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THE LEGACY OF GENGHIS KHAN – THE MONGOL IMPACT ON RUSSIAN HISTORY, POLITICS, ECONOMY, AND CULTURE

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Summary

The Mongol impact on Russian history, politics, economy, and culture has been one of the most debated subjects not only among Russian historians, scholars, and philosophers, but also among the historians of Western countries as well. For Russian historians with a traditional approach, the Mongols brought nothing to Russia but destruction and bloodshed. The Westernizers approached the Mongol rule in Russia from the perspective of relations with Europe and thus perceived the Mongol impact as a very negative development, as Russia was isolated from Europe during the Mongol rule, which continued for almost 250 years. The Eurasian school, however, embraced the Mongol rule with the argument that it had a direct impact on strengthening the founding pillars of the Tsarist Russian State: Orthodoxy, centralization of political power, autocracy, and serfdom. In an attempt to make an impartial analysis, this paper first briefly takes a look at the different interpretations of Russian and Soviet historians of the impacts of the Mongol invasion. It then focuses on the search for concrete evidence that obviously demonstrates the impacts of the Mongol rule on Russia in various fields. In the last section, the paper tries to lay out its own impartial assessment based on the existing evidence as well as unbiased interpretations.

Key Words: Mongol invasion, Genghis Khan, Tatar yoke, Golden Horde, Kievan Rus', Muscovy, Muscovite princes, centralization of power, political unification, oriental despotism, Eurasianism, Slavophiles, autocracy, absolutism, serfdom, Mongolianism, Russification of Mongol state system.

Introduction

The role of the Mongols in the rise of Muscovy has been a controversial topic in Russian historiography. Some Russian and Western historians have used the terminology “Tatar yoke” to better explain the destructive consequences of the Mongol invasion of Russian lands. One group of Russian historians considered the invasion a huge catastrophe in Russian history that isolated Russia from Europe, whereas another camp of Russian historians saw it as a positive development that kept Russia immune from the “bad influences” of the Catholic Church of Rome and provided it the chance to establish its unique political, religious, cultural, and economic systems, at the core of which lay Orthodox belief. Despite the great differences between the existing interpretations of the impact of the Mongol invasion, it goes without saying that it had profound consequences that helped to shape Muscovite and modern Russia, and perhaps even its role in recent world history.

From the tenth to the thirteenth centuries, Kievan Rus'^[1] (Russia of Kiev) was well integrated into the medieval economic system. The Tartar invasion, which resumed in 1237 and lasted more than 250 years, tore Russia away from the West. Despite having devastating consequences for Kievan Rus', the Tartar rule played an important role in the rise of Moscow and subsequently the Russian Empire. When the Principality of Moscow reorganized itself and rolled back the Tartar invaders, a new Russia was born, which considered itself as the heir of Orthodox Byzantium, different from the Catholic and Protestant West. The victory of Moscow began the Russian drive towards the Siberian vastness.

The Russian historian Nikolai Karamzin was perhaps the first person to open the debate about the consequences of the Mongol invasion. In his masterpiece *History of the Russian State*, which was published in 1818, Karamzin described the Mongol invasion as a “blessing” as it played a key role in unifying the Russian principalities. Karamzin’s book was considered as the re-discovery of Russian history and Russian pride. The common conviction among the educated elites that Russia’s history started with the process of Westernization under the reign of Peter the Great rapidly faded away. The distant past of Russia became a valuable source, wherein answers to questions about the country’s nature and destiny were sought.

In fact, it would not be too odd to claim that the different interpretations of the Russian historians and intelligentsia regarding the impact of 250 years of Tatar rule have been highly influenced by the traditional debate about the place of Russia between West and East. Westernizers saw the “East”, and in that sense the Tatar influence, as linked with autocracy, despotism, and empire. Their opponents admired precisely these features, which for them signified a strong state, unity, and order.^[2] According to the Slavophiles, Russia’s exclusion from the Roman heritage – thanks to the Mongol invasion – was the essential feature distinguishing Russia from Europe. Russia had been spared this fatal heritage and was therefore established on purely Christian principles that were in complete harmony with the spirit of the Slavic peasant commune. The West was poisoned by shallow rationalism and racked by class antagonism, from which Russia was saved by Byzantine heritage and Slavic spirit.

Nikolai Berdyaev, the eminent twentieth-century Russian philosopher, believed that the source of Russian troubles lay in the “inconsistency of the Russian spirit” due to the “conflict of the Eastern and Western elements in her”. Russia, he argued, always contained within its wide territory an invisible and shifting border between two continents, and thus Russian society was forever torn between two cultures. Berdyaev insisted that Russia could not discover its true calling or place in the

world until it resolved its internal conflict between East and West.^[3] As precisely pointed out by Berdyaev, the difference of the attitudes of Russian historians and philosophers towards the Mongol impact have in fact demonstrated this dual Russian character.

When the works of non-Russian historians are examined, one often encounters some attempts to establish a link between the Mongol invasion and the “autocratic tradition” of the Russian state. In most cases, non-Russian historians have considered the Mongol invasion as the reason for the cultural and political backwardness of Russia and its Oriental despotism. Especially during the years of the Cold War, some historians and politicians of the Western world, as a part of an intentional campaign against Communism, attempted to explore the similarities between the Russian character and Mongol barbarism.

These different camps of explanations of the consequences of the Mongol invasion, each playing its own role in Russian history and political thought, in fact demonstrate the different faces of Russia. In an attempt to make an impartial assessment about the consequences of the Mongol invasion in Russian history, politics, economy, and culture, this paper will examine these different interpretations in detail in order to reach some concrete conclusions.

The Mongol Invasion

Temuchin, known as Genghis Khan and born probably in 1162, united the Mongols in 1206 after many years of struggle and wars. The armies of Genghis Khan invaded China, smashed the Muslim states of Central Asia, and soon reached the Caucasus. Genghis Khan died in 1227 but his successors continued his sweeping conquests.

The Mongols – or Tatars as they are called in Russian sources – appeared suddenly in 1223 in southeastern Russia and smashed the Russians in a battle near the river Kalka, only to vanish into the steppe. They returned to conquer Russia, in 1237-1240, and impose their long rule over it. Batu, a grandson of Genghis Khan, directed the Mongol invasion of Europe. The Mongols crossed the Urals in 1236 to first attack the Volga Bulgars. After that, in 1237, they struck at the Russian eastern principality of Ryazan, coming unexpectedly from the north. The town of Ryazan was besieged and captured after five days of bitter fighting and its entire population was massacred. Next, in the winter of 1237-1238, the Mongols attacked the Suzdal territory with its capital of Vladimir, the seat of the grand prince. In a matter of several months, the Mongols had succeeded in conquering the strongest section of the country.^[4] According to Riasanovsky, the winter campaign of the Mongols was the only successful winter invasion of Russia in history.^[5]

Kiev fell to Batu Khan in 1240. He established his headquarters in Sarai on the lower Volga, north of the Caspian Sea. The Khanate of the Golden Horde was the farthest part of the Mongol Empire. As the ties with the center weakened gradually, it was the first to become independent. Sarai became the capital of the Golden Horde and the Khans of the Golden Horde ruled southern Russia from there. Their territory stretched from the Aral Sea across the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea. Following successful campaigns to the north and west from 1240 to 1242, all Russian cities came under the rule of the Golden Horde.

The Mongols destroyed Kievan Rus' and divided medieval Russia into four regions. They dominated the southern steppes, whereas their control over the region between the Volga and Oka rivers, including the principalities of Vladimir and Moscow, was relatively moderate. They had the least influence over the principality of Novgorod in northern Russia.

