniia russkikh organizatsii, "Dnia russkoi kul'tury," Belgrade, 1925), 25–51 at 29ff. Henryk Paszkiewicz rejects both positions; see below. Partially the question is one of emphasis: *PVL* contains two tenth-century Rus'-Byzantine treaties which define the Rus' Land as "Kiev, Chernigov, Pereiaslavl' and others (*i prochie*)" (*PVL*, 25, 36). Henry Paszkiewicz, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations: Premodern Identities in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 33–38 concludes that it is impossible to determine which meaning came first. He dates the ideological origins of the myth to the eleventh century.

10 The evidence is conveniently summarized in Rybakov, "Drevnye Rusi."

11 The authenticity of the *Slovo o polku Igoreve* is too vast a topic to be addressed here; originally I suggested that of necessity I had to assume that it is genuine. Now, after the later publication of A. A. Zimin's repressed monograph and Edward L. Keenan's monograph which argued against authenticity, I feel safe in vouching for the authenticity of the text, which is the scholarly consensus. See Charles J. Halperin, "Authentic? Not authentic? Not authentic, again! Edward L. Keenan, *Josef Dobrovsky and the Origins of the Igor' Tale*," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 54, no. 4 (2006): 556–71; Norman W. Ingham, "Historians and Textology," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 8, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 831–37, and Ingham, "The *Igor' Tale* and the Origins of

is, Kiev and Chernigov, the seats respectively of his suzerain and godfather Grand Prince Sviatoslav, and his brother Iaroslav.¹² Yet the author of the *Lay* appeals to the princes of Vladimir–Suzdal', Galicia–Volhynia, and other principalities to come to the assistance of Igor', implying that loyalty to the Rus' Land extends to those princes as well. However, the *Lay of the Host of Igor'* never names the other principalities, as if to emphasize that the link between the two geographic definitions of the Rus' Land is the dynasty itself: the Rus' Land is wherever a Volodimerovich prince rules.¹³

In the *Lay of the Host of Igor'* the Rus' warriors are called the grandsons of Dazhbog, the winds are called the sons of Strizhbog, invoking the pagan Slavic pantheon. Iaroslavna, the wife of Igor', appeals to the sun, moon, rivers, stars, winds, and other forces of nature to save her husband. Iaroslavna's lament is pure animistic paganism.¹⁴ The rare Christian elements in the *Lay of the Host of Igor'* are irrelevant.¹⁵ But if the *Lay* is rightly considered a pagan epic, then what of the concept of the polity for which Igor' and his retinue fight, to which the entire Volodimerovich clan owes its allegiance, the central motif of the text, the Rus' Land? Could the myth of the Rus' Land itself have pagan overtones?

In a posthumous article Vasilii Komarovich uncovered a princely pagan cult of the clan (*kul't roda*) in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Princes never canonized by the Rus's Orthodox Church are invoked in battle; each prince received both a Christian and a princely, in other words pagan, name; rites continued to be held at the graves of the founders of the princely clan (*rodonachal'niki*) Oleg and Ol'ga¹⁶ (this is the same name, as Komarovich notes); a custom of shearing princes when they came of age was continued. Komarovich also relates this cult of the princely clan to the cult in Rus' of Moist Mother Earth (*mat' syra zemlia*), the Rus' variant of the universal myth of Mother Earth. For example, the soul of a dead prince reposed in the earth until his name was given to

Conspiracy Theory," *Russian History* 44, no. 2–3 (June 2017): 135–49. For a convenient text see N. K. Gudziĭ, *Khrestomatiia po drevnei russkoi literatury*, 7th ed. (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe uchebno-pedagogicheskoe izdatel'stvo, 1962), 58–71.

12 A. N. Robinson, "'Russkaia zemlia' v 'Slovo o polku Igoreve,'" *Trudy otdela drevne-russkoi literatury* 31 (1976): 123–36 at 124 wrote that the historical content of the Rus' Land was insufficiently studied in the *Lay of the Host of Igor'*.

