



[736]
NUPI Working Paper

**The Mongol Connection: Russia's Asian
Entry into European Politics**

Iver B. Neumann



Utgiver: NUPI
Copyright: © Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt 2008
ISSN: 82-7002-193-8
ISBN: 978-82-7002-193-2

Alle synspunkter står for forfatterens regning. De må ikke tolkes som uttrykk for oppfatninger som kan tillegges Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt. Artiklene kan ikke reproduseres – helt eller delvis – ved trykking, fotokopiering eller på annen måte uten tillatelse fra forfatterne.

Any views expressed in this publication are those of the author. They should not be interpreted as reflecting the views of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. The text may not be printed in part or in full without the permission of the author.

Besøksadresse: C.J. Hambros plass 2d
Adresse: Postboks 8159 Dep.
0033 Oslo
Internett: www.nupi.no
E-post: pub@nupi.no
Fax: [+ 47] 22 36 21 82
Tel: [+ 47] 22 99 40 00

The Mongol Connection: Russia's Asian Entry into European Politics

Iver B. Neumann

[Abstract] The end of the 15th Century saw what was beginning to be known as Europeans coming into first contact with the 'new world' to their West, and driving the Moor out of Europe to their South. In what contemporaneity thought of as 'the North', i.e. what we would now call the East, a less conspicuous but nonetheless highly consequential development took place. Beyond Poland, a new political entity was making itself felt in such a degree that diplomatic relations had to be sought with it. This was Muscovy, led by Ivan III. Russians shared an experience with Christians in the South Balkans and the South Iberians; they had fresh experience with being ruled by non-Christians, more specifically, by the Mongols who were based in their tent capital Saray at the Volga. I start with a presentation of Mongol and Rus' political organization at the time of the invasion in 1240, and discuss Rus' as a suzerain system which was part of the Golden Horde empire (which was itself in the early decades part of the Mongol empire). I then ask how, once the Golden Horde fell apart and Muscovy emerged as a separate polity, Muscovy's Mongol connection coloured its entry into the European states system. My conclusion is that, since Muscovy itself chose to seek recognition among other things as successors to the Mongol Golden Horde and since it did so by dint of a number of practices that were taken directly from the Mongols, European powers were warranted in seeing Russia as a partly Asian polity. The argument is framed as a critique of the English School's proclivity for treating sequences such as these as cases of 'expansion of international society'. I attempt to demonstrate that such a perspective cannot account adequately for what should rather be treated as relations between cultures.

Grattez le russe et vous trouverez le tatar!
Scratch a Russian and find a Tatar

European proverb, hailing probably from the
court of Napoleon (Halperin 1987: ix)

Introduction

In *The Expansion of International Society*, Adam Watson (1984:61) writes the following:

In the thirteenth century the Tatar Golden Horde swept westwards over the Eurasian plain. Moscow fell in 1238. Soon afterwards the Tatars destroyed Cracow, the spiritual capital of Poland, and pushed on into the heart of Europe. Pope Alexander IV summoned Latin Christendom to a crusade. The Poles took the lead in pushing back the Tatars, confirming themselves as the bulwark of the Latin world against the East. The Tatars were driven out of Poland and western Russia; but they stabilized their immense suzerain empire from the Dniepr to the China Sea (approximately the territory of the Soviet Union), and embraced Islam. Their khans conducted sporadic negotiations with European sovereigns and married into the Byzantine and other royal families; but the subject principalities of their empire were substantially isolated from the rest of the world.

This is one of the few, if not the only, place in which the IR literature touches base with one important part of the pre-history of the European states system (but comp. Buzan & Little 2000). Watson and the English School of International Relations should therefore be lauded for having paid attention to the relationship between nomads and sedentary peoples along Europe's steppe frontier (for an overview, see McNeill 1964). It must also be said, however, that this *précis* of relations between Mongols and Christians is problematic. I have in mind here not first and foremost the level of precision. There are some problems on this score: in 1238, Moscow was a village of little or no consequence; the Mongols were not pushed back, but retreated for reasons of their own; the Mongol empire maintained its full cohesion only for a couple of decades; although some Mongols adopted Islam, others adopted Christendom, and those who stayed in the core areas around present-day Mongolia and were not assimilated by their subjects eventually adopted Lamaistic Buddhism; the Golden Horde was not isolated from the rest of the world, and in relative terms, neither were their dependencies such as Russia.

Watson's imprecision is not the main problem, however. The key problem with his *précis* hails directly from the general perspective of the English School, and is apparent already in the title of the book in which it appears: *The Expansion of International Society*. Expansion is a process which is imagined as taking place from a centre, and then to spread outwards from that centre. Although there may be set-backs and even reversions, the conception is of a process where one party imposes its order on the other, with little or no residue and without being itself changed by the experience. It is of course true that European international society has expanded to cover the entire globe, so in terms of teleol-

ogy, this perspective on history is not unwarranted. The problem is, however, that it is not relational. It does not invite scrutiny of the relations that went into producing the result of European expansion. This is scientifically problematic, for we want to know what kinds of tensions and conflicts that gave rise to the result of European expansion. It is also politically problematic, for it invites a reading where an 'us' expands at 'their' expense, when a reading of how there were numerous interconnections and consistent blurring of 'us' and 'them' may be more warranted. It should not be too much to ask of a social science that calls itself International Relations that its knowledge production is indeed relational.

The aim of this paper is a modest one. Drawing mainly on non-Russian literature, I lay myself open to the charge of being myself guilty of a Western epistemological bias as well as dabbling in *haute vulgarisation*. I plead guilty on both charges. My defence is that, although as yet unsatisfactory to a Russianist, what little I am doing here is still new in an IR context. Drawing only on the most basic anthropological and political concepts, I intend to outline where the Mongol force that attacked Christendom came from, what the Russian-speaking (or rather, Eastern Slavonic-writing) lands that bore the brunt of the attack looked like, and how the two parties interacted. My intention is to demonstrate the validity in this case of the basic point of anthropological symbolic interactionism, which is that on the practice level, communities tend to be fuzzy at the boundaries, and exactly therefore it takes a lot of discursive work to uphold a clear-cut boundary between us and them. This goes for the 13th century, and it goes for the knowledge-producing rematch that is going to play itself out in this paper, where Watson's reinscription of the boundary between Europeans and non-Europeans is challenged by my attempt to demonstrate that in practice, this boundary was a very porous one.

Pre-history

Let us begin with the situation at the easternmost forested lands, which were also the westernmost boundary of the Eurasian steppe. Barring ancient Greek usage, the first recorded use of the concept of Europe for the lands that stretched west of the steppes is from the year 800. That usage stands alone. The concept of consequence remained, at least up until around 1500, Christendom. In the north, wild peoples like the Vikings and the Lithuanians, who were all eventually to be converted to the Catholic faith, continued to assert themselves. In the south and south-west, the two key modes of contact were trade and clashes between Catholic Christians on the one hand, and Muslim polities on the other. In the west, relations took the form of clashes between nomadic peoples, mostly Turkic-speaking, and relatively recent arrivals who had become sedentary and had converted to Christianity. Amongst these were the Slavs and the Hungarians. Around the eighth century, the northernmost polity the Slavs was the Rus' khaganate. In the 860s, the Viking Rurik arrived to take over its leadership, seemingly by invitation. His sons moved the capital of Rus' to the old Khazar town of Kiev. The Rurikids ruled Rus' for

almost four hundred years. Following both skirmishes and religious contacts with Byzantium, grand prince Vladimir was baptised in 988 (Franklin & Shepard 1996).¹

Since the time of Vladimir's son and successor Yaroslav the Wise's death in 1054, the Rus' principle of succession was changed from primogeniture (where the oldest son inherits upon his father's death) to so-called collateral seniority, where the key principle is that the oldest surviving brother inherits the throne when the ruler dies, and that the youngest surviving brother is followed by the oldest surviving son of the brother first to become ruler. If an eligible head of a branch died before he had acceded the throne, his entire line was barred from accession.