The Russian princes were required to go to Sarai to tender personal homage and to pay tribute to the khans. The Khans retained control over princely successions and exercised a veto over

all major policy decisions. The collection of taxes was closely monitored by the Golden Horde through officials that were stationed in Russian towns. Russian princes were obliged to send recruits for the Mongol armies when ordered so by the Khans. In the beginning, the Mongols collected taxes from the Russians by means of their own agents. Later, they did it through the intermediary of Russian princes. The Khans appointed one Russian ruler as Grand Prince and authorized him to maintain public order, law, and discipline.

Despite the fact that the Mongols did not actively interfere in Russian life, they maintained their effective rule until 1380. In 1380, Prince Dimitrii of Moscow defeated the Mongols in the Battle of Kulikovo. This defeat greatly weakened the Mongol power, but still another hundred years had to pass for Mongol rule to be overthrown. Finally, in 1480, Ivan III, Prince of Moscow, refused the authority of the khan and the Mongols failed to challenge him. The successor states of the Golden Horde were absorbed one after another into the Russian Empire: the Khanate of Kazan in 1552, of Astrakhan in 1556, and of Crimea in 1783.

Different Interpretations of the Mongol Impact on Russia

The Mongol rule of Russia continued for almost 250 years. However, there exists no consensus among Russian historians, philosophers, and scholars regarding the impact of the Mongols on Russian history. According to Riasanovsky, traditionally Russian historians have paid little attention to the Mongols and their impact on Russia; nevertheless, some of them did stress the destructive and generally negative influence of the Mongol invasion and subjugation. Others virtually dismissed the entire matter as being of minor significance in the historical development of the country.^[6]

Following the Bolshevik Revolution, two contrasting views of the Mongol impact emerged. While Soviet historians argued that Tatar rule delayed the development of a unified Russian culture, economy, and national state, the Eurasian school of Russian emigres depicted the Mongol unification of Eurasia as a historically progressive event, claiming that Russia's unification under Moscow was a direct consequence of Mongol rule. According to Eurasianists, the Russian state was the heir, successor, and continuer of Genghis Khan's great empire.

In order to make an impartial analysis regarding the impacts of Mongol rule in Russian history, politics, and culture, it is both imperative and productive to take a brief look at the different approaches of each school.

A) The Traditional Approach

Perhaps the only thing upon which almost all Russian and non-Russian historians can agree is the staggering devastation and massacre that the Mongol invaders brought to Russian lands. Russian-language sources speak about the complete extermination of the populations of towns such as Ryazan, Tortzhok, and Kozelsk, while other sources indicate that those who were lucky enough to survive the massacres became slaves of the Mongols.

The *Tale of the Destruction of Ryazan*^[7] (Повесть о разорении Рязани Батыем) is an early Russian work about the capture of the city of Ryazan by the Mongols in 1237, which describes the invasion of the city as follows:

...godless Emperor Batu invaded the Russian land with a great multitude of his Tatar warriors and set up a camp of the river Voronezh in the vicinity of the principality of Ryazan. The Grand Prince Yury Ingvarevich sends to Batu his son Fedor Yurevich with gifts of supplication. The merciless Batu accepts the gifts and gives a false promise not to invade Ryazan. His lust is fueled by stories about Prince Fedor's beautiful wife of Byzantine noble

blood; Batu demands for himself concubines from Ryazan's ruling families. Angered by Fedor's proud refusal, he puts the Prince and his retinue to death. Great Prince Yury Ingarevich prepares for the battle, which takes place on the border of the principality of Ryazan. The outnumbered Russians fight fiercely and bravely but they lose the battle. Many receive martyr-like deaths. The accursed Batu successfully storms the city and kills all of its inhabitants.

The tale further describes the great destruction and slaughter with the following words: The churches of God they devastated, and in the holy altars they shed much blood. And no one in the town remained alive: all died equally and drank the single cup of death. There was no one here to moan, or cry – neither father and mother over children, nor children over father and mother, neither brother over brother, nor relatives over relatives – but all lay together dead. And all this occurred to us for our sins.

Other similar accounts reflect the devastation that the Mongol invasion created. These accounts justify the traditional negative assessment of Mongol impact on Russia. Muscovite chronicles usually depicted the invasion as a terrible misfortune for Rus', emphasizing the slaughter of Russian people by the Mongols.

According to national myth, the Mongols brought nothing but terror and they left Russia without a trace. Russia had no choice but to surrender to the superior Mongols; however, its Christian civilization remained unaffected by the Tatar invaders and Christianity always preserved its central place in Russian identity. Russians, according to the traditional approach, were living in Asia, but their faces were looking towards the West. The Asiatic Mongol culture, however, was primitive and backward when compared with the Russian culture in which a European identity was strongly felt.

According to Orlando Figes, when Russia sought to redefine itself as a European empire in the eighteenth century, it needed to construct a clearer cultural boundary to set itself apart from the "Asiatic other" in the Orient. All the non-Christian tribes, regardless of their origins or faith, were lumped together as "Tartars" to reinforce this "good and evil" split. The word "Tartar" was deliberately misspelled with an extra "r" to bring it in line with the Greek word for hell (*tartarus*).^[8] In eighteenth-century imagination, the Urals were built up into a vast mountain range, as if shaped by God in the middle of the steppe to mark the eastern limit of the civilized world. The Russians on the western side of these mountains were Christian in their ways, whereas the Asians on the eastern side were described by Russian travelers as "savages" who needed to be disciplined.^[9]

Dmitry Likhachev, the leading twentieth-century cultural historian of Russia, argued that Russia received extraordinarily little from Asia. Pushkin wrote that the Mongols brought "neither algebra nor Aristotle" with them when they came to Russia. What they did was plunge Russia into its "Dark Age". In *History of the Russian State* in 1818, Karamzin blamed the Mongols for the backwardness of Russia, asking how a civilized people could have learned anything from nomads.^[10] However, Karamzin also positively evaluated the invasion in the sense that it helped the restoration of "autocracy" in Russia. By strengthening Moscow, the Mongols, according to Karamzin, contributed to the "greatness" of Russia. Meanwhile, the great historian Sergei Soloviev in his 28-volume *History of Russia* argued that there was no reason to assume any great influence of the Mongols on Russia; he only devoted three pages of his work to the cultural influence of the Mongols.^[11]

B) The Soviet View

Soviet historians, while agreeing on the devastating results of the Mongol invasion on Russian history, politics, economy, and culture, devoted more attention to the role of Russia as the savior of

Western Europe from Tatar raids. The heroic defense of the Russian people, argued the Soviet historians, played a decisive role in preventing the plan of the Tatar-Mongol aggressors to conquer all of Europe. By protecting the peoples of Western Europe from the approaching avalanche of the Tatar-Mongol hordes, Russia contributed to the economic and social development of Europe and thus shaped the history of Europe and the world.

From the economic perspective, parallel to the traditional approach, the Soviet historians argued that the Mongol invasion greatly delayed Russia's economic development. Tribute payments and the destruction of commercial centers delayed the growth of a money economy. The town economies based on handicrafts were completely destroyed, throwing Russia back by several centuries. The economy of Europe, however, flourished in this period, preparing the necessary ground for the industrial revolution. The Mongols also prevented the agricultural development of Russia, which further worsened the commercial position of Russia, especially in comparison to the West. Russia not only lost the vital trade route of the Dvina River but also lost some of its territories in the west to Lithuania, Sweden, and the Teutonic Knights. To summarize, the net effect of the Tatar yoke on the Russian economy, according to Soviet historians, was overwhelmingly negative. The Mongols gave nothing but destruction and looting to the Russian people.