13 I am indebted for this interpretation of the *Slovo o polku Igoreve* to Michael Cherniavsky's later published article from the James Schuyler Lectures at the Johns Hopkins University, chapter 5, "Russia," in *National Consciousness, History and Political Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Orest Ranum (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 118–43.

14 V. V. Sapunov, "Iaroslavna i drevnerusskoe iazychestvo," in *Slovo o polku Igoreve—pamiatnik XII veka* (Moscow: Nauka 1962), 321–29, where the archeological evidence is also considered.

15 Harvey Goldblatt and Riccardo Picchio, "Toward a Critical Edition of the *Igor' Tale*," *Russica Romana* 2 (1995): 25–64 and "Old Approaches and New Perspectives: Once Again on the Religious Significance of the *Slovo o polku Igoreve*," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 28, no. 1–4 (2006): 129–54 argue otherwise.

16 On Ol'ga as a pagan priestess before her conversion to Christianity see Roman Kovalev, "Grand Princess Ol'ga Shows the Bird: Her 'Christian Falcon' Emblem," *Russian History* 39 (2012): 460–517.

a newborn prince. That soul came out of the earth and entered the body of the infant on the spot where it was born. Typically, a church was erected in honour of the occasion.¹⁷

The princely dynasticism of the *Lay of the Host of Igor'* takes on new meaning in light of Komarovich's article. Moist Mother Earth, even in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was still considered the defender of the clan way-of-life (*rodovaia zhizn'*) and clan religion in ecclesiastical folk-poems (*dukhovnye stikhi*).¹⁸ The word for "earth" in the Mother Earth cult and the word for "land" in the "Rus' Land" are one and the same, *zemlia*. Surely a latent connection between the two cannot be ruled out.¹⁹ Our conceptual framework is completed by some strikingly original work on the concept of Rus' by Paul Bushkovitch. Employing linguistic analysis, Bushkovitch perceptively uncovered a logical system of nomenclature of peoples in the *Tale of Bygone Years* which entwined grammar and social-political evolution. The only group of the neighbours of Rus' whose names have the same grammatical form (feminine singular collective noun, like Chud' or Ves') as the word *Rus'* are the Finno-Ugric peoples, the most "primitive" tribes of the region. Since the East Slavs had long ago surpassed that stage of social evolution, it is likely that the word *Rus'* was retained because it was a pagan sacral term.²⁰

Applying Bushkovitch's conclusion we see that Komarovich's cult of the clan might actually have been the cult of the *Rus'*, which was probably the primal sacral name for the princely clan (*rod*) of the Kievan dynasty.²¹ The name of the sacral clan later became attached to the entire people, as is suggested by the legend recorded in Byzantine, Arab, Polish, and Persian sources that the *Rus'* were the descendants of an eponymous ancestor, *Rus/Ros/Rusa*.²² The omission of the legend from the *Tale of Bygone Years* does not impugn this interpretation: the Kievan chronicler had his own version of the origins of the *Rus'*, the Normanist theory. The diversity in time and space of the sources preserving the ancestor legend lends credence to the view that the neighbours of Rus' were repeating something they had heard from the *Rus'*, rather than merely fantasizing.

¹⁷ V. L. Komarovich, "Kul't roda i zemli v kniazheskoi srede XI–XII vv.," *Trudy otdela drevne-russkoi literatury* 16 (1960): 84–104.

¹⁸ G. Fedotov, "Mat'-zemlia—K religioznoi kosmologii russkogo naroda," *Put'* 46 (1935): 3–18.

¹⁹ Noticed *en passant* but not discussed in any depth by James Billington, *The Icon and the Axe* (New York: Knopf, 1966), 20.

²⁰ Paul Bushkovitch, "Rus' in the Ethnic Nomenclature of the *Povest' vremennykh let*," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* 12, no. 3 (July–September 1971): 296–306.

