

The Contest for the “Kievan Inheritance” in Russian-Ukrainian Relations: The Origins and Early Ramifications

The contest for the inheritance of Kievan Rus' has represented one of the oldest bones of contention in the history of Russian-Ukrainian cultural and political relations. It began among the Eastern Slavs in the second half of the eleventh century and culminated in the famous controversy between the “Northerners” and the “Southerners,” that is, between Russian and Ukrainian scholars.¹ This controversy over the question of who are the legitimate heirs to the Kievan tradition—the Russians or the Ukrainians, which has continued until the present day, has had a profound impact on the development of the cultural perception, historical awareness, modern national consciousness, and the national mythology of the intelligentsias and even common people of the two sides involved.

The three major theories or schools of historical interpretation formulated by modern scholarship about the Kievan inheritance are as follows:

1) The monolineal and exclusivist Russian national theory developed already in the late eighteenth but basically in the nineteenth century in the works of Russian historians of the national-imperial school, such as V. N. Tatishchev, M. N. Karamzin, S. M. Solovev, and V. O. Kliuchevsky. Resting largely on historical-ideological claims and political-juridical theories formulated in Muscovy between the 1330s and the late 1560s, this theory was founded on the transfer of the ecclesiastical institution of the Kievan metropolitan see from Kiev first to Vladimir and eventually to Moscow, the uninterrupted dynastic continuity of the “Riurikides,” and on the Kiev—(Rostov-Suzdal)—Vladimir—Moscow *translatio* theory.²

The notion that Muscovy is the only legitimate heir to Kievan Rus' has influenced the interpretations not only of Russian, but also of Western historiography. Views critical of Muscovite theories about the Kievan inheritance and the canons of Russian nineteenth-century national historiography generally, even if expressed by such distinguished Russian scholars and intellectuals as A. N. Pypin, P. N. Miliukov, A. E. Presniakov, and M. K. Liubavsky, have been conveniently disregarded.

2) The monolineal and exclusivist Ukrainian national theory advanced by Ukrainian national historiography between the 1840s and the end of the 1930s. It was summarized most clearly by Mykhailo Hrushevsky in his *Istoriia*

Ukrainy-Rusy and in his seminal article on the “rational organization” of early East Slavic history.³ This Ukrainian theory found its own line of continuity, i.e., Kiev—Galicia-- Volhynia—Lithuania-Rus’—Cossack Ukraine, and utilized mainly territorial, ethnodemographic, social, and institutional arguments.

3) The official Soviet theory, which in ideological terms allots equal rights to the claims to the Kievan inheritance of the three East Slavic nations—that is, the Russians, the Ukrainians and the Belorussians—but which in fact is much closer to the traditional Russian theory and its forceful advocacy of Russian national interests than it is to the Ukrainian one. This Soviet theory also comes coupled with a distinct preference for research on Kievan Rus’ conducted in Russia proper and by Russian scholars primarily. Thus the major studies of Kievan Rus’ history since World War II have been written by Russian scholars, such as B. D. Grekov, B. A. Rybakov, M. N. Tikhomirov, M. K. Karger, and D. S. Likhachev. The last of these was the first to deal specifically with the origins of Muscovite preoccupation with the Kievan succession, again from an exclusively Russian perspective. It is significant that contemporary Kiev is not the principal centre for the study of the history and culture of Kievan Rus’.

The Soviet theory was first articulated in the late 1930s, but was not elevated to the status of an official state doctrine until the Tercentenary of the Pereiaslav Treaty in 1954. Then it was enunciated in a document of extraordinary importance entitled “Theses Concerning the Tercentenary of the Reunification of Ukraine with Russia (1654–1954) Approved by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.”⁴ According to it, “the Russian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian peoples stem from one root, which is the Old Rus’ nationality that formed the Old Rus’ state—Kievan Rus’.”⁵ The formation of the three East Slavic peoples, or, in Soviet terminology, “nationalities” (*narodnosti*), took place, according to this theory, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when the Russian (or Great Russian) nationality played the most important role of guarding the Kievan tradition, not only during that formative period, but also in the two succeeding centuries.

Although there are serious differences of opinion among the protagonists of each of the three schools of thought, with a few exceptions like M. Hrushevsky and A. E. Presniakov, they all share several assumptions about the nature of the Kievan Rus’ state. One of them is that Kievan Rus’ was a well integrated polity based upon a unified Old Rus’ people or nationality (*narodnost*) of East Slavic ethnic origin inhabiting the “Rus’ land,” which allegedly nurtured an inherent proclivity for territorial, ethnonational, and political unity.⁶ They therefore stressed the ethnic homogeneity, political unity, and cultural coherence of Kievan Rus’, familiar concepts in all nineteenth-century national ideologies. From this perspective, it was not difficult for both Russian and Ukrainian historians to go a step further and develop coherent and well-integrated continuity theories that linked their own latter-day nationalities with ancient Kievan Rus’. To do so they had only to modernize and refine earlier versions

and couch them in appropriate academic terminology.

This image of a unified, integrated, and even ethnically defined Old Rus' which has been handed down to us by several generations of scholars, however, reflects the ideological concerns of the authors and editors of the Kievan chronicle, *Russkaia pravda*, Metropolitan Ilarion's *Sermon on Law and Grace*, and the *Vitae* of the Kievan rulers more than it does the political, cultural, and ethnic realities of Rus'. Kievan Rus' was never really a unified polity. It was a loosely bound, ill-defined, and heterogeneous conglomeration of lands and cities inhabited by tribes and population groups whose loyalties were primarily territorial, *landespatriotisch*, and urban but not national in the modern sense of the term. They were ruled for a time by a dynasty which very soon dissolved into several rival subdynasties which fought each other more fiercely than they battled the much-maligned nomadic "heathens" of the East. Although the decline and dissolution of Kievan Rus' are usually attributed to "bad neighbours," internal factors played a larger part. Among them were the victory of patrimonial territorial states and city-states over multiterritorial and heterogeneous empires or protoimperial polities.