Such a system easily spawns impatience, rivalries and secessions. And indeed, the political history of Rus' from the beginning of the 11th century to the time of the Mongol invasion in 1240, when primogeniture became the key principle, is the history of wave after wave of internecine fighting where brother stands against brother and uncle stands against nephew. (The following century is the history of wave after wave of internecine fighting where princes kill one another off in more general bids for superiority). Every Rurikid male was a potential ruler, and every Rurikid head of a lineage with a patrimony (*otchina*) was a prince. Patrimony was a city, or a clutch of cities, complete with hinterland. There were many of them. They could be inherited (either by collateral seniority or primogeniture). They could be taken by force, or they could be given by the ruler of Kiev, the 'mother of Russian cities' and traditionally the city of residence for the *primus inter pares* of the heads of the Rurikid lineages. Kiev's symbolic importance notwithstanding, however, the centripetal force of the collateral seniority system of succession was such that Rus' should be categorized as a suzerain system of polities centered on Kiev, rather than as a single polity.

Note that neighbouring non-Christian nomads in the steppes to the east, particularly the Pecheneg and later the Kipchaks, served as regular allies and key players in the brotherly squabbles between Rus' princes:

In the eleventh century the Pechenegs and several other lesser tribes, such as the Berendei and Torki, were swept out of the Pontic steppe by the people who would be Russia's most powerful nomadic neighbors, the Polovtsy [also known as the Cuman or the Kipchaks]. Driven from their pastures, the refugees formed a single non-ethnic confederacy usually called the Chernye Klobuky (Black Caps). As sworn enemies of the Polovtsy. The Chernye Klobuky readily entered the service of the Kievan princes. Their military skills were invaluable. [...] A garrison was quartered in the capital itself, and the bulk of the Chernye Klobuky was stationed near enough to Kiev to intervene in succession disputes and civil wars (Halperin 1987: 13).²

¹ Vladimir's agnatic line went through his father Sviatoslav I and grandfather Igor to Igor's presumed father Rurik.

² 'in Turkic, *Kipchaks*; in Latin and Greek, *Cumans* or *Kumans*'; Halperin 1987: 14. Fennell 1983 reserves *Cumans* for sedentary *polovtsy*. This tradition resurfaced as the Golden Horde began to weaken and the Kasimov Tatars, so called after their leader Qasim, sought Moscow's help in the mid-fifteenth century.

In a word, there was lively interaction between steppe peoples and Rus' from very early on. Indeed, it is a speculation which lies close to hand that the system of succession which partly gave rise to the squabbles of the Rus' princes was itself an import from the steppes. We do not know exactly where Yaroslav found the inspiration to introduce collateral seniority. It is a fact, however, that other sedentary peoples with whom the Rus' princes had been in contact all based succession on primogeniture. Indeed, the only other place where this system is known to have existed is amongst the Inner Asian peoples (Halperin 1987: 18). Amongst the many steppe peoples who relied on it were the Mongols (although variants were allowed and it took a gathering of the key lineages, a *kuriltai*, to consecrate a new leader). It is, of course, possible that Yaroslav simply had an inspiration. It seems likely, however, that the ultimate source of this inspiration, and so of the Rus' succession principle of collateral seniority, was the steppe.

Rus' Polities

The struggles between lineages went through a particularly intense period in the late 1100s and early 1200s. Three of the lineages were particularly active. First, there were the descendants of Rostislav Mstislavich, known as the Rostislavichi and based in Smolensk (a relatively wealthy city, not least due to its trade with Germany). Then there were the descendant of Oleg Svyatoslavich, the Ol'govichi, based in Chernigov. Finally, there was Roman Mstislavich and his kin, based in Volynia.

A fourth key lineage, the Monomashchi, watched the struggle from Vladimir, which through the 13th century was a key city. A word on its status seems in order. When instituting collateral seniority as the principle of succession in 1054, Yaroslav testamenteed Suzdal', adjacent cities and their hinterlands ('Suzdalia') to his son Vesevolod, whence it passed to his son Vladimir Monomakh, who founded the city Vladimir in 1108 and basically freed it from Kievan influence. Under his son Yuriy Dolgorukiy and subsequent rulers, Vladimir emerged as a key political force. In an attempt to establish himself as 'autocrat' (*samoderzhets*), Yuriy's son Andrey Bogolyubskiy 'chased out four of his brothers, two of his nephews and "the senior boyars of his father" [and...] attempted to assert ecclesiastical independence from the see of Kiev by proposing (in vain) to set up a metropolitanate of the north' (Fennell 1983: 3). Andrey's career displays the three most important elements of political life at the time: fraternal (and avuncular) struggle, the role of the church, the positioning towards Kiev (a fourth was relations with the peoples of the steppe, a fifth relations with Western and Northern powers like Germany, Lithuania, Sweden, Hungary and Poland).

In the North of Russia, things were relatively quiet. Novgorod, which had been under the sway of Kiev since that city left the hands of the Khazars and became the capital of Rus' in the ninth century, had acquired a certain measure of independence during the twelfth century, and was run by an elected mayor (*posadnik*) and a town assembly (*veche*).

They eventually formed a separate khanate which survived until 1681, and were Muscovy's vassals and served 'primarily as nomadic auxiliary troops' (Halperin 1987: 109).

(Fennell 1983: 17-19). They were still dependent on making deals with princes who could afford them military protection, however. This meant that Novgorod was still a prize in the infighting between the princely lineages, but then not as a patrimony, only as a temporary possession. It also meant that the infighting between Novgorod and other cities was somewhat rarer and somewhat dampened.

The struggles between the lineages had come to a head in 1203, when the Ol'govichi, with the help of the Polovtsy, had invaded Kiev to dispose of Roman Mstislavich and had wrought much damage to the city. Their victory was short lived, for the Rostislavichi took over the city later that same year. The city changed hands a number of times for the next decade, when it came to rest in the hands of the Rostislavichi. There it remained until 1235, but for the next five years, it changed hands seven times (Fennell 1983: 27, 34, 73-75). Neighbouring powers were brought into the squabbling on a regular basis. In short, the Russia that the Mongol forces reconnoitered in 1223 was a loose suzerain system of lineage-based polities characterized by a high level of conflict and open lines to allies from the adjacent steppe.

The Mongols

The size of the Mongol population at the time of Chinggis Khan has been estimated at 700.000 (Allsen 1987: 5). Although the Mongol made eminent use of heavy wooden saddles and composite bows, their key advantage in warfare was their strategy. The Mongols emphasized protracted training, advance planning, multi-strand coordination and tight discipline. Alone at the time, they concentrated their thinking not on the single combatant or on a small group of soldiers, but on the *tümen*, (Russian: *t'ma*), a unit ideally composed of ten thousand men. It was officially recognized that actual *tümen* would be undermanned, for an 'upper *tümen*' was stipulated as having a minimum of 7000 troops, a middle 5000, and a lower only 3000 (Allsen 1987: 193). The land needed to man a *tümen* was also used by the Mongols as the basic administrative unit.³

In Europe, Mongols are sometimes (and in Russia, always) referred to as Tatars. We do not quite know why this is so. According to Matthew Paris, a contemporary who wrote interesting about how Europeans reacted to Mongols, it was the French king, Louis XI, who punned that the Mongols, who had almost exterminated a neighbouring tribe called the Tartars, emanated from hell (Lat. *Tartarus*), hence Tatars. (Morgan 1986: 57).

