THE ORIGINS OF MUSCOVITE AUTOCRACY

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by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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The origins of the idea of autocracy in Muscovite Russia may be found largely in the fifteenth century, when the growth of the independent Muscovite State was marked by the emergence of a new concept of State and a corresponding theory of State power intended to legitimize the claims of the Grand Prince of Moscow to divinely-commissioned autocratic sovereignty over the Russian lands, all of which he considered his ancestral patrimony. Although the Russian Orthodox Church had long advocated the autocratic principles of Byzantine political philosophy, it was not until the fifteenth century that these theories, modified by changing circumstances and supplemented by original South Slavic and Russian contributions, assumed a major role in the official ideology of the Grand Princes. Both clerical and grand-princely concepts of autocracy were intimately associated and exercised a distinctly reciprocal influence upon one another.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an attempt to examine the origins of the idea of autocratic sovereignty in Russia, and the forms in which it emerged as the central principle of authority of the Grand Princes of Moscow in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The interest in this question was stimulated by the relative shortage of scholarly works, in either English or French, which present a continuous, systematic interpretation of the origin and emergence of autocratic ideology in Muscovite Russia.[1] This is not to imply that the problem of autocratic ideology has been entirely neglected by the eminent historians of Russia; rather, the political, economic, and social development of the Muscovite State has simply claimed the greater part of their attention.[2] Valuable

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[1] S.V. Utechin, Russian Political Thought, New York, 1963, outlines certain theories of autocracy but devotes only one short chapter (Chapter II: "Muscovite Russia", pp. 19-36.) to political ideas from the Mongols to Patriarch Nikon.

[2] G. Vernadsky, Russia at the Dawn of the Modern Age, New Haven, 1958, pp. 165-170, briefly explains autocratic ideology in the reign of Ivan III. V.O. Kluchevsky, A History of Russia, New York, 1960, II, 16-37, provides an excellent analysis of the new political consciousness of the Grand Princes of Moscow in the fifteenth century. F. Dvornik, The Slavs in European History and Civilization, New Brunswick, 1962, pp. 362-388, gives a better account of the origins of the idea of autocracy than either Vernadsky or Kluchevsky, but his explanation is rather sketchy, and alternates between ideology and politico-social history.

insights into the idea of autocracy may be derived from the general histories of Russia, but the overall picture is generally incomplete and unsatisfactory, especially with respect to the problem of origins.

A study of monographic literature is generally more rewarding than the various histories, for there are a number of detailed analyses of certain aspects of the problem, but in spite of existing information there is no work which offers an overall interpretation of how the ideas of Muscovite autocracy emerged and found expression.

Accordingly, a comprehensive and continuous analysis of the complex and varied factors instrumental in the origin and emergence of the idea of autocracy in Muscovite Russia is the purpose of this study, which represents only a part of the project which will be undertaken for Ph.D. research. The literature on the subject is limited mainly to works in English and French, including translations of Russian and Soviet historians, as well as appropriate source material. Certain Russian-language sources were consulted, but financial limitations made it impossible to use those libraries (especially the Library of Congress and the New York Public Library) which would provide all the relevant source material and literature in the Russian language.

Before embarking upon this study, it is first necessary to understand its frame of reference. Autocracy, which is not a very rigid or definite form of government, may be understood as the free exercise of absolute sovereignty by an independent ruler, whose monopoly of political authority knows minimal restraints. In Moscow, autocratic ideas found expression in two broad trends of thought: autocracy as a principle or notion of political sovereignty and as a legitimist ideology. The latter idea may be studied in terms of the concepts of authority held by the Grand Prince of Moscow, and the prerogatives and responsibilities of the ideal Orthodox autocrat envisioned by the Russian Orthodox Church. Both trends of thought were intimately associated and exercised a distinctly reciprocal influence upon one another. The State is also to be taken into consideration as the framework of the development of autocratic ideas, for in regard to the problem, the State is fundamentally important as an expression of the idea of the relation between sovereign and subject.

Legitimism, the legal right or mandate to rule, is central to any principle of authority and may find expression in various forms. In Kievan Russia, the right to exercise princely power was reserved for those of the blood of Rurik; legitimacy thus resided in the princely family. During the

During the period of the Mongol conquest, princes exercised authority by virtue of the Khan's yarlyk; in effect, the Khan became the dispenser of legitimacy in the Russian lands. With the rise of Moscow and its destruction of Mongol suzerainty, the Grand Princes of Moscow began to think of themselves as autocrats commissioned by God. The same God who universally established authority over the people and who imparted to the ruler a divine mandate also raised him to the throne without human intervention. Such a belief, vigorously preached by the Russian Church, was essential to the transformation of the Grand Prince from the senior patrimonial prince to the autocratic sovereign of all Russia.

CHAPTER I

THE FOUNDATIONS OF AUTOCRACY

A study of the origins of autocracy in Muscovite Russia necessarily involves an investigation of those elements of authority which antedated its establishment, in order to assess the extent to which earlier principles of authority and legitimacy influenced the development of ideas of autocratic sovereignty.

Unlike the centralized monarchies of Western Europe, the Muscovite autocratic regime was not preceded by an era of feudalism, but by the princely federation of Kievan Russia, in which family right was considered the basis of sovereignty. This idea was implicit in the testament (1054) of Iaroslav I, who entrusted power to all his sons as a family group:

> My sons, I am about to quit this world. Love one another, since ye are brothers by one father and mother. If ye abide in amity with one another, God will dwell among you, and will subject your enemies to you. But if ye dwell in envy and dissension, quarrelling with one another, then ye will perish yourselves and bring to ruin the land of your ancestors, which they won at the price of great effort. Wherefore remain rather at peace, brother heeding brother. The throne of Kiev I bequeath to my eldest son, your brother Izyaslav. Heed him as ye have heeded me, that he may take my place among you. To Svyatoslav I give Chernigov, to Vsevolod Pereyaslavl', to Igor' the city of Vladimir, and to Vyacheslav Smolensk.[1]

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[1] S.H. Cross and O.P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor (eds.), The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text, Cambridge, 1953, p. 142. Hereafter cited as PVL (Povest' Vremennykh Let).

The "land of Rus'" was regarded as the common patrimony of the entire family of Rurik, and every member of the family was entitled to a share in its rule. It was therefore essential to reconcile two fundamental principles: maintaining the unity of the lands and sharing a common patrimony among all members of the princely family.[2]

A reconciliation was achieved by creating a system of succession by seniority, which gave the senior member of the family supreme authority at Kiev and introduced a rotating system of succession in the principalities. Supreme power was vested in the princely family as a whole and not in individual members of the family, who merely participated in the collective ruling power. Individual princes were not permanent, immovable rulers of the lands allotted to them, for the common ancestral heritage was not divided into perpetual portions bequeathed to posterity. Rather, they were transferable rulers, moving from principality to principality according to a definite rota. The rota was fixed by the relative seniority of the individual prince, which in turn fixed the adjustable relation between the number of eligible princes and the number of principalities. Princely rule was based on an exact relation between the two scales - territorial and genealogical. The senior prince was thus assigned to the suzerain throne of Kiev, and the junior

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[2] F. Dvornik, The Slavs in European History and Civilization, New Brunswick, 1962, p. 363.

princes received lesser thrones according to the relative importance of each. When a prince died, each prince below him on the double scale moved up a position according to his relative degree of seniority. The weakness of this system is obvious, for seniority could be determined both by the order of generations and by the order of birth of individuals constituting a generation. A prince's death could provoke the outbreak of a feud between the brothers and sons (uncles and nephews) of the dead ruler, for the brothers would claim seniority of generation, while the sons would feel that they should assume the same place in the great chain of family relationship as had been held by their father.

Since the lands were held as a family heritage, the idea of the prince as a territorial ruler bound by permanent ties to the territory which he governed had not arisen. Supreme authority resided in the princely family collectively, and the authority of each prince over his territory was of a temporary nature, for he would eventually move to another district in accordance with the rota system.[3]

The basis of sovereign power was less that of political right than that of genealogical or family right, i.e., the general legitimacy of the princes of the blood of Rurik. Kievan Russia was essentially a princely federation, a family enterprise. No centralized State existed, for the

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[3] V.O. Kluchevsky, A History of Russia, New York, 1960, I, 94-103. See also G. Vernadsky, Kievan Russia, New Haven, 1948, pp. 178-180. Hereafter cited as Vernadsky, Kievan.

early Varangian princes had no idea of such an organized political entity. The Varangians did not settle in the country, but in the towns, forming a loose federation of cities and of tribes upon which tribute was imposed. The Grand Prince and his family ruled the land along the lines of a patrimony, the junior princes ruling in the name of the Grand Prince. Relations between the princes were based on personal and family ties rather than political and institutional ones. All princes were bound by the blood-tie; there was no clear notion of political authority and political relationships as opposed to family authority and kin-relationship.

The very nature of family authority in Kievan Russia precluded the idea of the political State, which is more than an organized, autonomous power-organism. The political State involves an essential corporative element because it is bound by institutions rather than blood. Its sovereignty is determined by the territorial principle, not the personal.[4] There must exist some type of distinction between sovereignty and the bearer of sovereignty, between "the king's two bodies."

The institutional principle was absent from the Kievan realm. The princes were bound by kinship rather than political ties and recognized the Grand Prince not as their

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[4] M. Mladenovic, L'Etat serbe au moyen-âge, Paris, 1931, pp. 46-47.

lord or sovereign, but as their elder brother, to be respected in place of their father. The public administration was centered about the prince's court, for its nucleus was the prince's household administration supported by his druzhina.[5] This was clearly an encroachment of the patrimonial idea upon the idea of the State, especially since the princely family as a whole had to be provided for out of the State revenues, each member claiming his share.[6] The personal nature of sovereignty made impossible a clear separation of ruler and office. Kievan Russia was therefore not a homogeneous political State or even a political federation in the strict sense of the term, but an aggregation of territories united only through their princes. There existed a unity of territory and population based on fact of kinship rather than a unity of State.[7]

If the blood tie determined the nature of authority, it is logical that this same factor should condition the idea of legitimacy. As authority resided in the princely family, so did legitimacy. Each prince was entitled to a share in the rule of the family patrimony because the blood of Rurik flowed in his veins; the family had an inborn right to rule and each prince partook of the general family legitimacy. Indeed, all princes thought of themselves as brothers, nor

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[5] Vernadsky, Kievan, p. 174.

[6] Ibid., p. 190.

[7] Kluchevsky, op. cit., I, 124.

could they forget that they were all "grandchildren of the same grandfather." A prince or a branch of the princely family could claim to be more senior than another, but could not claim to be more legitimate.[8] Seniority was the basis of establishing ranks, but with the multiplication of the princes and the ensuing complication of genealogical relations, the often unclear tenets of seniority were replaced by personal ambition and the patrimonial instinct. The idea of the general legitimacy of the family of Rurik would later be put to good use by the Muscovite princes, a junior branch of the family.

Kinship was not the only source of legitimacy. With the Christianization of Russia, the Orthodox Church began to preach the idea of the sanctity of princely power. God protected the Christian prince and granted to him authority, which was recognized by the universal Emperor of all Christians. Accordingly, obedience to the legitimate sovereign was the duty of the subject. Divine-right ideas, however, did not become a part of the practical ideology of the Kievan princes. When the prince was enthroned, he received the blessing of the Church but there was no anointment or religious coronation ceremony; the Church blessed the "right" ruler but itself did not confer the right to rule. The princes were patrons and protectors of the Church, enacting statutes

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[8] Ibid., p. 99.

defining lay and ecclesiastical rights and jurisdictions, but did not generally interfere with the life of the Church. Similarly, the involvement of the Church in politics was confined largely to keeping the peace amongst feuding princes and inspiring collective action against pagans, especially the invading horsemen of the steppes. Certainly, the Church advocated the autocratic principles of Byzantine political philosophy, but these were in complete disaccord with the political structure and beliefs of the Kievan realm. Family authority and seniority remained the true foundation of authority and legitimacy; clerical political ideas were reserved for ceremonies or feast-days.

The society of Kievan Russia would thus appear most inimical to the growth of autocracy. The rotating system of succession in the principalities and the structure of the State as a princely federation precluded the rise of a strong monarchy, and the Grand Prince was bound to collaborate with the other princes in matters of administration and foreign relations. The fact that a boyar was not a vassal and could take service with another master without loss of lands tended to limit the powers of the Grand Prince. Towns were an important political force; the veche limited the powers of the prince, for it had a voice in the succession to the throne by supporting or opposing a candidate from the point of view of the city's interest, and on certain occasions even

demanded the abdication of a prince already in power.[9] Finally, the autocratic notions of political authority held by the Church had not become an integral part of the concepts of authority held by the Grand Prince.

The breakdown of the rotating system of succession and the idea of a broad family authority was essential in creating conditions favourable to the growth of autocracy. Under the rota system, a son was expected to assume the exact place in the great chain of family relationships as had been filled by his father; this was known as the father's otchina, or grade. With the growing complexity of genealogical relations, sons were often unable to follow their father in the same order that the father himself had followed. Indeed, princes began to disregard precepts of seniority when it was a question of whether a son or a senior, but distant, relative should succeed to a principality. Various branches of a princely family began to be associated with a particular territory, which began to be considered as the special otchina of its own branch. The effects of the territorialization of the term otchina, i.e., from the father's place in the family scale to his place in the scale of principalities, were to shatter the indivisibility of family rule and to cause the land to be broken up into a number of lands governed as inherited patrimonies instead of principalities succeeded to in order of seniority. As the princes multiplied, so did the

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[9] PVL, p. 148.

various lines of the princely family drift apart and become estranged. Each line attempted to stabilize its authority in its own principality, which began to be considered as personal, not family property. Certain princes began to consider their authority their own, thus mingling concepts of political authority and proprietorship.[10] This practice may be dated from the riada of Lyubech (1097) where, according to the Chronicle, the various princes agreed to end their feuds. They declared:

> Why do we ruin the land of Rus' by our continued strife against one another... . Let us rather hereafter be united in spirit and watch over the land of Rus', and let each of us guard his own domain.[11]

While the principle of seniority was not abrogated, that of the special rights of each princely branch was recognized, for the princes agreed that each of Iaroslav's grandsons should be left in possession of the principality which had been awarded to the grandson's father by Iaroslav.[12]

Prince Andrei Bogoliubsky of Suzdal threw out the entire rota system. In 1169, Andrei led his army out of north-east Russia and mercilessly sacked Kiev. He subsequently proclaimed himself Grand Prince without occupying the throne of Kiev, which he relegated to minor princes whom he treated

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10 Kluchevsky, op. cit., I, 106-108.

11 PVL, p. 187.

12 Vernadsky, Kievan, p. 90.

as servitors. Suzdal thus acquired the character of private property while the nature of the prince's authority acquired an individual significance, since the senior prince remained voluntarily in a junior principality. Andrei sought to introduce the principles of autocracy into Russian political life by attempting to curb the powers of the veche and treating his boyars as servitors rather than councillors. As potential rivals for power, his kinsmen were driven out or treated as servitors in an attempt to replace the old ties of kinship with the compulsory subordination of the junior princes to the suzerainty of the senior prince. Such an autocratic policy was too alien for his contemporaries, and Andrei was assassinated in 1174.[13]

Andrei was succeeded by his younger brother Vsevolod III, who emerged victorious from a feud with Andrei's sons. Vsevolod's victory assured that the lands of Vladimir-Suzdal would remain with his branch of the family in direct contravention of the old rota system, from which his lands were now effectively removed. He began to regard his principality as a private property over which he ruled as an absolute sovereign. The principality lost its unity when the old custom of dividing the lands amongst the heirs was re-introduced; the latter regarded their lands as private property. A more ambitious prince would be

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[13] M.T. Florinsky, Russia: A History and an Interpretation, New York, 1953, I, 51-53.

inclined to consider as his private property inherited from his father not only that part of the principality which he himself held, but the entire principality.[14]

The gradual tendency of the princes to regard their lands as inheritable private property was essential in laying the foundations of autocracy. The breakdown of the rota system enabled a prince to establish himself in his lands and form permanent relations with the local populace, thus creating a solid base for his authority which was becoming a personal rather than a family right. The process of the conversion of family lands into private property had begun prior to the Mongol conquest, but was continued and became stabilized under Mongol rule. Family right became gradually overshadowed by patrimonial right.

The origins of patrimonial right may be found in Vladimir-Suzdal, which had become the common otchina of Vsevolod III's branch. It did not remain its collective otchina, but was gradually split up into a number of territories separate and independent from one another, the personal property of its princes. Certain minor lands were ruled in the descending, not collateral line, by the junior princes of Vsevolod's family. Each small territory became the separate and permanent property of an individual prince; the new terminology votchina or udiel was used to describe

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[14] Dvornik, op. cit., p. 365.

the separate, private, divisible property of a prince. These terms may be translated as patrimony rather than apanage, for in Western Europe, an apanage was a fief granted by the sovereign to a member of the reigning family, which reverted to the crown after the death of the titulary, whereas the udiel was a hereditary property.[15] The new system differed from the rota in that the movement of princes from principality to principality was ended, and that the prince became the private ruler of his own lands, which he could devise or alienate at will. Two factors aided the growth of patrimonial rule in north-eastern Russia. The physical features of the region caused the process of colonization to give rise to small river provinces, separated from one another, which served as a ready-made basis for the division of the lands into private hereditary patrimonies. The process of colonizing going on in the frontier region of the north-east forced the prince to be the organizer of the community; hence the idea of the prince as the personal owner of his patrimony followed from his role as its first settler and organizer.[16] Indeed, the nature of the frontier area enabled the prince to exercise his authority with less restraint than in the south-west, for the colonists were

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[15] See A. Eck, Le Moyen-Age russe, Paris, 1933.

[16] Kluchevsky, op. cit., I, 249-253.

dependent upon the prince for defence and organization, and there existed no deeply-rooted traditions which would tend to restrain princely power.[17]

The thirteenth century saw an ever-increasing disintegration of north-eastern Russia into patrimonies. As the princes multiplied, the hereditary otchina was divided and subdivided to the impoverishment of the patrimonial princes, who received an ever-decreasing share of their family's otchina. The grand result was a decline of the political importance of the individual prince, who became little better than a landowner, less the ruler of his patrimony than a proprietor of princely blood. When the idea of the patrimony as the personal property of the prince became transformed into an actual right to possess it, the power to rule was added to that right. Gradually, a prince's private right of possession over a patrimony became the political basis of his ruling power, and the supreme rights of the prince were considered assets attached to the property which he had inherited. Authority thus became property devisable at will, and if a prince lost his patrimony, he lost his authority and could do nothing but enter the service of another prince. The idea of the land as the common patrimony of the princely family as a whole and of the old pan-territorial ruling power

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[17] K. Kadlec, Introduction à l'étude comparative de l'histoire du droit public des peuples slaves, Paris, 1933, p. 159

residing in the entire family was gradually forgotten.[18]

The period of the patrimonial regime (udelnyi poriadok) was thus characterized by a confusion of juridical concepts of sovereignty and proprietorship, a lack of differentiation between private right and public law. The idea of the State was overshadowed by the idea of private patrimonial right, which became the effective basis of the authority of the individual prince.

The Mongol conquest of Russia at first helped to consolidate the divided nature of the patrimonial regime, but ultimately aided the emergence of autocracy by disrupting the traditional patterns of authority which had worked against the establishment of autocracy. After the initial period of conquest, the Mongols chose not to administer Russia directly, but through the agency of the highest authority in Russian society, the Grand Prince, thus recognizing, in effect, the legitimacy of the senior member of the family of Rurik. To eliminate the idea of any authority existing without the express consent of the Mongol Khan, sole and supreme source of political authority, the Grand Prince and the patrimonial princes were required to journey to his court to have their rights to their patrimony and their princely status confirmed by a yarlyk or Charter, the most coveted of which bestowed grand-princely authority.[19] A new element of authority was

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[18] Kluchevsky, op. cit., I, 256-261.

[19] Florinsky, op. cit., I, 58-59.

thus introduced; princes were bound to their suzerain not by blood and kinship but by a document expressing the idea of political rather than personal authority.

The Khan's practice of granting yarlyks to confirm the rights of the Russian princes and secure their loyalty considerably aided the disintegration of the land into patrimonies. Each prince was eager to secure hereditary rights to his principality and thus convert it into a private patrimony. By granting them yarlyks, the Khan effectively made the petty princes secure in the possession of their patrimonies by guaranteeing their proprietory rights. Such a practice was considered useful in providing order and stability in the Khan's Russian domains.[20] The prince's private right of possession of a patrimony, the result of his gradual entrenchment in his lands, became the political basis of his ruling power and the effective source of princely authority.

Consider the suzerain principality of Vladimir in the thirteenth century. Upon the death of Iaroslav I (1246), Vladimir was ruled successively by his four sons Andrei, Alexander Nevsky, Iaroslav II, and Vasili, each of whom received the office of Grand Prince in his turn. Upon the death of Vasili, the throne of the Grand Prince of Vladimir

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[20] S.F. Platonov, La Russie moscovite, Paris, 1932, pp. 5-6. See also C. Stählin, La Russie des origines à la naissance de Pierre le Grand, Paris, 1946, pp. 99-100.

was assigned by Khan Mangou-Temir to Alexander's oldest son Dmitri. Each of Alexander's brothers, and then each of his sons, while becoming Grand Prince of Vladimir, preferred to remain in his own private patrimony, coming to Vladimir only to conduct business which required his presence.[21] If the Khan's yarlyk was the legal source of grand-princely authority, then his hereditary patrimony was the concrete, practical basis of his power, for each Grand Prince remained in his patrimony, the real source of his power, merely adding the suzerain principality of Vladimir to his udiel when he received the grand-princely yarlyk.[22]

The Mongol conquest altered the concept of legitimacy. Since a prince's tenure in office was dependent upon the Khan's yarlyk which confirmed his rights to his patrimony, the Khan in effect became the dispenser of legitimacy in the Russian lands. Although the rights of the princely family to rule were generally recognized, the Khan's yarlyk superseded family right as the supreme source of authority.

If the Mongol conquest served initially to further the disintegration of Russia into hereditary patrimonies, it also destroyed the traditional patterns of authority and served to create the conditions in which an autocratic regime could ultimately arise. Formerly, no prince could gain enough power to dominate the others; indeed, the autocratic policies

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[21] G. Vernadsky, The Mongols and Russia, New Haven, 1953, pp. 167-168. Hereafter cited as Vernadsky, Mongols.

[22] Platonov, op. cit., pp. 15-17.

of Andrei Bogoliubsky had led to his assassination. A prince was also obliged to come to terms with the city veche. Under Mongol rule, a clever and ambitious prince could use the Khan's yarlyk as an unassailable instrument for asserting his own authority over the other princes, for was not the Grand Prince required to enforce the Khan's orders and collect his tribute? As for the cities, their strength had declined considerably as a result of the devastation of the initial conquest and of subsequent punative expeditions, as well as the heavy taxation in money, kind and labour services. Similarly, he could use the Khan's yarlyk against the veche of the weakened cities. It was the princes of Moscow who succeeded in monopolizing the grand-princely yarlyk and used its authority to build up their autocratic power at the expense of the other patrimonial princes.

Moscow, inferior to Rostov and Vladimir, had been generally assigned to a junior line of princes who were mostly transient. In 1263, Danili Alexandrovich, a younger son of Alexander Nevsky, was created prince of Moscow, which then became the capital of a permanent principality. Danili was thus the founder of the Moscow line of princes.[23]

The general insecurity of life in the steppe region stimulated a steady exodus of the population from the south to the relatively peaceful area of north-east Russia. This

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[23] G. Welter, Histoire de Russie, Paris, 1949, pp.101-102.

process of colonization was an essential factor in the early growth of the Muscovite principality. The main area of colonization was the Mezhduriechie, the land enclosed by the upper Volga and Oka rivers. Settlement took place along the inner tributaries of these two rivers, in long strips of land divided by forest and swamp but connected by portage. This region was of great importance commercially, for the Moskva river linked the middle Oka system with the upper Volga system. The tributaries of the upper Volga and Oka are connected with the tributaries of the upper Dnieper, and the upper Oka and its tributaries lie near the upper stretches of the Donets and Don and their tributaries.[24] Moscow was thus at a point where two popular movements intersected: commerce south-westwards and colonization north-eastwards. The commerce meant transit-dues and the stimulation of local industry, and the colonists meant a large population to pay taxes. Indeed, colonization resulted in considerable acquisitions of lands and population during an initial period of inconspicuous, long-sustained growth.[25]

The genealogical position of the princes of Moscow must be appreciated, for they belonged to a junior line and could not hope to advance themselves by the traditional methods of seniority. It was necessary to become political

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[24] R.J. Kerner, The Urge to the Sea, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1946, pp. 35-36.

[25] Platonov, op. cit., p. 39. See also Kerner, op. cit., p. 38.

opportunists and to pursue a policy which would advance them in defiance of old traditions. Thus, a thorough organization of their patrimony aimed at increasing its wealth and power was essential in order to provide a solid basis for subsequent political activity.[26]

The acquisition of the grand-princely yarlyk by the Muscovite princes provided them with a golden opportunity to increase the scope of their political activities. The Grand Prince was responsible for enforcing Mongol order and collecting the Khan's tribute, and since he needed power to carry out his duties, he was permitted to retain an army. To support the cost of his troops, the Grand Prince added his own taxes to those of the Khan and tried to collect as much money as possible in order to gain a surplus for himself once the Khan's tribute was paid. This surplus was required to increase his political power at home and to retain his office by distributing liberal bribes to the Khan and his officials. As the yarlyk was a lucrative asset, it became the object of intrigues and strife among the Russian princes.[27]

Ivan I of Moscow, after a bloody conflict with the princes of Tver in which Ivan led a joint Muscovite-Mongol army to devastate the principality following an anti-Mongol

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[26] Vernadsky, Mongols, p. 244.