From the political perspective, Soviet historians argued that the Mongol invasion interrupted the gradual consolidation of the Russian lands and deepened feudal divisions. The Mongols weakened the towns and prevented centralization. The policy of the Tatars was to prevent, to the largest possible extent, the consolidation of power and centralization in Russia by supporting the divisions between the Russian principalities. Thus, the emergence of the "centralized Muscovite state" of the 15th century did not happen with the support or help of the Mongols but "contrary to their interests and despite their will".

C) The Eurasian View

Among the scattered émigrés who fled Soviet Russia was a group of intellectuals known as the Eurasianists. The philosopher Lev Karsavin and the music critic Petr Suvchinsky were leading members of the group. Many of the best known Russian exiles, including the philologist Prince Nikolai Sergeevich Trubetzkoi, the religious thinker Father George Florovsky, the historian George Vernadsky, and the linguistic theorist Roman Jakobson, were members of the group. Eurasianism was essentially a phenomenon of emigration insofar as it was rooted in the sense of Russia's betrayal by the West in 1917-1921. Its largely aristocratic followers reproached the Western powers for their failure to defeat the Bolsheviks in the Revolution and the civil war, which had ended with the collapse of Russia as a European power and their own expulsion from their native land. Disillusioned by the West, but not yet hopeless about a possible future for themselves in Russia, they recast their homeland as a unique Turanian culture on the Asiatic steppe.^[12]

The Eurasianists foresaw the West's destruction and the rise of a new civilization led by Russia or Eurasia. At root, argued Trubetzkoi, Russia was a steppeland Asian culture. Byzantine and European influences, which had shaped the Russian state and its high culture, barely penetrated to the lower strata of Russia's folk culture, which had developed more through contact with the East. For centuries the Russians had freely intermingled with the Finno-Ugric tribes, the Mongols, and other nomadic peoples from the steppe. They had assimilated elements of their languages, music, customs, and religion such that these Asiatic cultures had become absorbed in Russia's own historical evolution.^[13]

According to the Eurasianist view, the Mongol invasion was a turning point in Russian history. The Eurasianists argued that the Mongols performed a historic task by achieving the political unification of Eurasia. According to the Eurasianist view, the unification of the Russian lands under

the power of Moscow was the direct result of the Tatar yoke. The Mongol rule facilitated the transition of Russia from the so-called “appanage” period, which was based on tribal and town principalities, to the road to statehood. In the beginning of the Mongol rule, Russia was only a province of the Mongol Empire. However, by adopting the Mongol concept of the state and later taking their place, the Russian state became the heir, successor, and later continuer of Genghis Khan’s historic task. Thus, the Mongol impact, argued the Eurasianists, proved highly beneficial to the Russians.

Eurasianists argued that the Tatars, by isolating Russia from the West, in fact protected it from the illnesses of Latin Europe. The invasion had devastating results in the beginning; however, the Russians learned to coexist with the Mongols in harmony and peace. From the invaders, they adopted positive features such as strength, courage, faith, and religiosity, all of which promoted the development of the Muscovite state. The Mongols secured the commercial and cultural relations of Russia with the Orient. They also strengthened the position of the Orthodox Church. They largely contributed to the protection and preservation of the unique Russian cultural identity. Thus, despite the destruction and disruption that it caused, the Mongol invasion made positive contributions to all aspects of Russian development.

D) Vernadsky’s Approach

Professor George Vernadsky,^[14] a Russian émigré who lived most of his life in the United States, formulated a new approach that was mostly derived from the Eurasian view. Vernadsky assessed the Mongol influence by analyzing differences between Kievan and Muscovite Russia and emphasized the importance of Eurasian nomadic cultures for the cultural and economic progress of Russia. He refused the traditional view that modern Russia emerged from Kievan Rus. He emphasized the importance of the Mongol period, during which the vast Eurasian plain was united under a single rule.

Vernadsky argued that the Mongols drastically changed Kievan political life based on the balance between monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic elements. Monarchical power became highly developed, especially in the eastern provinces, which were more exposed to Mongol influence. The Mongols, by crushing the town assemblies, destroyed the democratic balance. The power of princes grew steadily as their authority could not be questioned by democratic town assemblies. This, according to Vernadsky, paved the way for the establishment of a strong centralized government during the period of Tsarist Russia.^[15]

Vernadsky criticized the efforts of Peter the Great to westernize Russia, arguing that Peter distorted the Russian natural character and polarized Russia into a Western-oriented elite that stood in profound conflict with the Eurasian peasants. Vernadsky considered this polarization as one of the main weaknesses of Russia and the source of the dilemma about the real place of the country between the East and the West.

Tracking the Footprints of the Mongols in Russian History, Politics, Economy, and Culture

After taking a brief look at the different interpretations of the Mongol impact on Russia, it is imperative to search for concrete evidence that would demonstrate to what extent the Mongols were able to influence Russian history, politics, economy, and culture. Such a study would not only enable us to see which approaches have been closer to explaining the actual situation but would also help us make our own impartial assessment about such a debated topic.

A) The Mongol Impact on Russian History: The Contribution of Tatars in the Rise of Moscow and Political Unification of Russia

Moscow remained an insignificant town for more than a hundred years after its foundation in 1147. According to Peter Stearns, no town benefited from the Mongol presence more than

Moscow.^[16] With the start of the Mongol raids on Kiev and southern towns, thousands of refugees began to arrive in Moscow looking for shelter. Within a short period of time the population of Moscow increased drastically.

The most important turning point in Moscow's rise as a power center was the year 1327, when the populace of Tver started a rebellion against their Mongol Khans. Seeing this as an important opportunity, Prince Ivan I of Moscow crushed the rebellion and restored the order with the help of a Mongol contingent. Ivan I was rewarded with *iarlyk* (ярлык), a status as the tribute collector, for this loyalty to his Khan. After 1328, Moscow started profiting largely from this status. Its princes not only used their position to fill their own coffers; they also annexed further towns as punishment for falling behind on the payment of their tribute.^[17]

Soon Moscow became second only to Sarai in importance during the Mongol period.^[18] The Muscovite princes were transformed into permanent hereditary governors of the Russian province of the Mongol Empire. From that moment, the Muscovite princes became the representatives of a central state power and the restorer of the unity inside the Tatar state system. Historical evidence demonstrates, without any doubt, that the princes of Moscow, by cooperating with their Mongol Khans in the collection of tribute, prospered greatly and thus became grand princes.

As Mongol rule weakened, Moscow grew in strength. The princes of Moscow initiated the process that has come to be known as "the gathering of the Russian land". They gradually expanded the territories of the principality of Moscow by purchasing, colonizing, and conquering the lands of other principalities.

Moscow also benefited largely from Mongol religious tolerance. Before the Mongol invasion, Kiev was the center of the Orthodox Church. Following the destruction of Kiev, Metropolitan Maxim moved the center of the Orthodox Church to Vladimir in 1299. The Metropolitan was made the representative of all the clergy in Russia, which enhanced the power of the Orthodox Church. The new Metropolitan, Petr, decided to move the center of the Orthodox Church to Moscow in 1322.^[19] The choice of Moscow as the seat of the Orthodox leaders brought new sources of wealth to its princes and helped bolster the importance of Moscow and its claims to be Russia's leading city.