The key models on which Chingis Khan organized his Mongol (or Tatar) empire were those of the Uigurs and the Khitans. The Uigurs, a neighbouring people that was first to be enrolled in the burgeoning empire, was a nomadic turned sedentary people which had considerable experience in ruling sedentary populations and cities. The Mongols borrowed their alphabet (and used it until about a century ago), their way of setting up a chancery and the concept of scribes. The Khitans were a semi-nomadic Turko-Mongolian people that had conquered the Chinese in the ninth century, established the Liao dynasty,

³ In Russia, George Vernadsky (1953: 215-219) has estimated the number of tumens around 1760 to have been 27 in the eastern principalities, and an additional 16 in the western ones. These territorial units later came to be known as *volosti*.

been displaced, and returned as a key steppe force of the twelfth century. The Khitans, which were brought into the Mongol fold in 1218, had administered a loose and non-confessional steppe empire based on tribute extracted by decimally organized cavalry (Morgan 1986: 49).⁴ For this, they had used intermediaries, and these are the direct predecessors of the *darugh*a used by the Mongols, the Turkish concept for which is *basqaq* (Morgan 1986: 109). The Mongol intermediaries that ran the Golden Horde in Russia in the early decades were locally known as the *baskaki*. Chinggis's key tool was his imperial guard, which had at its core his classificatory brothers (*anda*) and people who had chose to leave their tribe to follow him personally (*nöker*). The guard, which included representatives of all the Mongolian tribes ('a useful form of hostage-taking', Morgan 1986: 90 comments), and which was in effect Chinggis's household, numbered around 10.000 at the outset of his conquests.⁵

As first established by Erik Vogelin (1941), the Mongols lay claim to universal sovereignty. They conceived the world as a Mongol empire to be, under Chingis Khan's successors, known as the Golden Kin. All peoples were potential members of the universal Mongol empire'. Allsen writes about these political ideas that they

can be traced back to the Türk quaghanate, were in all likelihood transmitted to the Mongols by the Uighur Turks. In the Mongol adaptation of this ideological system it was held that Eternal Heaven (*Möngke Tenggeri*), the sky god and the chief deity of the [Shamanistic] steppe nomads, bestowed upon Chinggis Qan a mandate to bring the entire world under his sway. This grant of universal sovereignty gave the Mongols the right, or perhaps more accurately, placed upon them the obligation, to subjugate and chastise any nation or people refusing to join the Empire of the Great Mongols on a voluntary basis (Allsen 1987: 42).

The idea of a heavenly mandate was, of course, also a Chinese idea (comp. de Rachewiltz 1971: 104). To ask where the idea of conquest came from may also be to ask a moot question, for raiding and preferably subduing sedentary populations into paying tribute was a traditional nomad pastime which, if successful, resulted in empires.

Chingis Khan had four sons who all left descendents: Jochi, Chaghadai, Ögödei and Tolui. Relations between these four lineages were at the centre of Mongol politics. The key principle of organization was kinship, both biological kinship and classificatory kinship. The language of the fights over succession was the one of the *jasagh*, the rules of the ancestors, which were supposed to be upheld and to which respect should be paid, not

⁴ Beyond the Khitans, there is an uninterrupted tradition of steppe empires reaching back for at least a fifteen hundred years. From the perspective of their neighbours to the south, the rise of the Mongol empire was a working accident: 'There was a standard imperial Chinese policy for dealing with them. They would be carefully watched, and if one nomadic chief seemed to be gaining power and influence at the expense of others, Chinese subsidies, recognition and titles would be offered to one of his rivals, who would be encouraged to cut the upstart down to size. Should the new protégé in his turn seem to be becoming dangerously powerful, the process would be repeated.' (Morgan 1986: 35).

⁵ 'The imperial administration was [...] essentially an extension of the prince's household establishment in terms of organization, function, and personnel. It is for this reason that the Mongol Empire in general, and Möngke's reign in particular, have a pronounced patrimonial flavor' (Allsen 1987: 100).

least when these used were used creatively. Although the custom was for the youngest son to follow in his father, when it came to being the khan of khans (khagan), there was no automatic succession involved. The candidates built alliances which felt one another out until one candidate emerged as the stronger one and called a *kurultai* where the leading Chingisid successors were to consecrate him (Allsen 1987: 34). After Chingis Khan died in 1227, his youngest son Tolui took over as regent, but in 1229 it was Ögödei who made khagan. When he died in 1241, a protracted fight between the Toluids and the Ögödeians ended when Tolui's oldest son Möngke made khagan in 1251.⁶ This protracted fight was of key importance to European history, and I will return to it below.

Centralization of the empire peaked under Möngke. Within his central administration, he established regional secretariats for China, Turkestan, Persia and, although this is not altogether clear, Rus' (Allsen 1987: 101). He recalled all the imperial seals, insignia and orders from the court (*jarligh*) and issued new ones. This gave him a chance to screen all the empire's middle men and all his own residents. He then restricted the availability of the vital postal system to these people only. 'A third measure was intended to circumscribe the power of the imperial princes within the confines of their own appanages (*fenti*). Thenceforth, these princes could neither summon their subjects on their own authority nor issue any orders concerning financial matters without first conferring with officials of the imperial court.' (Allsen 1987: 80-81)

Möngke dispatched his own people to do the actual tax collection. The local middle man was allowed to have his own representative on the spot, but he was not allowed to receive the actual taxes. Allsen (1987: 46) notes that

Of particular importance was the qaghan's right to appoint the Mongol residents, called *darughachi* or *basqaq*, who were stationed in all major population centers and at the courts of all local dynasts. These officials, who commanded wide administrative, police, and military powers, were key figures in the control and exploitation of the subject populations (Allsen 1987: 46).

A final point that needs underlining in our regard is that 'The grand qan had exclusive right to conduct relations with others on behalf of the empire' (Allsen 1987: 45). I have dwelt on Mongol administration and its historical precondition first, in order to demonstrate that the Mongols stood in a long political steppe tradition and second, because this was the blueprint for how the Mongols that settled on the Volga from the 1240s on ruled the Rus' lands.

The Mongols' Western campaign

When Chinggis Khan died in 1227, he had not only instructed his sons to conquer the world, he had also explicitly partitioned it, including the parts that were not yet conquered. The extreme West of the Mongol empire was the preserve of Jochi, who was also

⁶ He was followed by his brother Qubilai (Kublai Khan, 1260-1294). Qubilai concentrated on China, and was not much of a presence in other parts of what was now increasingly the former Mongol empire.

bequeathed 4000 soldiers (Tolui inherited the lion's share, 101.000 men). Jochi had already reconnoitered the lands, and established a fledgling polity called the White Horde somewhere north of the Caspian Sea. Indeed, in his work on Mongol imperialism, Thomas Allsen maintains that the 1237-1240 expedition which established the Mongols in the Rus' lands 'was designed primarily to carve out a territory for the family of Jochi' (Allsen 1987: 28, comp. 45).

Jochi's reconnoitering in 1223 had also resulted in first contact between Mongols and the Rus'. On their way westward, in 1222, the Mongol reconnoitering party met opposition from an alliance of Alan and Polovtsy troops.⁷ When the Mongols proclaimed themselves the blood brothers of the Polovtsy, this was enough to break the alliance. The Mongols proceeded to massacre the Alans while the Polovtsy stood idly by. Once the job was done, the Mongols massacred the Polovtsy. The Polovtsy Khan Kotyan passed words of what had happened back to his son-in law prince Mstislav of Galicia (note the marriage alliance), who called a council in Kiev. Three princes decided to raise an army and engage them on foreign territory. The army marched east, where they were met by Mongol envoys whose message was that their real quarrel was with the Polovtsy. The Rus' princes recognized the tactic that they had heard about from the Polovtsy, and proceeded to kill the envoys. This move guaranteed that there would be war. When it broke, the three Rus' princes were neither willing nor able to coordinate their efforts (which also meant that they could not coordinate very well with their Polovtsy allies).