²¹ Is this not what "we are from the Rus' *rod*" means, the dynasty of Rus'? See PVL, s.a. 907, 25; s.a. 945, 34, the Rus'–Byzantine treaties. Could not the "grandsons of Dazhbog" in the *Lay of the Host of Igor'* be the dynasty itself?

²² Simeon Magister, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, 50 vols. (Bonn, 1828–1897), 13:149–50, and Ibn Fadlan cited in A. Garkavy, *Skazaniia musul'manskikh pisatelei o slavianskikh i russkikh* (St. Petersburg, 1870), 73, both quoted in A. V. Soloviev, "Rusichi i Rusovichy," in *Slovo o polku Igoreve—pamiatnik XII veka*, 176–99 at 282; *Kronika Wielkopolska*, Monumenta Poloniae Historia, 2:468 and B. A. Rybakov, "K voprosu o roli khazarskogo kaganstva v istorii Rusi," *Sovetskaia arkheologiya* 18 (1953): 128–50 at 134, both quoted in Henryk Paszkiewicz, *The Making of the Russian Nation* (London: Greenwood, 1963), 77, 144n203.

The myth of the Rus' Land, as the evidence of the tenth-century Rus'-Byzantine treaties proves, pre-dates the Christianization of Kievan Rus'.²³ The Rus' Land constituted, then, the first Rus' conception of political society.²⁴ It personified the pagan patrimony of the sacral clan of Rus' of the Kievan dynasty. It was neither a tribal (ethnic) nor a statist conception of a realm but a dynastic construct.²⁵ Despite the official conversion of Rus' to Christianity, this pagan topos of the Rus' Land survived and was manifested in the *Lay of the Host of Igor* several centuries later.

With the official baptism of Rus' under St. Vladimir the myth of the Rus' Land almost immediately acquired what became its dominant aspect, a Christian one. The *Tale of Bygone Years*, in a prayer at the conclusion of the "Tale of the Baptism of Vladimir," reads: "Blessed is our Lord Jesus Christ who loves his new people, the Rus' Land, and illuminates them with holy baptism."²⁶ In the early eleventh-century *Lives of Saints Boris and Gleb*, the first Rus' saints, the princely martyrs die for the Rus' Land and become its defenders and intercessors with God. In this cult of the princely-saints, ably elucidated by Cherniavsky, the Rus' Land is hallowed by the blood of Boris and Gleb just as the prototypic *Terra Sancta*, Palestine, was hallowed by the blood of Jesus. Here we see a *translatio* to the newly-Christianized Rus' Land of the model Christian Holy Land. As in the concept of the pagan sacral Rus' Land, the supreme importance of the ruler-myth remains self-evident.²⁷

Within the Kievan period, therefore, the myth of the Rus' Land already exhibited considerable vitality and flexibility. Indeed, its malleability was probably one source of its power, since it was able to draw upon the well-springs of both pagan and Christian sacredness. In a sense, I originally proposed, this quality of the myth represents the raising of the Rus' "dual-religion" (*dvoeverie*, the retention and mixture of pagan motifs with the newer Christian religion) to the level of ideology. Just as the Rus' princes were sacred both as clan ancestors and Christian saints, so also the Rus' Land was a "holy land" in both pagan and Christian belief. Subsequent research by Eve Levin and Stella Rock has convincingly demonstrated that "dual-religion" did not mean the mixture of pagan and Christian practices and beliefs.²⁸ However, the dual religious nature of the myth of the Rus' Land remains credible.

23 This assertion, admittedly, rests upon the assumption that the surviving Slavonic translation of the treaties from the original Greek dates to the tenth century.

24 PVL, 27–35. Nasonov speculates that the first Rus' Land was that territory around Kiev under Khazar domination, suggesting the possibility that the earliest connotations of the term were steppe-Turkic. However, nomadic polities defined themselves by people, not territory.

25 Serhii Plokhy, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations: Premodern Identities in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 38.