According to Nikolai Trubetzkoi, the assimilation of the techniques of the Mongol state system and of the Tatar life style proceeded at an especially rapid pace in Moscow. This is why Russians in that area assimilated more easily and quickly to the spirit of the Mongol state. It was also the Moscow region that exhibited particular interest in Byzantine state ideologies. This complex psychological process culminated ultimately in the transformation of the Mongol state system into the Russian state, the center of which was Moscow. The Grand Princes of Moscow gradually became the living bearers of the new Russian state spirit. The transformation of Muscovite princes into the "Tsars of all Rus" became possible owing to the psychological process that led to the emergence of the Russian state ideology. Muscovite princes enjoyed the full patronage and support of the Horde, which could only welcome the administrative centralization of its Russian province. Whatever the case, the political unification of Russia under the power of Moscow was a direct result of the Tatar Yoke.^[20]

Trubetzkoi also argued that the important moment in Russian history was not the overthrow of the Yoke but rather the extension of Moscow's power over a large part of the territory once under control of the Horde – in other words, the replacement of the Tatar Khan by the Muscovite Tsar, together with the transfer of the center of the political power to Moscow. This took place during the reign of Ivan the Terrible, after the conquests of Kazan, Astrakhan, and Siberia.

Riasanovsky argued that Muscovite princes considered the Mongols as a "scourge of God sent upon the Russians for their sins". When Moscow emerged as a center of power, its leaders

looked to Byzantium for their high model, and to Kievan Rus' for their historical heritage. Despite being closer to the traditional view, which considered the Mongols as of little significance in Russian history, Riasanovsky did not neglect the Mongol contribution to the emergence of Moscow as the center of power in Russian history.^[21]

B) Isolation of Russia from the West

One of the most profound impacts of the Mongol invasion upon which almost all Russian and non-Russian historians, scholars, and philosophers agree is the isolation of Russia from the West for almost 250 years. Despite this consensus about the fact that the Mongol invasion resulted in the isolation of Russia from the West, there have been serious differences of opinion about the consequences that this isolation created. The Westerners interpreted the isolation as a very negative development for Russia, whereas the Eurasianists welcomed it as an event that contributed to the development of the Russian identity.

Riasanovsky considered the isolation as a negative development, arguing that Russia might have participated in such epochal European developments as the Renaissance and the Reformation.^[22] According to Pushkin, the Mongol occupation left a profound mark on the Russian way of life as the Mongols separated Russia from the West.^[23] Russian Europhiles like Chaadaev found nothing to impress them in the Mongol legacy. Seeking to explain why their country took a separate path from Western Europe, many Russians blamed the despotism of the Mongol Khans. Karamzin pointed to the Mongols for the degeneration of Russia's political morals. The historian Vasilii Osipovich Kliuchevsky described the Russian state as "an Asiatic structure, albeit one that has been decorated by a European façade".^[24]

C) The Religious Revival and the Rise of Orthodox Church

The destruction of the independent feudal principalities of Rus' by the Mongol invasion and their incorporation into the Mongol state undoubtedly caused profound upheaval in the hearts and minds of the Russian people. The humiliation suffered by Russian national pride created an eruption of acute spiritual turmoil. The hallmark of this period was the extraordinarily vigorous development of religious life. For ancient Rus' the period of Tatar rule was above all else an epoch of religion. The foreign yoke was perceived by religious minds as God's punishment for past sins. The intense religious orientation of the inner life of Russians suffused every product of the spirit, and especially art, with its colors. This period is associated with feverish creative activity in all areas of religious art; icon painting, church music, and religious literature reached new heights.^[25]

Dustin Hosseini argued that the Orthodox Church became a powerful inspiration during the dark years of Mongol rule. The Russian people eventually turned inward, seeking solace in their faith and looking to the Orthodox Church for guidance and support. The shock of being conquered by the steppe people planted the seeds of Russian monasticism. The humiliation suffered by the princes and the town assemblies caused fragmentation of their respective political authority. This loss of political unity allowed the Orthodox Church to rise as an embodiment of both religious and national identity while at the same time filling the gap of lost political identity.^[26]

An important feature of Genghis Khan's empire was the place given to religion. Genghis Khan, being a very religious person himself, valued religious feelings and was very tolerant of other religions within the territories of his empire. The Mongol Khans, following the legacy of Genghis Khan, were therefore very tolerant to the Orthodox Church and the clergy. The Orthodox Church was directly under the protection of the Mongols and was exempted from taxation by Mongol or Russian authorities. The clergy was also immune from common Mongol practices such as forced labor or military service. The Mongol protection created profound consequences for the Orthodox Church. It permitted the church to build up its material wealth and influence, becoming less

dependent on the Russian princes, which was not observed in any other period in Russian history. It acquired big quantities of land and became extremely powerful not only in the daily life but in politics as well.

In the fourteenth century the Golden Horde converted to Islam. This development created a barrier between the Mongols and their Orthodox Russian subjects. It fueled the struggle for independence and the Russians considered this war a crusade for Orthodox Christianity. This religious difference also prevented the integration of the Mongols fully into Russian life, which would have created deeper cultural impacts.

According to Trubetzkoi, Russia had come to know Orthodox Byzantium long before the Tatar Yoke and during the time of the Yoke the grandeur of Byzantium was in eclipse. Yet for some reason, it was during the period of Tatar rule that Byzantine state ideologies, which formerly had no particular appeal in Russia, came to occupy a central place in the Russian national consciousness.^[27] The Russian state system that arose as successor and heir to the state of Genghis Khan rested upon a strong religious cultural foundation. Every Russian, regardless of his occupation and individual circumstances, belonged to the same culture, professed the same religious convictions, the same world view, and the same moral code, and was guided in his behavior by the same traditional life style.^[28]

Mongols also made an indirect contribution to the development and strengthening of orthodoxy in Russia by protecting weak and divided Russia from its more powerful enemies such as Poland, Lithuania, and Hungary, as well as the “crusades” of the Teutonic Knights, who were determined to wipe out the Orthodox heresy.

D) Development of the Russian Identity and Consciousness

According to Trubetzkoi, following the humiliating defeat against the Mongols, the Russians started to idealize their distant past. This idealization is evident in Russian tales and heroic songs (byliny, былины). In folk consciousness, this idealization of Rus’ and of ancient Russian heroism transformed minor princes and their retainers into all-Russian heroes. Such idealization strengthened the national pride that was swelling in opposition to the foreign yoke. Together with the emergence of this spirit of national military heroism there developed another conception of heroism fostered by the religious revival, a heroism that was ascetic and sacrificial, that found real embodiments in Russian monks and in the martyrs executed by the Horde. This contemporary and local Russian heroism merged in the Russian mind with traditions of ancient, non-Russian, Christian heroism. Thus, in reaction to the despair occasioned by total defeat at the hands of the Tatars, a wave of heroism – primarily religious, but also nationalistic – was growing and gaining strength in Russian minds and hearts.^[29]

This “Eastern spirit” was manifested in the Russian people’s tendency to contemplation, in their fatalistic attitudes, in their love of abstract symmetry and universal laws, in their emphasis on religious ritual, and in their fierce bravery. According to Trubetzkoi these mental attributes were not shared by the Slavs in Eastern Europe, suggesting, in his view, that they must have come to Russia from Asia rather than from Byzantium. The “Turanian psychology” had penetrated into the Russian mind at a subconscious level and had left a profound mark on the national character.^[30]

E) Oriental Despotism and Autocracy

A considerable number of Russian historians and especially the Russian intelligentsia who belonged to the group of the Westernizers attempted to establish a direct link between the Mongols and the despotic rule of the Tsarist Russia. This argument was also used later to explain the despotism of Soviet rule. Herzen said that Nicholas I was “Genghis Khan with a telegraph”. As a continuation of this tradition, Stalin was compared to Genghis Khan with a telephone. According to

this group, the most significant consequence of the centuries of Russian subservience to the Golden Horde was surely the impetus it gave to authoritarian rule in Tsarist Russia.