The importance of Mongol superior strategy is in evidence already during this first clash between the Rus' and Mongols, which took place at the Kalka river (now in southern Ukraine) in 1223, when two of Chengis Khan's four key generals, Jebe and Subudai, outmanoeuvred a badly organized assemblage of Rus' and Khipchak forces which actually outnumbered the Mongols (Allsen 1987: 6). Note that the Western reconnoitering played out according to standard Mongol operating procedures:

Prior to the commencement of hostilities with a foreign state (*qari-irgen* [i.e. polity]) the Mongols always issued orders of submission that offered its ruler physical and institutional survival in return for acknowledging the suzerainty [sic] of the qaghan. Even if the ruler did not in the end surrender, such offers were still a valuable means of weakening an enemy's resolve and a diplomatic tool for detaching his clients and allies. [...] Another and perhaps more compelling reason for the toleration of dependent states was the Mongols' lack of experienced administrative personnel. Inasmuch as very few of the Mongols' estimated population of seven hundred thousand were literate and still fewer were familiar with the "customs and laws of cities," retention of a local dynasty and its attendant administrative apparatus was frequently the most practical method of controlling and

⁷ The Alans, were a Farsi-speaking people. Eventually, a large number of them settled in Khanbaliq (Beijing) where they were converted to Christianity by archbishop John of Montecorvino. They became a mainstay of the Mongol army. Kagan Toghon Temür sent an embassy to the Pope in 1338, asking the Pope to send a new pastor as well as for his blessing. De Rachewiltz (1971: 188) sees the key reason for this as being the kagan's 'desire to please the military chiefs on whom depended the security of the state and the emperor's own safety'.

exploiting the population and resources of a newly surrendered territory (Allsen 1987: 64-65).

The Rus' princes, seemingly reckoning that the Mongols were simply another steppe nuisance, paid no more heed to steppe affairs than before. That was a key mistake. In 1238, the Mongols returned with a vengeance. For the next two years, they effectively overcame all military oppositions from Bolgars, Khipchaks, the Rus', Poles and Hungarians. They established themselves in the Rus' and Hungarian lands, and had scouting parties as far west as Venice and Vienna. Once again, the campaign went according to plan. Cities which did not offer resistance were spared, cities that did were more or less destroyed. The result, here as elsewhere in the empire, was patchy destruction of the conquered areas (Morgan 1986: 82).

There is no reason whatsoever to assume that, if they had forged ahead, the Mongols would not have subdued all of what we may anachronistically refer to as Europe and made it into part of the Mongol order in one way or the other. As it happened, however, news of Ögödei's death reached the extreme west of the empire in 1241. At this time, not only Batu, who was Jochi's oldest son, but also Ögödei's oldest son Gülüg and Tolui's oldest son Möngke were there. The presence of three out of four Chingisid lineages was not by chance; the Western front was at this time the key area of new conquest, which meant that representatives of the different lineages were there to keep an eye on one another. Now, however, it became more important to keep an eye on one another in the Mongol heartland around Kharakhorum, where the succession would be decided. In the upshot, both Gülüg and Möngke left the Western frontier for the steppes. The focus of imperial politics turned away from the fairly narrow strip of land that remained to be conquered, namely Europe. This left the Jochids, led by Batu, alone in the West with his newly won Rus' possessions.

Although he was no longer in the thick of imperial politics, as head of one of the four Chingisid lineages Batu was a key player in Mongol politics.⁸ When khagan Ögödei's widow Töregene, who was regent 1241-1246, called a *kurultai* to consecrate Gülüg as new khagan, Batu refused to attend, and when she went on anyway, Batu refused to acknowledge the new khagan. This was instrumental in forcing the khaganate off Ögödeian hands and usher in the Toluids, and this happened at a *kurultai* which was actually called by Batu. Furthermore, Batu had more leeway vis-à-vis the imperial centre than had other regional middle men (Allsen 1987: 61, comp Nexon & Wright 2007). Actually, from Möngke's accession in 1251, 'Batu was conceded virtual autonomy in his own *ulus* [patronage] of the Golden Horde' (Morgan 1986: 117).

Note, however, that the first *darughachi* or governor to the Golden Horde, a Mongol by the name of Kitai, was sent from Kharakhorum in 1257 (Allsen 1987: 104). Furthermore,

⁸ Soviet historians like Bartol'd have suggested that Batu was co-ruler, but Allsen (1987: 54-59) and others have convincingly refuted the argument.

Batu and his immediate successors sometimes sent Rus' princes to the Mongol capital of Kharakorum to have their patents of rule confirmed there.⁹ Also, under Möngke,

Hostages were an additional measure designed to assure the fidelity of the Mongols' dependent rulers. Carpini reports that all tributaries were required to send sons or brothers to the imperial court [at Kharakorum]. As examples, he notes that Yaroslav of Vladimir, the chieftain of the Alans, and the Korean king had sent relatives as a pledge of their good behavior. [...] it was not always the possibility of the hostage's execution that kept a dependent ruler in line, but rather the threat of being deposed and replaced by the hostage at the first sign of disloyalty (Allsen 1987: 73-74).

When Batu died in 1256, he had built a tent capital in Sarai on the Volga (100 km north of today's Astrakhan) for his khanate, which came to be known locally as the Golde Horde. Batu was followed by his short-lived son (Sartaq, a Christian) and grandson, before his brother Berke (1257-1266) took over. Berke lost Georgia to another Chingisid line, the Il-khan of Persia, but the overall story of his reign was that he gained more room for manoeuvre within the Mongol empire, whose cohesion was now definitely loosening (Allsen 1987: 62-63).

We have little history writing on the Golden Horde, among other things because its archives were destroyed by Tamerlane's invading force (emanating from Samarkand) in 1390.¹⁰ Since the steppe-dwelling Mongols lacked expertise in running administrative apparatuses, throughout the Mongol empire these were mostly staffed locally. In the case of the Golden Horde, however, there was little by way of local administrative personnel to be found, and so the khagan relied on Khwarazm Turks (in Russian *Besserminy*). Note that in the east, the Golden Horde, which was based on the Khipchak steppes, was simply known as the Khanate of Khipchak (Morgan 1986: 141). Note also that its key foreign opponent was the Mongol Ilkhans that ruled Persia, and that its key ally was the Egyptian Mamluks, who were at loggerheads with the Ilkhans.¹¹ The Golden Horde's main foreign policy focus seems to have been Caucasus (especially Azerbaijan), not Russia. The tribute from Russia was important, but the European West remained a sideshow throughout the Horde's existence (Halperin 1983: 250-251). The Golden Horde adopted Islam as its official religion under Özbek (1313-1341), in conjunction with which they also adopted the Persian administrative *diwan* system.

⁹ For example, in 1256-57, Prince Gleb Vasil'kovich of Rostov journeyed to Kharakorum, and returned with a wife, a Mongol princess. (Allsen 1987: 183-184).

¹⁰ The object of the invasion was Khan Tokhtamesh (1376-1395), a previous protégé of Tamerlane's who succeeded in uniting the Golden Horde with the White Horde to its east. The White Horde had been established by the same Mongol campaign that spied out the Russian lands in 1223.

¹¹ Indeed, balance of power logic then suggested a potential for Ilkhanite alliances with Christian polities. Such prospects were tested out at a number of occasions, but remained fruitless.

Mongols and Rus' Polities

The Mongols destroyed Kiev and established a new layer of Mongol overlordship to what was now becoming a suzerain system of Rus' cities within an imperial structure – that of the Golden Horde. The Golden Horde, which was itself still part of an imperial structure, continued to follow the standard operational procedures of Mongol rule. As summed up by Allsen, the basic demands that the Mongols imposed on all of their sedentary subjects were: '(1) the ruler must come personally to court, (2) sons and younger brothers are to be offered as hostages, (3) the population must be registered, (4) militia units are to be raised, (5) taxes are to be sent in, and (6) a *darughachi* is to take charge of all affairs' (Allsen 1987: 114). To the Mongols,

the surrender of a foreign state [i.e. polity] was not just an admission of military defeat and of political subordination, but a pledge that the surrendering state would actively support the Mongols in their plans for further conquest. To fulfill this pledge, the surrendered state had to place its entire resources at the disposal of the empire, and because a census was needed to identify and utilize these resources effectively, the Mongols came to consider submission and the acceptance of the census as synonymous acts (Allsen 1987: 124).