26 PVL, 82.

27 Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People*, 5–43.

28 Eve Levin, "Dvorverie and Popular Religion," in *Seeking God. The Recovery of Religious Identity in Orthodox Russia, Ukraine, and Georgia*, ed. Stephen K. Batalden (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993), 31–52; Stella Rock, *Popular Religion in Russia. "Double Belief" and the Making of an Academic Myth* (London: Routledge, 2007).

On the eve of the Mongol conquest of Rus' the myth of the Rus' Land carried two geographic meanings, either the area of Kiev in the narrow sense or all East Slavdom in the broad sense, as well as two religious meanings. How were these various and complex elements of the myth affected by that conquest?

The major statement of the reaction of Rus' to the Mongol conquest is the *Tale of the Destruction of the Rus' Land* (*Slovo o pogibeli russkoi zemi*), only a fragment of which survives. It is hardly surprising that in response to the pagan Mongols it is the Christian Rus' Land which is invoked: "Thou, Rus' Kand, art rich in wealth and the Orthodox Christian faith." The Rus' Land is blessed by "ecclesiastical houses" (*domy tserkovnye*), monasteries or churches, and illumined by the Christian faith (*svetlorusskaia zemlia*).²⁹ Faced with disaster, the Rus' fell back on their Christian identity.

But which Rus', in Kiev or the Northeast? Debate continues over whether the *Tale of the Destruction of the Rus' Land* was written in Kiev after the Mongol sack of that city in 1240 or earlier in the Northeast after the campaign of 1237–1238.³⁰ The geographic conception of the Rus' Land in the *Tale of the Destruction of the Rus' Land* seems to be the broader one, but given the fragmentary nature of the extant text the precise object of loyalty of the work is difficult to establish. Let us look at other sources for the century after the Mongol conquest in the Northeast and try to put the *Tale of the Destruction of the Rus' Land* into a wider context.

For the thirteenth century we can examine the *Laurentian Chronicle* (*Lavrent'evskia letopis'*) copied in 1377 in Suzdal', which covers the period up to 1305. This can be supplemented by entries from the late fifteenth-century *Simeonov Chronicle* (*Simeonovskaia letopis'*), which preserved what might have been chronicle-writing from the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.³¹

The *Laurentian* and the other chronicles record that in 1249 the Mongol khan gave Aleksandr Nevskii "Kiev and the whole Rus' Land," and Aleksandr's brother Andrei the city of Vladimir.³² Clearly Vladimir–Suzdal' Rus' in the Northeast was not included in the "whole Rus' Land." That is, I believe, the last time that the *Laurentian Chronicle* refers to the Rus' Land, but the other chronicles did utilize it after 1249. In 1283 Maksim is sent from Constantinople to be Metropolitan over "the whole Rus'

²⁹ Text in Iu. K. Begunov, *Pamiatnik russkoi literatury XIII v. Slovo o pogibeli russkoi zemli* (Moscow: Nauka, 1965), 182–84.

³⁰ For full bibliography see Begunov, *Pamiatnik russkoi literatury XIII v.*

³¹ I had previously relied upon the *Trinity Chronicle* (*Troitskaia letopis'*), which purportedly dates to 1408. However, the manuscript discovered by N. Karamzin had not been published when it perished in the Moscow fire of 1812. M. Priselkov attempted to reconstruct its text, partly on the basis of a small number of extracts transcribed by Karamzin but mostly by inference. See M. D. Priselkov, *Troitskaia letopis'. Rekonstruktsiia teksta* (Moscow: Nauka, 1950). However, I later concluded that a reconstruction could not be treated as a text (see Charles J. Halperin, "Text and Textology: Salmina's Dating of the 'Chronicle Tales' about Dmitry Donskoy," *Slavonic and East European Review* 79, no. 2 (April 2001): 248–63). I have now replaced citations to the *Trinity Chronicle* with references to the *Simeonov Chronicle*.