Figs argued that the Russian autocratic tradition had many roots, but the Mongol legacy did more to fix the basic nature of its politics. The Khans demanded complete submission to their will from all their subjects, peasants and noblemen alike. Moscow's princes emulated the behavior of the Khans when they ousted them from the Russian lands and succeeded them as Tsars in the sixteenth century. Indeed, they justified their new imperial status not just for the basis of their spiritual descent from Byzantium but also on the basis of their territorial inheritance from Genghis Khan. The title "Tsar" had been used by the last Khan of the Golden Horde and for a time the Russian terms for Tsar and Khan were interchangeable. Even Genghis Khan was rendered Genghis Tsar.^[31]

Hosseini argued that an important democratic institution of Kievan Rus', the *veche* (вече),^[32] suffered severe curtailment with the Mongol invasion and eventually vanished from existence with the fall of Novgorod to Moscow. This, according to Hosseini, was an important milestone in the totalitarianization of first Muscovy and then the Russian state.^[33]

According to some Russian historians, the ruthless methods used by the princes of Moscow during the unification of the other principalities under the rule of Moscow in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries also recalled the Mongol example. The princes of Moscow, living through the experience of the bludgeoning authoritarianism of the Khans, started using the same methods in governing their subjects and, in practice, the tyranny and ruthlessness of the Tsars by all means surpassed the model of Byzantine autocracy. Thus, the rulers of Moscow in time developed a new version of "Russian autocracy", which was, in principle, a continuation of Byzantine and Mongol traditions, but in practice was different from both models. The autocratic rule enabled the Russian princes to centralize their control and minimize the limitations placed on their power by the landed nobility, the clergy, and wealthy merchants. The seeds of this Russian style of autocracy were first clearly observed during the reign of Ivan the Terrible and echoes were later seen in the iron-fisted regimes of Peter the Great and Joseph Stalin. According to the great historian Karamzin, the Russian national character "presents some blots which are derived from the Mongol barbarism".

The Mongol invasion, above all, planted the seeds of the feeling of insecurity in the Russian nation as well as the Russian state. This feeling of insecurity led Muscovite Russia to the development of a "military dictatorship". The development of a privileged aristocracy and a class of self-governing burghers was impeded. The absence of private property led to the complete concentration of power in the hands of Russia's rulers. The lack of two key institutions, namely an independent nobility and private property, which served to limit the authority of kings in the West, helped Russian rulers to consolidate absolute power.^[34]

F) State System, Administration, and Military Organization

Trubetzkoi considered Genghis Khan not only a great conqueror, but also a genius in state administration. The Tatar conception of the state, according to Trubetzkoi, was absorbed and then applied to the conditions of Russian life. In comparison with the primitive notions of the state typical of pre-Mongol Rus', the Mongol concept developed by Genghis Khan was grand, and its grandeur was bound to impress the Russians deeply. Thus, the Tatar Yoke gave rise to a rather complex situation. As Russia acquired the techniques of the Mongol state system, it also appropriated its spirit, its underlying design. Although this state system and its fundamental ideas were perceived as foreign and hostile, their grandeur made such powerful impressions that reactions of one sort or another were inevitable. Consequently, the Russians had to separate this system from its "Mongolianism" and associate it with Orthodoxy in order to "Russianize" it. In doing this, Russian national thought turned to Byzantine-Greek political ideas and traditions that enabled the religious

appropriation and “Russification” of the Mongol state system. The ideas of Genghis Khan, obscured and eroded during the process of their implementation but still glimmering within the Mongol state system, once again came to life, but in a completely new, unrecognizable form after they had received a Byzantine Christian foundation. This is how the miraculous transformation of the Mongolian conception of the state into the Orthodox Russian conception occurred.^[35]

According to Vernadsky, the Mongol influence on Muscovite administrative and military affairs was also profound. It was on the basis of Mongol patterns that the grand dual system of taxation and army organization was developed in Muscovy in the late fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. For more than 50 years the Khans of the Golden Horde exercised full and direct power over taxation and conscription in eastern Rus'. When the Russian princes recovered authority over them, they continued the Mongol systems. The Turkic origin of the Russian words for treasury (*kazna*, казна) and treasurer (*kaznachei*, казначей) suggest that the Muscovite treasury followed a Mongol pattern. The division of the Muscovite army into five large units resembled Mongol practice. The Russians adopted the Tatars' tactics of envelopment and their system of universal conscription.^[36]

Riasanovsky argues that a number of Mongolian words in the fields of administration and finance entered the Russian language, indicating a degree of influence. For example, the term *iarlyk* (ярлык), which means in modern Russian a trademark or a customs stamp, comes from a Mongol word signifying a written order of the Khan, especially the Khan's grant of privileges; similarly, the Russian words *denga* (деньга), meaning coin, and *dengi* (деньги), money, derive from Mongolian. According to Riasanovsky, Mongols affected the evolution of Russian military forces and tactics, notably as applied to the cavalry. Similarly, the Mongols deserve at least limited credit for bringing Russia the postal service.^[37]

Halperin argues that despite the objections of hypersensitive Russian historians, there is a compelling case that Muscovy did indeed borrow a variety of Mongol political and administrative institutions, including the *tamga* (тамга), the seal for the customs tax as well as the tax itself; *kazna* (казна), the treasury; *iam* (ям), the postal system; *tarkhan* (тархан), grants of fiscal or judicial immunity; and *dengi* (деньги), money. Muscovite bureaucratic practices, and perhaps some features of Muscovite bureaucratic jargon, may also derive from the Qipchaq Khanate, as well as selective legal practices such as *pravezh* (правёж), beating on the shins. Certainly Muscovite diplomatic norms for dealing with steppe states and peoples were modeled on Tatar ways. Finally, the Muscovites had no choice but to study Tatar military tactics and strategies, if only to survive by countering them in battle, but Muscovites also copied Mongol weapons, armaments, horse equipage, and formations.^[38]

Ostrowski saw a direct parallel between the organization of the central and provincial political institutions of Muscovy and the Qipchaq Khanate, embodied in matching organizational charts that demonstrate that the two systems were “direct cognates”. According to Ostrowski, the Muscovite Boyar Council, the division of military and civilian authority that he calls a “dual administration”, the leading Muscovite military and diplomatic officials (the *tysiatskii*, тысяцкий), the heads of the domestic court administration (the *dvorskii*, дворский), the provincial administrators (the *volosteli*, волостели) – all were direct imitations of the political and administrative structure of the Qipchaq Khanate.^[39]

According to Trubetzkoi, a concrete example of the Mongol influence on Russia was the establishment of the postal system. The Mongols, Trubetzkoi argued, brought the network of postal roads and the Mongol system for organizing mail and other means of communication, based on a statewide “postal obligation”, which continued to exist in Russia long after the Tatar Yoke.^[40] Figs

argued that the Mongols had a sophisticated system of administration and taxation, from which the Russian state would develop its own structures, and this is reflected in the Tatar origins of many words like *dengi* (деньги), *kazna* (казна), and *tamozhnia* (таможня).^[41]

G) Serfdom and Obedient Character

According to Vernadsky, one of the social impacts of the Mongol invasion was the creation of serfdom as an institution in Russia. The foundations of the relatively free Kievan Rus' were destroyed during the Mongol rule. Mongol Khans expected unconditional submission from their subjects, including the Russian princes and the peasantry. Both the princes and the peasantry were forced to pay tributes and heavy taxes to their Mongol rulers. Fearing Mongol raids and in an attempt to avoid taxes, the Russian peasants started to escape to remote areas or became, in effect, lifetime laborers of the Russian ruling class in return for protection. When Ivan III announced the emancipation of the Russians from the Mongol rule in 1480, the framework of a new service-bound society was virtually complete. Thus, the Mongol Tatar rule prepared the necessary ground for the enserfment of the peasantry.