[27] B. Grekov and A. Iakoubovsky, La Horde d'or, Paris, 1939, pp. 210-212.

revolt in 1327, ultimately gained possession of the grand-princely yarlyk (1332). His successors never allowed it to be lost, keeping it in the Muscovite princely family for a century and a half by lavish bribes and constant intrigues. The principalities of Tver, Riazan, and Suzdal were made exempt from the authority of the Grand Prince of Moscow, the prince of each being commissioned to collect tax monies and bring them directly to the Khan.[28] Several years later, these princes were granted the title of Grand Prince within their dominions, but Vladimir still carried prestige as the original and senior Grand Principality.[29]

Thus, the Muscovite princes, despite their possession of the senior suzerain principality, did not have a monopoly of political power in north-east Russia. The reasons for the growth of Muscovite autocracy may be found in the astute policies pursued by the Grand Princes, who began to impose their authority on the other patrimonial princes while enjoying the support of the Khan. Intentionally or not, the Khan helped to build up the autocratic powers of the Muscovite princes. He awarded to Moscow the rights to the senior grand-princely throne; he helped Moscow to overthrow its most dangerous rival, Tver (1327), and ultimately allowed Moscow to dominate the other grand duchies (Riazan,

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[28] Vernadsky, Mongols, pp. 199-201.

[29] Ibid., p. 206.

1371; Tver, 1373) of his realm; he strengthened the financial position of Moscow by the inflow of tribute collected on his behalf; and by wearing down the resistance and resources of the people, he prepared the ground for the autocratic rule of the Grand Prince of Moscow.

The Moscow princes knew how to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the Khan's yarlyk. First-class administrators, good businessmen, efficient managers of their estates and territories, they were capable of maintaining territorial peace and civil order, establishing internal and external security. Subservience to the Khan resulted in the cessation of Tatar raids for some forty years following 1332, while the right to collect Tatar tribute gave the Muscovite princes a powerful financial weapon to use against the other princes. The ultimate result of this increased political and financial power was the expansion of Moscow by the purchase of bankrupt estates, seizure by armed force, diplomatic acquisitions, and treaties with patrimonial princes on the basis of contingent service. As the power and prestige of Moscow increased, growing numbers of petty princes and boyars were attracted to the service of the Grand Prince, thus increasing his power and prestige. To summarize, the shrewd use of the military and economic power derived from the possession of the Khan's yarlyk was a major factor in converting the Muscovite Grand Prince, senior only

by title over the other patrimonial princes, into an autocratic Russian sovereign.[30]

It has been argued that all notions of State disappeared during the period of the patrimonial regime, and certainly, its distinguishing feature, the confusion of proprietorship and sovereignty, would seem to have eclipsed the idea of the State. The status of the lands of the Grand Prince of Moscow in the mid-fourteenth century is a good example of this problem. The territory of the principality of Moscow was not a territory of State, but a personal otchina. The prince's right of rule could be devised or alienated at will equally with the lands of the otchina. The juridical basis of succession was the personal testament of the ruler, and this right was based on the idea of the personal, heritable property of the prince; authority was conceived of as property. The personal domains of the Muscovite prince were the chief foundation of his administration and economic power, which situation was really an incursion of the patrimonial idea upon the idea of the State, for Vladimir, and not Moscow, was the legal seat of the suzerain power. Thus the prince's landed rights became blended with his authority.[31]

The testaments of the Muscovite princes reflected

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[30] Kluchevsky, op. cit., I, 281-288.

[31] Ibid., pp. 298-299.

this problem. In his will, Ivan I divided his possessions, including his lands and personal belongings, fairly equally among his three sons and wife.[32] No mention of his rights of ruler was made, because the Moscow principality alone was his patrimony to be bequeathed. Ivan could not devise the suzerain principality of Vladimir because it was not his otchina; the grand principality, with its suzerain rights, was the seat of the senior Grand Prince who occupied it only by virtue of the Khan's yarlyk. In contrast, the principality of Moscow ranked as an otchina and not a territory of State, hence the rights of rule could be devised at will equally with the lands of the otchina.[33] Ivan had no right to devise the suzerain principality, for that was the Khan's prerogative. Possession of the throne of Vladimir was the legal basis of the Grand Prince's rights, but the practical basis of his power was the patrimony, of which he was both proprietor and sovereign.

Ivan I, Semeon the Proud, and Ivan II all considered Moscow and its subordinate territories as the patrimony of the Grand Prince and dared not claim testamentary rights over the suzerain principality of Vladimir, seat of the Grand Prince designated by the Khan. Dmitri Donskoi was the first

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[32] R.C. Howes, The Testaments of the Grand Princes of Moscow, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University, 1961, pp. 16-34.

[33] Kluchevsky, op. cit., I, 297-299.

prince of Moscow to call the suzerain principality of Vladimir his otchina and bequeath it in its entirety to his heir Vasili I: "And lo, I bless my son, Prince Vasili, with my patrimony, the Grand Principality... ."[34] Vasili dared not consider Vladimir his patrimony when drawing up his testament, but his son Vasili II indicated that the former seniority of Vladimir was gone forever by bequeathing his otchina, the grand principality of Vladimir and its integral parts, to his son Ivan III without any reference to the Khan's prerogative.[35] Vasili thus bequeathed the territory of State, and with it, the suzerain power, as if it were a personal possession; indeed, Ivan III became Grand Prince without the Khan's yarlyk. Sovereign power was thus included in the inventory of devisable property, and this problem would eventually play a major role in the succession crises at the end of Ivan III's reign.

Despite the general confusion of proprietorship with sovereignty, the idea of the State was not entirely absent during the patrimonial regime. The prince's authority was not entirely submerged in his sphere of private interests, and his dynastic origin made him more than a simple landlord.[36]

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[34] Howes, op. cit., p. 85.

[35] Ibid., p. 144.

[36] Vernadsky, Mongols, p. 353.

The testaments of the Grand Princes of Moscow furnish evidence of the survival of the idea of the State. As early as the first testament of Ivan I, there was a tendency to divide the otchina into unequal portions, of which the eldest son received a larger share than did the other heirs. At first, the excess granted by right of seniority was only a small one, but with Dmitri Donskoi's will, this excess assumed increasingly greater proportions. The Grand Princes did not invest their eldest sons with any corresponding excess of political rights, nor did they place the younger sons in direct political dependence upon the eldest. Rather, the eldest son received the material means to force his brothers into a position of subordination. The Grand Prince's landed ascendancy became the foundation of his subsequent political authority; his excess of lands enabled him to impose his authority on the junior patrimonial princes.[37]

From the time of Dmitri Donskoi, there began a process of the gradual conversion of the patrimonial princes from autonomous rulers to princes in the service of Moscow. This practice was of supreme importance, because the relations of the patrimonial princes in the fourteenth century can provide no evidence of the existence of compulsory, political bonds placing the junior princes in subordination to their suzerain. Any bonds formed were temporary or family ones, usually arising from the need to resist common enemies or

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[37] Kluchevsky, op. cit., I, 305-306.

from the dependence upon the Horde ("It shall be for me to know the Horde, but not for thee."), for it was generally recognized that each prince was autonomous within his own patrimony. Because of the Grand Prince's right to collect Horde tribute, the financial dependence of the patrimonial princes upon the Grand Prince was bound to develop into a political dependence.[38] The replacement of bonds of kinship by compulsory political subordination was an essential feature in the conversion of Moscow from senior patrimony to an autocratic State. In this connection, mention should be made of an interesting passage in the testament of Semeon the Proud: "And lo, I write this to you so that the memory of us and of our parents may not die, and so that the candle may not go out."[39] In a hesitant way, Semeon was attempting to establish the legitimacy of his family to rule Moscow.

The purpose of this chapter has been to describe the conditions in which autocracy arose. The divided nature of authority in Kievan Russia, the idea of legitimacy residing in the princely family as a whole, and the eventual fragmentation of the land into hereditary patrimonies would seem to have effectively precluded the emergence of an autocratic regime. The Mongol conquest disrupted these

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[38] Ibid., pp. 302-303.

[39] Howes, op. cit., p. 42.

traditional patterns of authority; the Khan became the dispenser of legitimacy in the Russian lands, for no prince could exercise authority without first having obtained the Khan's yarlyk. Early in the fourteenth century, the Muscovite princes obtained permanent possession of the grand-princely yarlyk and used it to increase their own power and territory, and to force the other patrimonial princes into a position of dependence. Despite the apparent triumph of the idea of patrimonial right, the testaments of the Grand Princes of Moscow and their efforts to impose bonds of compulsory political subordination upon the junior patrimonial princes provide evidence of the survival of the idea of the State.

Although the Grand Princes of Moscow were dependent upon the Khan's yarlyk to sanctify their authority over the junior patrimonial princes, Moscow, by the fifteenth century, was becoming increasingly powerful, while the Golden Horde was gradually disintegrating under the impact of political crises and civil wars. The grand result was a growing reluctance on the part of the Muscovite princes to admit that their authority was derived from the Khan, and a tentative search for other sources of legitimacy. By 1480, Ivan III's renunciation of Mongol suzerainty made essential an ideology to sanctify the autocratic sovereignty of the Grand Prince.

CHAPTER II

IVAN III'S IDEA OF GRAND-PRINCELY AUTHORITY

The origins of the idea of autocracy in Muscovite Russia may be found largely in the fifteenth century, especially in the reign of Ivan III (1462-1505). Throughout the fourteenth century, the principality of Moscow had grown steadily into a powerful State capable of defeating domestic rivals such as Tver, withstanding attacks from the militant Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and leading a large-scale military resistance against the Horde. The first half of the fifteenth century saw Moscow survive a bitter civil war and achieve a practical independence from the Horde; after 1452, Grand Prince Vasili II paid no regular annual tribute to any of the rival Tatar khans.[1] Internally, Vasili succeeded in converting the suzerain principality of Vladimir, seat of the senior Grand Prince, into a patrimony which he bequeathed to his eldest son Ivan III.

Ivan's reign marked the emergence of a new concept of State and a corresponding theory of State power. As ruler, his goal was to unite all the Russian lands under the independent leadership of the Grand Prince of Moscow and to create a powerful centralized State to replace the old

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[1] G. Vernadsky, Russia at the Dawn of the Modern Age, New Haven, 1959, p. 71. Hereafter cited as Vernadsky, Russia.

patrimonial federation held together by ties of kinship or temporary agreements. He had no intention of reigning merely as the senior member of his family, the chief patrimonial prince. In his concept of the proper State, he envisioned the ultimate submission of all the patrimonial princes to the autocratic sovereignty of the Grand Prince. Ivan's idea of grand-princely authority was clearly manifested by an episode which took place during his campaign against Novgorod in 1477-1478. In stipulating the terms of surrender, Ivan declared that the Grand Princes demanded the same authority over Novgorod, their "patrimony", as they had over Moscow. When the Novgorodians asked for concessions, Ivan replied: "Now you are instructing me, are setting limits to our sovereignty; where then is my sovereignty?"[2] To Ivan, grand-princely authority meant independent autocratic sovereignty.

The construction of a centralized autocratic State necessarily involved two courses of action: increasing the Grand Prince's authority at the expense of the other Muscovite patrimonial princes, i.e., his brothers, and expanding the territory of Moscow by conquering or annexing the other autonomous Russian principalities. The most serious opposition came from the Grand Prince's brothers. When their father Vasili II had defeated Iuri of Galich and his supporters, he was left in supreme control of Moscow but

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[2] S.V. Utechin, Russian Political Thought, New York, 1963, p. 26.

when he drew up his testament, he created new patrimonies by dividing his lands among his five sons and wife. Ironically, it was Vasili who threatened both the hard-won supremacy of the Grand Prince and the principle of autocracy. The authority of the Grand Prince had been legally established by Vasili's testament, and Ivan III had received the greatest share of lands and wealth, but at the same time, his brothers had received patrimonies in full ownership as hereditary property, which could be ruled or devised at will. The relations of the patrimonial princes to the Grand Prince were vague. Vasili's testament had contained the time-honoured formulae which stipulated that the junior princes should "honor and obey your oldest brother Ivan, in place of me, your father..." while Ivan was to "hold his brother Iuri and his younger brothers in brotherliness, and without injustice."[3] Thus the basis of relations was family rather than political ties. Obligations were minimal. The patrimonial princes were obliged to levy soldiers to aid the Grand Prince in time of war and conduct no independent diplomatic relations with powers outside the Grand Principality.[4] The collection of the Horde tribute was the

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[3] R.C. Howes, The Testaments of the Grand Princes of Moscow, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University, 1961, p. 184.

[4] J.L.I. Fennell, Ivan the Great of Moscow, London, 1961, pp. 290-291.

only fiscal tie with Moscow, for the princes were obliged to hand over to the Grand Prince their share of the Khan's annual levy. Even this tie was temporary, for Vasili's testament stipulated:

> And if God should bring about a change concerning the Horde, then my princess and my children shall collect tribute [dan'] for themselves from their patrimonial principalities and my son Ivan shall not interfere in this.[5]

In effect, the patrimonies were states within states, for the princes were free to deal with their subjects within their boundaries and were not hampered by terms of compulsory political subordination to the Grand Prince. Ivan, however, was determined to rule as an autocrat and not as primus inter pares. He was not prepared to see his brothers grow more powerful as Moscow grew in territory, and resolved to reduce their lands and authority, leaving them politically impotent.

When his brother Iuri died childless in 1477, Ivan promptly seized his patrimony, in violation of the old custom by which each of the surviving brothers could claim a share in the dead brother's lands. In 1481, Andrei Junior of Vologda died childless and Ivan seized his patrimony for himself. Such autocratic actions were resented by the other brothers, Andrei Senior and Boris, both of whom had revolted against Ivan in 1480 because neither had received

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[5] Howes, op. cit., p. 181.

a share of the new Novgorodian lands to which they were by custom entitled. When Andrei Senior refused to participate in a campaign against the Horde in 1491, Ivan accused both his brothers of treason. He pardoned Boris, but cast Andrei into prison and confiscated his patrimony. Boris died in 1494, leaving his patrimony to his sons Ivan and Fedor, both of whom died childless in 1504 and 1513, respectively. Their patrimonies were taken over by the Grand Prince.[6]

Ivan pursued a similar course of action towards the other Russian principalities. In 1463, the Iaroslavl' princes ceded their rights to Ivan and resigned their independence. The Rostov princes sold their rights in 1474. Prince Fedor of Riazan bequeathed his half of the Riazanian principality to Ivan in 1503. The Grand Principality of Tver was conquered outright in 1485, as was the small northern republic of Viatka in 1489. Novgorod had already been annexed in 1478. By the end of Ivan's reign, only half of the principality of Riazan and the city of Pskov remained separate States outside of Moscow.[7] Ivan had been careful to eliminate all independent authority outside of his own; no Russian prince could be capable of effectively limiting his autocratic authority, which was increasing proportionally with the growth of the Muscovite State.

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[6] Vernadsky, Russia, pp. 96-98. See also Fennell, op. cit., pp. 293-306.

[7] Vernadsky, Russia, pp. 98-101. See also Fennell, op. cit., pp. 29-65.

Ivan's policies as described above were no great innovation in the traditions of the Muscovite princes. His desire to rule as an autocrat was by no means unique, while his methods of consolidating his authority and increasing his territories were entirely traditional. It is the second aspect of his policy which is significant. Ivan was the first Grand Prince of Moscow to claim that all the Russian lands, and not merely the Great Russian portion, was his otchina or hereditary patrimony and was the first Muscovite prince to make the recovery of the "lands of Saint Vladimir" his basic policy.

Such a claim, vigorously pursued, would necessarily lead to conflict with Lithuania, whose ruler styled himself "Grand Duke of Lithuania and Russia." A large portion of the Lithuanian lands had once been ruled by princes of the Kievan family federation prior to the expansion of Lithuania in the fourteenth century. The Russian population of Lithuania, some three million out of a total population of four million,[8] had remained largely Orthodox while Roman Catholic institutions were favoured by their rulers. The Muscovite princes claimed to be direct descendants of Rurik and his family which had once governed the lands now held by the usurping princes of Lithuania. Therefore, all of the Russian lands of Lithuania were considered the legitimate

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[8] Vernadsky, Russia, pp. 175-177.

patrimony of the Orthodox Grand Prince of Moscow, and Ivan was prepared to claim his hereditary rights.

Ivan's opportunity to press his claims arose in 1492 when Poland and Lithuania were separated by the death of Casimir IV. Of his sons, Jan Olbracht was elected king of Poland and Alexander became Grand Duke of Lithuania; the eldest brother, Wladislaw, had been elected king of Bohemia (1471) and Hungary (1490). Under Ivan's direction, the undeclared border warfare which had been going on since 1487 in the Smolensk district became intensified; raids became extensive operations resulting in the capture of the province of Vyaz'ma; thousands of people in the raided areas were captured and deported to Moscow; local princes were either captured, supported against the Lithuanian Grand Duke, or else encouraged to desert to Moscow, as did the princes of Vorotynsk. In 1493, negotiations were opened between Lithuania and Moscow to end the impossible situation of an undeclared border war. The progress of these negotiations provides a good illustration of Ivan's concept of autocratic sovereignty.

In January, 1493, the Muscovite ambassador to Lithuania was instructed to convey the greetings of "Ioann, by the grace of God, sovereign of all Russia and grand prince... ."[9] Such a title could mean only that Ivan now

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[9] Fennell, op. cit., p. 147.

officially laid claim to all the Russian lands, regardless of under whose protection they temporarily might be. The Lithuanians objected vigorously to this appelation; at a reception given by the diak Ivan Patrikeev, the Lithuanian ambassadors complained that Ivan had "written his name in a lofty manner, not according to tradition." Patrikeev replied that there was nothing new or lofty in the title and that Ivan was "sovereign of all Russia," a title bestowed on him by God "from his grandfathers and great-grandfathers."[10]

After protracted negotiations and disputes, a treaty of friendship and alliance between Lithuania and Moscow was signed in Moscow on 7 February, 1494. For the purposes of this study, the most important aspect of the treaty was that it included the title upon which Ivan had insisted: "Ioann, by the grace of God sovereign of all Russia."[11] This was a major victory for Ivan, for he had succeeded in forcing a foreign head of State to recognize his new title of "sovereign of all Russia." The claim implicit in the title was that all the "lands of Saint Vladimir" were the hereditary patrimony of the Grand Prince of Moscow by virtue of his dynastic origin, and because he was the divinely-commissioned autocrat of all Russia. It is possible that the Lithuanians were not fully aware of the

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[10] Ibid., p. 148.

[11] Ibid., p. 152.

dangers implicit in their recognition of Ivan's title, for their ruler continued to style himself "Alexander, by the grace of God grand prince of Lithuania, Russia, Zmudz and other lands... ."[12] Ivan, however, had occasion to complain several times that the Lithuanians did not use his full title.

In April, 1500, two Russian princes of the Chernigov-Severian region, Semen Ivanovich of Mozhaisk and Vasili Ivanovich Shemiachich, son and grandson respectively of Vasili II's great enemies and direct descendants of Dmitri Donskoi, deserted from Lithuanian to Muscovite suzerainty, bringing with them great estates east of the Dnieper which then became Muscovite territory.[13] This action provided a convenient pretext for a second war between Moscow and Lithuania, lasting from 1500 to 1503. As with the first war, the process of peace negotiations provide a good illustration of Ivan's concept of autocratic sovereignty and his intention to recover his legitimate "patrimony", the "lands of Saint Vladimir". Sigismund Santay, ambassador of Wladislaw of Bohemia and Hungary, arrived at Moscow in December, 1502 to arrange terms of peace between Alexander and Ivan, as well as to deliver a letter from Pope Alexander VI

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[12] Ibid., p. 155.

[13] Vernadsky, Russia, p. 94.

urging Ivan to join with the western powers in a great European crusade against the Turks. To Santay's demands that the Grand Prince should cease hostilities, pay damages, and return prisoners and captured lands, Ivan and his diaki composed a reply which restated all their old complaints against Alexander and defined clearly Ivan's position:

> King Wladislaw and King Alexander have been hereditary owners of the kingdom of Poland and the land of Lithuania since the days of their ancestors; but the Russian land, since the days of our ancestors, since the times of old, has been our patrimony.[14]

Ivan added that these princes were surely in error in seeking to go to war over his legitimate patrimony. Without equivocation, Ivan was laying claim to all the Russian lands of Lithuania, whereas previously he had designated as his otchina only those lands captured from the enemy. To the Polish-Lithuanian embassy of March, 1503, the Muscovite delegates explained that if Alexander should desire love and brotherhood with Ivan, he should "yield to our sovereign his patrimony of all the Russian land."[15] Under such circumstances, neither side was prepared to make concessions enough to secure a stable peace. Therefore, a six-year truce was concluded, with the stipulation that Alexander send his "great ambassadors" to Moscow to conclude a permanent peace. In February, 1504, the Lithuanian embassy arrived at Moscow

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[14] Fennell, op. cit., p. 263.

[15] Ibid., p. 266.

and presented Alexander's terms for peace, which included the demand that Ivan return the towns and districts seized since 1494, the "patrimony" of the king of Poland and the Grand Duke of Lithuania. Ivan's representatives promptly outlined the Muscovite theory of the ownership of the Russian lands:

> It is known to King Alexander...that all the Russian land is by God's will our patrimony and has been since olden times, since our forefathers... . Their [i.e., the king's] patrimony is the Polish and Lithuanian lands. Why therefore should we yield to him those cities and districts - our patrimony - which God gave us?[16]

The Muscovites further declared:

> ...les villes russes, également notre patrimoine, qui sont encore sous le grand-prince lithuanien, Kiev et Smolensk et d'autres villes, terre russe, nous avons l'intention si Dieu le permet, de recouvrer tout ce patrimoine à nous.[17]

Such a blunt declaration showed clearly Ivan's mission: the reconstitution of the former territories of the Kievan princely federation under the autocratic sovereignty of the Grand Prince of Moscow.

Ivan III's claim of otchina over all the Russian land was part of a new political consciousness which found expression in new ideas about the sovereignty of the Grand Prince of Moscow. Ivan's stand on the Ugra in 1480 was his

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[16] Ibid., pp. 284-285.

[17] A. Eck, Le Moyen-Age russe, Paris, 1933, p. 432.

formal renunciation of Mongol suzerainty. The Grand Prince was now faced with an ideological problem: he had depended upon the Khan's yarlyk to sanctify his authority over the other patrimonial princes, but had now officially renounced his suzerain. Ivan was therefore obliged to search for a new source of legitimacy for his authority, which would fit in with his lofty ideal of grand-princely authority and his belief that all the Russian lands were the patrimony of the Muscovite princes.

Ivan resolved his problem by invoking the principle of the divine right of himself and his ancestors to rule the Russian lands. The idea of divine right was not new in Moscow. Since the Christianization of Russia, the Church had always preached the divine origin of princely power and the rule of the prince as God's agent on earth. Such exalted concepts of sovereignty had never really been a part of the working, practical ideology of the Kievan princes - these were reserved for feast-days. Ivan, however, made the divine origin of his sovereign rights a central idea in his concepts of legitimacy. In a word, Ivan believed that the Grand Prince should be imperator in suo regno.

Perhaps the most dramatic example of Ivan's belief in the divine origin of his sovereignty may be found in his relations with Nikolaus Poppel, who had served the Holy Roman Emperor Friedrich III as a kind of roving ambassador. In

1486-1487, Poppel visited Moscow as an agent of the Emperor, who was interested in Moscow as a potential ally against the Jagiellons. Returning to the Reichstag at Nürnberg, he delivered a report about Moscow's impressive military and political strength. Friedrich promptly dispatched Poppel back to Moscow as his official ambassador to probe the possibilities of an alliance. In a private audience, Poppel suggested that Ivan could obtain a royal crown from his master the Emperor. Ivan was furious at the suggestion, which would make him a vassal of the Holy Roman Empire. He replied:

> By God's grace we have been sovereigns in our own land since the beginning, since our earliest ancestors; our appointment comes from God, as did that of our ancestors, and we beg God to grant us and our children to abide forever in the same state, namely as sovereigns in our own land; and as beforehand we did not desire to be appointed by anyone, so now too do we not desire it.[18]

The power to rule in Moscow was thus derived from God, and not from the hands of men. Ivan was attempting to place his authority on a higher foundation than mere patrimonial right; in consolidating the Russian lands under his authority and attempting to invest his authority with a universal significance because it came from God, the Grand Prince was passing from the senior patrimonial prince and chief landowner to the divinely-commissioned autocrat of all the Russian lands. Legitimacy, the right to rule, was derived

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[18] Fennell, op. cit., p. 121.

not only from ancestral or family right as with the Kievan princes, but from God who ordained the Grand Prince as an autocratic sovereign.

The new political consciousness of the Grand Prince and his officials did not find expression in abstract treatises on sovereignty. No Russian Machiavelli existed to define the authority of the Muscovite prince. New ideas of political power were expressed not in tracts, but in new titles, ceremonies, and official legends. It is necessary to study these externals to understand the internal idea.

In 1497, Ivan III caused to be made a State seal. On the obverse side was a bicephalous eagle, a radiant crown upon each of the heads-in-profile. The inscription read: "Grand Prince Ivan by God's Grace Sovereign of All Rus."[19] The use of this title was not entirely new. Vasili I had inscribed "Grand Prince of All Russia" on his coins, in obvious imitation of the Metropolitan's title. After his last usurpation of the grand-princely throne, Dmitri Shemika caused coins to be struck with his name and the inscription "Sovereign of the Russian Land." When Vasili II recovered his throne, in 1447, he had coins struck bearing various inscriptions: "Vasilievich Sovereign of all Russia", "Sovereign of the Whole Russian Land", and "Sovereign of all Russia". Some time late in 1448 or early in 1449, the

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[19] G. Alef, "The Adoption of the Muscovite Two-Headed Eagle: A Discordant View", Speculum, 41 (1966), p. 1. Hereafter cited as Alef, Adoption.

coinage reflected the co-optation of Vasili's eldest son Ivan as Grand Prince, for the titles on the coins read: "Sovereigns of All Russia."[20] The purpose of these inscriptions was to legitimize the position of the Grand Prince of Moscow as the only true sovereign of all the Russian lands, and to express the notion of his political sovereignty.