A census was made of Kiev in 1245 and of Novgorod in 1259.

Following Mongol standard procedures, the khan initially dispatched *baskaki*, personal representatives, to live in key Rus' cities. After some decades (how many is not exactly known), the Mongols changed their policy and dispatched representatives who were based in the capital Saray on shorter inspections (*darugi*). The Rus' called these *posoli* (*posly* is still the term for ambassadors in Russian). When the *posoly* were not on missions, they worked in the administration in Saray (Halperin 1987: 33). In the degree that there remained a *primus inter pares* amongst the Rus' princes, it was the grand prince of Vladimir. His rule, like that of all princes, was dependent on a Mongol patent (*yarlik*). The principle of personal presence was replayed on the regional level, which meant that Rus' princes journeyed to Sarai in person to deliver their pledges of loyalty. The Rus' probably paid their taxes partly in coin, partly in furs.

In Rus' lands as elsewhere under the Mongols, there was one group that did not pay taxes. That was religious leaders, which in Christian areas meant the clergy. A precondition of this special treatment was Mongol eclectic religious tastes and general tolerance. Exemption from taxes were also a useful political tool which facilitated breaking in local religious elites to imperial rule. In Russia as elsewhere, this came in handy.¹² The clergy were, it will be remembered, a force in the squabbling between lineages in Russia, and this squabbling went on unabated after the Mongol invasion. As Fennell (1983: 97) puts it, 'the princes were able to squabble amongst themselves, to manage their own business,

¹² 'For example, Cyril, the Metropolitan of Kiev, who at first supported the anti-Mongol princes of Galicia and Volynia, in the end (1252) threw his considerable weight behind Alexander Nevsky, the prince of Novgorod and champion of accommodation' (Allsen 1987: 122).

to defend themselves against enemies in the west, and even occasionally to interfere in the affairs of their old neighbours in the south’.

The ‘Vsevolodskiys’, whose struggles converged on the city of Vladimir and its hinterland (Suzdalia), were the main lineage in Russia after the Mongol invasion. After Kiev’s fall, it was Vladimir which was the key Rus’ city. The Vsevolodskliys were named after Yuriy Dolgorukiy’s son Vsevolod III, whose son Yaroslav’s sons included Aleksander Nevskiiy and Andrey. They were, not surprisingly, split on the key question of whether to cooperate with the Mongol invader or to cooperate with their neighbours to the West. This was a struggle for keeps, in the sense that the winner would maintain the throne for his direct descendants (primogeniture having become the key principle of succession in the years immediately preceding the Mongol invasion). Furthermore, since Galicia was already attempting to head Westwards and the southern cities were increasingly passive politically, it was also a struggle about the entire orientation of what remained the key areas of the Rus’ lands and was increasingly becoming the only centre of political gravity between the Golden Horde in the east and Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, the Germans and the Scandinavians in the west. It was a centre that was very aware of its dependence on their new Mongol overlords. Between 1242 and 1252, Suzdalian princes made nineteen visits to the Saray. Four of these visits ended with the princes being sent on to the Mongol capital Kharakorum (Fennell 1983: 99).

Given Mongolian superior military force, the temptation to embrace the inevitable and collaborate must have been very strong indeed. The key bandwagoner was Aleksander Nevskiy. Already in the early years of the Mongol invasion, Aleksander had spent the time successfully fighting Swedish detachments (1240, earning his moniker) and German Knights (1242). These fights were part of a protracted struggle for mastery over the lands lying between them. When Yaroslav died in 1248, Aleksander was next in line of succession, but it was his younger brother Andrey who seized the throne. Andrey was one of the few Rus’ princes to advocate resistance to the Mongols. Nonetheless, in order to hang on to the throne, he needed the patent from the Khan, so both he, and eventually his brother Alexander, made their way first to Saray, and then onwards to Kharakorum, where Andrey was confirmed in Vladimir and Alexander in Kiev. Since Vladimir had been the main prize since the Tatar invasion, Aleksander did not rest content with this decision, and in 1252 he went to the Horde and obtained their help to oust Andrey. Andrey fled to Sweden. Aleksander had managed to put paid not only to his brother Andrey, but to organized opposition to the Mongols as such. As Fennell (1983: 108) puts it,

this was the end of any form of organized opposition to the Tatars by the rulers of Russia for a long time to come. It was the beginning of Russia’s real subservience to the Golden Horde [...] the so-called ‘Tatar Yoke’ began not so much with Baty’s [i.e. Batu’s] invasion of Russia as with Aleksander’s betrayal of his brothers.

From this time on, the enrollment of Mongol backing became a routine part of internecine struggles. There was nothing new about this: first the nomadic Pechenegs and then the Khipchaks had been drawn on in similar fashion by the Rus’ princes before. Now,

once more, the appeal to steppe forces became a key factor in the intensification of direct Mongol control with Rus' political life. There is a causal link between this development and the period of intensified Mongol raids and invasions towards the end of the thirteenth century. At this point, not only were Mongols from the Golden Horde brought in, Rus' princes who were up against other Rus' princes with Horde backing actually ventured further field to bring in the backing of Mongols insurgents from the Nogay further south.¹³ Rus' princes stood against Rus' princes, each backed by a Mongol ally.

In 1304, the grand prince of Vladimir died. Three developments brought about a change in politics. First, the princes of Moscow and Tver' emerged as the key players in Rus' politics. Secondly, among other things because of the now firmly established principle of primogeniture, these princes now headed more clearly organized families, which served as a firm power base. Thirdly, the firm wedding between families and cities meant that the territoriality of this power base was now assured in a much higher degree than before. Following decades of struggle between Moscow and Tver', Moscow emerged victorious and Ivan I was granted the title of grand prince of Vladimir by the Mongols in 1328. From Ivan I onwards, Moscow was the emergent centre of gravity of Rus' politics, and the home both of the great prince and of the Metropolitan. Moscow remained completely dependent on the Mongols, however, to the point that brothers appealed to Saray and even traveled there in order to settle their succession struggles (Halperin 1987: 58). Moscow took its time fighting down Tver' competition. In 1353, Novgorod supported the Tver' bid for the grand principality of Vladimir over the Moscow one by sending envoys to Saray to plead for Tver's case (Halperin 1987: 51).

The grand princes of Moscow kept up their brilliance in playing the alliance game. Whereas Tver' looked West, to the rising power of Lithuania. Moscow stuck to the Mongols of the Golden Horde. This served them well, for they were able to stave off three attacks by Lithuania and Tver' between 1368 and 1372. As summed up by Halperin (1987: 54),

the special relationship between the Golden Horde and Moscow was strengthened in the middle of the fourteenth century, when the Mongols faced a new challenge to their hegemony. Grand prince Olgerd of Lithuania struck deep into the Tatar orbit by bringing both Tver' and Riazan' into his sphere of influence and applying pressure to Novgorod.¹⁴ Olgerd's opposition to Moscow was not rooted in principle, and he played politics by the same rules as everyone else. Thus, with the eye on Moscow, he sent a delegation to the Golden Horde to negotiate a rapprochement. The Mongols, however, had decided, logically, to use Moscow as a coun-

¹³ The Nogay, named after the Mongol Nogay Khan, based in the Caucasus around present-day Kalmykia and harbouring a number of Khipchaks, were at loggerheads with the rest of the Golden Horde in the 1290s, and established themselves as a khanate in 1319. They 'built a power base in the Crimea and the Balkans and contested with the khans of the lower Volga for control of the Golden Horde'; (Halperin 1987: 18).