The transition of the peasantry into serfs of the Russian nobility resulted in a major change in the rural social structure of Russia. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the majority of the Russian population would be tied to the lands they worked and bound to the minority of nobles who owned these vast estates.

The Mongols trained the Russian people to take orders, to pay taxes, and to supply soldiers when ordered by their masters. Carrying these obedient characteristics over into later centuries, the Russian people became excellent subjects for future Russian Tsars. The Mongols brought their state organization into Russia in order to provide law and order in the conquered Russian territories. As a result of this policy the Mongols gave the conquered country the basic elements of future Muscovite statehood: autocracy, centralism, and serfdom.

H) Unification of Eurasia: The Historical Task Left to the Tsarist Russian State by the Mongols

According to Trubetzkoi, within the territory of Eurasia there were originally tribes and states with a settled life style among the rivers, and steppe tribes with a nomadic life style. Conflict between river and steppe was inevitable. In the beginning the nomads were divided into many tribes, each of which remained within a defined area. The constant threat of nomadic raids on the river settlements and the never-ending danger that trade along the rivers would be interrupted made normal development impossible for the river states. The situation changed radically when Genghis Khan subjugated the nomadic tribes of the Eurasian steppe system into a single, all-encompassing nomad state with superb military organization. Nothing could resist such power. All the organized states within the territory of Eurasia lost their independence and became subject to the ruler of the steppes. Thus, Genghis Khan was successful in accomplishing the historical task set by the nature of Eurasia, the task of unifying this entire area into a single state, and he accomplished this task in the only way possible – by first unifying the entire steppe under his power, and through the steppe, the rest of Eurasia.^[42]

Eurasia, argued Trubetzkoi, is a geographically, ethnographically, and economically integrated system whose political unification was historically inevitable. Genghis Khan was the first to accomplish this unification. Instinctively, the Russian state, as the descendant of Genghis Khan, followed the Mongol example to occupy and unite all of the territory of Eurasia, and became the heir and successor of Genghis Khan's historical endeavors.^[43]

Figs pointed out that the military conquest of the Central Asian steppe was justified by an important number of Russians from the educated circles on the grounds that Russia's cultural

homeland was on the Eurasian steppe. By marching into Asia, the Russians were returning to their ancient home. This rationale was first advanced in 1840 by the Orientalist Vasily Grigoriev. During the campaign in Central Asia the thesis that Slavs were returning to their “prehistoric home” was advanced. The idea that Russia had a cultural and historic claim in Asia became a founding myth of the empire.^[44]

I) Economy

The devastating results created by the Mongol invasion on the economy of Rus' is one of the rare topics upon which there has been a consensus among Russian historians. The Mongol raids devastated major cities, Kiev, Chernigov, and Suzdal being the foremost among them. These cities lost their importance for centuries. The Mongols conscripted the majority of craftsmen and that almost brought the Russian reservoir of skilled manpower to an end. The local industries were nearly completely destroyed. The economic depression in Novgorod lasted for 50 years. In the eastern parts of the Russian lands the situation was even more acute.

As the Mongols needed agricultural production as taxes, agricultural production was able to escape the destruction and thus became the leading branch of the Russian economy. In the years to follow, the Mongol regional governors and Khans took some steps to encourage the development of trade, especially with the East. With the establishment of new and secure trade routes, trade started to flourish slowly.

Some Russian historians argue that economic growth also heavily suffered from tributes and taxes. With the devastation of the city assemblies, Russia lost the urban merchant oligarchies and the rising middle classes that appeared in Western Europe during the same period.

J) Culture

According to Figes, the Russian culture, in the beginning, was a product of the combined influence of Scandinavia and Byzantium. The national epic that the Russians liked to tell about themselves was the story of the struggle by the agriculturalists of the northern forest lands against horsemen of the Asiatic steppe. This national myth had become so fundamental to the European self-identity of the Russians that to suggest an Asiatic influence on the culture of Russia was to invite charges of treason. In the final decades of the nineteenth century, however, cultural attitudes shifted. As the empire spread across the Asian steppe, there was a growing movement to embrace its cultures as a part of Russia's own. The first important sign of this cultural shift came in the 1860s, when Vladimir Stasov^[45] tried to show that much of Russia's folk culture, its ornament, and folk epics had antecedents in the East. Stasov was denounced by the Slavophiles and other patriots. Yet by the end of the 1880s, there was an explosion of research into the Asiatic origins of Russia's folk culture. Archeologists such as Dmitrii Anuchin and Nikolai Veselovsky exposed the depth of Tatar influence on the Stone Age culture of Russia. They equally revealed, or at least suggested, the Asiatic origins of many folk beliefs of the Russian peasants of the steppe. Anthropologists found shamanistic practices in Russian sacred peasant rituals. Others pointed out the ritual use of totems by the Russian peasantry in Siberia. The anthropologist Dmitry Zelenin maintained that the animistic beliefs of the peasants had been handed down to them from the Mongol tribes.^[46]

For Stasov, the significance of the Eastern mark on Russian art went far beyond exotic decoration. It was a testimony to the historical fact of Russia's descent from the ancient cultures of the Orient. Stasov believed that the influence of Asia was manifest in all fields of Russian culture: in language, clothing, customs, buildings, furniture, and items of daily use, in ornaments, in melodies and harmonies, and in all fairy tales.^[47]

In order to make a better assessment of the Mongol cultural impact on Russia, perhaps it would be more appropriate to take a deeper look at the specific aspects of the area of culture.

a) Language

Vernadsky believed that the Mongol cultural impact on Russia was considerable especially in terms of language, as the Russian language borrowed many words from Mongolian. Similarly, Hosseini argued that it is only natural that the Mongol Empire, after 200 years of dominance, would leave a multitude of significant linguistic and even socio-linguistic impacts on the people who inhabited the lands of Rus'. Indeed, Russian borrowed thousands of words, phrases, and other linguistic features from the Mongol and Turkic languages. Listed below are just a few examples of some of the most significant impacts that have survived.^[48]

амбар	barn
базар	bazaar
денга	coin
деньги	money
лошад	horse
сундук	truck, chest
тамохня	customs
улус	district/region

By the fifteenth century the use of Tatar terms had become so modish at the court of Muscovy that the Grand Duke Vasily accused his courtiers of excessive love of the Tatars and their speech. But Turkic phrases also left their mark on the language of the street – perhaps the most notably in those “*davai*” (давай – Come on, let’s go) verbal riffs that signal the intention of so many daily acts:^[49]

давай пойдём	Come on let’s go
давай посидим	Come on let’s sit down
давай попьём	Come on let’s get drunk

b) Art

While the arts in Russia first suffered from the mass deportations of its artisans to other lands within the Mongol Empire, the monastic revival and focus of attention that turned towards the Orthodox Church led to an artistic revival. It was during the second half of the Mongol rule in the mid-fourteenth century that Russian iconography and fresco painting began to flourish.^[50]