³² *Lavrent'evskaia letopis'* in *PSRL*, 1 (Moscow: Vostochnoi literatury, 1962), col. 472; *Simeonovskaia letopis'* in *PSRL*, 18 (St. Petersburg: Aleksandrov, 1913), 69.

Land.”³³ This is ambiguous: the Kievan see remained unified, and Maksim passed through Kiev, but he spent all his time thereafter in the Northeast. In 1293 the Tatars raided Vladimir, Suzdal’, Murom, Pereiaslav’, Kolomna, Moscow, Mozhaisk, Volog, and other cities, all of them in the Northeast. The Tatars did much harm to the Rus’ Land—the beginnings of a *translatio* of the narrow concept of the geographical Rus’ Land from the Kievan area to the Northeast.³⁴ The *translatio* was completed by 1328 when there was “peace in the Rus’ Land” at the accession to the grand principality of Vladimir of Ivan Kalita of Moscow and in 1340 when Ivan Kalita was mourned on his death by “all the Muscovite men...and the whole Rus’ Land.”³⁵ By 1340 the *translatio* of the Rus’ Land to the Muscovite principality itself, or at the very least to the Northeast, was a *fait accompli*.

According to Serhii Plokhy, because the narrow geographic definition of the Rus’ Land remained alive even in the thirteenth century, the chronicler divided other Rus’ territories into “lands”: the Smolenskan Land, Polatskian Land, Suzdalian Land, Novgorodian Land, and so forth, which replaced the original apportionment of Rus’ among tribes but did not rest upon the tribal divisions. Chroniclers in Galicia–Volhynia in the southwest, Novgorod in the north, and Vladimir–Suzdal’ “knew” that those regions did not belong to the Rus’ Land.³⁶ This conclusion is too categorical. First, it overlooks the inconsistent application of the myth of the Rus’ Land in its broadest sense to these regions. Second, it homogenizes a multitude of terms with disparate histories. Each “land” concept had its own history which merits separate examination.³⁷ Finally, Plokhy’s formulation does not do justice to his own astute observation that at different times the principalities of Galicia–Volhynia and Vladimir–Suzdal’ claimed that their principalities constituted the Rus’ Land,³⁸ so what their chroniclers “knew” was malleable.

During the transitional period of this *translatio* (ca. 1240–ca. 1340) with increasing frequency the chronicles employed the term the Suzdalian Land (*Suzdal’skaia zemlia*) to mean the Northeast. With the definitive *translatio* of the Rus’ Land to the Northeast by 1340, the concept of the Suzdalian Land vanished from the *Simeonov Chronicle* and in its place the term the Rus’ Land was consistently used to mean the Northeast.

Therefore, I deem it unlikely that the *Tale of the Destruction of the Rus’ Land*, which continues that myth, was written in the Northeast. If it were, then as an attempted *translatio* it died stillborn, to mix a metaphor, or it was a hundred years premature. Probably the *Tale of the Destruction of the Rus’ Land* was written in Kiev in 1240 as the swan song, for the time being, of the myth of the Rus’ Land.³⁹

33 *PSRL*, 1, col. 586, records only that he went to Suzdal’; *PSRL*, 18:79, that he went to the Rus’ Land.

34 *PSRL*, 1, col. 483, is missing several folios which might have included this entry; *PSRL*, 18:82.

35 *PSRL*, 18:90, 93.