Kievan Rus' was a transitional polity which exhibited some of the characteristics of an empire, but it lacked a well-structured imperial framework. Comparing it to the Carolingian Empire or the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation is, therefore, not quite justified, not only because of differences in ethnic and territorial composition, but also because Kievan Rus' lacked a hierarchy of dynasties and an administrative superstructure. The "Riurikide" dynasty and the ruling elite of Kiev and the Kievan land—the most developed patrimonial-territorial unit and for a time the senior principality within the broader multiterritorial conglomerate of Kievan Rus'—attempted to impose on their highly diverse polity the integrative concept of *russkaia zemlia* ("the Rus' land") and the unifying notion of a Rus' people. In the long run they failed, however, for both concepts soon took on entirely different meanings. The concept of Rus' did, however, refer to a relatively integrated cultural entity based on the Orthodox religion, a Slavicized Byzantine culture, and a transplanted *lingua franca* in the form of Church Slavonic. This cultural unity was elevated to an ideal which, in the realm of ideology, was applied to the political and ethnic spheres as well. The city of Kiev and the Kievan land were among the oldest and richest in that part of the world and Kiev had long been the actual or nominal capital of Rus'. This lent prestige to Kiev from the perspective of the new polities that were emerging from the amorphous superstructure known as Kievan Rus'. The new polities could emancipate themselves so easily not because an artificially invented Old Rus' nationality had disintegrated into three new nationalities, but because the old cities and lands provided a foundation for transforming ethnoterritorial groups into peoples or nationalities. For a variety of reasons their elites then laid claims to what they perceived as their rightful inheritance, and these claims ultimately assumed the status of national myths.

The first phase of the contest between the claimants of the Kievan inheritance, or more specifically the senior capital city of Kiev itself and Kievan Rus', lasted from the late eleventh to the late thirteenth century. Until the mid-1260s it was characterized by political and ideological succession struggles between the subdynasties that ruled the four patrimonial entities of Chernigov, Suzdal-Vladimir, Smolensk, and Galicia-Volhynia. These struggles were followed by the transfer of the Kievan metropolitan see from Kiev, first to Vladimir from around 1250 to 1300, and then to Moscow in 1326, and by the establishment in the first half of the fourteenth century of the Halych metropolitanate. This unprecedented division of the Kievan metropolitanate marked the beginning of the conflict between Vladimir and Galicia over the Kievan ecclesiastical legacy.

Of the four contenders, the house of Chernigov conducted the most protracted struggle, the beginnings of which can be traced all the way back to the 1070s.⁷ From that time until the Mongol invasion of the Rus' states in the 1230s-40s, several princes of the Chernigov dynasty managed intermittently to ascend the Kievan throne and rule with varying degrees of success. Their aim, it appears, was to govern Rus' from Kiev using the practices and customs observed in their own patrimonial-territorial principality. Since the principality of Chernigov disintegrated after the Mongol invasion, its competition for Kiev had no lasting historical consequences. The Chernigov dynasty did not die out until the beginning of the fifteenth century, and some of its rulers even retained the title of "Grand Prince" of Chernigov. The title had no real significance at that time, however, and no evidence suggests that the Chernigov dynasty perpetuated its claims to be legitimate Kievan heirs in that later period.⁸

Until the end of the 1160s, the contenders for the Kievan inheritance aimed at full control of Kiev and the adjoining land and at reestablishing the traditional relationship with other parts of Rus' that existed in the reigns of Volodimer I, Iaroslav I, Volodimer Monomakh, and Mstislav I Harold. Throughout that early period, the takeover of Kiev itself was regarded by the contenders as the goal to be achieved, since Kiev was considered the most prestigious city and the proper capital from which to govern the Rus' polity.

That perception changed dramatically with the sack of Kiev in 1169 by an army acting on the orders of Andrei Bogoliubsky. That event especially shifted the attitude toward Kiev of the Russian ruling elite in the then emerging Suzdal-Vladimir principality from respect to ambivalence.⁹ In its formative years, the Suzdal-Vladimir principality, especially during the reigns of such rulers as Andrei Bogoliubsky (1157-75), Vsevolod III Iurevich (1176-1212), and Aleksandr Iaroslavich Nevsky (1252-63), was torn between the need to retain dynastic and historical ties with Kiev, on the one hand, and the desire to diminish its status and enhance that of the rising patrimonial-territorial Grand Principality of Suzdal-Vladimir on the other. The desire to enhance first Vladimir, its capital on the Kliazma River, and later Moscow at the expense of

Kiev is evident in both practice and theory, as can be detected in contemporary ideological writings.¹⁰

Vladimirian rulers claimed the Kievan inheritance through dynastic connections to the Kievan dynasty. This provided them with the justification to refer to Kiev as their "patrimony and ancestral property," and to develop a set of ideological justifications to substantiate their "rights" to Kiev, based on the assertion that the Christianization of their land and the founding of the city of Vladimir had been accomplished by Prince Volodimer I. Using this assertion, parallels could then be drawn between Bogoliubsky and Volodimer I, who had aspired to be the senior prince of all Rus'. Andrei Bogoliubsky attempted to subordinate the other princes of Old Rus' by referring to them as his vassals (*podruchniki*).