¹⁴ From the 1250s onwards Galicia and Kiev came ever closer to the Lithuanian kingdom, and were eventually absorbed by it. The Russian aristocracy asserted themselves strongly, however, to the point that a variant of Russian (White Russian) became the kingdom's official language. A number of nobles eventually gravitated back to Muscovy, cf. Backus 1957.

terweight to the growing power of Lithuania. The Muscovites were therefore successful in their attempts to undermine the Lithuanian embassy, and the Mongols, in a fine display of political delicacy, arrested the Lithuanian envoys and handed them over to Moscow. Olgerd was compelled to ransom his emissaries from his enemies.

The decisive Moscow victory over Tver' occurred in 1375.¹⁵ Moscow owed its victory to the superior way in which they had played the alliance game *vis-à-vis* the Mongols compared to other Rus' polities. From this time on, in order to underline how Moscow was changing the suzerain system of Rus' lineages into a polity centred on Moscow, it is customary to refer to this polity as Muscovy. Muscovy was still subservient to the Golden Horde, and would remain so for another hundred years.

In terms of systems logic, the arrival of Lithuania was a major event, since it challenged the suzerain system by adding another possible centre of gravity for Rus' princes. As the Golden Horde weakened and Moscow emerged ever stronger, diplomatic relations between the Golden Horde and Lithuania became ever closer, to the extent that we may talk about an alliance existing during the last third of the fourteenth century. It was an alliance that did not work, for Moscow (which could in turn draw on its good relations with the emergent Crimean khanate)¹⁶ emerged triumphant, whereas the Golden Horde fell apart. Note that the patterns of alliance do not follow religious or cultural lines. The same may be said about the alliance Muscovy and what was left of the Golden Horde formed in 1502, against the Great Horde, i.e. the polity of nomadic Mongol-led forces on the steppe.

To sum up, the key political fact in the Rus' lands from 1240 to the end of the 15th century was the suzerainty of the Mongols, based in Saray. Rus' princes fought one another, and used Mongol backing as the key power resource in their internecine struggles. The Mongols lent their support to various princes with a view to upholding tribute. They also followed the same policy towards the Rus' princes that they themselves and other steppe peoples had experienced from the Chinese side: they played the Rus' princes off one another so that no one of them should emerge as a uniting force that could challenge Mongol rule. As the Golden Horde started to fall apart from the mid-fifteenth century onwards, however, Moscow was nonetheless able to emerge as the key political centre, which proceeded to relativise Mongol suzerainty and, using techniques lent from the Mongols, unite first the Rus' lands and then the old lands of the Golden Horde (Kappeler 2001). Muscovy seems to have stopped paying tribute to the Golden Horde some time around 1470, but it maintained contacts until the Golden Horde fell apart around 1500.

¹⁵ Although Tver' did not give up. In 1382, it allied with Khan Tokhtamesh of the Golden Horde and against Moscow.

¹⁶ This is not to say that the relationship between Muscovy and this second most long-lived of the Golden Horde's successor states was not volatile. The Crimean Tatars burnt Moscow to the ground as late as in 1571.

Relevance for Russian-European Relations

Throughout the Mongol period in Russian history, relations with Western Christendom continued. In the immediate aftermath of the invasion, and despite Aleksander Nevskiy's skepticism to Western powers and to Catholicism, pope Innocent IV nonetheless forwarded a Bull to him in 1248 (Fennell 1983: 122n15). Rome followed what was going on in the Rus' lands. Note also that Alexander's ally, Metropolitan Kirill, established a bishopric in Saray in 1261. The church's presence in Saray secured, among other things, a channel from the Rus' clergy and princes to the Byzantine empire, which had diplomatic relations with the Golden Horde. The Golden Horde also received diplomatic envoys from Rome. Even in the immediate aftermath of the invasion, 'trade with the West, either from or via Novgorod and Smolensk, both of which suffered no damage from the Tatars, seems to have been relatively unaffected' (Fennell 1983: 89). Furthermore, the Golden Horde granted tax exemptions to the Hanseatic League, which continued its brisk trade with Rus' lands via Novgorod (Halperin 1987: 81). Genoese economic and political relations with the Golden Horde were particularly active (Meyerdorff 1981). Poe (2000:12-13) sums it up:

Despite the lore of a long scholarly tradition, Russia was not 'discovered' by Europeans in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, when early travellers like Sigismund von Herberstein arrived, for there had been continuous contacts between the east Slavs and the political entities around the Baltic since the time of the Vikings, and there had also been more scattered contacts with the continental powers.

Note, however, that at this point in time, the European states system does not exist as such. What existed was a loose system based on the continent, and a loose system based on the Baltic Sea. The two only merged during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). Rus' and Muscovy contacts were overwhelmingly with Northern polities, and not with Continental ones. By the end of the fifteenth century, we are therefore partly warranted in speaking about Muscovy as a new polity to Continental European.

If the existence of and human status of Russian-speakers were known to most Europeans, the same could not be said about the steppe-dwelling peoples to their East. Ever since Pope Alexander III's personal physician Master Philip has set sail Eastward from Venice in 1177 on his mission to find the alleged Christian kingdom of Prester John, attempts to establish contact had rested on 'a strange combination of Christian and pagan elements [...built on] the legends and myths inherited from the classical world' (de Rachewiltz 1971: 29). When the Pope had word of the Mongol invasion some sixty-odd years later, his reaction was to send friars with letters asking the Khans to mend his ways and convert to Christendom. The Mongol answers mirrored these messages by insisting that the Pope should come and pay his respect to the Great Khan. Universal claim stood against universal claim (Dawson 1955, Bowden, forthcoming). The envoys to the Great Khans brought back new information which made for much more detailed representations in the West of

people and life in the East.¹⁷ However, when both the Ilhanite state and the Golden Horde first converted to Islam and then, later in the fourteenth century, went through periods of internal strife, it affected the possibility for European missionaries and merchants to take the land route through these areas in order to reach destinations further East. As a result, direct contacts between the European Continent and the East suffered, and European Continental representations of the East were once again dominated by ‘dreaming and speculation’, as de Rachewiltz (1971: 207) puts it. What this meant was that, when direct contacts between Muscovy and the Holy Roman Emperor ensued in 1486, after two and a half centuries of Mongol rule, although there was knowledge of who the Russians were, they must still have come across as a fairly unknown entity.

In 1486, a noble knight by the name of Nikolai Poppel arrived in Moscow, carrying a general letter of introduction from the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III.¹⁸ As a result of Poppel’s visit, the Holy Roman Empire came to know Muscovy as a polity separate from the Polish-Lithuanian state. Upon Poppel’s return to the Empire, he started to spread the word about the Russian state, that is, Muscovy, and about the riches and power of its ruler. Then, according to official Soviet history writing,

In 1489, Poppel returned to Moscow, now already as the official agent of the Emperor of the Holy Roman empire. In a secret audience he suggested to Ivan III that he should petition the Emperor to confer upon him the title of king. From the point of view of Western European political thought, this would be the only means of legalising a new state and to introduce it into the common system of European states – and at the same time place it in a certain state of dependence of the empire. But in Moscow, another point of view held sway. Ivan III answered Poppel with dignity: ‘By God’s grace, we are the ruler of our land from the beginning, from the first of our ancestors, it has been given us by God, and as it was for our ancestors, so it is for us’ (Zorin 1959: 262)

Ivan III insisted on signing his written answer to the emperor with the title ‘Great ruler of all of Rus’ by God’s grace’, and for the next three generations, there ensued a tug-of-war between Russian and Western courts regarding titles. Already in 1508, Ivan’s son Vasilii sent a letter to the Emperor asking for an alliance in his war against Lithuania. In 1514 the Emperor, somewhat belatedly, sent his envoy Georg Schnitzenpaumer back with an encouraging letter in German. Writing about this letter, Karamzin (volume 7, chapter two) notes that ‘instead of the word tsar, he wrote Kaiser’. ‘Kaiser’ may be translated back into Russian as ‘*Imperator*’, and so the letter was taken by the Russian court to mean that the Emperor acknowledged Vasiliiy as a fellow Emperor. In Maximilian’s letter of 4 August 1514, however, where he confirmed an alliance against the Lithuanian king

¹⁷ Janet Abu-Lughod’s interesting attempt to theorise the world system before European hegemony is marred by her specious readings of these reports. Although she herself notes that their use of imagery is of the same kind (and frequently even parading the same specific ideas about monsters and strange humanoids) as contemporary Chinese texts about Western lands, she does not hesitate to heap scorn on serious scholars like William of Rubruck (Abu-Lughod 1989: 162, comp. Rubruquis 1990).