Although Vasili II used the title of sovereign (gospodar', gosudar') freely on his coinage, he used the title most hesitantly on State documents. Yet in his treaties, Vasili began to substitute terms of political relationship to replace terms of kinship. Previously, subordination had been expressed in terms of kinship - a junior prince would acknowledge himself the "son" or "younger brother" of another, and this was entirely within the old traditions of family authority. The impetus for change came from Grand Duke Vitovt of Lithuania, who was named both gospodin and gosudar' in a treaty with the Grand Prince of Riazan in 1429. This idea was adopted by Vasili II in his treaty with Vasili of Serpukhov (1433), who addressed the Muscovite prince as his "gospodin, elder brother, and father". The princes of Vereia and Mozhaisk subsequently recognized Vasili II as their gospodin (1434), omitting the terms of kinship. In a 1449 treaty with a Suzdal prince, Vasili became the former's gosudar', but this formula was not repeated in any subsequent

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[20] G. Alef, "The Political Significance of the Inscriptions on Muscovite Coinage in the Reign of Vasili II", Speculum, 34 (1959), pp. 11-12. Hereafter cited as Alef, Coinage.

treaties.[21]

Ivan III made full use of the titles tentatively employed by his father, for his intention to rule as an autocratic sovereign and not as the senior member of his family made it essential to replace terms of kinship with terms of political subordination. As sovereign of all Russia, Ivan was to be the sole independent political force; the recognition of his title gosudar' by Novgorod meant the end of its independence.[22]

Vasili had also introduced the idea of divine right into his treaties; in 1451, a treaty with Boris Alexandrovich of Tver stated: "si quelqu'un de mes princes-serviteurs part en ton service, tu n'interviendras pas dans leurs patrimoines à eux que Dieu me confia... ."[23] Similarly, in a treaty with Casimir IV of Poland, Vasili had used the phrase "By the Grace of God" for the first time, thus creating a useful precedent for his son.[24] Nevertheless, Vasili was in no position to push any of the claims implicit in the new titles. He could not pursue a large-scale policy of annexation because it was necessary to consolidate his authority after the recent civil war. Ideologically, it was difficult to reconcile the idea of being sovereign of all

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[21] Vernadsky, Mongols, p. 351.

[22] Vernadsky, Russia, p. 59.

[23] Eck, op. cit., p. 420.

[24] Vernadsky, Mongols, p. 327.

Russia by the grace of God with the fact that the Grand Prince of Moscow was still theoretically the vassal of the Tatar Khan and ruled by virtue of his yarlyk.

Ivan III was in a more advantageous position than was his father. By 1497, he had formally renounced his Tatar suzerain, destroyed most of the independent political authority in north-east Russia, and had obtained Lithuanian recognition of his title "Sovereign of all Russia". Ivan was prepared to make the claims implicit in his titles a political reality.

Ivan used his title on coins and treaties, and incorporated "Grand Prince Ivan By God's Grace Sovereign of All Rus'" on his State seal, which included also the bicephalous eagle. The adoption of the eagle has been traditionally interpreted as symbolizing the transference to Moscow of the "Byzantine heritage", for the bicephalous eagle had been employed by the Greek emperors and in taking it as a symbol on a State seal, the Grand Prince was thus proclaiming himself heir and successor to Byzantium. Ivan's marriage to Sophia Paleologus was also interpreted in the light of Moscow's "Byzantine heritage". The bicephalous eagle, however, had never been a coat-of-arms of the imperial branch of the house of Paleologus, and it was never used in Constantinople in the same fashion as it would be used in Moscow. In the fourteenth century, the bicephalous eagle became popular at

the court of the Paleologi, but as an insignia of high court dignitaries, not imperial arms.[25] Indeed, Ivan did not adopt this Paleologian insignia immediately after his Byzantine marriage, but after the opening of diplomatic relations with the Habsburgs some twenty years later. It is entirely possible that the bicephalous eagle as a device on Ivan's seal of State came into being as a reaction to diplomatic manoeuvers with the Habsburgs.[26] Poppel had deeply offended Ivan in suggesting that he could obtain a crown from the Emperor. In the subsequent exchange of ambassadors, Ivan made it clear that he considered himself at least the Emperor's equal. In a letter to the Reval authorities requesting free passage for his mission, Ivan styled himself "Ivan, by God's grace, Great Sovereign, Tsar of all Rus'... ."[27] Iuri Trakhaniot, his ambassador, was instructed to agree to nothing less than the marriage of Ivan's daughter to Maximilian, son of Friedrich III; the issue of a reigning monarch, and not an imperial margrave, was alone fit to wed the Grand Prince's daughter. Trakhaniot was to remind Friedrich that the rulers of Rus' had lived for many generations in peace and brotherhood with the former emperors of Byzantium, "who gave Rome to the Popes".[28] The reception

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[25] A.V. Solovjev, "Les emblèmes héraldiques de Byzance et les Slaves", Seminarium Kondakovianum, 7 (1935), p. 134.

[26] This is the thesis of Alef, Adoption.

[27] Ibid., p. 9.

[28] Fennell, op. cit., p. 122.

of the imperial envoy Jörg von Thurn in Moscow was an exact replica of Habsburg ceremonial accorded to Trakhaniot. Von Thurn saluted Ivan as "Tsar of all Rus'" and "Sole Tsar of all Rus'"[29], but was careful not to put this in writing.

During this diplomatic exchange, Ivan discovered that the bicephalous eagle identified the imperial rank of the Western Emperor. An eagle device had been brought to Ivan's court some twenty years previously by members of Sophia's suite. Ivan therefore ordered the fashioning of a State seal with a bicephalous eagle closer iconographically to the Byzantine than the Habsburg. The new seal was markedly different from any employed by the Muscovite princes prior to the 1490s; those of the Grand Princes from Ivan I to Vasili II bore the image of the personal name-saint of the ruler. Ivan's seal bore an impersonal State symbol - the bicephalous eagle, the purpose of which was to convey the idea that Ivan was equal in rank to the Holy Roman Emperor, not a potential vassal.

Ivan was not content with establishing his title of Sovereign of all Russia and having it recognized by the Habsburgs. He began to use occasionally the titles tsar and samoderzhets (autocrat). Both titles were used sparingly, in a tentative and exploratory manner, and were confined to internal documents and dealings with lesser authorities.

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[29] Alef, Adoption, pp. 14-15.

Their origin may be found in Byzantium, where the Emperor was known as Basileus Autokrator. The Russians rendered Basileus as tsar and Autokrator as samoderzhets, the last term being a literal translation of the title into Slavonic.[30] Ivan used the title samoderzhets to express the notion of his independent sovereignty; his grandson Ivan IV interpreted it to mean unlimited sovereignty.

The title tsar, derived from caesar, reached the Slavs by way of the Goths and had originally designated all princes.[31] Ivan III approached this title with care and circumspection, for it had been formerly applied exclusively to the universal Christian Emperor by the Russian monk-chroniclers. From the thirteenth century onwards, tsar had lost its Orthodox connotations, being used to describe the Mongol Khan and eventually the Tatar vassal khans established by Vasili II. With the growth of the second South Slavic influence in the mid-fifteenth century, the title tsar began to assume a distincly Orthodox connotation such as it already possessed in the Balkans.[32] Perhaps the first to use tsar in this sense in Russia was the refugee scholar and monk Pakhomius the Serb (Logothetes). Ivan, filled with an exalted idea of the dignity of his office, used tsar to show lesser

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[30] Vernadsky, Russia, p. 167.

[31] M. Mladenovic, L'Etat serbe au moyen-âge, Paris, 1931, p. 156.

[32] N. Andreyev, "Filofey and his Epistle to Ivan Vasil'yevich", Slavonic and East European Review, 38 (1959), p. 14. See also Mladenovic, op. cit., p. 157.

authorities that he was the equal of any emperor, and to impress upon all men the notion of his independent, God-given sovereignty. In 1473, a Pskovian treaty concluded with the Livonian Order began with "our sovereigns, the orthodox Grand Princes and Tsars, Ivan Vasilievich and his son Ivan Ivanovich... ."[33] Ivan thus had begun to use the title tsar before renouncing Tatar suzerainty. In 1482, the same formula appeared on an armistice signed between Ivan and the Livonian grand master von der Borch. In 1484, Ivan wrote to the Jew Zakharii Skar'e of Kaffa, inviting him to enter his service: "By the Grace of God, the Great Sovereign of the Russian lands, Grand Prince Ivan Vasil'yevich, Tsar of all Rus'... ."[34] Ivan wrote to the authorities at Reval in 1489, requesting free passage for his envoys to Friedrich: "Ivan, by God's grace, Great Sovereign, Tsar of all Rus'... ."[35] A 1493 treaty of friendship between Moscow and Denmark began: "We, John, by the grace of God king of Denmark, Sweden, Norway...enter into friendship and perpetual alliance with...John, emperor of All Russia (tocius Rutzsie imperatore)."[36]

Ivan used tsar to show that he was a ruler who owed no obedience to any power and paid no tribute to anyone,

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[33] Alef, Adoption, p. 8.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., p. 9.

[36] Fennell, op. cit., p. 169.

but tsar nevertheless drew its full meaning from the Byzantine belief in the divine sovereignty of the universal Christian Emperor, whose autocratic authority is exalted above lesser kings and princes.

The introduction of a coronation ceremony in 1498 was an important stage in the development of Muscovite autocracy. In Kievan Russia, the clergy would give its benediction when a prince ascended his throne, but no quasi-sacramental coronation took place. Indeed, the city veche approved the succession or decided between rival candidates, and the people played a prominent part in the enthronement, which usually took place in a public square or the prince's castle. A break with tradition occurred in 1206 when Vsevolod III of Vladimir installed his son Constantine on the throne of Novgorod. After a spiritual invocation and instruction by the bishop, Constantine was confirmed by his father and acclaimed by the people. The ceremony then moved from the public square to the Church of Saint Sophia where a religious ceremony took place, which indicated the consecration of the elect of God. The ceremony included the invocation, "God, even thy God, has anointed thee", which consecration attributed to the prince a spiritual sonship with God, who selects and sustains the prince.[37]

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[37] W.K. Medlin, Moscow and East Rome, Geneva, 1952, pp. 57-60.

A religious coronation was exceptional, and no evidence of a similar ceremony may be found until 1498, when Ivan III had his grandson Dmitri crowned Grand Prince of Vladimir, Moscow, and Novgorod. The coronation took place at the Uspensky Sobor in the Kremlin on 4 February, 1498. Metropolitan Simon and the bishops officiated. In the ceremony, the following phases were important: Ivan's address to the Metropolitan in which he stressed seniority and heredity; the oration by the Metropolitan and the prayer of anointment; the blessing of the grand-princely regalia - the cap and the barmy - and the Metropolitan's handing of the regalia to Ivan who placed it upon Dmitri; an instruction by the Metropolitan and an instruction by Ivan III who declared:

> Grandson Dmitri! I have favoured thee and blessed thee with the grand duchy; do have awe of God, do love truth, mercy, and justice; do care with all thy heart for the whole Orthodox Christianity.[38]

An elaborate religious coronation fitted in well with Ivan's exalted concept of the dignity of the Grand Prince; nothing less than the divine consecration of the autocratic sovereign replaced the consent of the veche and the Khan's yarlyk as a source of legitimacy. Indeed, the Metropolitan of Moscow and all Russia played a central role in the ceremonial, and his prayer of anointment symbolized that Dmitri was

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[38] Vernadsky, Russia, pp. 124-125, 166-167.

consecrated to his throne not by man, but by God. Ivan's admonition to care for all Orthodoxy showed his awareness of the sovereign's duty to care for the public weal; not only for his subjects, but the "whole Orthodox Christianity", i.e., the Orthodox folk inhabiting the Russian lands of Lithuania. Thus, the ceremony of 1498 was an important expression of Ivan's concept of autocratic sovereignty.

Perhaps the most unusual justification of the titles and claims of the Muscovite autocrats may be found in an epistle written by the Tverian monk Spiridon-Savva in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. In the 1540s, his epistle was rewritten and popularized as the Legend of the Princes of Vladimir. In attempting to fit the new Muscovite State into the frame of world history, Spiridon began with Noah and carried the account down to Caesar Augustus who, in reorganizing the world, sent his own brother Prus to the banks of the Vistula to rule. Rurik, invited to be prince of Rus', was a descendant of Prus in the fourteenth generation, and consequently, of Caesar Augustus. Thus the Muscovite princes, direct descendants of Rurik, were linked with a representative of the oldest world monarchy.

In the course of time, the Kievan prince Vladimir Vsevolodich decided to attack the imperial city, Tsargrad. Constantine Monomakh, the Byzantine emperor, was anxious to avoid war and dispatched to Vladimir the Metropolitan Neofitas and other emissaries bearing gifts, including the imperial

crown from his own head, and a message:

> Receive from us, oh God-loving and pious prince, these worthy gifts, due your birth and ancestry... for your glory and honour and enthronement over your free autocratic tsardom...for we request of Your Honour peace and love; thus the Church of God will be trouble-free and all orthodoxy will be at peace under the power of our tsardom and your free autocracy of Great Russia; for you shall be called, henceforth, the God-crowned tsar, crowned with this imperial diadem by the hand of the most holy metropolitan... ."[39]

Vladimir accepted the gifts, was crowned with Constantine's crown, and henceforth called himself Monomakh:

> And from that time Great Prince Vladimir, son of Vsevolod, was called Monomakh, Tsar of Great Russia, and thereafter...continued for the rest of his life in peace and friendship with the Emperor Constantine. From that day to this, the great princes of Vladimir have been crowned with the imperial crown which the Greek emperor...sent when he confirmed the Russian great-princedom.[40]

The Legend was pure historical fiction; aside from the nonsense of Roman descent, Spiridon forgot that Constantine Monomakh died when Vladimir was two years old. The Legend nevertheless gained popular acceptance; Ivan IV claimed descent from Caesar Augustus on the basis of the Legend, which he used also to justify his title of tsar during negotiations with Poland in 1563.

The Legend is highly important as a source of autocratic ideology. It expressed the notion of double legitimacy: by their birth, through the legendary Prus and his direct descendant Rurik, the Muscovite princes were heirs

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[39] N.K. Gudzy, History of Early Russian Literature, New York, 1949, p. 266.

[40] Ibid.

of the Roman emperors. Through their power and glory, the Kievan ancestors of the Muscovite princes acquired imperial rank from the emperor of the second Rome, who confirmed Vladimir as tsar. The Legend emphasized the idea of continuity and therefore legitimacy of the Muscovite State and its sovereigns, who were heirs to the two Romes both historically and dynastically. Legitimacy was established not only through imperial descent, but also right of conquest, for the Legend pointed out the foreign origin of the dynasty. It is interesting to note that the Legend appeared at the solemn coronation of Ivan IV, when the titles of tsar and samoderzhets were officially adopted for general use in foreign affairs and internal administration.[41]

At this point, it is necessary to summarize certain conclusions. The rapid territorial growth of Moscow forced the Grand Princes to take a new view of themselves as rulers and of the idea of their sovereignty. New theories were deduced from accomplished facts and then elevated into political and ideological claims; Ivan's belief that he was "Sovereign of All Russia" was due in a large part to his successful elimination of independent political authority in Russia and his renunciation of Tatar suzerainty. His concept of autocracy rested on a dual base. On the one hand, he was sovereign of all Russia by virtue of his origins and ancestral right; on

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[41] V.O. Kluchevsky, A History of Russia, New York, 1960, II, 22.

the other, he was the legitimate Grand Prince and autocrat because his appointment to rule over all Russia came from the grace of God, not from the hands of men. His belief in autocracy as the only form of sovereignty may be ascribed to various influences. Perhaps the most important was two centuries of Mongol rule. The Grand Prince took over from the Horde the adulation of an autocratic ruler, a deep instinct for affairs of State, and a bold conception of leadership. The patrimonial idea may have contained within itself latent seeds of autocracy inasmuch as the patrimony was absolute property to be ruled or devised at will; Vasili II's conversion of the suzerain principality of Vladimir into a hereditary patrimony might, therefore, have increased such latent tendencies. The consolidation of the Russian lands under Moscow resulted in the elimination of all other sources of independent authority with the exception of those foreign powers whose Russian lands were considered the Grand Prince's patrimony. Finally, the Russian Church had a predilection for autocracy and lent ideological and political support to the autocratic sovereignty of the Grand Prince.

The new ideology embodied in titles, claims, legends and ceremonies was intended not only to legitimize Ivan's right to exercise autocratic sovereignty over the "lands of Saint Vladimir", but to elevate the very nature or essence of his authority to a higher level than mere patrimonial right, i.e., to invest his authority with a universal significance

because his appointment to rule came from God. Was there a corresponding change in the nature of the lands he ruled, i.e., was the hereditary patrimony transformed into a political State? To answer this question, it is first necessary to understand the meaning of "patrimony" and "State".

A patrimony was a portion of landed, private, heritable property over which a prince exercised authority by virtue of his ancestral origin. Proprietorial right became gradually confused with sovereign rights, with the result that the prince ultimately derived his authority from the possession of a patrimony, which was his private property to be ruled or devised as he pleased. If a prince lost his patrimony, he lost his authority which itself had gradually come to be considered as property. The senior patrimonial prince could exercise authority over other princes if he were powerful enough, but relations were based on kinship rather than compulsory political subordination, and the nature of sovereignty was essentially personal, since it was derived from proprietorial right.

In contrast, the political State exercises territorial rather than personal sovereignty, for it is an institutional corporation, a unity bound by institutions rather than kinship. These institutions are greater than and distinct from the private individuals who comprise them; there exists a distinction between sovereignty and the bearer of sovereignty, between King and Crown. The bonds between

government and people are based on a relation fixed between an institution and the individual, not on personal dependence. Finally, legitimacy is derived not from mere proprietorial right, but from a higher, usually abstract principle, such as divine right or the sovereign will of the nation.

Ivan III laid claim to all Russia as an autocratic sovereign whose mandate from God legitimized his rights. Was there a corresponding attempt to transform his ancestral patrimony into a political State compatible with the principles of autocratic sovereignty? Certainly, the aim of Ivan's policies was to build a unified, centralized State, but he never ceased to maintain that all the Russian lands were his otchina, or ancestral patrimony and throughout his reign, continued to treat his State as private property, and failed to make a distinction between himself and his sovereign rights.

In 1497, there arose a crisis which clearly illustrated the contradiction between Ivan's exalted concept of sovereignty and his method of ruling the State. The problem was one of succession to the throne. By his first wife, Maria Borisovna of Tver, who died in 1467, Ivan had one son, Ivan Ivanovich, born in 1456 and proclaimed co-ruler and Grand Prince around 1470. Ivan Ivanovich predeceased his father in 1490, but left Ivan III a grandson, Dmitri. In the interval, Ivan had married Sophia Paleologus in 1472; in 1479, Sophia bore Ivan a son, Vasili. The death of Ivan

Ivanovich left open the question of succession to the throne. The court was divided into two factions, the one favouring the candidacy of Ivan's grandson Dmitri, the other his son by a second marriage, Vasili. Behind the intrigues was the personal rivalry of Vasili's mother, Sophia Paleologus, and Elena of Moldavia, mother of Dmitri and widow of Ivan Ivanovich.

A conspiracy aimed at Dmitri's assassination was discovered in 1497. Evidence about the plot is scant, but it is believed that Vasili and Sophia, having been informed that Ivan had decided to grant Dmitri the title of Grand Prince, decided to poison Dmitri and break allegiance with Ivan. With the discovery of the plot, Vasili and Sophia were disgraced and placed under arrest, and certain of their supporters were executed. It is interesting to note that all of the leaders of the plot and their families were connected, at one time or another, with the courts of the patrimonial princes and that Vasili, when he came to the throne, continued the centralizing policies of his father.[42]

As soon as the conspiracy had been suppressed, Dmitri was installed as Grand Prince in an elaborate ceremony. With Dmitri's solemn coronation, it seemed that the dynastic crisis had been overcome. In spite of their disgrace, Sophia and Vasili began to work to re-establish themselves in Ivan's

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[42] Vernadsky, Russia, pp. 122-124.

favour by arousing his suspicions against those boyars who had been instrumental in the trial of the conspirators of 1497 and in Dmitri's elevation to power. Their intrigues were successful. In 1499, Semen Riapolovsky was executed, Ivan and Vasili Patrikeev were made monks, and Vasili Romodanovsky was imprisoned. A little over a year after Dmitri's coronation, Ivan proclaimed Vasili Grand Prince of Novgorod and Pskov, thus breaking the unity of "All Russia" by depriving Dmitri of one of his Grand Principalities. Shortly after this event, Ivan began to neglect Dmitri, who had now lost his most influential supporters. On 11 April, 1502, Ivan disgraced Dmitri and his mother Elena. Three days later, with the blessing of Metropolitan Simon, Ivan proclaimed Vasili "Grand Prince of Vladimir and Moscow and Autocrat of All Russia". Vasili succeeded his father in 1505, and cast Dmitri into prison, where he died.[43]

According to the tradition and practice of the Muscovite princes, the eldest son succeeded to his father's throne. Before the time of Ivan III, no eldest son with male issue had ever predeceased his father; therefore, no precedent existed for choosing between the son of the deceased heir and the eldest surviving son of the Grand Prince. The choice between Dmitri and Vasili rested entirely with

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[43] Ibid., pp. 125-130.

Ivan III, who at first disgraced Vasili and proclaimed Dmitri Grand Prince only to disgrace the latter and confer the succession upon the former. Clearly, succession rested on the testamentary right of selection in direct descending line. In Moscow, there existed no Fundamental Law to regulate succession independently of an individual's whims. The discretionary selection of a successor from among the various heirs in direct descending line was the act of an independent otchinik, a prince whose lands were his hereditary patrimony to be devised at will to his heirs, rather than that of a sovereign who promulgated the first Sudebnik. In effect, Ivan was treating the State as a private patrimony to be devised at will.

In 1499, Vasili was restored to favour and named Grand Prince of Novgorod and Pskov; a year earlier, Dmitri had received the title of Grand Prince of All Russia and had been "blessed" with the grand principalities of Vladimir, Moscow, and Novgorod. Ivan was thus breaking the unity of "All Russia" for which he had worked so arduously. The free city of Pskov, under Ivan's suzerainty, protested Vasili's new title. Ivan sent an envoy to Pskov to proclaim: "I, Grand Duke Ivan, favored my son Vasili and granted him Novgorod and Pskov."[44] The Pskov veche refused to accept Vasili, and sent a delegation to Moscow to petition Ivan not

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[44] Ibid., p. 128.

to violate the old custom by which the suzerain of Pskov was the Grand Prince of Moscow. To this request, Ivan replied: "Am I not free to take care of my grandson and my sons? I grant princely power to whom I please and I please to grant Novgorod and Pskov to Vasili."[45] When Ivan disgraced Dmitri, he explained his decision to Khan Mengli-Girey of the Crimea:

> I, Ivan, at first had favored my grandson Dmitri, but the latter became rude to me. Everyone favors that one who serves well and tries to please his benefactor; there is no sense in favoring a man who is rude to you.[46]

All these incidents indicate how jealously Ivan guarded his right to select a successor and devise his grand principalities as he chose. Personal favour was the basis of succession and a son did not necessarily or automatically enter into his inheritance by right of primogeniture or any similar Fundamental Law; an heir received lands and honours because the reigning Grand Prince "favoured" or "blessed" him with the same. Despite Ivan's exalted concept of the dignity of Grand Prince, the new legitimist ideology, and the new political consciousness, the Grand Prince continued to treat the territories of State as a private patrimony to be devised to the heir he "favoured" - "I grant princely power to whom I please".

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[45] Ibid., p. 129.

[46] Ibid., p. 130.

An examination of the testaments of Ivan III and Ivan IV (Vasili III's testament exists only as a fragment) may provide further insight into the problem of a contradiction between autocratic sovereignty and absolute proprietorship. From the middle of the fourteenth century onwards, the Grand Princes of Moscow began by their testaments to augment the inherited supremacy of the eldest son over his younger brothers in the patrimonies. This process was continued by Ivan III, who bequeathed to his eldest son enough towns and lands so that Vasili III exceeded in wealth and power all the resources of his brothers put together. Ivan also granted to Vasili increased rights in court cases, the exclusive right to coin money, the governorship of the city of Moscow, and the right of escheat in "extinct" patrimonies.[47] Such innovations could only have resulted from the steady permeation of Ivan's mind by ideas of State. Indeed, Ivan wrote: " I bless my oldest son Vasili, with my patrimony, the grand principalities with which my father blessed me, and which God gave me." (italics mine)[48] Formerly the superior of his kinsmen by seniority and material resources, the Grand Prince now began to concentrate in himself practically the whole stock of political rights. Despite the fact, however, that the majority of lands and privileges were granted to Vasili, each of his four brothers

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[47] See Howes, op. cit., pp. 198-262 for the complete text of Ivan's testament.

[48] Ibid., p. 199.

received patrimonies of their own. Similarly, Ivan IV's testament of 1572 apportioned the "Russian tsardom, with which my father Grand Prince Vasili blessed me and which God gave me," to his eldest son Ivan, but granted a patrimony to his other son Fedor, as well as smaller holdings to certain relatives.[49]

Both testaments would suggest that the Grand Princes of Moscow could envision the autocratic, but not the monarchic principle. They refused to relinquish the right of testamentary selection of a successor, and continued to retain the idea that every member of the family was entitled to a private patrimony, however small its territory or illusory its rights.

Ivan III's new concepts of sovereignty and autocracy were indicative of a new political consciousness which sought to transform the Grand Prince's authority from that of patrimonial right to that of autocratic sovereignty over all Russia. The new legitimist ideology was conceived to show that the Grand Prince derived his authority not only from ancestral right, but from God, who commissioned him autocrat of all Russia. Since Ivan was no longer prepared to rule as a patrimonial prince, it is logical to assume that he would strive to convert his ancestral patrimony into a State, whose subjects were bound to their sovereign by ties

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[49] Ibid., pp. 300ff.

of compulsory political subordination, not kinship. Ivan had some distinct notions of State: witness his formal renunciation of Tatar suzerainty and the subsequent political and ideological reorganization which necessarily followed; his idea of the essential unity of the Russian lands and his ambitious policy to recover them; his awareness of his duty to care for the public weal; the promulgation of the Sudebnik; his employment of terms of political subordination rather than kinship; and the use of his testament to increase the power and rights of his eldest son. In times of crisis or urgency, Ivan would treat his lands as a private patrimony and his authority as devisable property. His course of action during the great succession crisis showed the extent to which he considered the Grand Principality as a patrimony devisable to whatever heir he chose to "favour"; he even broke the unity of the Russian lands when he made Vasili the Grand Prince of Novgorod and Pskov while Dmitri held the title of Grand Prince of Vladimir and Moscow. In devising lands and honours to one heir, and then to another, Ivan failed to make a proper differentiation between himself and his authority, or rather appeared to believe that authority was blended with his personality. With Ivan, succession, properly an act of State, was reduced practically to the level of an independent otchinik parcelling out his patrimony to his heirs. The testaments of the Grand Princes

continued to grant patrimonies to junior princes, despite the overwhelming preponderence of the senior prince - a survival of the idea of the State as a patrimony, a share of which was the right of every member of the princely family.