At the same time, the Vladimirian rulers were responsible for two sacks of Kiev—directly for the sack of 1169 ("for three days they plundered the entire city of Kiev with churches and monasteries; and they seized icons and books and chasubles")¹¹ and indirectly for the sack of 1203. They also reduced the status of Kiev as the capital and the centre of Rus' in order to elevate Vladimir to the status of principal city of Old Rus'. Under Bogoliubsky an attempt was made to establish an independent metropolitanate in order to undermine Kiev's position as the ecclesiastical centre of Rus', but it was not successful. At the same time, an ideological program was developed to supersede Kiev and replace it with Vladimir. It included undertakings such as the building of new impressive churches, the development of the cult of the Icon of Our Lady of Vladimir (an icon originally taken from the Kievan land), the celebration of the Feast of the Veneration of the Virgin Mary, a new Feast of the Saviour, and the veneration of the newly discovered relics of Bishop Leontii of Rostov.¹²

An ambivalent attitude toward Kiev is also evident in the political program advanced by Aleksandr Nevsky, as reflected in contemporary chronicle writings and in the ideological statements made in his *Vita*. Nevsky was credited by some chroniclers with having succeeded in obtaining from the Mongols "Kiev and the whole land of Rus'."¹³ According to his *Vita*, written from a devotional point of view, he was linked dynastically with the saintly *srodniki* Boris and Gleb and Iaroslav I. These references may be later interpolations in the text. The crucial opening passage of the *Vita* states only that his dynastic lineage reached back to his father Iaroslav Vsevolodovich and his grandfather Vsevolod III Iurevich, both of Suzdal-Vladimir. The same *Vita* refers to a eulogy allegedly delivered by Metropolitan Cyrill at Nevsky's funeral in which the Metropolitan proclaimed that upon Nevsky's death, "the sun has set in the Suzdal land."¹⁴ Curiously enough, the *Vita* emphasizes the Suzdal-Vladimir dynastic lineage of Aleksandr Nevsky and extols the image of the Suzdal land, but refrains from mentioning Kiev and the Rus' land.

The Vladimirian claims to Kiev were, therefore, not formulated with the purpose of supporting a Kievan revival or in anticipation of its glorious future.

On the contrary, Kiev was to be subordinated to the rising capital city of Vladimir. The Kievan inheritance would serve as a convenient tool for gaining hegemony for the Suzdal-Vladimir principality over the lands of Old Rus'. That ambivalent attitude toward the Kievan inheritance has remained a Russian tradition, regardless of the changing nature of the Russian state or the capital city of the Russian Empire. In 1482, for example, when the Crimean Tatars sacked Kiev at the instigation of Ivan III, the Grand Prince committed blasphemy by accepting from Khan Mengli-Girei a gift of the sacred vessels plundered from the Saint Sophia Church. Significantly, this happened during a gap in the development of the governmental Muscovite theory concerning the Kiev—Suzdal-Vladimir—Moscow *translatio* formulated between the mid-1450s and 1504.¹⁵

The last principal claimant to the Kievan inheritance was Galician-Volhynian Rus', a patrimonial-territorial state.¹⁶ Its dynasty raised claims to the Kievan succession about half a century after the princes of Suzdal-Vladimir. Originally the intentions of the Galician-Volhynian dynasty were not even in direct conflict with those entertained by Suzdal-Vladimir, but they were more on a collision course with an older contender, the house of Chernigov.

Similar in several respects to their northern competitors, rulers of Galicia-Volhynia such as Roman Mstyslavych (1199–1205) and Danylo Romanovych (1237–64) succeeded for brief periods in controlling Kiev and, by extension, southwestern Rus'. Their ultimate aim was to claim succession to all Rus' in order to attain an exalted status for their principality among the lands of Old Rus'. Like Andrei Bogoliubsky and Vsevolod III Iurevich, Roman and Danylo were not interested either in ruling Kiev or in ruling from Kiev, according to the old tradition. They preferred to exercise the power of investiture and install minor princes or later, in the case of Danylo, even a governor. Danylo's replacement of a vassal prince by a governor can be interpreted as an additional contributing factor to the decline of Kiev in both the political and judicial spheres.

The Galician-Volhynian dynasty devised its own ideological program vis-à-vis Kiev and the all-Rus' inheritance based on the law of investiture, on patrimonial ties with the Kievan dynasty, and on the special relationship to Kiev of religious objects. This program is set forth in the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle, the third major component of the Hypatian Codex.¹⁷ Of particular significance is the special "Introduction" to the Hypatian Codex, which explicates the exclusive historical and dynastic rights of the Galician-Volhynian house to the Kievan succession:

These are the names of the Kievan princes who ruled in Kiev until the conquest of Batu, who was in [the state of] paganism: The first to rule in Kiev were co-princes Dir and Askold. After [them followed] Oleg. And following Oleg [came] Igor. And following Igor [came] Sviatoslav. And after Sviatoslav [came] Iaropolk. And following Iaropolk [came] Volodimer, who ruled in Kiev and who

enlightened the Rus' land with the holy baptism. And following Volodimer Sviatopolk began to rule. And after Sviatopolk [came] Iaroslav. And following Iaroslav [came] Iziaslav. And Iziaslav [was succeeded] by Sviatopolk. And following Sviatopolk [came] Vsevolod. And after him [followed] Volodimer Monomakh. And following him [came] Mstislav. And after Mstislav [followed] Iaropolk. And following Iaropolk [came] Vsevolod. And after him [followed] Iziaslav. And following Iziaslav [came] Rostislav. And he [was followed] by Mstislav. And following him [came] Gleb. And he was [followed] by Volodimer. And following him [came] Roman. And after Roman [followed] Sviatoslav. And following him [came] Riurik. And after Riurik [followed] Roman. And after Roman [came] Mstislav. And after him [followed] Iaroslav. And following Iaroslav [came] Volodimer Riurikovich. Danylo installed him in his own place in Kiev. Following Volodimer, [when Kiev was governed by] Danylo's governor Dmytro, Batu conquered Kiev.¹⁸

This narration was composed either just after the conquest of Kiev by Batu in 1240, or after Danylo had made his final attempt to reclaim Kiev from the Tatars in the late 1250s, or just after Danylo's death in 1264. The line of Kievan rulers it provides from its origins to Danylo and his governor Dmytro is intended not only to demonstrate an uninterrupted dynastic line from the Kievan to the Galician-Volhynian rulers, but also to show that at the beginning of the thirteenth century the centre of power was transferred to southwestern Rus'.¹⁹ According to it, the last legitimate overlord in Kiev before the Mongol-Tatar invasion was none other than Danylo, who invested the last nominal ruler, a vassal prince, and ultimately a governor. Therefore, any attempt to lay claim to the Kievan succession on the part of other Rus' rulers, including the Suzdal-Vladimir line, which for a brief time between the early 1240s and the early 1260s succeeded with the help of Mongol-Tatars in obtaining the title to Kiev,²⁰ was illegitimate and invalid. This "Introduction" to the Hypatian Codex reflects the contents of many parts of this work, especially the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle, and provides evidence that both the codex and the chronicle were compiled to justify, among other things, the Galician-Volhynian claims to the Kievan inheritance.