¹⁸ This paragraph draws on Neumann 2008a.

Sigismund, there was no mention of the Russian king being a 'Kaiser'. Russia was not satisfied in its quest for recognition as an empire.

I think we are warranted in seeing this as a key moment which is even of contemporary importance, for to this day, Russia has sought recognition from Europe as an entity on a par with the leading ones, only to be thwarted again and again (see Neumann 2008b). In order to understand the Russian lack of success, we need to ask about the grounds on which recognition has been sought, and the compatibility between these grounds and the grounds constituting the recognition game in Europe. When the ruler of Muscovy took the title of tsar in 1547, and when Muscovy went from dominating former Golden Horde areas such as that of the Kasimov to downright annexation of the Khanate of Kazan' in 1552 and the Khanate of Astrakhan in 1556, this gathering of the Mongol lands must, among other things, be seen as attempts to impress Muscovy's greatness on the European powers. As Andreas Kappeler (2001: 26) writes,

Of crucial importance for the qualitative leap that led to conquest and annexation was the new self-image that the young tsar and his court began to develop at this time. It revolved around a sense of their imperial mission, and this found expression both in the tsar's coronation in 1547, and in legends that traced claims to legitimacy back to Kiev, Byzantium and even to Rome. This imperial ideology was not, as historians used to claim in the past, based on the doctrine of 'Muscovy, the third Rome' and on the idea of a *translatio imperii* from Constantinople to Muscovy, but on the emphasis placed on the development of Rus itself, of the Rurikid dynasty and its successful expansion in the "gathering of the lands of Rus'. The sense of empire was increased by the struggle for the inheritance of the empire of the Golden Horde. Possession of Kazan and Astrakhan, the seats of legitimate rulers of the Genghis Khan dynasty, who were called tsars in Russia, considerably enhanced the nimbus and the imperial pretensions of the tsar of Moscow.

Kappeler's dismissal of the importance of the doctrine of 'Muscovy, the third Rome' is probably too massive, but that aside, his highlighting of the *translatio imperii* from the Mongols does, I think, strike to the heart of the matter of how Russia came to be represented by the European powers.

In the early 1500s, Russians themselves were far from certain about what to make of their Mongol connection. There was a duality in the Russian knowledge production about these relations which goes to the heart of how Russo-Mongol relations are relevant to Russia's entry into the European state system. On the one hand, as has been demonstrated convincingly by Charles Halperin, Russian contemporary sources, both the chronicles paid for by princes as well as literary genres such as the *byliny*, finessed a technique of not touching on the fact of Mongol suzerainty directly. As Halperin (1987: 8, comp. 63) puts it,

The Russian 'bookmen' (writers, redactors, scribes, copyists) of the Kievan past were accustomed to explaining Russian victories and defeats in skirmishes with nomads as signs of God's pleasure or displeasure with his people. They had never

been called upon, however, to rationalize absolute conquest. Instead of confronting the ideologically awkward fact of utter defeat, the bookmen finessed the fact of Mongol conquest by presenting Russo-Tatar relations as merely a continuation of Kievan relations with the steppe with no change of suzerainty involved. Thus the Russian bookmen raised the ideology of silence to a higher level and threw a veil over the intellectual implications of Mongol hegemony.

However, once the Mongols seemed to be a spent force, there was a need to tell a story about Russia's history as having some kind of continuity. A solution that lay close to hand was to forge a new role for the Russian leader as being not only a great prince, but a tsar. The problem was that the term tsar was a translation into Russian not only of the Greek term *basileus* (i.e. Byzantine emperor), but also of *khan*. The implication of these eponymous translations was that these two entities were treated on a par. Note that the fall of Constantinople is at this point half a century back. There was no longer a *basileus* in Constantinople. The hegemon to live down was the khan in Saray. Vassilian, bishop of Rostov and a close advisor of Ivan III, came up with an answer to this problem, namely to raise the status of Ivan III to that of tsar and so live down the very idea that there was ever such a thing as a tsar in Saray. The link should be that of *basileus* to tsar, and the khan should be treated as nothing but an impostor (see Cherniavsky [1959] 1970).

However, there is an interesting split in representations of Muscovite rule here, for as I have tried to demonstrate above, once the domestic work of establishing the basic continuation of Russia's legitimacy as a Christian power was done, Muscovy actually started propping up its claims to being an imperial power on a par with the Holy Roman Empire by invoking its conquests of the successor states of the Golden Horde, notably Kazan' and Astrakhan.¹⁹ The pride that Russians took in being the key successor of the Golden Horde was also evident in the sixteenth century aristocratic fashion for tracing one's ancestry back to Mongols (Halperin 1987: 113). In a situation where Europeans knew little of Mongol or even Asian ways (little, not nothing: there had, after all, been continuous contacts), Russia chose to base its claims for recognition partly on its Mongol connection. This was not necessarily an optimal strategy in terms of goal-fulfilment.

Moscow's imperial claims were also presented in terms of diplomatic practices that definitely hailed from the Mongols, and which therefore necessarily struck European interlocutors as Asian. As summed up by Halperin (1985: 92),

Given the importance of Russia's relations with its oriental neighbors, it is natural that Muscovy drew upon Tatar diplomatic practices in establishing its own. Accordingly, Muscovite diplomatic protocol was essentially Asian. Rulers communicated and exchanged gifts through envoys who were supported by the host country and allowed to engage in tax-free trading to supplement their subsistence. The envoy presented himself on his knees and left his weapons outside (a serious problem for sword-bearing Western nobles). Negotiations were preceded by lengthy greetings, questions about the journey and the rulers' health, and a cere-

¹⁹ As late as the seventeenth century, the emigré Muscovite bureaucrat Gregorii Kotoshikin explained that the ruler of Muscovy was a *tsar*' by virtue of Ivan IV's conquest of Kazan'; Halperin 1987: 100.

monial meal eaten without silverware. Not all the elements of the elaborate diplomatic etiquette were uniquely Asian. Still, it was sufficiently un-European that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Muscovy and the Ottomans communicated with a facility neither could achieve in dealings with Europeans.

To this can be added a number of other Russian practices which were distinctly non-Europeans, such as washing hands after shaking Catholic religiously unclean hands and refusing to eat with Catholics, meeting envoys at the border and sequestering them in special quarters, basing their foreign policy apparatus on offices (*prikazy*) that were themselves modeled on early Mongol institutions, *etc.*²⁰ It is true that Muscovy did refrain from insisting on following certain Asian practices when they met with European interlocutors. For example, although kowtowing (*bit' chelom*) was ubiquitous in Russia, as it had been at the court of the Golden Horde when Russian princes and their representatives had visited it (Zorin 1959: 140), there seem to be no recorded instances of the Muscovy head of state demanding that European envoys should be made subject to it. Nonetheless, what was to become the Russian entry into the European states system was definitely characterized by a clash of what we may call different sociabilities (see Neumann, forthcoming).

