

THE CONTEST BETWEEN LITHUANIA-RUS' AND THE GOLDEN HORDE IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY FOR SUPREMACY OVER EASTERN EUROPE*

J. PELENSKI

Traditional scholarship, in its treatment of the struggles for territorial supremacy in Eastern Europe in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries and, in its assessment of the impact of the non-Slavic neighbors on the destinies of the Eastern Slavs, has concentrated its attention on three subjects:

- 1) the relationships among Suzdal'-Vladimir, Tverian and Muscovite Rus', and the Golden Horde;¹
- 2) the struggle among the Russian competitors, particularly Muscovy and Tver, for hegemony in the Great Russian ethnic territory;² and
- 3) the relationship between the Grand Principality of Lithuania and the Eastern Slavs. Here Lithuania has been regarded as both an outsider

*This article represents an expanded version of its author's paper, entitled "The Contest between Lithuania and the Golden Horde for the Supremacy over Eastern Europe", which was presented at the session "Nomads and the Development of the Slavic World", chaired by Professor Tibor Halasi-Kun, and held at the Banff '74 International Slavic Conference (Banff, Alberta, Canada, September 4-7, 1974).

¹ For the best general surveys of these relations, see A.N. Nasonov, *Mongoly i Rus' (Istorija tatarskoj politiki na Rusi)* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1940); B. Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde (Die Mongolen in Russland, 1223-1502)*, Wiesbaden, 1965²; B.D. Grekov and A. Ju. Jakubovskij, *Zolotaja orda i ee padenie* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1950); G. Vernadsky, *The Mongols and Russia* (New Haven-London, 1953); M.G. Safargaliev, *Raspad Zolotoj Ordy (Učenyje Zapiski Mordovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, vyp. 11)* (Saransk, 1960); I.B. Grekov, *Očerki po istorii meždunarodnyx otnošenij vostočnoj Evropy XIV-XVI vv.* (Moscow, 1963).

² For the most important works and the literature on the subject, see A. E. Presnjakov, *Obrazovanie velikorusskogo gosudarstva (Očerki po istorii XIII-XV stoletii)* (Petrograd, 1920); L.V. Čerepnin, *Obrazovanie russkogo centralizovannogo gosudarstva* (Moscow, 1960); J. L. I. Fennell, *The Emergence of Moscow, 1304-1359* (London, 1968).

and an insider of the east Slavic world with equal justification, particularly after her transformation into a Lithuania-Ruthenian state.³

In comparison, the relationship between Lithuania-Rus' and the Golden Horde, in whose system Muscovy was integrated, has received very little attention.⁴ This comparative neglect appears unjustified since Lithuania, or Lithuania-Rus', and the Golden Horde were the two principal contestants in the struggle for supremacy in Eastern Europe, specifically for the lands of Old Rus', in the fourteenth century. Lithuania-Rus' and Muscovy were also competing for the succession to Old Rus'. However, their conflicts and confrontations cannot be analyzed outside the larger scope of the relations between Lithuania and the Golden Horde. Muscovy, a vassal state of the Golden Horde, played a significant, albeit secondary, role in this peculiar triangular relationship. Nevertheless, Muscovite bookmen and ideologists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries succeeded in magnifying Muscovy's role in the East

³ For the most important works and literature on these relations, see V.B. Antonovyč, *Monografii po istorii zapadnoj i jugo-zapadnoj Rossii*, I (Kiev, 1885); M. Hruševs'kyj, *Istoriya Ukraïny-Rusy* (10 vols., offset rep. ed., New York, 1954-1958), IV (*XIV-XVI viki — Vidnosyny polityčnyj*); M.K. Ljubavskij, *Litovsko-russkij sejm. Opyt po istorii učreždenija v svyazi s vnutrennim stroem i vnešnju žiznju gosudarstva* (Moscow, 1900); *idem*, *Očerki po istorii Litovsko-russkogo gosudarstva do Ljublinskoj unii vključitel'no* (Moscow, 1910); A.E. Presnjakov, *Lekcii po russkoj istorii* (2 vols., Moscow, 1938-1939), especially I, vyp. 1 (*Zapadnaja Rus' i Litovsko-russkoe gosudarstvo*); P.G. Klepatskij, *Očerki po istorii Kievskoj zemli (I. Litovskij period)* (Odessa, 1912); S. Kutrzeba, "Unia Polski z Litwą", *Polska i Litwa w dziejowym stosunku* (Cracow, 1914); O. Halecki, *Dzieje Unii Jagiellońskiej* (2 vols., Cracow, 1919-1920); N. Čubatyj, "Deržavno-pravne stanovyšče ukrajins'kyx zemel' Lytovskoji deržavy pid kineč' XIV st.", *Zapysky Naukovoho Tovarystva im. Ševčenk*a 134, 135, 144 and 145 (1924-1926) (and separately L'viv, 1926); L. Kolankowski, *Dzieje Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego za Jagiellonów (I. 1377-1499)* (Warsaw, 1930); H. Paszkiewicz, *Jagiellonowie a Moskwa (I. Litwa a Moskwa w XIII i XIV wieku)* (Warsaw, 1933); S.M. Kuczyński, *Ziemie czernihowsko-siewierskie pod rządami Litwy (Praci Ukraïns'koho Naukovoho Instytutu, 38)* (Warsaw, 1936); H. Jablonowski, *Westrusland zwischen Wilna und Moskau (Die politischen Tendenzen der russischen Bevölkerung des Grossfürstentums Litauen im 15 Jh.)*, (Leiden, 1955); O.P. Backus, *Motives of West Russian Nobles in Deserting Lithuania for Moscow, 1377-1514* (Lawrence, Kansas, 1957); V.T. Pašuto, *Obrazovanie litovskogo gosudarstva* (Moscow, 1959); V. I. Pičeta, *Belorussija i Litva XV-XVI vv.* (Moscow, 1961); J. Bardach, J. Ochmański, and O.P. Backus, *Lithuanie; Introduction bibliographique à l'histoire du droit et à l'ethnologie juridique*, (D; 14) (Bruxelles, 1969).

⁴ A few specialized studies should be mentioned in this connection: M. Ždan, "Stosunki litewsko-tatarskie za czasów Witolda, w. ks. Litwy", *Ateneum Wileńskie* (cited hereafter *AW*) 7 III-IV (1930), pp. 529-601; S.M. Kuczyński, "Sine Wody" in *Księga ku czci Oskara Haleckiego wydana w XXV-lecie jego pracy naukowej* (Warsaw, 1935), pp. 81-141; J. Puzyra, "W sprawie pierwszych walk litwinów z tatarami o Rus' w latach 1238-1243", *Przegląd Historyczno-Wojskowy* (cited hereafter as *PHW*) 9 (1937), pp. 345-400; R. Batūra, "Bor'ba Litovskogo velikogo knjažestva protiv Zolotoj Ordy (Ot našestvija poličič Batija do bitvy u Sinix Vod)" (Avtoreferat dissertacii na soiskanie učenoj stepeni kandidata istoričeskix nauk) (Vilnius, 1972).