The ideological programs of the two dynasties differed in several respects. The compilers of the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle, in contrast to their Suzdal-Vladimirian counterparts, did not attempt to diminish the image of Kiev in favour of any one of their principal cities (Halych, for example), nor did the Galician-Volhynian rulers engage in a sack or plundering of that ancient city. The compilers of the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle treated Halych as an important centre of Galicia-Volhynia, but they did not try to substitute Halych for Kiev. Nothing in the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle suggests that it advocated any idea of Halych as a "second Kiev."²¹ Steps were taken to attribute religious significance to the founding and rebuilding of towns such as Kholm and Volodymyr-Volynsky, but never with the aim of undermining the

status of Kiev. They were simply meant to show that the Galician and Volhynian lands also had towns worthy of note. An attempt was even made to link those cities with Kiev, as attested, for example, in the account of the rebuilding of Kholm following Batu's invasion. When the Church of St. John was erected, it was said that Danylo brought icons and a bell from Kiev and donated them to the new church.²²

Although the two territorial states observed many of the same religious conventions, including a providential interpretation of history, religion played a much greater role in the Suzdal-Vladimirian ideological program than it did in the Galician-Volhynian counterpart. Religious practices such as the veneration of icons, celebration of religious feasts, and adoration of relics of saints constituted an important part of the Suzdal-Vladimirian ideological program. The Galician-Volhynian elite was more pragmatic, as evidenced by data in the Kievan Chronicle pertaining to Galicia-Volhynia and in the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle itself. It did not involve itself in developing a system of religious ideological justifications, and its outlook remained more worldly.

Comparable differences can be seen in the relations between the secular power and ecclesiastical authority of the two states. Almost from the beginning, Vladimirian rulers aggressively interfered in the affairs of the church, first by attempting to organize an anti-Kievan metropolitanate, somewhat later by endeavouring to dominate the Kievan metropolitanate and, finally—just like the later Muscovite rulers—by making every possible effort to retain exclusive control over the Kievan metropolitan see, which was eventually moved to the north. Such a transfer was accomplished easily, because the Metropolitan See of Kiev and All Rus' was still an ecclesiastical province of the Byzantine patriarchate.

The Galician and Volhynian rulers also had their conflicts with ecclesiastical authorities, especially after two of their appointees to the metropolitanate, Cyrill and Peter, proved to be "turncoats." Those two metropolitans did not hesitate to accommodate themselves to the political and ecclesiastical designs of the Vladimirian and Muscovite rulers, the Golden Horde, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Byzantine Empire, all of whom were interested in maintaining the unity of the Kievan metropolitan see and its centre, first in Vladimir and later in Moscow.²³

When this new ecclesiastical arrangement proved intolerable, because the metropolitans of Kiev had become tools in the hands of the rising Muscovite rulers and the religious needs of the southwestern Rus' were completely neglected, the Galician-Volhynian rulers simply curtailed their contacts with the Vladimir and Moscow-based Kievan metropolitanate and negotiated with the Byzantine Patriarchate for the establishment of a separate Halych Metropolitanate of "Little Rus'."²⁴ In contrast to their Vladimirian and Muscovite counterparts, who clung tenaciously to the administrative link with the Kievan church, the Galician-Volhynian ruling elite was more inclined to seek

pragmatic solutions to religious and ecclesiastical problems and to abandon its ecclesiastical administrative claims to Kiev.

When it came to secular claims, however, the Galician-Volhynian dynasty and elite retained their claims to the Kievan inheritance through historical and legal arguments. In them, the interchangeable use of the concepts *Rus'*, *rusaskaia zemlia*, and *vsia zemlia rusaskaia* played a significant role. The term “Rus’” and its variants, “the Rus’ land” and “all the land of Rus’,” lost their original ambiguity and acquired geographically and politically clearly defined meanings that pertained from about the mid-twelfth century to the Kievan and Pereiaslav lands and subsequently to the southwestern Rus’ in general.²⁵ In the thirteenth century and throughout the first half of the fourteenth these terms referred to the Kievan, Galician and Volhynian lands, and at approximately the same time began to converge geographically with the emerging concept *Ukraina* (Ukraine), which appears for the first time in the Hypatian Codex under the year 1187.²⁶

The concepts *Rus'*, *rusaskaia zemlia*, and *vsia zemlia rusaskaia* were also used to mean Suzdal-Vladimir, though less frequently than they were applied to Galicia-Volhynia. In fact, the preponderance of available evidence suggests that over extended periods the use of these terms began to decline in the northeastern regions in favour of other terms. For example, during the reigns of Andrei Bogoliubsky, Vsevolod III Iurevich and Aleksandr Nevsky, the terms “Suzdal land” and “Vladimir” were more commonly used, while following the death of Aleksandr Nevsky and until approximately the mid-fifteenth century, the concepts “Suzdal land,” “Grand Principality of Vladimir,” and eventually “Moscow” were employed to denote the territories of northeastern Rus’. The traditional terms *Rus'*, *rusaskaia zemlia*, and *vsia zemlia rusaskaia* were revived and applied to Russia proper beginning in the second third of the fifteenth century, but by then they acquired still different connotations.