To summarize, the Grand Princes of Moscow continued to view their lands as a patrimony which they ruled both by ancestral right and by the grace of God, who granted them their autocratic sovereignty. The idea of the political State would triumph when Peter the Great would declare the tsar to be merely the first servant of the State. Until that time, political and patrimonial ideas would remain blended together in Moscow.

CHAPTER III

ORTHODOXY AND AUTOCRACY

In Muscovite Russia, the most powerful intellectual force was the Orthodox Church which, like the Grand Prince's court, was a highly important source of political ideas. The concepts of authority held by the Church may be traced back to the Christianization of Kievan Russia, when the Church was first confronted with the problem of defining the nature of its relations with the secular power. Since Russia's "baptism" came from Byzantium, the Russian clergy received its education from the Greek Orthodox Church, whose clergy had well-developed ideas of the respective functions and proper relation of Church and State. Accordingly, the Russian Church would tend to define the responsibilities and mutual relations of the two in terms of Byzantine political thought. Ideas about the nature of the authority of the Grand Prince would thus be influenced by the Byzantine concept of the role of the Emperor, Basileus Autokrator, in Christian society. In the realm of political theory, the basic interest of the Russian Church would be to define the prerogatives and responsibilities of the ideal Orthodox prince, rather than to use ideology to justify the claims of the Grand Prince, as did certain of the clergy in the period of the Muscovite regime. To understand the influence of Byzantine

political thought upon the development of Muscovite autocracy, it is necessary to summarize the essential tenet around which Byzantine political ideology was centered - the theory of imperial sovereignty.

The old Roman concept of the god-emperor was the basis of the idea of the divine origin of the sovereign's power. With the triumph of Christianity in the Roman Empire, the Christian Roman Emperor was regarded as a sovereign appointed by God's will. In Byzantium, this idea became transformed into a mystical glorification of the Emperor. Called to rule by Divine Providence, the Emperor was considered the chosen of God who fulfilled divine will in his capacity as ruler of the empire protected by God.[1] He was God's representative on earth, an instrument for the execution of God's purpose on earth. Agapetus, deacon of Hagia Sophia, expressed these ideas succinctly: "By the essence of his body, an emperor is like any man. Yet in power of his office, he is like God, ruler of the All".[2] Elaborate coronations and court ceremonies were so arranged as to stress the divine origin of imperial power and the divine inspiration of the Emperor, whose very person and deeds were holy. A typical acclamation ran:

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[1] G. Ostrogorsky, "The Byzantine Emperor and the Hierarchical World Order", Slavonic and East European Review, 35 (1956), p. 2.

[2] I. Sevcenko, "A Neglected Byzantine Source of Muscovite Political Ideology", Harvard Slavic Studies, II (1954), p. 142

> En vos mains aujourd'hui ayant remis le pouvoir, Dieu vous a confirmé autocrator souverain et le grand archistratège étant descendu du ciel a ouvert devant votre face les portes de l'Empire.[3]

The particular nearness of the Emperor to God and the divine origin of his sovereignty implied the concentration of all authority in his hands. Since his sovereignty was an emanation of divine power, it was bound to gather up all the power on earth and could not be limited by any force, domestic or foreign. Christian ideas thus increased the autocratic powers of the Emperor, who became recognized as the Orthodox Autocrat.

That there may be only one single legitimate empire in the world was the basic principle of all Byzantine political doctrines. The Emperor was considered a Roman emperor and the empire which God had called him to rule was the Roman Empire. Byzantium, "New Rome", was the true successor to Old Rome and its emperors were the legitimate successors to the Roman emperors. Like the belief in the divine origin of imperial power, the inheritance of Rome represented a special source from which the conception of the autocratic powers of the Byzantine emperors and their high claims on the world beyond the imperial borders was derived. The Emperor and omnipotent ruler of the Romans was the leader of all the world and the guardian of the Christian faith because he was the only legitimate Emperor on earth. Byzantium, the sole legitimate Empire on earth, had a more elevated position than other States, for all

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[3] R. Guilland, Etudes Byzantines, Paris, 1959, p. 127.

the countries which had once belonged to the Roman orbis and had joined the Christian Church were considered by the Byzantine emperors as their everlasting possessions to be incorporated into the Empire as a matter of course, even if these enjoyed political independence and the incorporation a mere fiction, not recognized by the nation. As the universal legitimate Empire had never in principle surrendered its claim to world sovereignty, its mission was to unite all Christian states in response to God's command.[4]

Just as the power of the Emperor was the outcome of divine power, any other authority on earth was the outcome of imperial authority. Thus did the Emperor dispense recognition and titles, i.e., legitimacy, to barbarian rulers of tribal federations who, by becoming Christian, wished to be admitted to the family of cultural nations and obtain a sanctity of authority more effective than custom and kinship. As bearer of the highest ruler's title and as head of the oldest Christian Empire, the Byzantine Emperor held the supreme position among rulers and stood as the father of all Christian peoples, the supreme legislator on earth to whom every Christian had to submit in all things concerning the Christian Commonwealth. Unity to the Eastern Christian meant unity under the Christian Emperor, for Byzantium was the Oecumene,

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[4] Ostrogorsky, Slavonic and East European Review, 35, pp. 4-6.

the Orthodox Empire whose political boundaries were co-terminous with the true faith.[5]

The Orthodox Church was of vital importance to the Empire. In the Multinational Empire, the distinctive characteristic which marked off the Rhomaios from the barbarian was not ethnic, but his membership in the Greek Orthodox Church: religion formed the tie which bound the East Roman to his fellow believer and to the Emperor, vice-regent of God.[6] Despite the marked lack of precision in the official relations of the sacred and secular offices, the Emperor played a central role in the operations of the Church. The defence of Orthodox doctrines, faith, and traditions was entrusted to the temporal throne, which was obliged to uproot heresy, enforce canon law, execute justice according to divine law, and care for the welfare of the Orthodox people. The notion of the Emperor as "living law" and of his sovereignty as the earthly reflection of divine wisdom and order led to the idea of his duty to defend the purity of the faith and to establish Orthodoxy, thus reigning as "the faithful and true servant and son of the Holy Church". Some emperors, notably Leo III who wrote to Pope Gregory VII: "Understand, O Pope, that I am both emperor and priest",[7] claimed the authority to define ecclesiastical dogma, but this was regarded by the

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[5] S. Runciman, "Byzantium, Russia, and Caesaropapism", Canadian Slavonic Papers, 2 (1957), pp. 2-3.

[6] N.H. Baynes, Byzantine Studies and Other Essays, London, 1955, p. 20.

[7] W.K. Medlin, Moscow and East Rome, Geneva, 1952, p. 25.

Church as an intolerable abuse and successfully resisted in the long run. The Emperor could legislate in "external" ecclesiastical affairs, especially canon law and patriarchal elections, but essential matters of faith and doctrines were left to the Patriarch, the "real and living image of the Christ". The Emperor was temporal head of the Church, united in spiritual sonship with it. Agapetus wrote: "The Emperor is in truth lord of all, but he is himself the servant of God along with all the rest."[8]

The Byzantine theory of the Christian society was to have a great impact upon the clerical writers in fifteenth century Moscow. The Church and the Empire were considered the two inseparable pillars of the Christian Commonwealth; the universal Roman Empire was the essential counterpart to the universal Orthodox Christian Church. The direct inspiration for this theory was found in the introduction to Justinian's Novel VI:

> God's greatest gifts to men, coming from above, from his love of mankind, are the priesthood and the empire, of which the former serves divine interests while the latter has the control over human interests and watches over them; both spring from the same principle and adorn human life... . If these two institutions fulfill their roles, a kind of harmony will arise which can only prove useful to mankind.[9]

Three centuries later (883), the same idea was repeated in a

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[8] Ibid., p. 24.

[9] See M. Bérenger (ed.), Les novelles de l'empereur Justinien, Metz, 1811, I, 45.

constitutional document called the Epanagoge, a reiteration of the laws. Although never officially published, its chapters defining the roles of Emperor and Patriarch found their way into subsequent compendiums of law. The relevant passage read:

> The state, like man, is formed of its parts and members; the most important parts and those most necessary, are the Emperor and the Patriarch. Thus the peace and happiness of the subjects, spiritually as materially, are in the full accord and agreement of the empire and the sacerdoce.[10]

Thus the Emperor and the Patriarch, deriving their powers from God, were termed the principle and most important organs of government; their concord in the administration of State and Church determined the welfare of all imperial subjects. Both Empire and Church were gifts of God, and the harmony that should exist between them resulted from the fusion of two concepts of universality - Roman and Christian. Thus the aims of the Emperor and Patriarch were identical - the preservation of Empire and Church, bound to one another in their imperial and universal institutional conception. The ideal of Byzantium was the union and fusion of the Roman Christian Empire with the Greek Orthodox Church under the leadership of the Emperor and Patriarch. Since the Emperor reigned as both temporal head and spiritual son of the Church, there existed such a union between Church and State that it was ideologically difficult to conceive of them as separate

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[10] Medlin, op. cit., p. 26.

institutions. One Byzantine author declared that "The Empire is a mystic body which hardly distinguishes itself from the Church...; beyond it there is only disorder and barbarism."[11] Thus it was that the Emperor treated heretics as criminals against the state and the Patriarch excommunicated rebels against the Emperor. Collaboration between the highest representatives of the secular and spiritual authority was directed toward the fulfillment of the ideological mission of evangelizing all humanity.[12] The Byzantine concept of Christian society would be of supreme importance when the Muscovite clergy would be faced with the problem of the disappearance of the universal Empire held to be the essential corollary of the universal Church.

Byzantine political thought began to penetrate into Kievan Russia when its people were converted to Christianity by the Greek Orthodox Church toward the end of the tenth century. Although no Byzantine treatise on political ideology was translated into Slavonic in the Kievan period, the people and rulers of Kievan Russia had good opportunities to become acquainted with the main principles of Byzantine political philosophy. Russian collections of canon law, translated from the Greek, contained not only canons of Councils, but imperial novels and documents of imperial

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[11] Ibid., p. 32.

[12] H. Paszkiewicz, The Making of the Russian Nation, London, 1963, p. 239.

legislation concerning ecclesiastical affairs and interests. These documents were so impregnated with Byzantine ideas on sovereignty that clerics who used them constantly in church administration could not have failed to be profoundly influenced by their innate political ideas, and clerics were the advisors of princes. Since these documents were available in Slavonic translation, they were accessible to others besides priests.[13]

Byzantine missionaries to the Slavs brought two codes of imperial law, the Ecloga and the Procheiron, its replacement. The more influential of the two, the Ecloga, contained an introduction which clearly outlined the legislative role of the Emperor and his sublime position in Christian society. Collections of canon law were also important. The Nomocanon of Fourteen Titles, compiled in the seventh century and revised by Patriarch Photius in the eighth, contained canons of the first four Oecumenical Councils and imperial decrees concerning ecclesiastical affairs. By the middle of the tenth century, the Nomocanon of Fourteen Titles was translated into Slavonic in Bulgaria, and the new Slavonic edition included a translation of the Ecloga of Leo III and the Procheiron of Basil I. From Bulgaria, this document reached Russia early in the eleventh century, and Russian compilers added to it a translation of eighty-seven chapters of imperial decrees,

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[13] F. Dvornik, "Byzantine Political Ideas in Kievan Russia", Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 9-10 (1956), p. 76.

which were contained in an earlier Nomocanon, that of John Scholasticus (sixth century), which is believed to have been translated in Moravia before being brought to Bulgaria, and from there, to Russia.[14]

This new Slavonic compilation contained important extracts from Justinian's Novels, including the introduction to Novel VI, one of the most significant texts defining the basic ideas of Byzantine political thought. The principles which inspired these imperial decrees helped to influence Russian conceptions of the relations between Church and State, and of the rights and duties of the Christian prince.[15]

The Slavonic editions of the Nomocanons included the decrees of various Councils and synods, many of which expressed the cardinal tenets of Byzantine political philosophy: the Emperor is appointed by God as Master of the Universe and represents Christ on earth; his duty is not only to care for earthly things, but above all, for heavenly things; as representative of God, he must care for the Church, confirm its decrees, and enforce their application to the lives of the faithful.[16] The prologue to the Ecloga, included in the Slavonic Nomocanon, explained the proper role of the Emperor and Patriarch in Christian society and stressed the

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[14] Ibid., pp. 76-82.

[15] Ibid., p. 83.

[16] Ibid., p. 88.

belief that the Emperor's position was sublime because his sovereignty came from God who appointed him in His Providence to rule over his faithful. This definition of the imperial role contained some priestly functions, especially care of the true faith.[17] It is interesting to note that these works were ultimately incorporated into the canon law of the Russian Church, which became a guide for the proper relations between Church and State in both the Kievan and Muscovite periods.[18]

The political ideas contained in the collections of canon law and civil jurisprudence were reinforced by concepts found in such collections as the Stoslovec (Hundred Sayings) and the Izbornik (Miscellany) of 1073 and 1076. Although these works were primarily collections of moral admonitions culled from Scriptural and Patristic sources, they tended to stress the divine nature of the ruler's office and the Christian duty of obedience to the legitimate prince - "He who does not fear the earthly lord, how will he fear Him whom he does not see?"[19] In the twelfth century, another Byzantine anthology, the Pcela (Bee), was translated into Slavonic. A compilation of quotations from Greek philosophers, Holy Writ, and Church Fathers, it contained a separate chapter entitled On Authority and Kingship, which contained an extract from Agapetus:

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[17] Ibid., pp. 90-91.

[18] F. Dvornik, "Byzantium, Muscovite Autocracy, and the Church", Rediscovering Eastern Christiandom, eds. E. Fry and A.H. Armstrong, London, 1963, pp. 108-109.

[19] Dvornik, Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 9-10, p. 92.

> The Tsar is equal through the substance of his body to any man, but through the dignity of power he is similar to God the sublime... . He has no one on earth who is more sublime than he ... .[20]

As the Kievan clergy was in possession of this important material, they could learn from it the main ideas of Byzantine political philosophy. From the collections of canon law supplemented by imperial novels, the clergy obtained a clear conception of the sublime role of the Emperor in Christian history and society. According to Byzantine beliefs, the Emperor, not the Patriarch, represented God on earth. God had entrusted to the Emperor the regulation of things divine and human; he was protector of the Church and supreme legislator for the Christian Commonwealth. This basic idea was tacitly accepted when Kievan Russia accepted Orthodoxy.

Under Greek tutelage, the Russian clergy began to adopt Byzantine ideas on sovereignty, especially the basic principle that God, and not the people, appointed rulers. Relations between Church and State were subsequently modelled on the Byzantine pattern. The preservation of a harmonious relationship and intimate collaboration between Church and State, the two main factors in human society, was one of the leading principles in Byzantine political philosophy, expressed with great clarity in Justinian's Novel VI. This important idea was taken over by the Russian clergy, which

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[20] Ibid., p. 109.

consequently made good relations with the ruling princes its first task. Since Byzantine political philosophy did not conceive of any political system other than autocratic monarchy by a ruler appointed by God, the Russian clergy had a distinct predilection for autocracy, requiring of an autocrat sovereignty inspired by God's precepts. Following the Byzantine example, the clergy tended to favour the autocratic government of one man. There also existed a predilection for unity in government embodied in the idea of the unity and indivisibility of the Russian Church under the Metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia. These theories of autocracy held by the clergy had little in common with the democratic features and divided nature of authority of the Kievan princely federation.

The circumstances of the conversion of Russia put Church and State into a relationship very different from the Byzantine example. Upon his conversion, Grand Prince Vladimir forced his new religion on an almost entirely pagan people, for the Christianization of Russia was an official act ordered by the secular power:

> Thereafter Vladimir sent heralds throughout the whole city to proclaim that if any inhabitant, rich or poor, did not betake himself to the river [and be baptized] , he would risk the Prince's displeasure.[21]

Vladimir's successors never quite forgot this, nor did the

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[21] PVL, p. 116. In this connection see also N.H. Baynes and H. St. L.B. Moss, Byzantium, Oxford, 1962, p. 373.

Russian Church. From the moment of Vladimir's baptism, Russia entered the universal Christian Empire, living under one holy Emperor, the source of law, establisher of Orthodoxy, and representative of God on earth. The idea of the State was thus introduced as part of the Christian ethos; Kievan Russia received and assimilated Christianity, but not the antique, classical concept of a secular State and society which antedated Christianity. The Russian clergy taught no idea of State outside of Christianity and its purposes, for the duty of the State was to work harmoniously with its necessary counterpart, the Church, to carry out the will of God on earth. Such was the idea of State held by the Church.

Ilarion, first native Russian Metropolitan of Kiev, composed a famous Treatise on Law and Grace about the middle of the eleventh century. Concerned mainly with the plan for human salvation conceived by God, the second part of the Treatise contained an eulogy to Vladimir the Saint, the "great Kagan of our land".[22] Vladimir, and by implication his descendants, was praised as an ideal Orthodox prince who established the true faith and provided a firm basis for a proper relationship between the prince and the Church (obviously, Vladimir's Church Statute). It may be noted here that the establishment of the faith was a primary duty of the

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[22] S. Zenkovsky, Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales, New York, 1963, p. 81.

Christian emperor. Ilarion's Treatise was used as a model by clerical writers in the Muscovite period, with the result that Byzantine ideas on the harmonious relations that ought to exist between Church and State, and the right of the princes to watch over the purity of the faith and integrity of the Church became a firm principle for the Muscovite clergy.[23]

Ilarion's works showed the extent to which Byzantine political thought had penetrated the consciousness of the Russian clergy. Russian Metropolitans were, however, the exception, for the Patriarch of Constantinople would generally nominate a Greek prelate to the Kievan see. Greek prelates, advisors to the princes, would be especially influential in the spread of autocratic ideas. Such a one was Metropolitan Nicephorus, who addressed Grand Prince Vladimir Monomakh as "our valiant head and [head] of all the Christian land." Nicephorus implied that there should always be not only one Church in Russia, but that the country should be subject to only one ruler, who should represent national unity and defend the indivisibility and purity of the Church. He stressed two monarchic ideas: the choice of the prince by God (as opposed to the Kievan system) and his predestination to rule by right of birth - Vladimir Monomakh was the better fitted to rule because he was the son of a Byzantine princess and Russian

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[23] Dvornik, Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 9-10, pp. 103-106.

prince.[24] Nicephorus was thus preaching autocratic ideology directly to the prince and his court; indeed, he granted a formal benediction to Vladimir when he ascended his throne.

An interesting example of the profound influence of Byzantine autocratic ideas is the eulogy of Andrei Bogoliubsky, written in the Laurentian Chronicle. Andrei had tried to introduce an autocratic regime into his principality of Vladimir-Suzdal, but was assassinated by his relatives and boyars in 1174. At the end of a long and detailed description of Andrei's virtues and untimely death, the monk-chronicler wrote:

> The Apostle Paul writes: 'Every soul should be subject to powers, because the powers are instituted by God.' For the Tsar, in his earthly nature is similar to any other man, but, because of his powers, he is of great dignity - like God. The great Chrysostom says: 'He who opposes the power opposes the law of God. The Prince does not bear the sword in vain, for he is the servant of God.'[25]

Never before in the Kievan period had the power of the prince been exalted to such a degree as in the eulogy of the first Russian autocrat. The Russian clergy had learned well the political lessons found in the literature available to them, which is all the more remarkable since Kievan traditions and the nature of the princely federation did not favour the autocratic and monarchic tendencies of Byzantine political philosophy.

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[24] Ibid., p. 110.

[25] Ibid., p. 115. The influence of Agapetus upon the chronicler must be noted.

Prior to the Mongol conquest, the centre of power in Russia had been shifting from Kiev to Vladimir in the north-east. The general insecurity of life in the southern steppe under the direct domination of the pastoral Mongols caused a mass migration of Russians to the forest regions of the north-east, away from direct Mongol rule. For the same reasons, Peter, Metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia, moved his residence to Vladimir in 1299, and then to Moscow some time prior to his death in 1325. Peter's successors remained in Moscow, where they made good relations with the ruling prince their policy. The fixing of the Metropolitan's residence at Moscow was distinctly to the benefit of its princes. Moscow became practically the ecclesiastical capital of Russia and its prince began to be considered as the eldest son of the Church.[26] A chronicler wrote: "Il était peu doux aux autres princes nombreux que la ville de Moscou eût le métropolite demeurant en elle."[27] In obvious imitation of the Metropolitan's title, Grand Prince Ivan I added to his own title the phrase "and of all Russia". This amplified title was used only in internal documents, but was significant because it marked the beginning of the drive to unify all Russia and the willingness of the Moscow princes to accept

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[26] Vernadsky, Mongols, p. 201.

[27] A. Eck, Le Moyen-Age russe, Paris, 1933, p. 409.

leadership of it.[28]

Byzantine political philosophy was not forgotten during the period of Mongol rule in Russia. Indeed, its essential doctrines were redefined especially for the benefit of the Grand Prince of Moscow and the Russian Church.

To lend more emphasis to his growing political importance, Grand Prince Vasili I ordered the name of the Emperor omitted from the liturgy. Patriarch Antonius deemed it his duty to remind Vasili of the doctrine of the single world empire and in 1393 sent him a long letter in which he carefully explained the sublime position of the Emperor within the Christian Commonwealth.[29] The Emperor, wrote Antonius, is the establisher of Orthodoxy and defender of the faith; consecrated to his office by God, he is the supreme ruler over all Christians and his sovereignty can never be reduced to the level of other rulers, some of whom have usurped the title of emperor. The central doctrine of Christian society was clearly defined:

> My son, you are wrong in saying, 'We have a church, but not an emperor.' It is not possible for Christians to have a church and not to have an empire. Church and empire have a great unity and community, nor is it possible for them to be separated from one another.[30]

Antonius' letter was a vital document for the direct transmission of essential Byzantine doctrines of Empire and

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[28] Vernadsky, Mongols, pp. 201-202.

[29] Medlin, op. cit., pp. 68-70.

[30] E. Barker (ed.), Social and Political Thought in Byzantium, London, 1957, p. 195.

Church to the Grand Prince and his clergy. Complex ideas of autocracy were summarized in a single letter intended especially for the edification of the faithful in Moscow. The extent of the influence of these autocratic ideas upon the thought of the Muscovite clergy would be revealed by the events of the next century.

The reign of Ivan I had marked the beginning of a close association and co-operation between the Russian Church, with its predilection for autocracy and unity under one ruler, and the Muscovite princes, determined to become the sole rulers of the Russian land by gathering the independent principalities under their authority. The idea of the unity and indivisibility of the Russian Church, embodied in the Metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia, was gradually transferred to the political sphere; the idea of the essential unity of Orthodox Christianity gradually gave rise to the idea of the unity of the lands inhabited by the Russian Orthodox folk - the old Byzantine idea of the true faith being co-terminous with political boundaries. Similarly, the Byzantine political doctrines held by the Russian Church did not advocate the divided rule characteristic of the patrimonial regime, but autocratic rule by one sovereign over all the Orthodox lands. The Church was prepared to support a prince who could potentially realize this ideal, as well as maintain order and stability so that the Church could fulfill its mission. Thus

the rising power of the Grand Princes of Moscow was buttressed by the Church, which expected the prince to recognize his responsibilities as an Orthodox sovereign and rule accordingly. It was essential that the Grand Prince understand these obligations, and to this end, the Church was obliged to define the nature of his sovereignty, which was ultimately transformed from that of the senior patrimonial prince to that of the Orthodox autocrat ordained by God. In the process, the Church legitimized the rights of the Grand Princes of Moscow to rule over the lands inhabited by the Russian Orthodox folk, i.e., the "lands of Saint Vladimir".

The fifteenth century was characterized by the consolidation of Muscovite hegemony in Russia and by the first deliberate attempts on the part of the clergy to transform the Grand Prince of Moscow into the counterpart of the Byzantine Emperor. The impact of the great civil war in the Grand Principality of Moscow, the rejection of the Union of Florence, and the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks were all instrumental in inducing the Russian clergy to redefine the ideological position of the Grand Prince, who, in the eyes of the clergy, began to conform to the Byzantine ideal of the Orthodox autocratic sovereign.

When Grand Prince Vasili I died in 1425, his ten-year old son Vasili II succeeded as Grand Prince according to the new new idea of primogeniture which had been gradually

introduced into the political life of the principality. Iuri of Galich, uncle of the young Vasili, attempted to wrest the grand-princely throne from the legitimate incumbent. Twice Iuri took Moscow (in 1433 and 1434), only to die a month after he assumed the Muscovite throne. His eldest son Vasili Kosoi claimed his father's rights, but in the ensuing war, he was captured and blinded by order of Vasili II.[31] Civil war broke out again in 1446 when Dmitri Shemiaka, brother of Vasili Kosoi and cousin of Vasili II, took advantage of Vasili's absence from Moscow and occupied the city. He subsequently captured Vasili, blinded and imprisoned him. Vasili, freed on the insistence of Bishop Iona of Riazan and established by Shemiaka as a patrimonial prince in Vologda, was re-instated on the throne by his Russian and Tatar supporters. In the ensuing war, Shemiaka was defeated and poisoned by a Muscovite agent in Novgorod, where he had taken refuge. Vasili II reigned for fifteen years after his return to power.[32]

There is evidence to suggest that the civil war led to a re-evaluation of the political role of the Grand Prince and of the ideological conception of his position in the eyes of the Russian clergy. Ecclesiastical unity and administrative uniformity were always the aims of the Russian Church. Past experience had shown that these objectives

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[31] Vernadsky, Mongols, pp. 299-301.