36 Plokhy, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations*, 39, 40.

37 Of course, analysis of each of these “land”-terms fell outside the focus of Plokhy’s impressive monograph.

38 Plokhy, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations*, 53.

39 In the Hypatian Chronicle, the “militia commander” (*tysiatskii* or “thousand-man”) Danilo tells

The myth of the Rus' Land did not disappear for long. In the second half of the fourteenth century it underwent a major renaissance in Northeast Russia, and specifically in Moscow. The *Simeonov Chronicle* uses the term to mean exclusively the Northeast, in particular the grand principality of Vladimir.⁴⁰ Since in this period the Vladimir grand principality became an extension of the Moscow house, implicitly the myth of the Rus' Land would become associated with Moscow, but Muscovite ideologues consciously, consistently, and ultimately successfully sought to relegate utilization of the myth of the Rus' Land to a monopoly of Moscow. I have discussed the appearance of the myth of the Rus' Land in detail in the various "chronicle tales" (*letopisnye povesti*) from this period elsewhere, including narratives about Mamai, Tokhtamsh, Timur, the Battle on the River Voroskla, and Edigei, demonstrating that in every case the Rus' Land means Moscow.⁴¹ Here we can confine ourselves to two of the best-known literary works from the end of the fourteenth century to explore the aspects of the myth of the Rus' Land which they retain.⁴²

The epic *Zadonshchina* (*Battle Beyond the Don River*) usually attributed to Sofonii of Riazan',⁴³ was written to praise Grand Prince Dmitrii Donskoi of Moscow for his defeat of the Tatar emir Mamai at Kulikovo Field in 1380.⁴⁴ The literary model of the *Zadonshchina* was the *Lay of the Host of Igor'*, and the question immediately must be posed: Did the *Zadonshchina* retain the pagan aspect of the Rus' Land from the *Lay of the Host of Igor'*? The almost universal opinion of scholarship has been that it did not: In the *Zadonshchina* the Rus' fight "for the Rus' Land and the Christian faith." Obviously the *translatio* of the Rus' Land to the Muscovite principality is fundamental to the text, even though this has not been sufficiently appreciated. A significant exception is Plokhy, who concludes that all the literary monuments of the Kulikovo cycle "reflect the transformation of the notion of the Rus' Land from the common patrimony of the Kyivan princes to the exclusive patrimony of the princes of Moscow" and who fully appreciates that the

Batu after the sack of Kiev: "Vidi bo zemliu gibnuishchuiu rus'kuiu" (see the perishing Rus' Land) and the *Tale of the Sack of Kiev* in the Hypatian Chronicle uses the phrase the Rus' Land more than once. It strikes me that this confirms the interpretation of the *Tale of the Destruction of the Rus' Land* presented here. See *Ipat'evskaia letopis'* in *PSRL*, 2 (Moscow: Vostochnoi literatury 1962), cols. 784, 786, 787, 788.

40 e.g., *PSRL*, 18:100, s.a. 1358, the Rus' Land is called the patrimony of Grand Prince Ivan Ivanovich; 142, s.a. 1393 St. Sergius is called a teacher and preacher "over the whole Rus' Land."

41 Charles J. Halperin, "The Russian Land and the Russian Tsar: The Emergence of Muscovite Ideology, 1380–1408," *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte* 23 (1976): 7–103.

42 The dating of these texts remains contested, but at the latest they convey Muscovite conceptions of the myth of the Rus' Land from the middle to the second half of the fifteenth century.

43 Almost without fail in earlier publications I distorted the name of the putative author of the *Zadonshchina* as Sofronii.

44 The dating and textology of the *Zadonshchina* cannot be discussed in detail here. I am in agreement with the conclusions of A. V. Soloviev, "Avtor 'Zadonshchiny' i ego politicheskie idei," *Trudy otdela drevne-russkoi literatury* 14 (1958): 183–97, though not always for the stated reasons. The six manuscripts of the *Zadonshchina* were published in V. P. Adrianova-Peretts, "Zadonshchina. Opyt rekonstruktsii avtorskogo teksta," *Trudy otdela drevne-russkoi literatury* 6 (1948): 223–55.

myth of the Rus' Land was an "historically, politically and legally loaded term."⁴⁵ However, I believe that the Christian veneer of the *Zadonshchina*, while stronger than in the *Lay of the Host of Igor'*, is still, nevertheless, extraneous. The strongest evidence of Christianity is the refrain itself; otherwise, the only Christian motifs are the cliché contrast of "Christians"/"pagans" (*khrestiane/poganye*), a reference to Boris and Gleb, and one to Peresvet, a monk-warrior sent by St. Sergius to aid the Muscovites. But the ethos of the *Zadonshchina* is essentially martial and chivalric, and the appeal of Peresvet—"It is better that we fall in battle than become slaves to these infidels"—is uplifting, but hardly religious. Characteristically, for example, there are almost no prayers in the *Zadonshchina*.