Conclusion

Rus' should be categorized as a suzerain system of polities centered on Kiev, rather than as a single polity. The polities were lineages led by princes. Neighbouring powers, including steppe-dwelling peoples, were brought into the fight between lineages on a regular basis. Once the Mongols destroyed Kiev in 1240 and established a new layer of Mongol overlordship, this loose suzerain system of lineage-based polities characterized by a high level of conflict and open lines to allies from the adjacent steppe became part of an imperial structure – that of the Golden Horde. For some decades afterwards, the Golden Horde was itself still part of an imperial structure. The Golden Horde ruled Rus' according to standard operational Mongol procedures. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, two lineages, now thoroughly territorialized in the cities of Moscow and Tver', fought for predominance amongst the Rus'. Moscow owed its victory to the superior way in which they had played the alliance game *vis-à-vis* the Mongols compared to other Rus' polities. From the 1370s on, in order to underline how Moscow was changing the suzerain system of Rus' lineages into a polity centred on Moscow, it is customary to refer to this polity as Muscovy. Muscovy was still subservient to the Golden Horde, and would remain so for another hundred years, until the Golden Horde fell apart around 1500.

At this time, Muscovy emerged as a separate polity. Muscovy's Mongol connection coloured its entry into the European states system. Muscovy itself chose to seek recognition from the Continental European powers, to which Muscovy was a fairly unknown entity, among other things as successors to the Mongol Golden Horde. The bid for recognition was presented by dint of a number of practices that were taken directly from the Mon-

²⁰ Russian borrowings from the Mongols were extensive, see Vernadsky 1953: 127-130, 222-223, 362-363, 387-388, comp. Halperin 1987: 90-95, 149n7.

gols. Continental European powers were therefore warranted in seeing Muscovy as a partly Asian polity.

It should also be clear, however, that the political logic of what was going on in the North, between Scandinavians, Lithuanians, Poles, Germans, the Rus', the Polovtsy, the Golden Horde *etc.* was one where confession had importance, but not necessarily overwhelming importance. It is simply not the case that an overarching polity, be that Christendom or its successor Europe, stood against other polities. Neither is it the case that the Continental European powers imposed a ready-made system of interaction on Muscovy (or on other Northerners, for that matter). It is very hard to identify a clear geographical, social or political boundary between Europe and non-Europe in the period under discussion here. The emergence of Europe and European-based international society was fraught with ambiguity. Russia's continued self-understanding as a Euro-Asian power, and the continued currency of a saying such as 'Scratch a Russian and find a tatar', should alert us of the continued relevance of these facts. It should also remind us of the need to study social phenomena. Including the emergence of international society, as a relational process .

References

- Abu-Jughod, Janet L. (1989) *Before European Hegemony. The World System A.D. 1250-1350* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Allsen, Thomas T. (1987) *Mongol Imperialism. The Politics of the Great Qan Möngke in China, Russia, and the Islamic Lands, 1251-1259* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Amitai-Preiss, Reuven & David Morgan (eds.) (1999) *The Mongol Empire and Its Legacy* Leiden: Brill.
- Backus, Oswald Prentis (1957) *Motives of the West Russian Nobles in Deserting Lithuania for Moscow, 1377-1514* Lawrence, KA <?>: University of Kansas Press.
- Blaney & Inayatullah
- Bowden, Brett (forthcoming) *The Empire of Civilization: A Story about Making History and Influencing Peoples*, ms.
- Buzan, Barry & Richard Little (2000)
- Cherniavsky, Michael ([1959] 1970) 'Khan or Basileus: An Aspect of Russian Medieval Political Theory' pp. 195-211 in Michael Cherniavsky (ed.) *The Structure of Russian History* New York, NY: Random House.
- The Chronicle of Novgorod, 1016-1471* (eds.) Robert Mitchell & Neville Forbes) (1970) Hattiesburg, Miss.: Academic International. describes the 1259 census in some detail.
- Chrysos, Evangelos (1992) 'Byzantine Diplomacy, A.D. 300-800: Means and End', pp. 25-39 in *Byzantine Diplomacy. Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, (red. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Frankling Aldershot: Variorum.
- Dawson, Christopher (ed.) (1955) *The Mongol Mission* New York, NY: Sheed & Ward.
- De Rachewiltz, Igor (1971) *Papal Envoys to the Great Khans* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

- Ellis Davidson, H.R. (1976) *The Viking Road to Byzantium* London
- Fennell, John L.I. (1983) *The Crisis of Medieval Russia 1200-1304* London: Longman.
- Franklin, Simon and Jonathan Shepard *The Emergence of Rus 750-1200*. London: Longman, 1996.
- Frye, Richard N. (ed.) *Ibn Fadlan's Journey to Russia* Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener
- Geanakoplos, Deno (1976) *Interaction of Sibling Byzantine and Western Cultures in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* New Haven, CN: Yale University Press.
- Grekov, B & Iakoubovskii, A. Yu. (1961) *La horde d'or et la Russie* Paris: Payot.
- Halperin, C.J. (1983) 'Russia in the Mongol Empire in Comparative Perspective' *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 43 (1): 239-261.
- Halperin, C.J. *Russia and the Golden Horde: The Mongol Impact on Medieval Russian History* London 1985 OR Bloomington 1987.
- Kappeler, Andreas (2001) *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History* London: Longman.
- McNeill, William (1964) *Europe's Steppe Frontier 1500-1800* Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.
- Meyerdorff, John (1981) *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia. A Study of Byzantine-Russian Relations in the Fourteenth Century* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Morgan, David (1986) *The Mongols* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Neumann, Iver B. (2008a) 'Russia's Standing as a Great Power, 1492-1815' pp. 13-24 in Ted Hopf (ed.) *Russia's European Choices* New York, NY: Palgrave (in press)
- Neumann, Iver B. (2008a) 'Russia as a Great Power, 1815-2000' in *Journal of International Relations and Development* 11 (2) (in press)
- Nexon, Daniel & Thomas Wright (2007) 'What's at Stake in the American Empire Debate?' *American Political Science Review* 101(2): 253—271.
- Paris, Matthew (ed. and trans. J.A. Giles) (1852-54) *Matthew Paris's English History*, two vols.
- Poe, Marshall T. (2000) 'A People Born to Slavery': *Russia in Early European Ethnography, 1476-1748* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Rachewiltz, Igor de (1971) *Papal Envoys to the Great Khans* London: Faber & Faber.
- Richard, J. La Papauté et les missions d'Orient au moyen âge (XII-XVe siècles) 1977
- Rubruquis, Gulielmus de (eds. Peter Jackson & David Morgan) ([1255] 1990) *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journeys to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke 1253-1255* London: Hakluyt.
- Spuler, Berthold (1965) *Die Goldene Horde: Die Mongolen in Russland 1223-1502* Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, two vols.
- Spuler, Berthold (1994) *The Mongol Period*. Vol. Two of *A History of the Muslim World* Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener.
- Vernadsky, George (1948) *Kievan Rus* New Haven, CN: Yale University Press.
- Vernadsky, George (1953) *The Mongols and Russia* New Haven, CN: Yale University Press.
- Voegelin, Erik (1941) 'The Mongol Orders of Submission to the European Powers' *Byzantion* 15: 402-425 OR 378-413.
- Zorin, V.A. et al. (eds.) (1959) *Istoriya diplomatii*, second ed. Moscow: Gospolitizdat.
- <CHECK> Veselovskiy, N.I. (1910) 'Tatarskoe vliyanie na posol'skiy tseremonial v moskovskiy period russkoy istorii' pp. 1-19 in *Otchet Sv. Peterburgskago Univer-*

siteta za 1910 (also separate publication, St. Petersburg, 1911). Fisher, Alan W. (1973) 'Muscovite-Otoman Relations in the Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries' *Humaniora Islamica* I, pp. 207-217.>