The Galician-Volhynian dynasty and elite, on the other hand, continued to advance claims to “Rus’,” “the Rus’ land,” and “all the land of Rus’ ” and adamantly to restate their historical and dynastic pretensions to those entities until the very end of the state’s existence. Beginning with the rule of Iurii Lvovych (1301–8) and during the co-reign of his sons Andrii and Lev (c. 1309–c. 1321–2), and subsequently of Iurii II Boleslav (1324–40), the application of these concepts and claims to the inheritance in question were recorded in documentary sources, in the titles on charters, and even affixed on a seal. The seal used by King Iurii and his successors, for example, portrayed the king *in maiestatis*, crowned and seated on a throne with a sceptre in his hand. The inscription in Latin surrounding the central image read: *s(igillu) domini georgi regis rusie*. The reverse side of the seal, which depicted a mounted warrior with a shield in his hand, contained the inscription in Latin: *s. domini georgi ducis ladimerie*.²⁷

The use of Latin in these inscriptions and in documents is indicative both of the Westernization of the conduct of business affairs in the ruler's chancery and of the evolution political thought had taken in Galicia-Volhynia. It had already manifested itself in the Galician-Volhynian state under Danylo, the first native king of Galicia,²⁸ whose (and later King Iurii's) royalist conception of rule is unique in the history of the East Slavic world. Iurii's sons Andrii and Lev continued in traditional fashion to claim Rus' in their titles, as attested in their charters: *Dei gracia duces totius terrae Russiae, Galiciae et Ladimeriae*, and *dux ladomiriensis et dominus terrae Russiae*.²⁹ The same can be said about Iurii II Boleslav, who in 1327 referred to himself as *Dux Terre Russie, Galicie et Ladimere*³⁰ and who, apparently under Byzantine influence, applied the name of Rus' exclusively to Little Rus' in the Charter of 1335, where for the first time he styled himself *dux totius Russiae Minoris*.³¹

This brief analysis of the early history of the contest to claim the legacy of Old Rus' can yield some conclusions concerning its origins and its early ramifications. The role of the Kievan inheritance in Russian-Ukrainian relations defies convenient generalization. The complexity of the problem is compounded by its elusive quality, by its involvement in the sociocultural conditioning of the two peoples' intelligentsias and other segments of their population, and by its absorption into the scholarly paradigms of linguists, ethnographers, and historians of various backgrounds and methodological approaches. Under such circumstances, historians, instead of asking popular "new" questions, might do well to reopen old ones and offer some "unpopular" tentative answers.

The contest for the Kievan inheritance is neither an invention of the contending Russian and Ukrainian national historiographic schools, nor does it fall into the category of traditional territorial disputes, although certain parallels can be drawn with other historical, religious and national controversies from the Middle Ages to the present day. The notion that national legitimacy rests in tracing one's heritage back to Kievan roots is deeply imbedded in the historical consciousnesses of Ukrainians and Russians alike, though originally it had no nationalistic implications in the modern sense. For this reason, projecting contemporary national concerns into the history of Old Rus' or speaking of a conflict between "nationalities" in the early medieval period, followed by assumptions about the existence of a unified Old Rus' state, is erroneous and misleading.

There should be no misunderstanding about the realities of the period under consideration. Both hard and circumstantial evidence suggests that little unity or harmony existed in the Old Rus' polity and that the desire of its component parts to go their separate ways manifested itself early in its history and prevailed before the Mongol invasion. Following the reign of Iaroslav I the Wise, the dynasties, the lands, the cities, and the people of Old Rus' apparently had no real feeling of unity or need for East Slavic "togetherness." Some of them interacted with the nomads of the southern steppes, some with the Poles

and the Hungarians, others with the Meria and the Ugro-Finnic tribes. Early in its history, Old Rus' displayed all the features of a multi-civilizational and proto-imperial polity. Two of its territorial entities, Suzdal-Vladimir and Galicia-Volhynia, followed separate roads of *Staatsbildung* to form two clearly defined and independent monarchical states. These two states shared a common religious and cultural heritage and even found themselves confronted with some similar sociopolitical domestic problems, such as the conflict between the monarchical power and the strong *boiar* groups aspiring to greater political influence, and their elites continued to maintain contacts.

However, the two states differed in their relationships with other powers, entered into alliances with different partners, belonged to different civilizational and commercial communities, and were in more intimate contact with neighbouring states and societies than with each other. Furthermore, the evolution of their two political systems and their general ideological outlook diverged markedly and the two states were founded on dissimilar ethnically mixed strata, which, in fact, contributed to the definitive internal consolidation of the two separate peoples.

The two states displayed contrasting attitudes in their political responses to the Mongol-Tatar supremacy in the *ulus Rus'*. The Suzdal-Vladimirian rulers were ready to co-operate with the Mongols and to serve in the Horde's administration of the Rus' lands. The southwestern rulers, such as Danylo of Galicia-Volhynia and Mikhail of Chernigov, actively opposed the Mongol domination of their states.³² When Danylo's anti-Mongol policies suffered defeat, his successors managed to contain Tatar influences, and as a result their lands apparently were not integrated as effectively into the Horde's tax collection system as those of northeastern Rus'. For obvious reasons, the Suzdal-Vladimirian chronicles are rather circumspect in their treatment of the Mongol-Tatar rule and the active co-operation of its dynasty with the Golden Horde.

Similarly, opposite approaches were taken by the rulers of the two states with respect to participation in the anti-Mongol coalition and the related issue of the union of churches, both sponsored by Pope Innocent IV. Danylo of Galicia-Volhynia, like Mendog of Lithuania, was inclined to join the anti-Mongol coalition and, although he actually did not accept the union, he was involved in the negotiations. As a result both rulers were rewarded, in 1253 and 1251 respectively, by Pope Innocent IV with royal crowns for their support of his initiatives. Aleksandr Nevsky was evidently not interested in joining an anti-Mongol coalition, just as he firmly rejected papal overtures concerning the unification of churches.³³

When Suzdal-Vladimir and Galicia-Volhynia departed on their separate courses they joined two different civilizational communities. Suzdal-Vladimir became part of a northeastern community of Russians, surrounded by other Eastern Slavs in the southwest, west, and northwest, Ugro-Finnic tribes in the northeast, and Volga Bulgars in the east. Its rulers were chiefly interested in

controlling the Novgorod commerce and the Volga trade route. Following the conquest of the Rus' state by the Mongol-Tatars and their takeover of the Volga commerce, Suzdal-Vladimir became their junior partner in the Volga trade. Their geographic location made the Suzdalians and Vladimirians the natural partners first of the Volga Bulgars and later of the Mongol-Tatars. Thus, their state was incorporated into the imperial structure of the Golden Horde and became part of a new civilizational entity along the banks of the Volga River.