That the Rus' Land and the Christian faith were not only not identical, but were mutually exclusive in the *Zadonshchina*, that the *Zadonshchina* was perceived as at least a less-than-adequately religious text (to be sure, "secular" does not mean "pagan") can best be demonstrated by comparing it to another member of the Kulikovo cycle, the *Narration of the Battle with Mamai* (*Skazanie o Mamaevom poboishche*).⁴⁶ The *Narration* is a highly religious depiction of the battle, replete with constant prayers, miracles, and religious symbolism. Over one hundred manuscripts of the *Narration* are extant, compared to a paltry six of the *Zadonshchina*, a difference of such magnitude that it cannot be attributed solely to the vagaries of manuscript survival. The concrete textological evidence of the rewriting of episodes from the *Zadonshchina* for inclusion in the *Narration* is significant. In every case the latter version is more religious than the former. For example, the *Narration* adds to an invocation of Vladimir that he baptized the Rus' Land, and to one of Boris and Gleb that they were holy martyrs and passion-sufferers. Peresvet now pronounces a prayer before going into battle. The Ol'gerdovichi, Orthodox Christian Lithuanian princes fighting for Moscow, fight in the *Zadonshchina* for "the Rus' Land, the Christian faith and Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich," but in the *Narration* they fight only for the faith and their sovereign prince, never for the Rus' Land.⁴⁷ In fact no one in the *Narration* fights for the Rus' Land except in rare interpolations from the *Zadonshchina*. Otherwise, the myth of the Rus' Land is almost censored from the characteristic refrain of the *Zadonshchina*. This pattern of editing of excerpts from the *Zadonshchina* by the unknown but much more religious author of the *Narration* corroborates the conclusion that the *Zadonshchina*, and the Rus' Land in the *Zadonshchina*, were viewed by Muscovite book-men as, if not pagan or secular, not religious enough.

⁴⁵ Plokhy, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations*, 74, 84.

⁴⁶ I agree with the dating of *Narration of the Battle with Mamai* by I. B. Grekov, "O pervnonachal'nom variante 'Skazaniia o Mamaevom poboishche,'" *Sovetskoe slavianovedenie* 6 (1970): 27–36, although Grekov fails to consider many possible objections to this dating. Quotations from the Basic Redaction (*Osnovnaia redaktsiia*) published in *Povesti o Kulikovskoi bitvy*, ed. M. N. Tikhomirov et al. (Moscow: Nauka, 1959), 43–76.

⁴⁷ Cf. the *Zadonshchina* in Adrianova-Peretts, "Zadonshchina. Opyt," 225, 234, 229, 226 with the *Skazanie* in *Povesti o Kulikovskoi bitvy*, ed. Tikhomirov et al., 50, 57, 69, 58–60.

If the pagan layer of the myth of the Rus' Land continued in its typically epic form in the *Zadonshchina*, then the Christian layer was manifested in the *Life of Dmitrii Donskoi*.⁴⁸ In the *Life* Dmitrii Donskoi is Tsar of the Rus' Land, which is his patrimony. This hagiographic portrait of Dmitrii has been aptly summarized by Cherniavsky as that of a monk-tsar, but the text is also the apotheosis of the *translatio* of the Rus' Land in its Christian variant from Kiev to Moscow.