[32] Ibid., pp. 320-325.

could best be achieved only through secular consolidation under a single power, and this position was consistent with the maxims of Byzantine political philosophy about autocratic sovereignty. Thus it was that the Muscovite clergy hailed the Grand Prince as sovereign, and in the contest for secular power, supported him as the God-chosen sovereign of the Russian land.

In 1446, Dmitri Shemiaka seized the throne of Moscow, imprisoning Vasili II and his wife. Vasili's children were enticed to Moscow and cast in prison, despite Shemiaka's oath to Bishop Iona not to harm the boys. Iona and the clergy protested vigorously, demanding the release of the prisoners. To stem the growing resistance to his rule, Shemiaka freed the children. Vasili himself was freed and given the city of Vologda as his patrimony, in return for a pledge to acknowledge Shemiaka as Grand Prince. The abbot of Saint Cyril Monastery recognized Vasili as the legitimate Grand Prince and absolved him from his oath: "I take thy sins upon myself...and go with God, Sovereign [gosudar'] to your rightful patrimony [votchina] , the grand principality... ."[33] Vasili rallied his supporters and forced Shemiaka to retire to Galich. In December, 1447, Iona and five Russian bishops dispatched to Shemiaka an episcopal letter urging him to give up his rebellion. The bishops stated

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[33] Alef, Coinage, p. 10.

that the rightful Grand Prince was once again on his throne, and what God have given to Vasili, no man could take from him. Only Grand Prince Vasili had the right to exercise sovereign power in the Russian lands. The rebellion of Shemiaka's father was compared with the sin of Adam, whom Satan had induced to rebel against God, while Shemiaka's actions were likened to those of Cain against Abel. Shemiaka was charged to lay down his arms, and renounce his futile ambitions, or be placed under the ban of excommunication.[34] What the bishops were suggesting was that the right to exercise sovereignty was dependent upon God's appointment, not brute force or, perhaps, even the Khan's yarlyk.

Shemiaka was excommunicated in 1448 when he persisted with his rebellion. Iona and the senior clergy accompanied the grand-princely army to make sure that no one would render aid to the excommunicated rebels. Iona threatened with excommunication all Orthodox Christians who would not obey Vasili II as their sovereign who received his office from God.[35] By 1450, Shemiaka's rebellion had collapsed and the rebels fled, leaving their estates to be confiscated by Vasili. These confiscations were justified by the clergy; in a letter to Bishop Misail of Smolensk,

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[34] F. Dvornik, The Slavs in European History and Civilization, New Brunswick, 1962, p. 261.

[35] V.O. Kluchevsky, A History of Russia, New York, 1960, I, 310-311.

Metropolitan Iona explained:

> Know, my son,...what has occurred because of what Prince Ivan Andreevich [has done] to...his eldest brother, but I should not say to his brother, but to his sovereign, Grand Prince Vasili Vasilievich...[36]

Iona thus sanctioned Vasili's right to punish princes guilty of treason and also preferred terms of compulsory political subordination to those of kinship. These actions on the part of the clergy during the civil war indicated the Church's support of the idea of autocratic sovereignty, and of the Muscovite princes, who were potentially capable of creating the unity and order desired by the Church.

The great controversies surrounding the reception of the Council of Florence in Moscow enabled the Grand Prince to emerge as the sole defender of the true Orthodox faith, while the Russian Church, with the aid of the Grand Prince, became virtually autocephalous. The events surrounding the controversy may be briefly outlined. In 1438-1439, the representatives of the Orthodox Christian Churches met with papal representatives at Ferrara, and later at Florence, where they reluctantly accepted reunion with the Roman Catholic Church. Isador, Metropolitan of Kiev, attended the Council and accepted the Union. Returning to Russia as a cardinal and papal legate, he proclaimed the Union to the

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[36] Alef, Coinage, p. 12.

outraged Russian bishops in March, 1441. Prompted by the bishops, Vasili II cast Isador into prison and convened a synod to depose the apostate. Since the Emperor and the Patriarch in Constantinople remained adherents of the Union, Moscow did not ask for a new Metropolitan. In 1448, Vasili finally convoked a synod of local bishops which consecrated Bishop Iona of Riazan as Metropolitan, without bothering to obtain patriarchal consent.[37]

The rejection of the Union of Florence offered the Grand Prince important political advantages. In deposing a Metropolitan appointed by the Patriarch and consecrating a native Russian prelate without patriarchal consent, the Russian Church was able to end its juridical dependence upon Constantinople. The break was not originally considered as complete or final; indeed, Vasili II wrote a deferential, but undelivered letter to Constantine XI in 1451, explaining that the Russian bishops had elected Iona because "we ourselves and our land were without a great pastor...and out of that great necessity...commanded the bishops to elevate... a metropolitan."[38] With the consecration of Iona, the authority of the Church was placed squarely behind the sovereignty of the Grand Prince of Moscow. During the civil

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[37] Dvornik, op. cit., pp. 262-263.

[38] G. Alef, "Muscovy and the Council of Florence", American Slavic and East European Review, 20 (1961), p. 401.

war, the clergy supported him as the legitimate sovereign of the Russian lands; henceforth, the Church and the Grand Prince would work together for the unity of the lands of Orthodoxy.

While supporting the secular power, the Church in its turn became increasingly dependent upon the political power of the Grand Prince. In 1459, a synod of Russian bishops declared Iona and his successors to be the rightful Metropolitans of Kiev and all Russia, thus repudiating Gregory, the Uniate Metropolitan of Kiev recognized by Casimir of Poland, and by the Lithuanian and Galichian bishops. This decision consummated the separation of the Russian Church from Constantinople and proclaimed its independence. Henceforth, the chief prelate of the Russian Church styled himself Metropolitan of Moscow and all Russia, effectively splitting the Orthodox Church into Muscovite and Kievan sees. The Russian Church lost the support of the distant, but influential Patriarch of Constantinople and was forced increasingly into dependence upon the Grand Prince of Moscow, who gained the right to confirm the election of a new Metropolitan.[39] Church and State thus became increasingly interdependent, each providing the other with ideological or material support.

The Byzantine "apostasy" made the Russian Church think of itself as the sole upholder of true Orthodoxy, while the Grand Prince came to be regarded as the tireless champion

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[39] Dvornik, op. cit., pp. 264-265.

of the true faith. In 1451, Iona wrote that "the Emperor is not the right one, the Patriarch is not the right one", and went on to praise the "noble, pious, Christ-loving Grand Prince Vasilii Vasilievich, working mightily in God's Church..."[40] This same idea was expressed in a tract by the Russian priest Samson, entitled On the Council of Florence. Samson wrote:

> The Byzantine Caesar John apostatized from holy piety and darkened himself with the darkness of heresy. But the Russian land has remained Orthodox and has become enlightened with the light of piety.[41]

Since a cardinal duty of the Emperor was to defend the faith, he was severely censured for allowing his lands to be darkened by heresy; if the Russian land had abided in the true faith, it was obviously due to the efforts of Vasili II, who steadfastly carried out the duties of the Christian Emperor.

The Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 was considered by the Russian Church as a divine punishment for the apostasy of the Greeks. Iona wrote:

> You know, my children, how many misfortunes had befallen the imperial city from the Bulgarians and from the Persians...nevertheless, it had in no way suffered from them so long as the Greeks kept piety. But as soon as they apostatized from piety, you know how they suffered, what was their captivity and slaughter; and as for their souls - God alone knows.[42]

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[40] M. Cherniavsky, "The Reception of the Council of Florence in Moscow", Church History, 24 (1955), pp. 353-354.

[41] C. Toumanoff, "Caesaropapism in Byzantium and Russia", Theological Studies, 7 (1946), p. 235.

[42] Ibid.

The disappearance of the Byzantine Empire had a decisive impact upon the development of autocracy in Russia. The Grand Prince of Moscow found himself the sole remaining Orthodox ruler of any consequence and whether he desired it or not, he was expected to act as protector of the faith, i.e., an Orthodox autocrat. The Russian Church was now cut off from Constantinople; psychologically, it was difficult to remain subordinate to the Greek Orthodox Church when it was dependent upon an "infidel" ruler - had not Patriarch Gennadius been personally installed by Sultan Mehmet II in 1454?[43] The Russian clerical ideologists were now faced with the grave problem of ordering the concept of Christian society to fit new historical circumstances. Byzantine thought had envisioned the universal Orthodox Church and the universal Christian Empire as the two inseparable pillars of human society. The fall of Constantinople, which had been considered the eternal city of Christianity, and the disappearance of the Empire, held to be the essential corollary of the Church, had broken the traditional structure of Christian Society. To restore it, the Russian Church was faced with three solutions. The first was to admit that the fall of Byzantium was not final, and that the imperial city would be freed by the Russians. There existed several legends and prophecies to that effect, but the aim of the Grand Prince

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[43] S. Runciman, The Fall of Constantinople, 1453, Cambridge, 1965, p. 155.

of Moscow was to recover the "lands of Saint Vladimir", not fulfill historico-religious prophecies. The second was to recognize the supremacy of the Holy Roman Empire, but Ivan III refused to accept a crown from the West and thus refused to recognize the Holy Roman Empire as the Christian Empire. The third was to assign to Moscow the role of the Christian Empire and to its prince the role of Orthodox Autocrat - the solution of Filofei of Pskov.

In the middle of the fifteenth century, Moscow was not ready for the role of the Christian Empire. In theory, the Grand Prince was under the suzerainty of the Tatar Khan, although regular payment of tribute had ceased since 1452. Moscow had not yet eliminated the other independent political powers in the Russian land, nor had its princes developed elaborate claims to sovereignty over all Russia. Similarly, the Russian clergy required a further ideological education, which it ultimately received from the South Slavic clergy which had fled to Moscow as a spiritual refuge. Nevertheless, Vasili's actions following the Florentine Union and the destruction of the Christian Empire by the infidel made the Grand Prince appear as the last ruler abiding in the true Orthodox faith, the sole protector of the Church and defender of the Christian folk. In the mind of the Russian clergy, the rights and duties of the Grand Prince began to correspond to those of the ideal Orthodox Autocrat, for one lesson that

the Russians had learned well from their Byzantine teachers was that the defender of the faith was the universal Christian Emperor, whose autocratic sovereignty came from God.

Panegyric literature written after the fall of the imperial city emphasized the uniqueness of Russian Orthodoxy and the unique position of the Grand Prince as sole defender of Orthodoxy. An excellent tract to analyze is the Tale of Isador's Council, an anti-Florentine polemic written between 1458 and 1462 by Simon of Suzdal, a monk who had accompanied Isador to Florence but had turned violently against the Union. Shortly after it was written, the Tale was included in a compilation attributed to Pakhomius the Serb, the Selections from the Holy Writings against the Latins and the tale about the composition of the Eighth Latin Council, c. 1462.[44] Both sources, substantially the same, portrayed Vasili II as the upholder of Orthodoxy who rejected from the beginning the Council and the Union of Churches. Vasili was alleged to have charged Isador to preserve the Orthodoxy of Saint Vladimir, and Simon's Tale claimed that the Byzantine Emperor had said of Vasili: "because of his humility and piety...he is not called a tsar but the Grand Prince of the Russian lands of Orthodoxy."[45] Simon asserted that the Emperor, Patriarch, and metropolitans were bribed to accept

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[44] Cherniavsky, Church History, 24, pp. 349-350.

[45] Ibid., p. 351.

the Union, but in Moscow, the situation was different for there reigned the "Faithful, Christ-loving, pious and truly Orthodox Grand Prince Vasilii Vaselievich, the white tsar of All Russia."[46] The Grand Prince perceived the abominable heresy of Isador before the other Russian bishops, and on his own authority imprisoned and deposed the wicked apostate. By exposing heresy, it was the Grand Prince himself who saved Orthodoxy in Russia, the only country in the world still abiding in the true faith. Vasili, therefore, not only fulfilled the highest function of rule, but in effect became an instrument of salvation for the world as a whole by preserving the only Church through which salvation was now possible. The tragedy of the betrayal of Orthodoxy at Florence became a triumph for the Grand Prince. Throughout the Tale and the Selections, a steady contrast was drawn between the apostasy of the Patriarch and Emperor and the unswerving Orthodoxy of the Grand Prince.[47] The Christian Emperor had betrayed his greatest duty, while the Grand Prince had fulfilled his own. The author of the Selections addressed the Russian people as the only truly Orthodox people in the world, admonishing them:

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[46] Ibid., p. 352.

[47] I. Sevcenko, "Intellectual Repercussions of the Council of Florence", Church History, 24 (1955), p. 308.

> Rejoice in the sovereignty over you of the God-chosen beloved of God, enlightened of God, glorified of God...supreme mediator for the faith... greatly sovereign pious Grand Prince Vasilii Vasilievich, God-crowned tsar of Orthodoxy and of All Russia. (italics mine)[48]

The author of the Selections emphasized the ideas of the divine election of the Russian people as the true bearers of Orthodoxy, the controlling role in this Orthodoxy by the Grand Prince, and the logical conclusion - the Grand Prince as the Orthodox Autocrat. Constantinople had taught Russia that the defender of Orthodoxy was the universal Christian Emperor. To the Russian Church, the Florentine Union had meant the disappearance of the hitherto acknowledged supreme source of Orthodoxy and authority, and the fall of the imperial city was seen as a result of the fall from divine grace at Florence. Into the vacuum thus created, the Russian clerical writers placed the Grand Prince of Moscow; hence the panegyric literature emphasized the new supremacy of the Grand Prince and the implications necessarily derived from this supremacy, in juxtaposition with the uniqueness of the Russian Church, which for the purposes of salvation remained the only true Church left in the world. In a hymn appended to Simon's Tale, the Grand Prince was praised as the true defender of the faith:

> Rejoice, oh pious Grand Prince Vasilii, for you have confirmed the Russian land in faith...you have stifled the Latin heresy and would not let it grow amongst Orthodox Christians...you have glorified the Orthodox Faith and the whole land of Russia.[49]

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[48] Cherniavsky, Church History, 24, p. 353.

[49] Ibid., pp. 356-357.

Vasili II saved and confirmed Russia through his own labours and piety, and thus the Grand Prince began to fit the image of the ideal Orthodox Autocrat, i.e., the Emperor of all Christians.

The rejection of the Florentine Union and the destruction of the universal Christian Empire had prepared the way for the byzantinization of the realm of the Grand Prince of Moscow by the clergy. The Russian Church began to see Moscow as the haven of the true faith and the Grand Prince as the temporal head of Orthodoxy and defender of the Christian folk. With Ivan III's renunciation of Tatar suzerainty, the clergy began to hail the Grand Prince as the sole ruler both Orthodox and independent. The Empire is Orthodox and eternal and since Moscow was the last independent Orthodox realm, it was gradually considered as the Empire.

In developing the idea of the Grand Prince as ecclesiastico-political heir to Byzantium, the Russian Church contributed considerably to its own interest, for if Moscow succeeded Constantinople as head of Orthodoxy, then the Metropolitan could consider himself as autonomous, and the depository and interpreter of the true faith, which the new heir to Byzantium was bound to defend. Indeed, the Russian Church developed a mythology parallel to the "imperial" mythology, intended, like its secular counterpart, to exalt Russian institutions. The Russian Primary Chronicle contained

an account of how the apostle Andrew, on a journey to Rome, visited the site of Kiev and blessed the spot.[50] This account was seized upon in the fifteenth century by the clergy, which claimed that since Andrew was the "first-called", and furthermore, the elder brother of Saint Peter, the Russian Church and especially the Metropolitan of Moscow had more seniority and greater legitimacy than the Roman Catholic Church and the Popes.

The Legend of the White Cowl was perhaps the most interesting justification of the autocephality of the Russian Church. Written towards the end of the fifteenth century in Novgorod by Archbishop Gennadi and Dmitri Gerasimov, who had received his inspiration from a manuscript which he translated while in the Vatican Library in Rome, the Legend was conceived to defend the sovereignty of the Novgorodian Church, but was transformed into an ideological work which glorified the prestige of Russian Orthodoxy, and indirectly, the Grand Prince. According to the Legend, the White Cowl, symbol of the true faith, remained in Rome as long as the Pope revered the teachings of Christ. When the Papacy broke with the Eastern Church and developed their "Latin Heresy", divine power gave the White Cowl to the Patriarch. The Greeks fell from Divine Grace, and God punished them with the Turks, but

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[50] PVL, pp. 53-54.

before the final catastrophe, the Patriarch was warned in a dream to send the Cowl to the Archbishop of Novgorod.[51] Spiritual power was thus inherited by receiving material symbols of that power. The symbol of the true faith now resided in Russia, predestined by God to be the last realm before the last judgement. The Legend helped to exalt the Grand Principality:

> Old Rome fell away from the glory of Christ's faith through pride and willfulness; in New Rome... the Christian Faith shall perish by the violence of the Hagarenes, but in Third Rome, which is the Russian land, there shall shine the grace of the Holy Ghost... . All the Christian lands shall end and converge in the one Russian Realm, for the sake of Orthodoxy.[52]

The Legend proved clearly the superiority of the Russian Church over Rome and Byzantium - in effect, a kind of translatio of the Papacy to Moscow. More important, the realm of the Grand Prince was seen as the last Christian Empire before judgement; it remained only for Filofei of Pskov to take this idea to its logical conclusion and hail the Grand Prince as the only tsar for Christians in the world, i.e., the Christian Emperor who exercises autocratic sovereignty.

The growth of an autocephalous Russian Church, a major source of autocratic ideology in Muscovite Russia, was

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[51] N.K. Gudzy, History of Early Russian Literature, New York, 1949, pp. 288-292.

[52] Toumanoff, Theological Studies, 7, p. 237.

intimately associated with the development of the territorial strength and sovereign rights of the Grand Prince of Moscow. In hailing the Grand Prince as defender of the faith and ruler of the sole remaining Orthodox realm, the Church was in effect elevating itself to an analogous position - the sole remaining Orthodox Church, and hence the essential counterpart to the Christian Empire, into which role it was gradually projecting Moscow. The dominant characteristic of Muscovite ecclesiastical policy was the justification on religious grounds of Moscow's right to sovereignty over all the Russian lands. Such support could be attributed to both material and ideological motives. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, some three million of the populace of four million belonged to the Orthodox faith, which formed an important link uniting them with the Russian Orthodox populace under Moscow.[53] Since 1459, the Orthodox Church had been split into two factions, the one recognizing the Metropolitan of Moscow, the other under the authority of the Metropolitan of Kiev. The preferment given to Roman Catholic institutions in Lithuania by the government was interpreted by the Orthodox populace as an attempt to Latinize them, with the result that the Russian Orthodox people of Lithuania began to look to the Grand Prince of Moscow as their natural protector. If Ivan III succeeded in establishing his sovereignty over all Russia, especially the Russian lands of

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[53] Vernadsky, Russia, pp. 175-177.

Lithuania, then the Metropolitan of Moscow could extend his ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the Russian Orthodox population under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Kiev, whose authority the Muscovite clergy did not recognize.

From an ideological viewpoint, the Russian Church supported Moscow's domination of the Russian lands and suggested Moscow's leadership of the entire Orthodox world. Ivan III's gathering of the Russian lands was seen as a preliminary stage to the eventual gathering of all Orthodox Christianity under the sceptre of the sole remaining ruler who was both Orthodox and independent. Indeed, the Russian Church equated the indivisibility of the Orthodox Church and the corpus of true believers with the unity of the lands inhabited by the Orthodox folk - the old Byzantine idea that the true faith was co-terminous with political boundaries. Religious "patriotism", the idea of the basic unity and solidarity of the "land of Rus'", was an old idea with the Church, which desired order and stability to carry out its work.[54] The Muscovite Metropolitans considered themselves the representatives of all the followers of the Russian Orthodox faith. Their idea of the unity of all the Russian Orthodox Christians bore outwardly a purely ecclesiastical character, but acquired a clearly evident political content when the Grand Princes of Moscow declared the gathering of the Russian lands

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[54] Paszkievicz, op. cit., p. 229.

their mission. Ivan's campaigns against Lithuania to recover the "lands of Saint Vladimir" was seen by the clergy as part of a campaign to unite all the Orthodox folk under the new temporal head of the true faith; in working for the State, the Grand Prince was working for the Church and expansion thus achieved an aura of sanctity and became the work of God.[55]

Several examples of this idea may be cited. In 1468, Metropolitan Philip wrote to the Novgorodians warning them against any leanings towards the heretical Latin Polish king. Acting as a political arm of his sovereign, Philip warned them not to stray from the Orthodox faith but to trust the "strong arm of the Orthodox and pious sovereign, Grand Prince Ivan Vasilievich of the Russian lands and of all Russia."[56] In 1492, Metropolitan Zosima declared in his new Paschal Canon:

> The Emperor Constantine erected a new Rome, Tsargrad, but the Sovereign and Autocrat of all the Russians, Ivan Vasilievich, laid the beginnings of a new city of Constantine, Moscow.[57]

In a pastoral letter addressed to his clergy in 1501, Metropolitan Simon hailed Ivan III:

> Great Sovereign Tsar of Russia...the beloved son and lord of our humility [i.e., the Church], the noble and Christ-loving Grand Prince Ivan Vasilievich, Autocrat of all Russia.[58]

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[55] Ibid., p. 311.

[56] Medlin, op. cit., p. 76.

[57] Ibid., p. 78.

[58] Ibid., p. 79.

Sovereignty over the Russian lands was, therefore, justified on religious grounds, and the Grand Prince of Moscow, now hailed with the old imperial titles of tsar and autocrat, was seen as the Christian Emperor, whose universal sovereignty over all true believers came from God. From "new city of Constantine, Moscow" to "Moscow the Third Rome" was but a short step.

The impact of these ideas among the people must not be underestimated. Paschal Canons and pastoral letters would be widely circulated amongst the clergy, who would transmit the ideas contained therein to the people in sermons and instructions. In a largely illiterate society, the spoken word is extremely effective, and became all the more so in Muscovite Russia, because the Church was the central medium by which autocratic ideology reached the people.

The new ideology of autocracy expounded by the Russian clergy was modified by new South Slavic influences. The Ottoman conquest of the Balkans prompted many South Slavic clerics to seek a spiritual refuge in Orthodox Moscow. These refugees brought with them new ideas on the nature of sovereignty, which were all the more important because the South Slavs had a more direct acquaintance with the Byzantine imperial idea than did the Russians, especially since the rulers of both the Bulgarian and Serbian Empires had appropriated the title of tsar and had elevated their own Patriarchs.

One idea brought to Moscow was the Bulgarian theory that Orthodoxy would forever seek an imperial bastion of refuge. Since Christ had been numbered as an imperial subject, his Church forever remains under the imperial sceptre and is inseparable from the Empire. The Bulgarians further believed that Rome had ceded its inheritance to Constantinople, and the latter would cede its place to a new imperial city, Trnovo, Bulgaria's own Tsargrad.[59] This latter idea had been brought to Moscow in a Bulgarian edition of the Byzantine Chronicle of Manasses, and would later influence Filofei of Pskov's theory of the Third Rome. These materials were all part of a new corpus of Byzantine works on sovereignty which had been translated into Slavic in the Balkans and subsequently brought to Moscow. At the time of Russia's political transformation, the study of Byzantine political literature was particularly intense, and many tracts, so far unknown, were translated in or introduced to Moscow.[60]

Another significant innovation was the use of the title tsar. In Kievan Russia, tsar was used to describe the universal Christian emperor, the Basileus Autokrator. From the thirteenth century onward, the Russians began to use the title not only for the Emperor, but also for such other rulers as the Khans of the Golden Horde, Crimea, Kazan, Astrakhan,

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[59] Ibid., p. 67.

[60] Dvornik, Rediscovering Eastern Christiandom, p. 113.

for the Turkish Sultans, the Persian Sheikhs, and the vassal Tatar khans resident in Russia. Tsar had lost the connotation of an Orthodox ruler. This idea began to change with the growth of the second South Slavic influence in Russia, when tsar began to assume a distinctly Orthodox connotation such as it already possessed in the Balkans.[61] Perhaps the first person to use tsar in that sense in Russia was the Serbian Pakhomius Logothetes, believed to be the compiler of the Selections which hailed Vasili II as the "God-crowned tsar of Orthodoxy".[62] Toward the end of the fifteenth century, the Russian clergy was hailing the Grand Prince as tsar, especially when emphasizing his responsibilities as defender of the faith.

One result of the influx of new ideas was the attempt to fit Moscow into the framework of universal history. Pakhomius Logothetes wrote a Chronograph (1442) which covered mostly eastern religio-history from a Christian viewpoint, but showed Moscow as the unifier of the Russian lands.[63] In 1512, a Russian Chronograph was written, probably by Filofei of Pskov, which set forth universal history from the Creation. Confined largely to religio-historical events, it ended with the eschatalogical prophecy

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[61] N. Andreyev, "Filofey and his Epistle to Ivan Vasil'yevich", Slavonic and East European Review, 38 (1959), p. 14.

[62] supra, n.n. 44 and 48.

[63] Gudzy, op. cit., p. 232.

of Moscow the Third Rome, bastion of Orthodoxy and the last Christian Empire before judgement.[64]

The Muscovite clergy thus established for the secular power the Russian claim to the inheritance of the Byzantine imperial dignity, ideology, and traditions. The Grand Prince received the former imperial titles of Tsar and Autocrat, for in the eyes of the clergy, he had inherited the office of the Basileus Autokrator, the universal Christian Emperor and temporal head of Orthodoxy who used his God-given sovereignty to defend the faith and thus assure the salvation of the Orthodox folk. It remained only for Filofei to proclaim the Grand Prince the only tsar for Christians in the universe.

The idea of the grand-princely authority determined by God played an important role in the formation and consolidation of the Muscovite State, for it strengthened the position of the Grand Prince of Moscow, assured his primacy among the other Russian princes as the Chosen of God and hence as the incontestable head of a single state.[65] Protection of the Church was closely bound up with political leadership, for it gave the Grand Prince a useful pretext for interfering with ecclesiastical affairs. From the time of the Sobor of 1459, the new Metropolitan of Moscow was to be elected by the

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[64] Dvornik, op. cit., p. 374.