Galicia-Volhynia, on the other hand, constituted an integral part of the East Central European civilizational community that included Polish territorial states, Hungary, Bohemia, and even Austria, and belonged to the southern commercial complex which embraced those countries. The borders of this complex were defined by the Dnieper River in the northeast and the Danube in the southwest, with access to the Black Sea in the southeast. The famous old "route from the Varangians to the Greeks" had ceased to function effectively before the Mongol invasion of Rus', not only because salt routes had been cut off by the nomads, but also—and primarily—because the commercial interests of the territorial states found new avenues and better opportunities outside the old framework.

Just as distinct were the differences in the development of their monarchical models, although at the outset they shared common conceptions of rulership (prince, principate) and utilized analogous (nominal reverential) titulature (grand prince and even *tsar*). In Suzdal-Vladimir the conception of rulership emphasized the senior grand princely position enjoyed by the rulers of that state, and its authors even made use of the Byzantine author Agapetus to buttress the exalted nature of the ruler's status.³⁴ That status was based on a combination of East Slavic, Byzantine, and later Mongol-Tatar models. Unlike its northeastern counterpart, Galicia-Volhynia derived its notion of rulership from the East Slavic principate and the European royal tradition in its Hungarian and Polish manifestations.

Even though the two monarchical systems were based on the theory of the divine right of rulers and both elites shared an Orthodox providential worldview, certain ideological differences were obvious even in the formative stages of their development. In the official ideology of the Grand Principality of Suzdal-Vladimir, for example, the Orthodox religious component played a greater role than it did in Galicia-Volhynia, which was relatively tolerant of other peoples, even those belonging to the Catholic fold. They displayed an open-minded approach toward the vexed issue of the union of churches under papal auspices.³⁵ The only villains, according to the Galician-Volhynian ideology, were the "heathens," that is, the various nomadic peoples of the steppe who lived in a symbiotic relationship with the people of the Old Rus' lands. But even this attitude was not rigid, for it was no coincidence that some nomadic folklore (the moving legend of the *ievshan zillia*, for example) found its way into the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle.³⁶

Developments on the territories of Old Rus' ultimately led to the formation of two separate nationalities, that is, the Suzdal-Vladimir Russians and the Ruthenians, or, in other words, the proto-Russians and the proto-Ukrainians. Many factors were instrumental in transforming a population into a relatively integrated people in medieval times: territorial integration and continuity, consolidation of a territorial monarchical state, conduct of dynastic politics, participation in a civilizational community, development of a common religious culture and of secular attitudes, social changes and economic interests, intermingling of elites and population groups. The histories of the Suzdal-Vladimirian and Galician-Volhynian states provide good examples of the formative processes of the two medieval territorial states and of the two peoples.

Which of them was more justified in claiming the Kievan inheritance? The answer depends on the significance one wants to attribute to normative value and on the weight one wants to ascribe to the various pieces of available evidence. If one were to answer it on the basis of the religious evidence exclusively, or on a combination of that and some aspects of dynastic politics, the Principality of Suzdal-Vladimir would have to be credited with having a serious claim. If, on the other hand, all the other factors, such as territorial continuity, ethnic identity, common social and institutional traditions, dynastic politics and religious or cultural evidence are added in, the Galician-Volhynian competitor emerges as the more legitimate successor. Since it was precisely this contest for the Kievan inheritance that significantly contributed to the splitting off of the Russian and Ukrainian peoples and to their consolidation as two separate entities to begin with, the debate over the Kievan succession that has followed since the nineteenth century can in itself be regarded as a further step in the protracted process of building a nation.

Notes

1. For an introduction to this controversy, see A. N. Pypin, *Istoriia russkoi etnografii*, vol. 3, *Etnografiia malorusskaia* (St. Petersburg, 1891): 301–38. A Soviet perspective is to be found in N. K. Gudzi, "Literatura Kievskoi Rusi v istorii bratskikh literatur," *Literatura Kievskoi Rusi i ukrainsko-russkoe literaturnoe edinienie XVII–XVIII vekov* (Kiev, 1989), 13–43.
2. On the origins of this theory and the literature on the subject, consult J. Pelenski, "The Origins of the Official Muscovite Claims to the 'Kievan Inheritance'," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* (hereafter *HUS*) 1, no. 1 (1977): 29–52; *Idem.*, "The Emergence of the Muscovite Claims to the Byzantine–Kievan 'Imperial Inheritance'," *HUS* 7 (1983): 520–31; *Idem.*, "The Sack of Kiev of 1482 in Contemporary Muscovite Chronicle Writing," *HUS* 3–4 (1979–80): 638–49;