Studying the *byliny* (былины), the epic songs that contained the oldest folk myths and legends of Russia, Stasov claimed that they were from Asia.^[51] The composer Balakirev, who was the founder of the “Russian music school”, came from ancient Tatar stock, and he was proud of it. The Oriental element was one of the hallmarks of the Russian music school developed by the *kuchkists* – the “Mighty Handful” (*kuchka*, кучка) of nationalist composers that included Balakirev, Mussorgsky, Borodin, and Rimsky-Korsakov. Many of the *kuchkists*’ quintessential Russian works – from Balakirev’s fantasy for piano *Islamei* to Borodin’s *Prince Igor* and Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Scheherazade* – were composed in this Oriental style. Balakirev had encouraged the use of Eastern themes and harmonies to distinguish this self-conscious Russian music from German symphonism.^[52] In Borodin’s *Prince Igor*, for example, the melismatic music of the Polovtsian Dances, which came to represent the quintessential sound of the Orient, was actually drawn from Chuvash, Bashkir, Hungarian, Algerian, Tunisian, and Arabian melodies.^[53]

Distinguishing Russian culture from that of the West became one of the major preoccupations of the young Russian romantics of the nineteenth century. The Oriental theme was frequently seen in the works of the great Russian poet Mikhail Lermontov, who embraced the Caucasus as his “spiritual home”. Gogol emphasized the “Asiatic” character of the Ukrainian Cossacks in his unforgettable story *Taras Bulba*.

c) Customs, Traditions, and Faith

Russian customs and traditions were also influenced by the Tatars. The Russian customs of hospitality have their roots especially clearly in the culture of the Mongol Khans, for whom hospitality was one of the most respected virtues. Distinguishing the Russian culture from that of the West became one of the major preoccupations of the young Russian romantics of the nineteenth century. Russian archeologist Nikolai Veselovsky found a Mongol origin for the Russian peasant custom of honoring a person by throwing them into the air.^[54]

There is also reason to suppose that the shamanistic cults of the Mongol tribes were incorporated in the Russian faith. The Holy Fool (*yurodivyi*, юродивый) was probably descended from the Asian shamans, too, despite his image as the quintessential “Russian type” in many works of art.^[55]

d) Clothing and Eating Habits

Many common elements of Russian clothing were Asiatic in their origin – a fact reflected in the Turkic derivation of the Russian words for clothes like *kaftan* (Кафтан), *zipun* (Зипун - a light coat), *armiak* (Армяк - heavy coat), *sarafan* (Сарафан), and *khalat* (Халат). Even the Tsar’s crown or Cap of Monomakh – by legend handed down from Byzantium – was probably of Tatar origin

The food of Russia was deeply influenced by the cultures of the East, with many basic Russian dishes, such as *plov* (Плов - pilaf), *lapsha* (Лапша - noodles), and *tvorog* (Творог - curd cheese) imported from the Caucasus and Central Asia, and other eating habits, like the Russian taste for horsemeat and *koumis* (Хоумис - fermented mare’s milk), no doubt handed down from the Mongol tribes. In contrast to the Christian West and most Buddhist cultures of the East, there was no religious sanction against eating horsemeat in Russia.

K) Ideology

According to Trubetzkoi, despite the large differences between the ideological foundations of the Muscovite and Mongol state systems, there was an inner kinship between them. Good reasons exist for considering the Muscovite state system a successor to the Mongol system, not only with regard to territory and certain peculiarities of state organization, but also in its ideological content. Both were based on a life style that was bound up with a specific psychological orientation – the nomadic life style in the empire of Genghis Khan, and the Orthodox way of living in the Muscovite state. In both, the supreme head of state was the most brilliant representative of the ideal form of that particular life style. In both, discipline within the state depended upon the universal subordination of all citizens and of the monarch himself to a transcendent divine source. The subordination of all persons to the monarch was understood as a consequence of universal subordination to the divine source, whose earthly instrument was the monarch. In both, the absence of attachment to earthly goods, freedom from material prosperity, and unshakable devotion to a religiously conceived notion of duty were recognized as virtues.^[56]

Conclusion

As seen in the previous sections of this paper there has been disagreement among Russian historians about the nature and degree of influence exerted by the Mongol rule on the history, politics, economy, and culture of Russia. While famous Russian historians such as Soloviev almost totally neglected any sort of Mongol influence on Russia, Eurasianists such as Vernadsky and Trubetzkoi argued that the Mongol impact on Russia was profound and visible in almost all fields of Russian life.

Looking at the existing written historical documents, almost all historians agree that the

Mongols brought great devastation and destruction to the Russian lands. However, directly or indirectly, the Mongol rule influenced Russian life in many ways, the effects of which are still visible today, especially in Russian language and culture. The Mongols, by isolating Russia from the West, had a profound impact on the Russian development. Perhaps the most fundamental consequence of the Mongol rule was the divergence of Russian civilization from the West. During the period of Kievan Rus', Russia was on a parallel track with Europe and its Latin Christian civilization. Following the Mongol invasion and the destruction of Kiev, the distance between Russia and Europe widened, and Russian society evolved along more distinctly different lines than it had a few centuries earlier. While the ideas of freedom and justice were gaining strength in Europe, Russia was institutionalizing serfdom, which was another direct result of the Mongol rule. While Europe was witnessing extraordinary development with new ideas and the introduction of scientific methods, particularly during the Renaissance, Russian society was experiencing a traditional, stagnant life based on small-scale agricultural production.

Russia, if not conquered by the Mongols, could have followed a similar path to that of the West. Therefore, it is an undeniable fact that Russian civilization followed a different course from the West as a direct consequence of the Mongol occupation. If Russia has been able to develop its own unique civilization based on the belief of Orthodoxy, which, without any doubt, differs vastly from the civilization of Europe, it is thanks to the element of "Asia or Orient", which was introduced by the Mongols and which has deeply penetrated into the Russian character and identity.

As was laid out in the previous sections of this paper, both the Western and Eurasian schools established a direct link between the Mongol rule and the foundation of an autocratic and to some extent despotic Tsarist Russian State. The Westernizers, who were charmed with the values of enlightenment, democracy, and freedom, blamed the Mongols for Russia's backwardness, whereas the Eurasianists embraced the Mongol legacy, claiming that it strengthened the founding pillars of the Tsarist Russian State such as Orthodoxy and autocracy and thus made a profound contribution to the security and stability of Russia. This paper does not attempt to begin an argument about the correctness of the views of the Western or Eurasianist schools. It rather tries to focus on one common observation that unites both sides: the direct Mongol impact on the tradition of autocracy in Russia. In that sense, the common observation of the two schools definitely seems more realistic than the traditional myth that claims that the Mongol rule had no direct or indirect impacts on Russian history, politics, economy, or culture.

Another undeniable seed that the Mongol invasion planted in Russian society is a deep sense of insecurity. The fear of being overrun and subjugated, either by a Western or Eastern power, made unity and cohesiveness a high-priority value in Russian society and the Russian state. The Russians were highly divided among themselves when the Mongol invasion started and this facilitated their easy defeat. This painful experience demonstrated to the Russians the necessity of building a strong centralist state, first to overthrow the Mongols and then to be ready for other similar attempts aimed at the occupation of Russian territories. In fact, history acknowledged the necessity of Russian unity as the Russians had to fight against foreign intruders during Napoleon's Russian campaign and in the First and Second World Wars. If the Mongol invasion had not taken place, it is highly possible that the Russians would have remained divided and would have been absorbed by their powerful neighbors: Poles, Lithuanians, and others.

In making an impartial assessment regarding the Mongol legacy in Russian history, politics, economy, and culture, it would be more appropriate to neither deny the Mongol impact nor to overemphasize it. Approaching the issue from a broader perspective and with the historical evidence, it is an undeniable fact that the Mongols indeed had significant impacts on Russian life and this

Mongol legacy is still visible in today's modern Russia.