[65] Paszkiewicz, op. cit., pp. 311-312.

Russian bishops, but confirmed by the Grand Prince. When Patriarch Denys declared the Muscovite metropolitans schismatics in 1469, Ivan III proclaimed: "Nous tenons ce patriarche pour dégradé et privé de tout droit sur nous."[66] Ivan III personally installed the Metropolitan Simon in 1494, and deposed Archbishop Gennadi of Novgorod in 1503. Vasili III installed the Metropolitan Danili in 1522 without proper synodal procedure, because he knew that Danili would put the Church's authority fully behind his sovereign's autocratic authority.

In the case of Russian boyars defecting from Lithuania to Muscovite service, the Grand Prince found it convenient to pose as the Orthodox Autocrat. A recent study by O.P. Backus has shown that the main reasons for boyar desertions were not religion or nationality, but border disputes, personal ambitions, and resentment over failure to acquire posts.[67] Religion nevertheless provided an extremely convenient pretext or justification for desertion, more exalted than crass material motives, and the importance of religious motives cannot be entirely minimized. A contemporary letter ran: "All our Orthodox Christiandom do they now seek to baptize anew, and therefore doth our Rus bear no love unto Lithuania."[68] The Russian clergy certainly never tired of

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[66] E. Denissoff, "Aux origines de l'Eglise russe autocéphale", Revue des études slaves, 23 (1947), p. 73

[67] O.P. Backus, Motives of West Russian Nobles in Deserting Lithuania for Moscow, 1377-1514, Lawrence, 1957, p. 110.

[68] Kluchevsky, op. cit., II, 7.

contrasting the heretical Latins of Lithuania with the pious Orthodox Grand Prince of Moscow, and this doubtlessly influenced the conscience of certain individuals.

The evidence presented in this chapter would suggest that the Russian Church was unanimous in acclaiming the Grand Prince of Moscow as the Orthodox Autocrat. The Grand Princes of Tver, the great rivals of the Muscovite princes for control of Russia, received to a lesser extent similar acclamation from certain elements of the clergy. Early in the fourteenth century, a monk of Tver, Akindin, wrote an epistle to the Grand Prince of Tver in which he stated: "Prince, tu es tsar dans ta terre."[69] Akindin thus introduced into Russian thought the idea that the prince is imperator in suo regno - an implicit rejection of the idea of the universal Christian Empire in the case of Tver. In the same period, Grand Prince Mikhail I of Tver began to style himself "Grand Prince of All Rus'".[70] In 1455, Grand Prince Boris Alexandrovich, inspired by the fall of Constantinople, ordered a new edition of the Annals of the Grand Principality. The monk-chronicler treated universal history from the Creation to the fall of Constantinople in such a way that Tver became the center of events; he attributed to the princes of Tver the role of supreme protectors of Orthodoxy

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[69] D. Strémooukhoff, "L'idée impériale à Moscou au XVIème siècle", Annales de la Faculté des Lettres d'Aix, 32 (1959), p. 166.

[70] Sevcenko, Harward Slavic Studies, II, p. 154.

and claimed that they defended the faith against the Tatars, whereas the Muscovite princes collaborated with the pagans and betrayed the faith. The fall of Byzantium created no new situation for the Metropolitan of Moscow, for the Patriarch remained supreme head of the Russian Church. The Grand Prince of Moscow had no right to pose as the sovereign defender of Orthodoxy.[71] A similar sentiment was expressed in the anonymous Praise of the Pious Grand Prince Boris of Tver in which the author called Boris tsar, the rightful successor to Constantine and Vladimir.[72] Such praise came from the minority of the clergy. The interests of the Metropolitan and of the Grand Prince of Moscow were bound together and these two would oppose any efforts to limit their power. In 1485, Moscow annexed Tver and its last prince fled to Lithuania, effectively ending all theories of Tverian leadership in Russia.

To conclude, the Russian Church favoured the growth of the autocratic sovereignty of the Grand Prince of Moscow and attributed to him the role of the Orthodox Autocrat, the universal Christian Emperor who defends the true faith. The use of the title Autocrat must be, however, clarified. When Ivan III styled himself samoderzhets, he meant that he was an independent sovereign who paid tribute to no one.

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[71] Eck, op. cit., p. 429.

[72] Dvornik, op. cit., p. 281.

When the Church hailed the Grand Prince as Autocrat, it meant that he was the head of Orthodoxy, and obliged to use the sovereignty which God had given him to defend the true faith and thus assure the salvation of the Orthodox folk. No deep contradiction between the two uses of the term really existed, for the Grand Prince felt obliged to care for the welfare of the Orthodox folk (c.f., Ivan's address at Dmitri's coronation), while the Church could scarcely have considered a vassal of the Tatar Khan as the "great sovereign Tsar of Russia".[73] It was the Church which prepared the ideological basis for the Russian Tsardom of 1547 by exalting the Grand Prince's autocratic sovereignty; the tsar and head of all Orthodoxy was by definition an autocrat.

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[73] supra, n. 58.

CHAPTER IV

TWO THEORISTS OF AUTOCRACY

Filofei of Pskov

The culmination of various ideas associating the Grand Prince of Moscow with the Christian Emperor was reached in the theories of two Russian clerics who wrote towards the end of the fifteenth and early in the sixteenth centuries. Filofei, abbot of the Eleazer Monastery of Pskov, proclaimed Moscow the Third Rome and the Grand Prince the sole tsar for Christians in the universe. Abbot Iosif Sanin of the Volok Monastery preached the Christian duty of obedience to the sovereign and induced Ivan III to rule as the ideal Orthodox Autocrat vis-à-vis the Russian Church. Since both writers hailed the Grand Prince as the temporal head of Orthodoxy, it was essential for them to define the nature of his autocratic sovereignty, that he might better discharge his responsibilities as Orthodox Autocrat.

Filofei was less interested in justifying Muscovite autocracy than in defending the Pskovian Church and obtaining improvements in the life of the Russian ecclesiastical community. His concern may be explained by the circumstances in which he wrote his epistles. Pskov, faced with continual

attacks from its Catholic neighbours, the Livonian Order and Lithuania, had a particularly strong attachment to the Orthodox faith and had frequently looked to the Grand Prince of Moscow for assistance; indeed, Pskov had supported Ivan III against Novgorod in 1478. The independence of the Church of Pskov was an important issue. After the destruction of Novgorod's independence in 1479, Ivan III confiscated ecclesiastical lands in the Novgorodian piatiny and granted them as pomiestie tenures. In 1499 and 1500, Ivan III, with the blessing of the Metropolitan Simon, confiscated ecclesiastical lands from the churches and monasteries of Novgorod for the same purpose. Such an immediate threat to the position of the Church in Pskov induced Filofei to take up his pen, for the great urgency of the situation called for a reassertion of the inviolability of ecclesiastical property and the rights of the Church.

The result was the famous Epistle to Ivan Vasil'yevich, written some time between 1499 and 1503, in which he outlined the fullest version of his theory of "Moscow the Third Rome".[1] Its main purpose was to avert a possible secularization of Church and monastic lands in the territory of Pskov after its union with Moscow (Grand Prince Ivan III

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[1] N. Andreyev, "Filofey's Epistle to Ivan Vasil'yevich", Slavonic and East European Review, 38 (1959), pp. 23-24. Some historians believe the Epistle was intended for Ivan IV.

had appointed his son Vasili Grand Prince of Novgorod and Pskov in 1499 over the objections of the Pskovians), a serious threat in the light of repeated instances of confiscation of ecclesiastical property in Novgorod. The Muscovite annexation of Pskov in 1510 was the occasion for a second epistle, addressed to Vasili III. The Pskovians, bewildered at the harsh treatment received at the hands of Muscovite officials, asked the Church authorities to intercede with the Grand Prince. To console them, Filofei wrote an epistle advising them to bear their misfortunes in a spirit of Christian submission to the will of God. Simultaneously, he wrote his epistle to Vasili III, the "shining light of Orthodoxy", in which he discussed three abuses in the Church, viz., the incorrect sign of the cross, the vice of sodomy, and the vacancy of the Novgorodian archepiscopal see. Filofei was concerned mainly with the interests of Pskov and its Church, left without the protection of the Archbishop of Novgorod. He urged Vasili to fill the vacant see and to show mercy to the oppressed, explaining that since the fall of Constantinople, the Grand Prince was the sole remaining Orthodox ruler on earth and therefore had special responsibilities toward the Church.[2] In 1528, Filofei addressed an epistle to the Muscovite diak in Pskov, Mikhail Grigor'yevich Misyur'-Munekhin, in which he simply stated that a Third Rome has

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[2] Vernadsky, Russia, p. 149.

arisen, and that there will be no Fourth, and that the cause of all the disasters which befell the imperial city was a lack of faith, which must be combatted by the Third Rome.[3]

Of Filofei's ideas, the most significant was his theory of Moscow the Third Rome, which he conceived to support his defence of the rights and property of the Church and the purity of its ritual forms and moral life. What he succeeded in doing was to arm Muscovite autocracy with a proud ideology and a magnificent formula: "Two Romes have fallen, and the Third one stands, and a Fourth one there shall not be," despite his original intention to maintain nothing more than the interdependence of Church and State, with the State guaranteeing the Church's autonomy.[4] To understand how autocratic ideology was derived from a theory intended to defend the rights of the Church, it is necessary to study the key passages from the Epistle to Ivan Vasil'yevich:

> [I write] to you, the Most bright and most highly-throning Sovereign, Grand Prince, orthodox Christian tsar and lord of all, rein-holder of the Holy eccumenical and Apostolic Church of God and the Most Holy Virgin...which is shining gloriously instead of the Roman or Constantinopolitan [one]. For the Old Rome fell because of its Church's lack of faith, the Apollinarian heresy; and of the second Rome, the city of Constantine, the pagans broke down the doors of the churches with their axes...And now there is the Holy synodal Apostolic church of the reigning Third Rome, of tsardom, which shines like the sun in its

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[3] Andreyev, Slavonic and East European Review, 38, pp. 28-29.

[4] Ibid., p. 31.

> orthodox Christian faith, throughout the whole universe. And that is your realm, pious tsar, as all the empires [tsardoms] of the orthodox Christian faith have gathered into your single empire...you are the only tsar for Christians in the whole world...
>
> Do not break, O tsar, the commandments laid by your ancestors, the great Constantine, and the blessed Vladimir, and the God-chosen Iaroslav, and the other blessed saints, of which root you are... .
>
> Listen and attend, pious tsar, that all Christian empires are gathered into your single one, that two Romes have fallen, and the third one stands, and a fourth one there shall not be... .[5]

Filofei's mission was to impress upon the Grand Prince that his realm must be the bastion of Orthodoxy, because it was the sole independent Orthodox State in the world. It was the heavy duty of Moscow and the Grand Prince to act as a refuge and guardian of the true faith; if Moscow was the Third Rome, it should learn to become worthy of its historical destiny, for it was the very centre of the Orthodox world.

Such a theory was most useful to the State. Behind Filofei's theory was the old Byzantine idea that Church and Empire were the two inseparable pillars of Christian society, that the universal Empire was an essential counterpart of the universal Church. Moscow was the last refuge of Orthodoxy, its ruler the only independent Orthodox prince, and its Church

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[5] M. Cherniavsky, "Holy Russia: A Study in the History of an Idea", American Historical Review, 63 (1958), p. 619.

the only one not tainted by heresy or dominated by the infidel. Therefore, the Grand Prince of Moscow was the sole defender of the faith and was under a sacred obligation to do so. Such emphasis on the function or responsibility of the prince resulted in a new idea of the ruler. New powers were derived from the new functions, which increased the glory of the Grand Prince and transformed him into a tsar - the Basileus Autokrator, the universal Christian Emperor who defends all the Orthodox folk. The Grand Prince of Moscow was transformed into a God-crowned tsar under whose sceptre all Christian empires were united, because of his new and overwhelming responsibility before all the world of safeguarding the last haven of the Orthodox Christian Church. Since Moscow's new status was established by the new function of the Grand Prince, his sovereignty acquired greater glory, expressed by the title tsar. Similarly, if true Orthodoxy was preserved only in the realm of the Grand Prince, then salvation became coincidental with the political boundaries established by the Grand Prince. Church and State were thus interdependent, and an extension of the territorial extent of "Moscow the Third Rome" meant an extension of the true faith. Expansion became the work of God.

The destruction of the Byzantine Empire had forced the Russian clergy to reckon with the problem of the disappearance of the universal Christian Empire. Filofei solved

the problem by proclaiming Moscow the Christian Empire, and the Grand Prince its God-crowned tsar, the only legitimate emperor in the world ("you are the only tsar for Christians in the whole world"). The ideological position of the Orthodox Autocrat was strengthened by the belief that his Empire was universal, having gathered all the Christian empires into it, and would endure until the Last Judgement - there would be no Fourth Rome to supplant Moscow's supremacy. Filofei declared that "l'Empire romain est en soi indestructible, car le Seigneur a été sujet de César."[6] Therefore, the tsar was to defend not only the purity of the faith, but the corresponding dignity of the Empire.

If Filofei's theory exalted the Grand Prince of Moscow as the only legitimate tsar commissioned by God to protect the Orthodox faith, it also equated the essential unity of Orthodox Christians with the unity of the lands inhabited by them ("all the empires of the orthodox Christian faith have gathered into your single empire... ."). This would seem to support the claim of the Muscovite princes to sovereignty over all Russia, especially since there existed in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania a Russian Orthodox population of some three million,[7] which, if brought under Muscovite

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[6] E. Denissoff, "Aux origines de l'Eglise russe autocéphale", Revue des études slaves, 23 (1947), p. 67.

[7] Vernadsky, Russia, pp. 175-177.

rule, would fall under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Moscow and would thus be reunited with the only true Orthodox Church. Furthermore, the theory could be construed to mean that the Grand Prince should free the Orthodox Christians of Greece and the Balkans from the rule of the infidel.

Filofei implied that fidelity to Orthodoxy was vital to political well-being.[8] It was essential to keep God's commandments and guard the purity of the faith, otherwise judgement would follow on transgression, "as in the imperial city".[9] Old Rome lapsed into heresy and damnation, while the ruin of the Empire was a punishment meted out to the Greeks because they betrayed the Orthodox faith to the Latins. The Church and the Empire were transported from Rome to Constantinople, and from there to Moscow, because the last Empire was the only truly Orthodox one. Accordingly, the tsar had the solemn task of preserving the purity of the Orthodox faith in its last abode.

Filofei also attempted to fit the Muscovite realm into the framework of universal history. His theory was clearly anti-Greek: the essential Empire had been transported to Moscow and there was no longer any question of liberating Constantinople.[10] Moscow was Constantinople's replacement,

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[8] Andreyev, Slavonic and East European Review, 38, p. 21.

[9] Ibid., p. 11.

[10] D. Strémooukhoff, "L'idée impériale à Moscou au XVIème siècle", Annales de la Faculté des Lettres d'Aix, 32 (1959), p. 172.

because the latter had been unfaithful to its mission and was punished by God.[11] Filofei believed that the Roman Empire was indestructable and that the Muscovite tsardom, as its heir, would be the last Empire; after its destruction by the forces of the Antichrist, the eternal Kingdom of God ruled by Christ would take its place.[12] Until that time, the Russian people would be the bearers of the only true Orthodox faith. What Filofei was trying to justify, by arguments held to be scriptural and historical, was the translatio of the eternal Empire of the ideal rule over the Christian world from Constantinople, now sullied by moral surrender to the Latins and Turkish conquest, to Moscow.[13]

In evolving the theory of Moscow the Third Rome, Filofei was not expounding an entirely new idea. The Legend of the White Cowl, of Novgorodian origin (1490s), spoke of the "Third Rome, which is in the Russian land... ."[14] Since the Pskovian Church was under the jurisdiction of the Novgorodian archepiscopal see, Filofei would probably have had easy access to the Legend, especially since its archbishop, Gennadi, was involved in its authorship. The 1492 Paschal

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[11] F. Dvornik, The Slavs in European History and Civilization, New Brunswick, 1962, p. 375.

[12] Ibid., p. 374.

[13] D. Strémooukhoff, "Moscow the Third Rome: Sources of the Doctrine", Speculum, 28 (1953), p. 101.

[14] supra, chap. III, n. 52.

Canon of Metropolitan Zosima contained the formula "Moscow - New Constantinople".[15] Even the Russian Primary Chronicle had hailed Vladimir as the "new Constantine of mighty Rome".[16] The title tsar, as an Orthodox ruler, was not new, since the panegyric literature of the mid-fifteenth century had hailed the Grand Prince as a "God-crowned tsar of Orthodoxy",[17] and Ivan III had made a tentative and exploratory use of the title in certain documents. Filofei brought together all those ideas, and from them developed a theory of the transfer of the Empire from Constantinople to Moscow, and charged the Grand Prince, who had used the title tsar only to emphasize his independent sovereignty, to rule as the Christian Emperor.

Filofei used scriptural sources to justify his arguments. In the Epistle to Ivan Vasil'yevich, he drew upon the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse, in which a woman dressed in the sun flees into the desert pursued by a dragon who spits out water to submerge her. The woman symbolized the Orthodox Church, which fled from Old Rome because the latter had fallen into heresy and fled to New Rome because of the apostasy of Florence:

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[15] Ibid., n. 57.

[16] PVL, p. 124.

[17] supra, chap. III, n. 48.

> She flees into the third Rome which is the new great Russia, that is to say, the desert (pustynya), for it was empty (pusta) of the holy faith...and now, alone, the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of the East shines more brightly than the sun in the universe, and only the great Orthodox Tsar of Russia...directs the Church.[18]

Such was the Apocalyptic image which justified the removal of the Christian Empire to Moscow.

Filofei was also influenced by the Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius, a work of Christian universal history composed in Syria at the close of the seventh century. Translated into Slavonic in Bulgaria toward the end of the ninth century when Greek religious and apocryphal works were especially in vogue, the Revelations probably reached Russia some time in the eleventh century, along with other translated Byzantine writings.[19] More concerned with eschatology than history, the Pseudo-Methodius predicted the unity of the Christian monarchies against the Ishmaelites, the unclean peoples of Gog and Magog who would introduce the reign of the Antichrist by issuing forth from the mountains to overwhelm mankind. However, Christ would overcome Antichrist and introduce His kingdom on earth.[20] From Pseudo-Methodius, Filofei borrowed the formula of the unification of the monarchies:

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[18] Strémooukhoff, Speculum, 28, pp. 98-99.

[19] S.H. Cross, "The Earliest Allusion in Slavic Literature to the Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius", Speculum, 4 (1929), p. 329.

[20] PVL, pp. 184-185. See also A.R. Anderson, Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations, Cambridge, 1932.

all Christian empires were united in that of Moscow, the last universal Christian Empire before the end of the world.[21]

The idea of the translation of the Empire to Moscow was inspired by the Bulgarian edition of the twelfth-century Byzantine Chronicle of Constantine Manasses, a work which South Slavic refugees brought to Moscow in the fifteenth century.[22] Describing the sack of Rome by the Vandals in 455, Manasses wrote:

> This is what happened to Old Rome. Ours, however, flourishes, thrives, is strong and young. May it continue to grow eternally, O Lord of all, since it has so great an Emperor, whose light shines far abroad, victor in a thousand battles, Manuel, the golden glowing scarlet rose, with whose brilliance a thousand suns cannot compare.[23]

In the fourteenth century, the Chronicle was translated into Slavonic in Bulgaria. The translator rendered the above passage:

> This happened to Old Rome, but our new imperial city (Tirnovo) flourishes, thrives, is strong and young. It will remain so to the end of time because it is under the dominion of the high Tsar of the Bulgarians, the generous, the noble, the friend of the monk, the great Tsar, Asen Alexander, whose lordship cannot be outshone by a thousand suns.[24]

Clearly, the Bulgarian translator's interpolation assigned to Trnovo the role of the imperial city, centre of

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[21] Strémooukhoff, Speculum, 28, p. 96.

[22] Ibid.

[23] R.L. Wolff, "The Three Romes: The Migration of an Ideology and the Making of an Autocrat", Daedalus, 88 (1959), p. 300.

[24] Ibid.

the Christian Empire. With the Bulgarian and Byzantine Empires overrun by the Turks, it remained for Filofei to declare that Moscow, and not Trnovo, was the new imperial city, which would endure until the end of the world. Thus the Russians had become acquainted with imperial ideology both directly and through the agency of the South Slavs, who had adapted it to fit their own national aims.

Filofei's theory had far-reaching effects. Moscow became invested with the messianic duty of dispensing Orthodoxy to the whole world, although the continued existence of the Patriarchate at Constantinople was an embarrassment. Since the true faith was declared to be co-terminous with the boundaries of Moscow the Third Rome, territorial expansion would extend the faith, and the theory could be used to justify land-grabbing. In principle universalist, the theory tended to exalt Russian piety and national sentiment, promoting a national and religious particularism. Certainly, the theory tended to give an ideological justification to the activities of the Muscovite State and could be used to justify the creation of a powerful, centralized State and the autocratic sovereignty of its ruler, as well as to invest the rising power of the Muscovite State with a great spiritual authority. Filofei, however, did not have those intentions in mind when he penned his theory; his purpose was to define the special responsibilities of the Grand Prince of Moscow as

defender of the last abode of the Orthodox Church, and not to justify a political programme; but nevertheless he succeeded in transforming the Grand Prince of Moscow into an Orthodox Autocrat.

Iosif Sanin of Volokolamsk

In 1479, the monk Iosif Sanin founded the Volok Monastery which, owing to the good administration of its founder, became powerful and prosperous, attracting numerous donations. Iosif firmly believed that the establishment and defence of the true Orthodox religion was the vital task which his monastery should carry out in Christian society, and to this end, the monks of Volokolamsk were subjected to a rigorous discipline designed to mould them into obedient and zealous workers for the faith.[25] Since the Church, in Iosif's view, should actively fulfill its moral and social functions in the world, the monastery became renowned as a charitable institution and as a centre of learning for laymen and ecclesiastics, with the result that the Volok monastery became, in the words of Miliukov, a "nursery" for Russian Church hierarchs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[26] Such churchmen would take up their posts thoroughly imbued with the spirit and ideas of their abbot-founder.

Iosif's concepts of autocracy were not developed in a formal, theoretical work; rather, they must be gleaned from

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[25] E. Behr-Sigal, "Nil Sorskij et Joseph de Volokolamsk", Irénikon, 14 (1937), pp. 372-375.

[26] P. Miliukov, Outlines of Russian Culture. Part I: Religion and the Church, Philadelphia, 1942, p. 20.

his various letters, missives, and epistles in which he set forth certain theoretical considerations in reference to specific problems of Church and State which had arisen in the course of his struggle against heresy and the reforms of Nil Sorsky. Eventually, most of the ideas thus expressed were gathered into a single work, the Prosvetitel'.[27] An autocrat within his own monastery, Iosif was prepared to lend ideological support to the autocratic sovereignty of the Grand Prince of Moscow, but was no mere apologist for the secular power. His great mission was the establishment and defence of Orthodoxy on earth, and to attain this end, Church and State should work actively together for the welfare of the Orthodox community. United in a common cause, each should sustain the other, for what endangers one endangers the other. The prince must act as supreme protector of the Church and use his God-given sovereignty to work for the spiritual salvation of his subjects, but the Church must be closely associated with the State power, for bishops should serve the State as well as the Church. Iosif was vitally concerned with the practical, concrete problems confronting the Orthodox Church, and many of his works were written to persuade the Grand Prince to rule as an ideal Orthodox Autocrat vis-à-vis the problems of the Church. The

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[27] M. Raeff, "An Early Theorist of Absolutism: Joseph of Volokolamsk", American Slavic and East European Review, 8 (1949), p. 81.

responsibilities of the Grand Prince as defender of the faith were not merely theoretical, something reserved for ceremonial occasions; rather, he should use his sovereign power to solve the very real problems which faced the Church. For Iosif, ideology should be transformed into action.

The latter half of Iosif's life was spent in persuading Ivan III and Vasili III to rule according to his concept of the ideal Orthodox Autocrat, especially when the delicate question of Church-State relations arose. In the process, he was forced to define the nature of autocratic sovereignty and to explain how the Orthodox Autocrat should rule.

Inspired by Saint Paul's thirteenth Epistle to the Romans, Iosif declared that the origin of the power and sovereignty of rulers was the will of God. As the tsar was the true representative of God on earth, his power was comparable to God's. In his sixteenth Slovo, Iosif wrote:

> The sun has its task - to shine on the people of this earth; the tsar has his task too - to take care of those under him. You [rulers] received the imperial sceptre [skipetr cesarstvija] from God, see to it that you satisfy Him who has given it to you... . For in body the tsar is like unto all men, but in power he is like unto God Almighty.[28]

In describing the tsar's similarity to God in respect to power, Iosif's intention was not to praise the

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[28] Ibid., p. 82. Iosif used the term tsar in its generic sense of ruler, which Raeff translated as "king". All quotations from Raeff have been slightly changed by this writer, who preferred Iosif's original term, tsar.

Grand Prince as a divine being; rather, the similarity lay not in the extent of his power, but in its purpose - the spiritual salvation of the tsar's subjects, for the spiritual life and welfare of the Orthodox folk were his primary concern:

> Harken then, and understand that it is from God that power is given you, you are the servants of God. He placed you here as the shepherds and guardians of his people to keep the flock intact from the wolves. God chose you in His own stead and put you on His throne and gave life and mercy into your hands, and it was God's hands which gave you your sword... .[29]

To such a sovereign, unconditional obedience was the duty of the Christian subject:

> ... have true love for our God-given tsar, render him true obedience, thankfulness, and work for him as he wishes and commands, as though you were working for the Lord and not for man...when you do obeisance and serve the tsar or ruler, it is for the sake of being pleasing to God that you make submission and are obedient to the ruler; for the ruler looks after us and cares for us... . For power is received by the man preferred by God... .[30]

Similarly, the patrimonial princes owe:

> ...soumission et obéissance au tsar donné par Dieu, doivent le seconder en toute sa volonté et suivent ses ordres, car ils oeuvrent ainsi pour Dieu et non pour l'homme.[31]

The tsar was the supreme protector of the Orthodox folk and the Church, but not its spiritual head, taking care of the Church rather than ruling it. However, "the tsar's

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., p. 83.