- Idem.*, "The Origins of the Muscovite Ecclesiastical Claims to the Kievan Inheritance," to be published in the Acts of Congress devoted to "The Origin and Development of the Slavic-Byzantine Christianity: the Baptism of 988 in the Long Run," (Rome, 3-6 May 1988), *Studi storici* of the Istituto Storico Italiano.
3. M. Hrushevsky, *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusy*, 10 vols. (3rd rep. ed., New York, 1954-8); "The Traditional Scheme of Russian History and the Problem of a Rational Organization of the History of Eastern Slavs 1909," in *Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the U.S.* 2 (1952): 355-64.
 4. *Tezy pro 300-richchia vozziednannia Ukrainy z Rosiieiu (1654-1954 rr.) skhvaleni Tsentralnym Komitetom Komunistychnoi Partii Radianskoho Soiuzu* (Kiev, 1954).
 5. *Ibid.*, 16.
 6. For an antithetical view, see the study by O. Pritsak, "Origins of Rus'," *Russian Review* 36, no. 3 (July 1977): 249-74, as well as his *The Origin of Rus'*, Volume One (Old Scandinavian Sources other than Sagas), (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981).
 7. The history of the Chernigov land and dynasty has been treated by P. V. Golubovskii, *Istoriia Severskoi zemli do poloviny XIV stoletia* (Kiev, 1881); D. Bagalei, *Istoriia Severskoi zemli do poloviny XIV stoletia* (Kiev, 1882); R. V. Zotov, "O Chernigovskikh kniaziaxh po Liubetskomu sinodiku i o Chernigovskom kniazhestve v Tatarskoe vremia," *Letopis zaniatii Arkheograficheskoi Komissii 1882-84 gg.*, Vypusk 9 (St. Petersburg, 1893), 1-327, 1-47; "Chernigovskie kniazia," *Russkii biograficheskii slovar* (St. Petersburg, 1905), 22: 231-67; Hrushevsky, *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusy*, 2: 312-38; O. Andriiashev, "Narys istorii kolonizatsii Siverskoi zemli do pochatku XVI viku," *Zapysky istorychno-filolohichnoho viddilu Vseukrainskoi Akademii Nauk u Kyivi*, kn. 20 (1928), 95-128; V. V. Mavrodin, "Chernigovskoe kniazhestvo," *Ocherki istorii SSSR* (Period feodalizma IX-XV v.v. v dvukh chastiakh), Part 1 (Moscow, 1953), 393-400; A. K. Zaitsev, "Chernigovskoe kniazhestvo," in L. G. Beskrovny (ed.), *Drevnerusskie kniazhestva X-XIII vv.* (Moscow, 1975), 57-117; M. Dimnik, *Mikhail, Prince of Chernigov and Grand Prince of Kiev 1224-1246* (Toronto, 1981); B. A. Rybakov, *Kievskaia Rus' i russkie kniazhestva XII-XIII vv.* (Moscow, 1982), 498-508.
 8. Hrushevsky, *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusy*, 3: 175-81. The last document of ideological importance bearing on the activities of the house of Chernigov was the *Vita* of Mikhail of Chernigov. A. N. Nasonov advanced a plausible hypothesis that the execution of Mikhail by the Mongols in the Horde was the ultimate act in the struggle between the houses of Chernigov and Vladimir for seniority in the lands of Rus' (*Mongoly i Rus'* [Moscow-Leningrad, 1940/1969], 24-8). In his political biography of Mikhail, Dimnik advanced the hypothesis that the principality of Chernigov had definitely won the contest for Kiev and had actually become the principal force in Rus' politics on the eve of the Mongol invasion (*Mikhail, Prince of Chernigov*, pp. 136-9). Dimnik's hypothesis is based on the situation in the years 1235-6, which could easily have changed later even if the Mongols had not invaded Rus'. The fact that the principality of Chernigov ceased to be a serious factor in Rus' politics after Mikhail's death supports the established view

that the principality was internally weak. The title phrase of the *Liubetskii sinodik* refers to the grand princes of Chernigov and Kiev, only in a factual manner, but, significantly, gives precedence to Chernigov (Zotov, *O Chernigovskikh kniaz-iakh...*, p. 24).

9. For general accounts of the history of the Suzdal-Vladimir principality, see D. A. Korsakov, *Meria i Rostovskoe kniazhevstvo; Ocherki iz istorii Rostovo-Suzdalskoi zemli* (Kazan, 1872); A. E. Presniakov, *Obrazovanie velikoruskago gosudarstva: Ocherki po istorii XIII-XV stoletii* (Petrograd, 1918), 26–47; A. N. Nasonov, "Russkaia zemlia" i obrazovanie territorii drevnerusskago gosudarstva (Moscow, 1951), 173–96; *Idem.*, "Vladimiro-Suzdalskoe kniazhestvo," *Ocherki istorii SSSR* (Period feodalizma IX-XV vv. v dvukh chastiakh), Part 1 (Moscow, 1953), 320–34; N. N. Voronin, "Vladimiro-Suzdalskaia zemlia X-XIII v.," *Idem.*, *Problemy istorii dokapitalisticheskikh obshchestv*, V-VI (1935); *Idem.*, *Pamiatniki suzdalskogo zodchestva XI-XIII v.* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1945); *Idem.*, *Zodchestvo Severo-Vostochnoi Rusi XII-XV vv.*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1961–2); *Idem.*, *Vladimir, Bogoliubovo, Suzdal, Iurev-Polskii*, 3rd ed. (Moscow, 1967), and his concise article "Vladimiro-Suzdalskoe kniazhestvo," in *Sovetskaia istoricheskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 3, cols. 528–33.
10. Ideological writings pertaining to the age of Andrei Bogoliubsky have been discussed by N. N. Voronin, "Andrei Bogoliubskii i Luka Khrizoverg: Iz istorii russko-vizantiiskikh otnoshenii XII v.," *Vizantiiskii vremennik* (hereafter *VV*) 21 (1962): 29–50; *Idem.*, "Zhitie Leontii Rostovskogo i vizantiisko-russkie otnosheniia vo vtoroi polovine XII veka," *VV* 23 (1963): 23–46; *Idem.*, "Povest ob ubiistve Andreia Bogoliuskogo i ee avtor," *Istoriia SSSR*, 1963, no. 3: 80–97; *Idem.*, "Skazanie o pobede nad Bolgarami 1164 g. i prazdnike Spasa," *Problemy obshchestvenno-politicheskoi istorii Rossii i slavianskikh stran* (*Sbornik statei k 70-letiiu akademika M. N. Tikhomirova*), ed. V. I. Shunkov (Moscow, 1963), 88–92; *Idem.*, "Iz istorii russko-vizantiiskoi tserkovnoi borby XII veka," *VV* 24 (1965): 190–218; W. Vodoff, "Un 'parti théocratique' dans la Russie du XIIe siècle?" *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 17, no. 3 (1974): 193–215; Iu. A. Limonov, *Letopisanie Vladimiro-Suzdalskoi Rusi* (Leningrad, 1967); E. S. Hurwitz, *Prince Andrej Bogoljubskij: The Man and the Myth* (*Studia Historica et Philologica* 12, Sectio Slavica 4) (Florence, 1980); J. Pelenski, "The Contest for the 'Kievan Succession' (1155–1175): The Religious Ecclesiastical Dimension," *Proceedings of the International Congress Commemorating the Millennium of Christianity in Rus'-Ukraine*, *HUS* 12–13 (1988–9): 761–80.
11. This statement was made by the compiler of the Suzdal-Vladimirian Chronicle (*Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* [hereafter *PSRL*] 1, issue 2 (1927): 354. On the events of 1169, confer J. Pelenski, "The Sack of Kiev of 1169: Its Significance for the Succession to Kievan Rus'," *HUS* 9, no. 3/4 (1987): 303–16.
12. For a discussion of the various aspects of this program, confer the literature enumerated in note 10. E. S. Hurwitz concludes that "Vladimir on the Kliazma was a second Kiev..." (*Prince Andrej Bogoljubskij...*, 50), but contemporary sources make no such explicit claim.
13. *PSRL* 1, issue 2 (1927): 472.
14. For the critical edition of the *Zhitie Aleksandra Nevskogo*, see Iu. K. Begunov,