In the eleventh century Metropolitan Ilarion wrote in his *Sermon on Law and Grace*:

The Roman Land with voices of praise, praises Peter and Paul, through whom Rome came to believe in Jesus Christ as the son of God; Asia and Edessa and Patmos praise John the Evangelist, India Thomas, Egypt Mark. Every country and every city and every people honor and glorifies its teacher who taught them the Orthodox Faith. And we praise... Volodimer, the grandson of Igor' of old, son of the glorious Sviatoslav. These ruled in their own time...not in some feeble or unknown land, but in the Rus' [Land], which is known and renowned to the ends of the earth (*zemli*).⁴⁹

Note that the Rus' Land received plaudits from the universal "land," the earth itself.

The author of the *Life*, probably Epiphanius the Wise, adapted that passage to read:

The Roman Land praises Peter and Paul, the Asian Land John the Evangelist, the Indian Land the apostle Thomas, the Land of Jerusalem the brother of the lord Jacob, Andrew the First-Called is praised by the *Pomor'e* [Black Sea Coast] and tsar Constantine by the Greek Land, while Vladimir is praised by Kiev and its neighbouring towns (*Kiev s okrestnym gradami*); you, however, Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich, are praised by the whole Rus' Land.⁵⁰

The author of the *Life of Dmitrii Donskoi* made stylistic changes that heightened the syntactic parallelism and increased the number of saints praised. More than that, he deprived St. Vladimir of his supplicant, the Rus' Land, in order to "reassign" it to praise Dmitrii Donskoi. The author demonstrates explicit consciousness of the *translatio* of the Rus' Land. He knew not only what the original Rus' Land was, that is, Kiev and its surrounding towns, but also what the new Rus' Land is, the patrimony of the Moscow house. This is precisely the rationalization we would expect of a political myth.

The *Life of Dmitrii Donskoi*, better than any other text, illustrates the success of Muscovite ideologues of the end of the fourteenth century in subsuming the myth of the Rus' Land to the myth of the Muscovite ruler, in this case the monk-tsar.⁵¹ By the middle of the fifteenth century the identification of the Muscovite grand principality with the Rus'

⁴⁸ For dating see A. V. Soloviev, "Epifanii Premudryi kak avtor 'Slova o zhitii i prestavlenii velikogo kniazia Dmitriia Ivanovicha, tsar'ia Rus'kago,'" *Trudy otdela drevne-russkoi literatury* 17 (1961): 85–106. The best interpretation of the contribution of the *Life* to the ruler cult is Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People*, 25–28. The best text is *Novgorodskaiia chetvertaia letopis'* in *PSRL*, 4 (Leningrad, 1925), 351–66.

⁴⁹ Gudzii, *Khrestomatiia po drevnei russkoi literatury*, 31–32.

⁵⁰ Translation simplified from Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People*, 28n63.

⁵¹ The myth of Holy Russia, which arose as an anti-statist ideology in the seventeenth century, suffered the same fate; it was later coopted by the regime and subordinated to the ruler-myth. See Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People*, 101–27.

Land manifested itself not only in literary texts⁵² but even in coinage, an official expression of state ideology. Some coins described Grand Prince Vasilii II as “sovereign of the entire Rus’ Land” (*ospodar’ vseia russkoi zemli*),⁵³ an inscription that did not become normative on Muscovite coinage. The myth of the Rus’ Land had become inseparable from the myth of the Muscovite prince. In the late fourteenth century the myth of the Rus’ Land still possessed sufficient flexibility to permit authors to project its final successful shift in space, and that it still functioned on both its religious levels, pagan and Christian.

52 The *Muscovite Chronicle Compilation of the End of the Fifteenth Century*, typically, records that God saved the Rus’ Land from Khan Akhmat in 1480–1481, the “Stand on the Ugra River” that supposedly marked the end of the “Tatar Yoke.” *Moskovskii letopisnyi svod kontsa XV veka* in *PSRL*, 25 (Moscow: Nauka, 1949), 328.

53 Gustave Alef, “The Political Significance of the Inscriptions on Muscovite Coinage in the Reign of Vasilii II,” *Speculum* 34, no. 1 (January 1959): 1–19 at 6.