[31] A. Eck, Le Moyen-Age russe, Paris, 1933, p. 426.

judgement is not appealable to a bishop".[32]

Iosif did not attribute the right of unlimited sovereignty to the tsar; if he did not rule justly, he ought not to be obeyed, even at peril of torture and death:

> If the Tsar who rules men is himself ruled by evil passions..., and worst of all, lack of faith and blasphemy, such a Tsar is not God's servant but the Devil's, and should not be considered a Tsar, but a tormentor.[33]

Such disobedience, however, should be of a spiritual, passive nature and not a violent revolt. Iosif gave no political actions as the basis of disobedience and was silent as to who should decide that the sovereign was no tsar, but an evil tormentor. God was the final judge of the tsar's deeds: "You [rulers] receive the sceptre from God, so see to it that you satisfy Him who has given it to you, for you will render an account to God."[34]

Iosif believed that the tsar was the vicar of God on earth and therefore subject to divine law, i.e., the teachings of Orthodox Christianity. Despite the autocratic nature of his sovereignty, the tsar had heavy duties and obligations which derived from his unique position of sole defender of Orthodoxy. As such, the tsar was responsible to God not only for his own deeds, but for those of his subjects,

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[32] M. Szeftel, "Joseph Volotsky's Political Ideas in a New Historical Perspective", Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, 13 (1965), p. 21.

[33] Ibid., p. 20.

[34] Raeff, American Slavic and East European Review, 8, p. 87.

for it was his sacred duty to protect the Orthodox folk and help them along the way to salvation by example and deed: "and if they [the subjects] commit evil, sin comes upon the soul of those who permitted it."[35] It pleased God when Christians obeyed the tsar and served him with an open heart, for he was the guardian of the people and cared for their interests.

Iosif's theories did not make a clear distinction between the functions of Church and State because, faithful to the Byzantine tradition, he viewed them as two inseparable institutions working harmoniously together for the welfare of Orthodoxy. His ideas of Church and State were formulated as a direct response to the two great crises which faced the Russian Church toward the end of the fifteenth century: the proposed secularization of Church lands and the heresy of the Judaizers. In each crisis, Iosif managed to play a central role and his polemics constantly urged the Grand Prince to rule as an ideal Orthodox Autocrat.

Although the Russian Church had in the past accorded considerable ideological support to the autocratic sovereignty of the Grand Prince of Moscow, there existed no unanimous agreement about the nature of the Church's relation to the State. In opposition to the doctrines advocated by Iosif and

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[35] Ibid., p. 85.

like-minded clerics arose the monk Nil Sorsky and his disciples, the Trans-Volga Elders. According to Nil, true Orthodoxy involved a spiritual, ascetic search for the inner "light of Christ". The external manifestations of Christianity, rank and property, should be subordinated to the inner regulation of the soul. Since property and secular affairs could only corrupt the soul, the monasteries should not own land and the Church ought to disassociate itself from the State power. The two ought to be separated, for the Church was above any State.[36]

Despite the political services rendered by the Iosifian faction, Ivan III tended to sympathize with the position of the Trans-Volga Elders. The political and military expansion of Moscow made it necessary for the Grand Prince to have large tracts of land to distribute to the service gentry as pomiestie tenures. The Russian Church owned great estates, and the area of land under Church control was steadily increasing, since every wealthy person was eager to grant estates to the Church before his death in return for perpetual prayers for the salvation of his soul. The yarlyk of the Mongol Khan had made Church property inviolable, but since Ivan III had renounced Mongol suzerainty, he was no longer bound to respect the Khan's yarlyk and could plan a programme

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[36] Behr-Sigal, Irénikon, 14, pp. 364-368.

of secularization of Church lands. In 1479 and 1500, Ivan had secularized the Church properties in Novgorod and distributed them as pomiestie tenures, but was reluctant to adopt a policy of the general secularization of Church lands, for he dared not forfeit the support of the clergy and risk having the entire Church turn on him. For this reason, Ivan encouraged any critical discussion of the right of Church institutions to own land, and lent support to that faction of the clergy which questioned the Church's moral right to own property.[37]

In 1503, a Sobor met in Moscow to discuss minor reforms in Church administration. When the council was at its close, Nil Sorsky, probably with Ivan's cognizance, suddenly moved that the monasteries be deprived of the right to own land. The proposal was violently opposed by Metropolitan Simon, who had blessed Ivan's seizure of Church property in Novgorod in 1500, and by Iosif, who explained that the Church needed landed property to carry out effectively its mission in Orthodox society:[38]

> Si on retire aux monastères leurs villages et leurs biens, comment les hommes d'honorable et noble naissance recevront-ils la tonsure?...Et quand il n'y aura plus de moines honorables et nobles, la foi elle-même chancellera.[39]

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[37] G. Vernadsky, "The Heresy of the Judaizers and the Policies of Ivan III of Moscow", Speculum, 8 (1933), pp. 344-345.

[38] Vernadsky, Russia, p. 131.

[39] T. Spidlik, Joseph de Volokolamsk, Rome, 1956, p. 138.

To justify the Church's right to hold land, Iosif presented Ivan with a voluminous set of quotations from the Church Fathers and Byzantine canon law, including the spurious Donation of Constantine. The Sobor supported Iosif, although Ivan tried three times to overrule it.[40] The refusal to allow further secularization of the Church lands was a clear victory for the Iosifian party, which began to gain control of the Church hierarchy. At the same time, Iosif had successfully induced the Grand Prince to rule as an ideal Orthodox Autocrat, and respect the rights of the Church. Ivan, however, would have preferred to secularize more Church lands and show less concern for his theoretical obligations!

The heresy of the Judaizers was a religious movement which attacked the whole institution of the Orthodox Church. It had been initiated by the learned Jew Zecharia (Skharija) who had arrived at Novgorod in the suite of Prince Mikhail Olelkovich of Kiev in November, 1470. Well versed in philosophy and astrology, Zechariah talked with Novgorodian intellectuals and thus sowed the seeds of a heretical movement which spread subsequently to Moscow, where it spread considerably despite the necessity of remaining underground. Among those converted was a number of high officials, including Fedor Kuritsyn, diak for foreign affairs, and Elena of Moldavia, daughter-in-law of Ivan III and mother of Dmitri, heir-apparent

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[40] Vernadsky, Russia, p. 132.

after 1491. Metropolitan Zosima was a secret sympathizer, but had to conceal his feelings since a Sobor had officially condemned the heresy in 1490 at the demand of Archbishop Gennadi of Novgorod, who had discovered its existence in 1487 and was conducting a tireless campaign against the heretics.[41]

The heresy was by no means a uniform body of doctrines. The Judaizers were an assorted group of dissenters united only in their general dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the Orthodox Church. In seeking new approaches to religious questions, many of them found answers in Jewish teachings, especially in Jewish astronomical and astrological treatises which had arrived in Eastern Europe when the centre of medieval Jewish learning had shifted eastwards from Spain due to religious persecution.[42] Another group of heretics were those of a rationalistic and reformatory spirit opposed to the ritual and dogma of the established Church. It is difficult to establish the precise doctrines of the Judaizers, especially since most of our information about them is derived from the writing of their opponents, who accused all religious dissenters, including the Trans-Volga Elders, of being adherents of the heresy.[43]

Archbishop Gennadi of Novgorod, who had conducted

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[41] Vernadsky, Speculum, 7, pp. 437-439

[42] Ibid., p. 442.

[43] J.L.I. Fennell, Ivan the Great of Moscow, London, 1961, pp. 324-326.

single-handedly the first half of the Church's campaign against the heretics, advocated the total destruction of the Judaizers with the methods of the Spanish Inquisition. Gennadi wrote that "the ambassador of the Emperor [Georg von Thurn] told me about the Spanish king, how he cleansed his lands [from heresy] ... ."[44] Ivan III was reluctant to imprison or execute the heretics, who also received protection from those Muscovite high officials who were either secret adherents of the sect or else sympathizers.

The situation began to change when Iosif entered the fray and began to thunder against the heretics and expose their iniquities. He laid down a complete programme for destroying the heresy which he considered a great danger to both Church and State, although the precise nature of this danger was never clearly defined. All heretics, repentant or not, should be relentlessly hunted down and brought to trial, for it was the duty of all Christians to "hate them and judge them...curse them and inflict harm upon them."[45] Once condemned, they should be imprisoned or put to death. The right of investigating and judging heretics belonged to the Church, but the duty of punishing them was the exclusive privilege of the civil authorities, above all of the sovereign,

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[44] J.L.I. Fennell, "The Attitude of the Josephians and the Trans-Volga Elders to the Heresy of the Judaisers", Slavonic and East European Review, 29 (1951), p. 498.

[45] Ibid., p. 500.

to whom power was granted by God to chastise the wicked and reward the righteous:

> Having accepted by command of the Almighty the rule over the human race, be an orthodox lord and prince... and keep the Lord's flock intact from the wolves... and do not give free rein to the evildoing men who ruin the souls together with the bodies, I mean the most wicked heretics.[46]

The defence of the purity of the faith was an essential duty of the Orthodox Autocrat. In persuading the reluctant Ivan to use his sovereign power to eradicate the heresy, Iosif cited numerous examples of Christian emperors who had condemned, punished, or banished heretics: "the pious tsars put to death many of the unrepentant amongst the Jews and the heretics."[47] Ivan's confessor Mitrofan was a follower of Iosif, as was his heir Vasili, and their influence, along with Iosif's warnings that Ivan would be punished by God if he failed to protect the Orthodox folk, induced Ivan to convoke the Sobor of 1504, which condemned the heretics to harsh punishment and their leaders to death at the stake.[48]

The decision of the Sobor represented a double triumph for Iosif and his ideas. The Trans-Volga Elders were defeated, for they had opposed the use of State power

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[46] Raeff, American Slavic and East European Review, 8, p. 86.

[47] Fennell, Slavonic and East European Review, 29, p. 501.

[48] Vernadsky, Russia, pp. 132-133.

to punish the heretics, who should be reconverted by prayer and Christian love. More important, the Grand Prince had been induced to carry out a major duty of the true Orthodox Autocrat - the use of the State power to maintain the purity of the faith. In an epistle to Vasili III, his personal friend, Iosif wrote: "If thou dost not bestir thyself in the matter of dealing with the heretics, then all Orthodox Christianity will perish."[49] The use of the word "all" is significant; for Iosif, the true faith resided only in the realm of the Grand Prince, whose power must guarantee the security of the faith:

> If we do not create an Orthodox autocrat, it will be impossible in any way to uproot the heretics and falsifiers... . He who in this way cares for the Orthodox Christian faith is like unto the Equal-to-the-Apostles Emperor Constantine... ."[50]

Thus the Church had a direct interest in transforming the Grand Prince into an Orthodox Autocrat, in keeping with the Byzantine tradition that the great defender of the faith was the Christian Emperor.

Iosif Sanin's ideas of autocracy contained little original thought, and did not depart significantly from the traditional canons of Byzantine political philosophy. Ihor Sevcenko has shown that Iosif relied heavily upon the first

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[49] Fennell, Slavonic and East European Review, 29, p. 489.

[50] W.K. Medlin, Moscow and East Rome, Geneva, 1952, p. 89.

complete Slavonic translation of Agapetus' Hortatory Chapters for his outline of imperial ideology.[51] In conflicts with Prince Fedor of Volok and Archbishop Serapion of Novgorod, Iosif emerged triumphant only with the direct assistance of Vasili III, and it was after those incidents that he wrote the famous Slovo XVI (c.f., n. 28), in which he compared the tsar's power to that of God, placing all his faith in the central authority, the Grand Prince, as opposed to the local princes and prelates.[52] Self-interest certainly helped to influence his support of the Grand Prince's autocratic sovereignty. Nevertheless, Iosif's concept of autocracy exercised a profound influence upon the political thought of the sixteenth century. Iosif systematized earlier views on princely power to create the first important work of political theory in Muscovite Russia. To spread the basic precepts of Orthodox autocracy amongst the Russian clergy and people, the cardinal tenets of Byzantine political philosophy were reduced to their essentials and expressed in the form of vigorous polemics. More important, Iosif attempted to transform abstract political principles into a working ideology of autocracy; it was not sufficient to hail

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[51] I. Sevcenko, "A Neglected Byzantine Source of Muscovite Political Ideology", Harward Slavic Studies, II (1954), pp. 156-159.

[52] Vernadsky, Russia, pp. 150-151. See also M. Szeftel, Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, 13, p. 27.

the Grand Prince as an Orthodox Autocrat - he should be induced to rule as one and to use his sovereignty for the promotion of the welfare of Orthodoxy. Iosif's ideas, concerned mainly with the defence and establishment of Orthodoxy, were distorted by later generations in order to provide a blanket justification for the policies of the Muscovite sovereigns.

Lest Iosif's characterization of the tsar's authority appear extreme, consider Bossuet's instructions to the Dauphin, son of Louis XIV. Bossuet said of kings: "Vous êtes des dieux; c'est-à-dire: Vous avez dans votre autorité, vous portez sur votre front un caractère divin."[53]

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[53] Bossuet, "Politique tirée des propres paroles de l'écriture sainte", Oeuvres, Paris, 1836, X, p. 385.

CHAPTER V

BYZANTINE AND MONGOL INFLUENCES

I

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: to gauge the extent to which certain concepts of autocracy expounded by the clergy corresponded to those held by the Grand Prince, and to discuss the possibility of a Mongol ideological influence upon the development of autocratic ideology.

Moscow's renunciation of Mongol suzerainty was preceded and complemented by a spiritual emancipation from Constantinople. This political and spiritual independence was one of the essential factors which induced the Muscovite clergy to forge for the Grand Prince an entire ideology of autocratic sovereignty, which attributed to him the rights and responsibilities of the universal Christian Emperor, head of all Orthodox believers. At the same time, the Grand Prince had developed certain concepts of autocracy derived less from theoretical considerations than from the traditional policies carried out by the Muscovite princes. Was he prepared to accept all the theories of autocracy expounded by the clergy, make them a part of his concept of sovereignty, and transform these theories into a practical policy, as was

done with the idea that the Grand Prince of Moscow was the divinely-commissioned autocrat of all Russia?

The transformation of an ideology into action or policy is an excellent indication of the extent to which it has been accepted. That the Grand Prince of Moscow was the head and protector of all Orthodoxy was distinctly implicit in the works of Filofei of Pskov, who wrote, "all the empires of the Orthodox Christian faith have gathered into your single empire...you are the only tsar for Christians in the whole world."[1] Filofei insisted that true Orthodoxy was preserved only in Moscow and that the Grand Prince was its protector, his position being analogous to the Byzantine Emperor's, who was regarded as the head of all Orthodoxy. The Grand Princes allowed themselves to be praised as God-crowned tsars, protectors of the only true faith, but they had no intention of actually becoming head and protector of all Orthodoxy, including the Greeks and Balkan Slavs. To accept such a responsibility would mean that the Grand Princes would have to embark upon a great crusade to liberate the numerous Orthodox Christians living under Turkish rule, at a time when they were devoting all their resources to the recovery of their ancestral patrimony.[2] Indeed, it was patently

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[1] supra, chap. IV, n. 5.

[2] M. de Taube, "A propos de 'Moscou, Troisième Rome'", Russie et Chrétienté, Cahiers 3-4 (1948), p. 20.

advantageous to the Muscovite princes to remain on good terms with the Porte, for the Turks posed a greater danger to their Polish-Lithuanian enemies than to Moscow. There was no advantage in becoming involved in a war with the powerful vassal of the Sultan, the Khan of Crimea, who was capable of creating considerable danger on Moscow's southern frontiers while the Muscovite armies were embroiled with the forces of Poland-Lithuania and the Teutonic Order.[3] Vasili III even proposed to Sultan Selim I an alliance against Poland which was not accepted,[4] and it was not until the 1670s that Moscow began to propose an anti-Turkish league to the European powers.[5] Even in the seventeenth century, the Muscovite tsars were not especially enthusiastic about liberating the Orthodox Balkan Slavs from Turkish rule; the great idea expounded by George Krizhanits to Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich fell on deaf ears. The liberation of the Balkan Slavs became a Russian policy only in the nineteenth century, when Panslavism had replaced the idea of the Third Rome, and brother-Orthodox had became brother-Slav. The headship of all Orthodoxy, advocated by the clerical theorists, did not become part of the working concepts of autocracy held by the Grand Princes.

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[3] O. Halecki, Borderlands of Western Civilization, New York, 1952, pp. 143-146.

[4] F. Dvornik, The Slavs in European History and Civilization, New Brunswick, 1962, p. 240.

[5] Ibid., p. 499.

The belief in a "Byzantine heritage" was closely bound up with the headship of Orthodoxy suggested by the clerical theorists. If the Grand Prince was the successor to the Byzantine Emperor, was not his heritage the imperial city which had been considered the centre of Christianity until God punished it with the infidels? Certainly, the seat of the Empire had been transported to Moscow, but this did not mean that the former seat of the Empire was not the heritage of the Grand Prince - "all the empires of the Orthodox Christian faith have gathered into your single empire... ." The marriage of Ivan III with Sophia Paleologus, niece of the last Byzantine emperor, Constantine XI, gave in the eyes of many a kind of juridical sanction to the idea of Moscow as the heir to Byzantium. Was a belief in a "Byzantine heritage" part of the concepts of autocracy held by the Grand Princes of Moscow? Did they believe that God had commissioned them as heirs to the Byzantine Empire, as He had commissioned them autocrats of all Russia?

The claim to imperial descent put forth by the Muscovite princes was not based on Ivan III's Byzantine marriage, but was traced from Vladimir, who had married Anna the Porphyrogenete, sister of the Byzantine emperor Basil II, and from Vladimir Monomakh, who received the imperial dignity and regalia from the Emperor Constantine IX. That Anna died childless and the story of Monomakh was patently false did

not undermine claims to imperial descent. Indeed, there was a certain unwillingness to admit that Ivan's marriage to Sophia created a new relationship which of itself enhanced the position of the Grand Prince. Sophia, although a Paleologus, was not the daughter of an emperor or even of a reigning monarch,[6] but an orphan who had been a papal ward. She was the youngest of four children born to Thomas Paleologus, Despot of Morea and younger brother of Constantine XI. Andrew, the elder of her two brothers, was generally recognized as the legitimate heir to Byzantium and styled himself "Deo gratia fidelis, Imperator Constantinopolitanus". Perpetually in debt, Andrew sold his rights to the imperial throne to Charles VIII of France in 1494, and to the Spanish monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, in 1502. Prior to these actions, he had visited his sister in Moscow early in the 1490s.[7] Did he attempt to sell his imperial rights to his brother-in-law, Ivan III? No evidence has been discovered to show that Ivan officially claimed the imperial throne for himself, although his wife continued to style herself as an imperial Byzantine princess - Tsarevna Tsaregorodskaia.[8] Ivan's adoption of the bicephalous eagle, which took place some twenty years

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[6] Alef, Adoption, p. 8.

[7] S. Runciman, The Fall of Constantinople, 1453, Cambridge, 1965, pp. 182-184.

[8] V.O. Kluchevsky, A History of Russia, New York, 1960, II, p. 18.

after his Byzantine marriage when he began to have diplomatic relations with the Habsburgs, cannot be construed as constituting a claim to a "Byzantine heritage". Ideas of imperial descent extant in Moscow were directed towards legitimizing the claim of the Grand Prince to sovereignty over his ancestral patrimony of all Russia, not establishing his right to the imperial city.

The idea of the Grand Prince's "Byzantine heritage" actually began in Europe, where there existed a popular idea that Sophia, despite Roman constitutional theory and her genealogical position, was the "heiress of the Empire" and that her rights passed to her husband.[9] This spurious right of Sophia's was first expounded in a letter of 4 December, 1473, from the Republic of Venice to the Grand Prince of Moscow, whom Venice considered heir to the Empire, "lequel, à défaut d'héritiers mâles, revient au duc de Moscou par suite de son illustre mariage".[10] Moscow's right to Byzantium was first proclaimed by the Venetian merchant princes. This same idea was seized upon when the expansion of Turkish power into the Danube basin produced a long series of appeals from

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[9] This same misconception was shared by V.O. Kluchevsky: "...as heiress to the declining house of Byzantium, the new Tsarina of Rus' had transferred the supreme rights of the Byzantine house to Moscow, as to the new Tsargorod, and there shared them with the Muscovite lord whom she had espoused." (Ibid., p. 19).

[10] P. Pierling, La Russie et le Saint-Siège, Paris, 1896, I, 179-180.

the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor to the European powers to put aside their quarrels and join together in a great crusade against the infidel who threatened them all. Moscow was considered in these appeals, and the idea of restoring Constantinople, "the inheritance of the tsar of all Russia", was used to induce the Muscovite princes to join the European league against the Turks. One such appeal was made to Vasili III in 1519 by the envoy of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order: the Pope was planning an anti-Turkish league and would invite the Grand Prince to adhere to it, and of course, to the Union of Churches. In return, the Pope would crown him as the "Christian, most noble, and invincible Tsar of All Russia". The Grand Master expressed the hope that Vasili would join the league and "fight for his Constantinopolitan inheritance".[11] The Habsburgs twice sent their ambassador, Sigismund von Herberstein, to Moscow to discuss the possibilities of an anti-Turkish alliance, but to no avail. The concept of autocracy held by the Grand Princes of Moscow envisioned the extension of their autocratic sovereignty over all Russia, not over the imperial city, as implied by the clerical theorists and suggested by the European powers.[12]

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[11] Dvornik, op. cit., p. 272.

[12] Certain contemporary historians still ascribe to the Grand Princes of Moscow a claim to sovereignty over the former seat of the Byzantine Emperor; c.f. B. Mouravieff, La monarchie russe, Paris, 1962, p. 15 and I. Grey, Ivan III and the Unification of Russia, London, 1964, p. 40. J. Kucharzewski, The Origins of Modern Russia, New York, 1948, p. 9, has correctly analyzed the motives of the European powers which suggested that the Muscovite princes fight to recover their "Byzantine heritage".

Despite the efforts of the clerical theorists to ascribe to the Grand Princes the position and responsibilities of the universal Christian Emperor, the Byzantine conception of the sublime position of the Basileus Autokrator was alien to the Muscovite autocrats. Obedience was the duty of the Christian, but the subject should render imperial and not divine honours to the sovereign, who was not a divine being but a servant of God, like the least of his subjects. Iosif Sanin wrote: "Si tu sers et vénères ainsi le tsar, loin de perdre ton âme, tu apprends à craindre Dieu, car le tsar est le serviteur de Dieu."[13] The Muscovite princes never received the epithet "divine"; their residence was never called the "sacred palace", nor did there develop an "imperial liturgy" on the Byzantine model, despite the rigid etiquette of the Muscovite court. In diplomatic relations with the West, the Muscovite princes did not claim to be above all other rulers, as did the Byzantine Emperor, but rather sought diplomatic recognition as equals and independent sovereigns.[14] In their negotiations with the Habsburgs, Ivan III's diplomats fought to establish the equality of their master with the Holy Roman Emperor, whom they considered of greater rank than

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[13] D. Strémooukhoff, "L'idée impériale à Moscou au XVIème siècle", Annales de la Faculté des Lettres d'Aix, 32 (1959), p. 178.

[14] Dvornik, op. cit., p. 376.

the other European kings. Ivan, however, did not use the title tsar as a counterpart to the Habsburg imperial title; rather, he used the title Gosudar' to stress that he was an independent ruler who received his sovereignty from God.[15]

If Ivan declared that his autocratic sovereignty was of God, he was careful to show that his right to exercise sovereignty over all Russia was derived from his ancestors as well - his claim that the "lands of Saint Vladimir" were the legitimate patrimony of the Muscovite princes was essentially ancestral in nature. The old idea of legitimacy residing in the princely family was still strong. In Byzantium, the imperial power was in theory non-dynastic and non-hereditary, the desired succession being assured by co-optation, although the later Byzantines began to evince a certain "legitimist" dynastic feeling.[16] The Muscovite Grand Princes certainly had no intention of eliminating family legitimacy from their concept of autocratic sovereignty.

The Russian Church thus failed to byzantinize the Muscovite autocratic regime, for the Grand Prince did not make all the idea implicit in the theory of Moscow the Third

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[15] J.L.I. Fennell, Ivan the Great of Moscow, London, 1961, p. 122.

[16] J.B. Bury, The Constitution of the Later Roman Empire, Cambridge, 1910, pp. 12-15.

Rome and the ideas of their succession to the role of the Christian Emperor a part of their working ideology of autocracy.[17]

II

This study of the origins of autocracy in Muscovite Russia would be incomplete without an examination of a possible Mongol influence upon the development of autocratic ideas. The Mongol notion of an autocratic regime impressed the Russians and helped to develop the Muscovite system of autocratic government, for the Mongols taught the Muscovite princes lessons in absolutism far more definitive than any amount of Byzantine theory could ever accomplish. Under the Mongol regime, the new source of legitimacy was the Khan's yarlyk, without which no Russian prince could occupy his throne and exercise princely power. This yarlyk could be obtained only by making a long and dangerous journey to the Khan's court at Sarai or even Karakorum, where the prince would endure a humiliating ceremony of prostration before the Khan and his court, and was expected to distribute liberal "presents" to the Khan, his family, and his officials. In

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[17] It is, therefore, impossible to accept Elie Denisoff's conclusion: "La doctrine de la troisième Rome, née au pays de Novgorod devenait ainsi dès la fin du XV^e siècle la doctrine officielle des princes de Moscou." (Revue des études slaves, 23, p. 86.)