- Pamiatnik russkoi literatury XIII veka "Slovo o pogibeli russkoi zemli"* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1965), 159–80, especially pp. 159, 165, 178.
15. J. Pelenski, "The Sack of Kiev of 1482 in Contemporary Muscovite Chronicle Writing," *HUS* 3/4 (1979–80): 638–49.
 16. The most comprehensive modern treatments of the history of the Galician-Volhynian Rus' and of the literature on the subject have been provided by Hrushevsky, *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusy*, vols. 2 and 3; Josyf Pełenski, *Halicz w dziejach sztuki średniowiecznej* (Cracow, 1914); V. T. Pashuto, *Ocherki po istorii Galitsko-Volynskoi Rusi* (Moscow, 1950); K. A. Sofronenko, *Obshchestvenno-politicheskii stroi Galitsko-Volynskoi Rusi XI-XIII vv.* (Moscow, 1955); P. Hrytsak, *Halytsko-Volynska Derzhava* (New York, 1958); I. P. Krypiakovich, *Halytsko-Volynske kniazivstvo* (Kiev, 1984).
 17. For a convenient English translation of the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle and for the literature on the Chronicle, confer *The Galician-Volhynian Chronicle* (The Hypatian Codex, Part Two), an annotated translation by G. A. Perfecky, *Harvard Series in Ukrainian Studies* 16, 2 (Munich, 1973).
 18. *PSRL* 2 (1908²), cols. 1, 2. Confer also *The Galician-Volhynian Chronicle* under the years 1245/46 for the relevant statement, which reads as follows: "Danylo Romanovych, the great prince who ruled the Rus' land, Kiev, Volodymyr and Halych,..." (58).
 19. Pashuto, *Ocherki...*, 17.
 20. Nasonov, *Mongoly i Rus'*, 26–33. Available evidence indicates that Danylo attempted to reconquer Kiev in the mid-1250s (*The Galician-Volhynian Chronicle*, 73).
 21. A. I. Hensorsky's hypothesis, as well as his comparison of the alleged theory of Halych, "the second Kiev," with Moscow, "the Third Rome," should be regarded as artificial constructions (*Halytsko-Volynskiy Litopys* [Kiev, 1958]), 86–7.
 22. *The Galician-Volhynian Chronicle*, 75–6.
 23. A partial treatment of Cyrill's political adjustments has been provided by J. T. Fuhrmann, "Metropolitan Cyrill II (1242–1281) and the Politics of Accommodation," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 24 (1976): 161–72. For a study of Russian-Byzantine relations in the fourteenth century, especially the ecclesiastical aspects, and the literature on the subject, see J. Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia* (Cambridge, London and New York, 1981).
 24. *Ibid.*, 91–5, including the literature on the subject.
 25. For introductory discussions of these concepts, see Nasonov, "*Russkaia zemlia...*," especially 28–9 and L. V. Cherepnin, "Istoricheskie usloviia formirovaniia russkoi narodnosti do kontsa XV v.," in *Voprosy formirovaniia russkoi narodnosti i natsii* (*Sbornik statei*) (Moscow, 1958), 61–3, 81–2. A definitive study of this problem has not yet been written.
 26. *PSRL* (2nd rep. ed., 1908), 653.
 27. *Boleslav-Iurii II, kniaz vsei Maloi Rusi* (*Sbornik materialov i issledovaniia*) (St. Petersburg, 1907), 249; Hrushevsky, *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusy*, 3: 113.
 28. The Hungarian kings, who at certain times advanced claims to Galicia, were the

first to use the title *Rex Galaciae* (1189) and *Galiciae Lodomeriaeque rex* (1206 and later) (Hrushevsky, *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusy*, 2: 449 and 3: 18).

29. *Boleslav-Iurii II, kniaz vsei maloï Rusi*, 149–50.
30. *Ibid.*, 4, n. 2.
31. *Ibid.*, 154.
32. Nasonov, *Mongoly i Rus'*, 26. Dimnik argues that Mikhail of Chernigov was the strongest opponent of the Mongols and was therefore executed on orders of Batu (*Mikhail, Prince of Chernigov...*, 130–35).
33. *Novgorodskaia Pervaia Letopis starshego i mladshego izvodov*, ed. A. N. Nasonov (Moscow-Leningrad, 1950/1969), 305–6.
34. I. Ševčenko, "A Neglected Byzantine Source of Muscovite Political Ideology," *Harvard Slavic Studies* 2 (1954), 142–4.
35. *The Galician-Volhynian Chronicle*, 67–8.
36. *Ibid.*, 17.