^[1]Kievan Rus' (Russian: Кіевская Русь) is the name used by Russian historian Nikolai Karamzin for the medieval state of Rus. The state existed from approximately 880 to sometime in the middle of the 13th century when it disintegrated. It was founded by East Slavic tribes and Scandinavian traders (Varangians) called Rus' and centered in Novgorod. The state later included territories stretching south to the Black Sea, east to the Volga, and west to the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

^[2]Peter J. S. Duncan, *Contemporary Russian Identity Between East and West*, *The Historical Journal*, Volume 48, Number 1, Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom, 2005, p. 277.

^[3]Ana Siljak, *Between East and West: Hegel and the Origins of the Russian Dilemma*, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Volume 62, Number 2, April 2001, pp. 335-358.

^[4]Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, Fourth Edition, New York, 1984, pp. 67-68.

^[5]Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, p. 68.

^[6]Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, p. 72.

^[7]Ryazan was one of the first to be conquered by Batu Khan. In Russian texts, they were called "Tatars" (тарапе). According to various chronicles and this military tale, Ryazan was attacked in 1237. The *Tale of the Destruction of Ryazan* survived in several sixteenth and seventeenth century redactions and is thought to be a part of a miscellany that was composed and revised by the clergy of the Church of St Nicholas of Zarazsk. Given the form of a military tale, the later version of the tale of Batu's capture of Ryazan is a fictionalized account with some historical inaccuracies suggesting that the tale was composed sometimes after the described events and was subsequently further edited. Tracing its provenance, textual analysis and dating of various redactions have been conclusively resolved by Soviet scholars. Originally, the tale of Batu's capture of Ryazan was a part of a cycle dedicated to the icon of St Nicholas of Zarazsk. This cycle included several parts or tales, each with a differing thematic emphasis. The tale of St Nicholas of Zarazsk (in 1225) and the tale of Batu's capture of Ryazan (in 1237) in their earlier manuscripts versions are dated to the second third of the sixteenth century. For the first time, the tale of Batu's capture of Ryazan was published by I. P. Sakharov in 1841. It was based on the late sixteenth century redaction. The whole cycle was published by D. C. Likhachev in 1947. In his canonical study, Likhachev (basing it on the research by V. L. Komarovich) dated, analyzed, and classified 34 variants dating from the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries.

^[8]Orlando Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, New York, 2002, p. 378.

^[9]Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, p. 378.

^[10]See Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, p. 367.

[11]See Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, p. 367.

[12]Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, p. 423.

[13]Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, pp. 423-424.

[14]Vernadsky left his native country in 1920 for Constantinople, moving to Athens later that year. At the suggestion of Nikodim Kondakov, he settled in Prague, teaching there from 1921 until 1925 at the Russian School of Law. There, in association with Nikolai Trubetzkoi and P. N. Savitsky, he participated in formulating the Eurasian theory of Russian history. After Kondakov's death, Vernadsky was in charge of the Seminarium Kondakovianum, which disseminated his view of Russian culture as the synthesis of Slavonic, Byzantine, and nomadic influences. In 1927, Vernadsky was offered a position at Yale University in the United States. At Yale, he first served as a research associate in history (1927-1946), and then became a full professor of Russian history in 1946. He served in that position until his retirement in 1956. He died in New Haven on 20 June 1973.

[15]See Charles J. Halperin, "George Vernadsky, Eurasianism, the Mongols, and Russia", *Slavic Review*, 1982, pp. 477-493.

[16]See Peter Stearns, *Russia in Bondage et al. World Civilizations. The Global Experience*, New York, 1992, p. 460.

[17]Stearns, *Russia in Bondage*, p. 460.

[18]Jiu-Hwa L. Upshur, *World History*, Minneapolis, 1994, pp. 371-372.

[19]See Dustin Hosseini, *The Effects of the Mongol Empire on Russia*, The University of Texas at Arlington, 2005, p. 6.

[20]Nikolai Sergeevich Trubetzkoi, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan and the Essays on Russia's Identity*, Michigan Slavic Publications, 1991, pp. 181-182.

[21]Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, pp. 75-76.

[22]Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, p. 73.

[23]Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, p. 368.

[24]Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, p. 369.

[25]Trubetzkoi, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan and the Essays on Russia's Identity*, pp. 175-176.

[26]Hosseini, *The Effects of the Mongol Empire on Russia*, p. 4.

[27]Trubetzkoi, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan and the Essays on Russia's Identity*, p. 181.

[28]Trubetzkoi, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan and the Essays on Russia's Identity*, p. 190.

[29]Trubetzkoi, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan and the Essays on Russia's Identity*, p. 176.

[30]Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, p. 425.

[31]Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, p. 369.

[32]The word is inherited from Proto-Slavic *větje*, meaning “council” or “talk” (which is also represented in the word “soviet”, both ultimately deriving from the Proto-Slavic verbal stem of *větiti*, “to talk, speak”). The East Slavic *veche* is thought to have originated in tribal assemblies of Eastern Europe, thus predating the Rus' state. The earliest mentions of *veche* in East European chronicles refer to examples in Belgorod Kievsky in 997, Novgorod the Great in 1016, and Kiev in 1068. The assemblies discussed matters of war and peace, adopted laws, and called for and expelled rulers. In Kiev, the *veche* was summoned in front of the Cathedral of St Sophia. The *veche* was the highest legislature and judicial authority in the Republic of Novgorod until 1478, after the Massacre of Novgorod by Grand Prince Ivan IV.

[33]See Hosseini, *The Effects of the Mongol Empire on Russia*, p. 10.

[34]See Ronald G. Charbonneau. *The Origins of Muscovite Autocracy*, Master Thesis, Department of History of McGill University, Montreal, 1967.

[35]Trubetzkoi, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan and the Essays on Russia's Identity*, pp. 178-180.

[36]See Charles J. Halperin, “George Vernadsky, Eurasianism, the Mongols, and Russia”. *Slavic Review*, 1982, pp. 477-493.

[37]Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, p. 73.

[38]Charles J. Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde: The Mongol Impact on Medieval Russian History*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985, pp. 90-95.

[39]Charles J. Halperin, *Muscovite Political Institutions in the 14th Century*, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, Volume 1, Number 2, Spring 2000, p. 239.

[40]Trubetzkoi, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan and the Essays on Russia's Identity*, p. 178.

[41]Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, p. 367.

[42]Trubetzkoi, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan and the Essays on Russia's Identity*, p. 166.

[43]Trubetzkoi, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan and the Essays on Russia's Identity*, p. 167.

[44] Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, p. 414.

[45]Vladimir Vasilievich Stasov (Влади́мир Васи́льевич Ста́сов, 1824-1906) was probably the most respected Russian critic during his lifetime. Stasov became a huge figure in mid-19th-century Russian culture. He wanted Russian art to liberate itself from what he saw as Europe's hold. By

copying the West, he felt, the Russians could be at best only second-rate. However, by applying their own native traditions, they might create a truly national art that could match Europe's with its high artistic standards and originality.

[46]Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, p. 365.

[47]Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, p. 392.

[48]Hosseini, *The Effects of the Mongol Empire on Russia*, pp. 9-10.

[49]Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, p. 371.

[50]Hosseini, *The Effects of the Mongol Empire on Russia*, p. 7.

[51]Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, p. 393.

[52]Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, pp. 390-391.

[53]Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, p. 384.

[54]Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, p. 371.

[55]Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, p. 373.

[56]Trubetzkoi, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan and the Essays on Russia's Identity*, p. 196.

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