Russia, the Khan found it convenient to withdraw his baskaks and make certain princes responsible for collecting his taxes and enforcing his orders. Thus, the Russian princes became Mongol agents, and the greater of them fought and betrayed one another for the yarlyk which would confirm their rights to the throne of Vladimir, seat of the senior Grand Prince. The Grand Prince was enthroned with the participation of the Mongol envoy, and regardless of all the theories of the Russian clergy, the ideological position of the prince was limited by the harsh realities of the political situation, by the need to pay tribute and acknowledge suzerainty.[18]

"Moscow owes its greatness to the khans", wrote Karamsin. The Grand Princes of Moscow used the Khan's yarlyk as an instrument to build up their financial, military, and territorial power, and as a weapon against their political rivals, the other Russian princes, as well as against that other institution capable of limiting their autocratic authority, the city veche. The highly efficient Mongol autocracy served as a model in the organization of an administration, army, postal system, census, and system of collecting taxes; indeed, the basic Mongol system of financial and military districts was left intact by the Muscovite princes

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[18] B. Grekov and A. Iakoubovsky, La Horde d'or, Paris, 1939, pp. 210-212.

after they had renounced Mongol suzerainty.[19] The Mongol influence upon Muscovite autocracy as a political system was undeniable, but Mongol influence upon autocracy as an ideology was not so obvious.

Did Mongol ideas of autocratic sovereignty influence the development of Muscovite autocratic ideology? The solution to this problem is difficult, because the Mongol imperial idea was not set down in a single treatise, but must be derived from the preambles of the letters sent by the Mongol Khan to the rulers of the West, and from the Great Yasa, the Mongol imperial law formulated by Chingis-Khan, of which no complete edition has been preserved. These documents nevertheless provide a good idea of the Mongol concept of autocratic sovereignty.

The basic order of the world, the Order of God, was expressed as: "In Heaven there is only one eternal God, and on earth there is only one lord, Chingis-Khan, the Son of God" (Edict of Mangu Khan to Saint Louis).[20] A parallel was thus drawn between the monarchical constitutions of Heaven and earth, and the Mongol nation was metaphysically associated with Chingis-Khan who, as its founder, was the guiding spirit of the Mongol Empire, and as Son of Heaven,

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[19] For a detailed analysis, see Vernadsky, Mongols, pp. 333-366.

[20] E. Voegelin, "The Mongol Orders of Submission to the European Powers, 1245-1255", Byzantion, 15 (1941), p. 391.

was the intermediary between Heaven and the ruling Khan.[21] The Mongol Empire was an instrument of God for establishing peace and order on earth; it was a universal "World-Empire-in-the-Making", to which all nations and rulers legally belonged, even if they were not at the present time de facto members, or refused to recognize its authority. The Khan based his claim to world-domination on a divine mandate, for it had fallen on him to institute the Order of God on earth, and he was God's instrument for that purpose. Indeed, the "World-Empire-in-the-Making" itself was a divine revelation, starting with the Order of God. The building of the Empire was not merely a war-like expansion of Mongol power over the world, but the process by which the essential Empire was actualized into a historic one. Therefore, the successors of Chingis-Khan considered themselves to be executors of a divine mandate, and their deeds were part of a comprehensive revelation of God's will. All nations were subject to the universal empire of the Khan, the chosen instrument of God for establishing peace and order on earth.[22]

Superficially, the Mongol concept of autocratic sovereignty resembled that of Byzantium: one legitimate

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[21] Vernadsky, Mongols, p. 95.

[22] Voegelin, Byzantion, 15, pp. 402-405.

universal Empire ruled by an Emperor who held his mandate from God.[23] It is doubtful, however, if the Russians would appreciate or understand the doctrines of the Mongol imperial idea, or see any possible connection with the Byzantine idea. The common folk would comprehend only the harsh realities of the autocratic rule of the omnipotent Khan. As for the Russian princes, their interest in Mongol political theory would extend little beyond gaining the precious yarlyk and placating their suzerain. People and princes would tend to understand the Khan's reign in terms of power politics, and not as the proper fulfillment of the Order of God. If the Mongol imperial idea had any influence upon Muscovite autocratic ideology, it was an indirect one which made itself felt through the medium of the Russian Church, the last institution which would admit to having been influenced by the ideas of the "godless ones".

In matters of religion, the Mongols practised tolerance. Their official policy was to protect and patronize the religions of their subject nations, thus avoiding the enmity of local shamen or holy men. The Great Yasa declared:

> Whereas Chingis-Khan did not belong to any religion and did not follow any creed...he ordered that all religions were to be respected and that no preference was to be shown to any of them.[24]

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[23] G. Vernadsky, "The Scope and Contents of Chingis Khan's Yasa", Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, 3 (1938), p. 360.

[24] Vernadsky, Mongols, p. 102.

The Orthodox Church in Russia was therefore accorded the protection of the Khan. In 1272, Khan Mangou-Temir granted a yarlyk of immunity to the Russian Church, which confirmed the privileges of the clergy as a social group.[25] The landed estates of the churches and monasteries with all the people employed on them were exempt from taxation, and all the "church people" were exempt from labour or military services. No Russian or Mongol official was allowed to seize church lands or demand services of Church people. Anyone vilifying the Orthodox faith would be put to death. In return for all these privileges, the clergy had but one duty - to pray for the Khan. In the words of the yarlyk, all these privileges were granted to:

> ...tous les gens travaillant pour Dieu, pour qu'ils prient Dieu, le coeur droit, pour nous et notre race, et pour qu'ils nous bénissent...pour qu'ils ne nous maudissent pas, mais pour qu'ils prient pour nous en paix.[26]

The yarlyk contained an interesting provision: "si quelqu'un va prier Dieu pour nous d'un coeur non droit, alors ce péché sera sur lui."[27] The Russian Church was therefore placed under the direct protection of the Mongol Khan.

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[25] Ibid., pp. 165-166.

[26] A. Eck, Le Moyen-Age russe, Paris, 1933, Appendice II, "Le iarlyk du Khan Mengou-Temir à l'Eglise russe". This is a French translation of the entire yarlyk issued in 1272.

[27] Ibid.

The solution to the problem of the influence of the Mongol imperial idea upon Muscovite autocratic ideology may be found in the compulsory public prayer for the Khan held in all Russian churches. The difficulty of a Christian praying for the "godless one", a pagan suzerain, was resolved by the application of Saint Paul's idea that all power is derived from God and is therefore legitimate, a standard Christian dogma. As a pagan, the Khan could not be entered into the official cult of the Church as was the Christian Emperor, but he could be considered as the suzerain who is of God, appointed to his throne by God (obviously to chastize the Christian folk for their sins!), and thus prayed for to God. The idea of the Basileus Autokrator as the universal emperor of all Christian society was almost certainly overshadowed by the harsh realities of the Khan's autocratic regime.[28] The Russian chronicles, compiled by the clergy, always referred to the Khan as the tsar, a title formerly reserved for the universal Christian Emperor.[29] The title tsar was now losing its Orthodox connotations, but as tsar the Khan could occupy the position of the ruler ordained by God.

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[28] M. Cherniavsky, "Khan or Basileus: An Aspect of Russian Medieval Political Theory", Journal of the History of Ideas, 20 (1959), pp. 465-468.

[29] N. Andreyev, "Filofey's Epistle to Ivan Vasil'yevich", Slavonic and East European Review, 38 (1959), p. 14.

Contemporary chronicles furnish evidence to support this contention. In 1245, Prince Mikhail of Chernigov was obliged to journey to the court of Batu-Khan at Sarai to receive Batu's yarlyk. Batu agreed to receive Mikhail only if he would purify himself by walking between two fires and by prostrating himself before the ongon of Chingis-Khan. Mikhail adamantly refused to obey Batu's orders, and even denounced the "vile idols", for which defiance he was executed. According to the Novgorodian Chronicle, Mikhail prefaced his final refusal to comply with the orders of "Tsar Baty" with the words: "To thee, Tsar, I bow, since God has granted thee the sovereignty (tsarstvo) of this world... ."[30] If Batu enjoyed power, it was only because he had received it from God, and the Christian must obey the legitimate ruler, unless he should command something against the will of God, i.e., bowing to idols.

Upon the death of Iaroslav I of Vladimir, his sons Alexander Nevsky and Andrei went to Batu's ordu at Sarai to pledge their allegiance. Batu ordered them to procede to Karakorum to submit themselves to the great Guyuk Khan. The Chronicle of Pskov vividly described the reason for Alexander's journey to the Horde:

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[30] R. Michell and N. Forbes (eds.), Chronicle of Novgorod, 1016-1471, Camden Third Series, XXV, London, 1914, p. 90.

> At that time, there was a mighty Eastern tsar, to whom God had submitted many peoples, from the east to the west; the tsar, hearing of the bravery and glory of Alexander, sent a messenger with the words: 'Alexander, as you know, God has submitted to me many peoples; you alone do not wish to submit; but if you want to preserve your lands, then come to me and gaze upon the glory of my tsardom.'[31]

Since all power is of God, it is therefore legitimate and to be obeyed by the Christian. As tsar, the Mongol Khan became the legitimate sovereign sent by God and although he was a pagan and an unbeliever, it was only through the dispensation of Divine Providence that he enjoyed power. The public prayer for the Khan in the churches reinforced the idea that the Khan should be obeyed.[32] In this way, the Russian Church unknowingly sustained the Mongol imperial idea - the legitimacy of the Chingisids, whose appointment to rule was derived from the Order of God.

The idea of the Khan as the ruler sent by God became the source of an ideological problem when Ivan III was prepared to repudiate his suzerain. Muscovite political thought had been based on the Scriptural admonition: "Fear God. Honour the Emperor (in Slavic, car'." By 1480, the Byzantine tsar was no more and the only tsar, ordained by God and therefore unassailable, was the car' ordin'skij, the Khan of the Golden Horde; and the Muscovite princes were

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[31] M. Cherniavsky, Tsar and People: Studies in Russian Myths, New Haven, 1961, p. 20.

[32] Grekov and Iakoubovsky, op. cit., p. 214.

the first to preach the doctrines of obedience to the legitimate powers.[33]

Archbishop Vassian of Rostov, confessor to Ivan III, resolved the ideological problem in his Poslanie na Ugru (Epistle to the Ugra), addressed to Ivan on the eve of his stand against Khan Akhmad to encourage the Grand Prince to defy the pagan and defend the faith.[34] The original manuscript of the Poslanie has been lost, but several editions may be found in the various Russian chronicles.[35]

Since the rejection of the Florentine Union and the fall of Constantinople, the Grand Princes of Moscow had begun to emerge as the Orthodox tsar, which image Vassian used to destroy the idea of the legitimacy of the "pagan" Tatar tsar; for Vassian, the renunciation of Mongol suzerainty was not merely an affair of armies. The Poslanie opened with an acclamation:

> Pious and Christ-loving, noble and God-crowned and God-confirmed, in piety shining to the ends of the universe, certainly the most glorious amongst tsars, the glorious sovereign grand prince Ivan Vasilievich of all Russia... .[36]

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[33] I. Sevcenko, "A Neglected Byzantine Source of Muscovite Political Ideology", Harvard Slavic Studies, II (1954), p. 154.

[34] Ibid., p. 153. Vernadsky (Russia, p. 75) believes that the Poslanie as we know it was compiled around 1498, possibly from a shorter version of 1480.

[35] Polnoe Sobranie Russkikh Letopisei, VI, pp. 225-230. A shorter version of the Poslanie was reprinted in M. Karamsin, Histoire de l'Empire de Russie, Paris, 1820, VI, pp. 189-194. Hereafter, PSRL refers to the first work.

[36] PSRL, p. 225.

It is as a God-crowned tsar that Ivan ought to face the enemies of his faith and land. Vassian pointed out that the Grand Prince was responsible for the welfare of the Orthodox folk, and reminded him that his ancestors had defended the true faith - did not God protect Dmitri Donskoi when he battled the infidel Mamai?

Vassian went on to encourage Ivan to defy his suzerain:

> And if some will argue that you are under the oath of your ancestors not to raise your hand against the tsar; listen, god-loving tsar. If an oath is made because of necessity, we are allowed to forgive the breaking of it, the metropolitan and we, the whole god-loving synod, [the oath being] not to a tsar, but to a brigand and savage and God-fighter... . And who of the prophets of the prophecies or who of the apostles have taught you to obey this God-shamed and most evil so-called tsar, you, the great Christian tsar of the Russian land?[37]

To raise the Grand Prince to the role of tsar and destroy the idea of the Khan as the legitimate ruler sent by God, Vassian presented the Tatar tsar as a mere usurper, and Ivan, the heir to Saint Vladimir's tradition, as the more legitimate of the two because he was the Orthodox tsar. Just as God raised Moses and Joshua to free Israel, so did He elevate Ivan to deliver Russia, the "new Israel" (novemu Izrailiu) from the "new Pharaoh, unholy Akhmat" (novago Faraona, noganago Akhmata).[38] Vassian seemed to support Ivan's claims

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[37] Ibid., p. 228.

[38] Ibid., p. 229.

to all Russia, for he declared that God had made Ivan and his posterity sovereigns for "generation and generation to eternity".[39]

The problem of the Mongol suzerainty and Ivan's desire to cast it off forced Vassian to redefine the nature of the Grand-Prince's sovereignty. Ivan was presented as the only right tsar, more legitimate than his former suzerain because he was the Christian tsar, defender of the faith. The idea of Ivan as tsar because he was working for the true faith was probably due to the renewed influence of Byzantine political ideas which had entered Russia with the South Slavic refugees. It was nevertheless the idea that Mongol suzerainty had been ordained by God (which belief was shared by the Mongols; there was merely a difference in gods) which forced Vassian to hail Ivan as the God-crowned tsar, the more legitimate of the two. It is interesting to note that the title tsar once again possessed an Orthodox connotation.

Despite Vassian's efforts to transform the Grand Prince into a universal Christian Emperor, the Muscovite princes regarded themselves as successors to the Khans in many ways. Ivan III and his descendants took over large sections of the Mongol administrative machine. As former vassals of the Mongol Khan and his actual successors in supreme power over Moscow, the Grand Princes assumed the Khan's authority in

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[39] Ibid., p. 230.

regard to taxation and army administration, especially conscription. In terms of concrete political authority, the Grand Prince was less the successor of the Christian Emperor than of the Mongol Khan. This belief received further emphasis when a new Tatar khanate was established in 1452 under the tutelage of Moscow. Kasim, Tatar ally of Vasili II, received the district of Gorodets as a patrimony and became the vassal of the Grand Prince. He received the appellation of tsarevich and his territory became known as the Tsardom of Kasimov. The creation of a vassal Juchid khanate under the authority of the Grand Prince signalized the end of Mongol domination over Russia. Moscow now had a member of the Mongol princely house, a tsarevich (and only princes of Chingisid blood were given that title) as a vassal.[40] The Grand Prince was thus filling the position of the Mongol Khan, whose exclusive suzerainty the Chingisid and lesser Mongol princes had formerly acknowledged.

In the Russian churches, the public prayer for the Grand Prince took the place of the prayer for the Khan, rather than the place of the long-defunct memorial for the Basileus. Similarly, coins struck by Ivan III bearing the inscriptions "Grand Prince Ivan Vasilievich" and "Sovereign of all Russia" replaced the older coins bearing the mark or image of the Khan. A ruler's name or mark on a coin was universally recognized as

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[40] Vernadsky, Mongols, pp. 331-332.

a symbol of sovereignty, and Ivan's coins indicated the replacement of the Khan's sovereignty by his own.[41]

In the fifteenth century, the Grand Prince began to be known as the "white tsar"; the Tale of Isador's Council[42] called Vasili II the "white tsar of all Russia", while Herberstein reported that "some call the prince of Moscow Albus, or white."[43] Originally, all of Juchi's Ulus was known as the White Horde; gold, representing the colour yellow, was the symbol of Mongol imperial power and Chingis-Khan's descendants were known as the Golden Kin. The first mention of the name Golden Horde in Russian sources appeared in the History of the Tsardom of Kazan (c. 1564). It appears that the term Golden Horde replaced that of White Horde after the separation of the Khanates of Crimea and Kazan from the White Horde.[44] Hence, the Grand Prince of Moscow, as successor to the White Horde (so-called Golden Horde), was called the "white tsar".[45]

In the sixteenth century, the idea of the Muscovite Tsar as successor to the Khan received official recognition.

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[41] Cherniavsky, Journal of the History of Ideas, 20, pp. 469-470.

[42] supra, chap. III, n. 46.

[43] Sigismund von Herberstein, Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii, Vienna, 1549. English edition by R.H. Major, Notes upon Russia, London, 1851, I, 34.

[44] Vernadsky, Mongols, pp. 138-139.

[45] Ibid., p. 388.

Ivan IV, in justifying his new title of tsar, declared in a note handed to the Polish-Lithuanian ambassadors that God gave him not only the Russian land, but also the tsardoms of Kazan and Astrakhan, "and the throne of Kazan and Astrakhan have been a tsar's see from the origins."[46] Similarly, the seventeenth century Muscovite writer Grigori Kotoshikhin asserted in his Russia in the Reign of Alexis Mikhailovich that Ivan IV, having conquered Kazan and Astrakhan, became "tsar and Grand Prince Ivan Vasilievich of all Russia, in this way did the tsardom originate in Russia."[47] It appears that the idea of the "Mongol heritage" was more powerful than the "Byzantine heritage" suggested by the clerical theorists.

If the Grand Princes regarded themselves in many ways as successors to the Khan, their autocratic ideology remained essentially Byzantine in form. The Russian Church was the most powerful intellectual institution in Moscow, and forged for the Grand Princes an ideology of autocracy based on Byzantine political philosophy. The purpose of the State was defined within the context of Christianity, and the autocratic sovereignty of the Grand Prince was defined in terms of the autority of the Basileus Autokrator, head of all Orthodoxy. In return for clerical support, the Grand Prince

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[46] Ibid., p. 388.

[47] Cherniavsky, Journal of the History of Ideas, 20, p. 474.

was expected to rule as an ideal Orthodox Autocrat, defender of the faith and head of all Orthodoxy. The Grand Princes were entirely prepared to have the tremendous authority of the Russian Church placed behind their autocratic sovereignty and to be hailed as the "God-crowned tsar", to whose absolute authority every Orthodox Christian should willingly submit. They were not always prepared to transform all these exalted doctrines into a practical policy, lest the consequences prove embarrassing. Nevertheless, the forms of the autocratic ideology of the Grand Princes remained in essence Byzantine, and they considered themselves tsars of the "autocracy of this Russian tsardom of veritable Orthodoxy".

For the common folk, autocratic ideology was far less relevant than autocratic practice, i.e., the taxes and services which they owed their sovereign, be it the Mongol Khan or his successor in power, the Grand Prince of Moscow. Their understanding of the ideology of autocracy was well expressed in a sixteenth-century popular folk-ballad, in which Ivan Grozny boasts:

> In passing, I took Kazan,
> Brought Tsar Simeon under my power,
> Took off his imperial purple,
> Conveyed it to stone-walled Moscow,
> Christianed the purple in Moscow.
> This purple upon me I put,
> Whereupon I became the priest-tsar,[48]
> Tsar Ivan Vasilyevich the Terrible.

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[48] N.K. Gudzy, History of Early Russian Literature, New York, 1949, p. 268.

Vassian of Rostov had expressed a similar view almost a century previously. The Tsar of Moscow was seen as the heir to the Khan, but the new political situation took on the character of a change of dynasty, from one ruler to another who, being Orthodox, was the more legitimate of the two. Was not the "imperial purple" Christianed in Moscow? Regardless of what autocratic ideologies were formulated, the obligations of the common folk towards their sovereign remained substantially the same.

CONCLUSION

The origins of the idea of autocracy in Muscovite Russia may be found largely in the political philosophy advocated by the Russian Church, and in the political activity and territorial-ideological claims advanced by the Muscovite State.

The Russian Church received its education from the Greek Orthodox Church of Byzantium. The political philosophy of the Byzantine clergy envisioned only an autocratic regime under an absolute monarch, who had received his throne from God, while its Weltanschauung held that the universal Christian Church and the universal Christian Emperor, temporal head of all true believers, were the two inseparable pillars of the Christian Commonwealth, and should work harmoniously together for the welfare of all Orthodoxy. Influenced by these ideas, the Russian Church, desirous of order and stability, made good relations with the ruling princes a basic policy, and preached the ideas of autocratic sovereignty learned from Byzantium, although the political traditions and divided structure of authority in Kievan Russia effectively precluded the development of an autocratic State. Byzantine concepts of autocracy never became part of the practical, working ideology of the Kievan princes, but

the Church nevertheless applied them to the contemporary political situation. By the twelfth century, the clergy was preaching that the prince's office and his very right to rule was derived not from the hands of men, but from God, in defiance of the Kievan political tradition of the general legitimacy of the princely family as a whole, and of confirmation in office by the veche. The Church continued to advocate autocratic political ideas during the period of the patrimonial regimes, when Russia was divided internally and ruled by the Mongol Khan externally.

As an advocate of order and stability, the Church lent its support to the rising power of the Grand Prince of Moscow, who seemed best capable of realizing the ideal of autocratic rule by a single sovereign over all the Orthodox lands. The growth of the political authority of the Muscovite princes, who became powerful enough to dominate the other patrimonial princes, provided the Russian clergy with an effective vehicle for their autocratic ideas, which in the absence of a powerful State, would have remained mere theories, without practical application. The Church lent its support to the Grand Prince's authority, but expected him to recognize his special responsibilities as an Orthodox prince and rule accordingly. To enable the Grand Prince to understand these obligations, the Church was obliged to define the nature of the sovereignty of the ideal Orthodox autocrat.

Under the impact of the rejection of the Florentine Union, the fall of Constantinople, and the influx of renewed Byzantine and South Slavic ideas, the Russian clergy began to see the realm of the Grand Prince of Moscow as the only haven of the true Orthodoxy, and the Grand Prince as the temporal head of all Orthodox Christians. If such was the case, the Grand Prince's authority acquired the characteristics of that of the Christian Emperor, and the Grand Prince, as head of Orthodoxy, necessarily became an autocrat. Ivan III's renunciation of Mongol suzerainty impelled the Russian clergy to hail him as the only prince who was both Orthodox and independent, the temporal head of Orthodoxy and defender of the faith. The Grand Prince received from the clergy the former imperial titles of Sovereign, Autocrat, and Tsar, all of which stood for independent, God-given sovereignty. Clerical theorists forged an ideology of autocracy. Filofei of Pskov proclaimed Moscow the Third Rome, and its sovereign the only tsar for Christians in the world because all the former Christian empires had gathered into his one. Iosif Sanin defined the autocratic powers of the tsar and the Christian duty of obedience, and attempted to transform ideology into action by urging Ivan III to rule as an ideal Orthodox autocrat. These clerical theories of autocratic sovereignty were derived largely from theological premises, and were

conceived primarily in terms of the Grand Prince's obligations as sovereign of the last Christian Empire. Their full implications were not accepted by the Grand Princes, who felt that the duties involved in accepting the headship of all Orthodoxy would interfere with their mission to recover their ancestral patrimony.

Unlike the clerical theories of autocracy, the principles of autocratic sovereignty held by the Grand Princes of Moscow were derived not from theological premises but from accomplished facts, and were elevated into political and ideological claims.

Autocratic ideas had been extant in Russia since the establishment of the Orthodox Church in the tenth century, but not until the fifteenth century did autocracy become the dominant political philosophy of an independent Russian State, the Grand Principality of Moscow. The rapid territorial growth of the Muscovite State forced the Grand Princes to take a new view of themselves as rulers, and of the nature of their rights. At the same time, Ivan III's renunciation of Mongol suzerainty made it essential to find a source of legitimacy other than the Khan's yarlyk to sanctify grand-princely authority. Accordingly, new theories were deduced from the new independence and power of the Grand Prince and elevated into political and ideological claims, which found

expression in new titles, ceremonies, and official legends, the purpose of which was to transform the status of the Grand Prince of Moscow from that of the senior patrimonial prince to that of the divinely-commissioned autocratic sovereign of all the Russian lands, which were his hereditary patrimony. Legitimacy, the right to exercise sovereignty, was thus derived from God and not from the hands of men, i.e., the consent of the veche or the Khan's yarlyk.

Ivan III attempted to transform the nature of his authority from that of the senior patrimonial prince to that of the divinely-commissioned autocrat of all Russia. His regime enjoyed the full support of the Russian Church, and Ivan's tentative and exploratory use of the titles tsar and samoderzhets probably resulted from clerical use of these terms, especially in the panegyric literature of the mid-fifteenth century. In spite of these new and exalted concepts of autocratic sovereignty, the Grand Princes treated their realm, in time of crisis or urgency, not as a territory of State but as a private patrimony to be devised at will. The Grand Princes could envision the autocratic, but not the monarchic principle.

The origins of autocratic ideology may also be traced to the first Muscovite diplomatic contacts with the West. Negotiations with the Habsburgs made the Grand Princes especially anxious to define their independent and God-given autocratic

sovereignty, lest they appear inferior to the Holy Roman Emperors.

The Mongol influence upon the autocratic government of Moscow was decisive, but its impact upon autocratic ideology was less direct. The Russian Church, under the protection of the Khan, accepted his suzerainty as legitimate because the source of all political authority was the will of God. When Ivan III renounced Mongol suzerainty, the Church was obliged to find an ideological justification for the repudiation of the suzerain who had been always held as legitimate. Bishop Vassian of Rostov showed that Ivan, as heir to Saint Vladimir's tradition, was more legitimate than the Khan because, of the two, Ivan was the Orthodox "God-crowned tsar", while the other was a "so-called tsar", a "godless one". The Grand Princes, successors to the Khans in supreme political power, were gradually seen as the ideological successors to the Khans, which belief received a kind of official recognition in the sixteenth century.

Finally, it is essential to remember that if the Grand Princes of Moscow had not possessed the political and military strength commensurate with the ideas of autocratic sovereignty, such ideas would have remained at best a series of interesting speculations on the nature of princely power, confined largely to the Russian clergy. When absolute political authority was combined with autocratic ideology,

the power of the Grand Prince attained the level at which Herberstein marvelled:

> He uses his authority as much over ecclesiastics as laymen, and holds unlimited control over the lives and property of all his subjects: not one of his counsellors has sufficient authority to dare to oppose him, or even differ from him, on any subject. They openly confess that the will of the prince is the will of God, and that whatever the prince does he does by the will of God... .[1]

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[1] S. von Herberstein, Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii, Vienna, 1549. English edition by R.H. Major, Notes upon Russia, London, 1851, I, 32.

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