NARRATIVE IDENTITY / IMPERIAL IDENTITY:
СКАЗАНИЕ О КНЯЗЬЯХ ВЛАДИМИРСКИХ
AND ПОВЕСТЬ О НОВГОРОДСКОМ БЕЛОМ КЛОБУКЕ

Nikita Nankov

Въс, княже, яко своего нитоже не хубить, но хвалить.
Повесть временных лет (122)

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS

This paper explores how Paul Ricoeur’s concept of narrative identity, complemented by the notion of ideology of Umberto Eco and the interpretive principle post hoc, ergo ante hoc apply to two Russian texts testifying to Muscovite Russia’s political and ecclesiastical coming-of-age: Сказание о князьях владимирских (The Tale of the Grand Prince of Vladimir and All Russia; further referred to as Сказание) and Повесть о новгородском белом клобуке (The Tale of the White Cowl; further as Повесть)1. These

1 The time of origin of both Сказание and Повесть is uncertain. Zhdanov thinks that Сказание appeared after 1480 (94, 98), but no later than 1522 (93, 98; see also 93-98, 112). For Dmitrieva (71, 109), this work dates from the first half or the middle of the sixteenth century. Malinin (503) holds that Сказание was written before 1491. Gudzii (232) suggests the end of the fifteenth century. For an English translation of the first redaction see Haney 359-367. I use the second redaction of Сказание published in Dmitrieva 185-191; the first redaction is in the same book 171-178. For Rozov (Повесть о ... клобуке 323), Повесть dates from the 1490s. Malinin (503) thinks that the work was written in 1491-1492. According to Zenkovsky (323), the date of occurrence is ca. 1510-1540. Gudzii (248) maintains that the time of writing is the end of the fifteenth century. Stremoukhoff (La tiare 128) writes that because no critical edition of the work is available, no firm ground for the historical placement of Повесть exists; it or its redactions might have been written before or after the 1564 Council. Луэ (Идеологическая борьба 229, 230) dates Повесть not earlier than the second half of the sixteenth century; yet he considers the time of its occurrence uncertain (234); he also writes that the work was written not earlier than the end of the sixteenth century (Луэ, Заметки 459). For an English translation of part of Повесть see Zenkovsky 325-332.
texts belong to a body of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century writings expressing the idea of Moscow as the Third Rome. My hypothesis concerning Сказание and Повесть comprises three intertwined points:

(a) the Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts, despite the fact that they fall into different genres, share some basic structural and functional characteristics;

(b) these features provide criteria for considering the heterogeneous Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts as narratively alike;

(c) the structural, functional, and narrative similarities of these texts boil down to their construction of Russian (and later Soviet) imperial identity which should be viewed not only in its verbal but

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2 See D’iakonov 54-90; Zhdanov 65-69, 85-90 (about Послание [Epistle] by Spiridon-Savva [Spiridon-Sabbas]) and 69, 80-81, 85-118 (about Сказание), especially 108-112, where Zhdanov speaks of the maturation of the political idea of Moscow as the Third Rome and its formulation in accordance with the literary trends of the time; Malinin 383-384; Miliukov 3: 50-57 and 2: 23-28; Toumanoff 445; Stremoukhov (Москов); Medlin, 68-69, 93-95; Lur’e, Идеологическая борьба 350-351, 375-390 (especially 378-380), 484-499; Rozov ([Комментарии]) 588; Haney 354-359; Gudzii 248; Zenkovsky 323-324; and Terras 66-70. To this body of texts we can add Filofei’s (Philotheus) cycle of epistles (Malinin, Приложения 1-144; cf. Likhachev, History 345), Сказание о вавилонском царстве (Памятники литературы древней Руси 1982 182-187; for a longer version of Повести о вавилонском царстве [Tales of the Babylonian Kingdom] see Grikhin 99-106 and 283-290; cf. Likhachev, History 329-330), and others. To this group, with some of its features, one may also relate Степенная книга (The Book of Degrees) (cf. Likhachev, History 366-367; and D’iakonov 78ff). Zhdanov (1-151) and Dmitrieva (66-70) describe a set of texts closely related to Сказание. Likhachev (History 345-346) also writes of Послание by Spiridon-Savva as an ideological text. Gol’dberg (У истоков) is of the opinion that the idea of Moscow as the Third Rome is the apex of the formation of Muscovite political ideology; this ideology emerged in the beginning of the fifteenth century, and made itself felt in the Muscovite fifteenth-century chronicles reworking earlier historical tales and legends.

3 For the scholarship on the Filofei cycle see Malinin; Toumanoff (411n1); Gol’dberg (Три „послания Филофея” 68n2); and Kämpfer (Beobachtungen 1n1). For Сказание see Dmitrieva; and Лу’е (Идеологическая борьба 386-390). For Повесть see Rozov (Повесть … как памятник; Повесть о … клобуке; and [Комментарии]); Лу’е (Идеологическая борьба 229-234, 246); Strêmooukhoff, La tiare; Cherepnin; Gudzii (248); Zenkovsky (323-324); and Terras (68-69).
also in its practical (historical, political, military, ideological, artistic, scholarly, etc.) aspects.

Here a preliminary methodological point should be made. Narrative similarity is a domain where literary scholarship can operate without fear of trespassing the borders of other disciplines dealing with the same texts, such as textology, history, biographical and source studies, political studies, history of law, and so on. But the opposite also holds true: narrativity is a cove where the study of literature can do its work without pressure from other disciplines. This plea, had it not been with respect to the medieval texts in question, may have sounded obsolete today. However, in the studies of medieval Russian literature, in our case at least, one still feels the strong spirit of nineteenth-century philology in which “[t]extual interpretation is simply one of the tools available to the history of mentalities” (Todorov, Symbolism 149; see also 143-155); nineteenth-century philology pays no attention to the internal consistency or structure of the text, and it does not deal with intratextual analysis (Todorov, Symbolism 154-155). The connection but also the autonomy of political history and literature with regard to the idea of Moscow as the Third Rome was spelled out at least a hundred years ago, but seems not to have been taken over by contemporary scholars owing, perhaps, to the pressure of the old philological momentum. Iv. Zhdanov, for example, writes:

Эти два ряда явлений [politics and literature, N.N.] не могли остаться уединенными: литература давала выражение тому, что на- зревало в жизни, но форма, в какую облекались идеи века, определялась ходом литературной истории (112; see also 114; emphasis added).

In contemporary terms, Zhdanov touches upon the idea that historical discourse refers not to extradiscursive, but to discursive entities as any other semiotic system; historical texts can be viewed as verbal artifacts, that is to say as signs referring not to events, but to other signs and, consequently, as narratives⁴. This striving for an autonomous realm of literary scholarship in respect of older texts, usually beyond the attention of recent literary theory, explains why

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⁴ See White, Metahistory; White, The Content of the Form; and White, Figuring the Nature of the Times Deceased.
I use certain scholarly works that for other disciplines may already be obsolete. For example, Cyrill Toumanoff’s article may be out of date for the historian, but it works well for the literary theorist; or Iakov Lur’e may be an excellent historian, but in some of his statements the student of literature may find certain flaws. In brief, every new approach to already researched areas has not only the right but also the obligation to reassess the ideas in this field from its own perspective.

Before we start our analysis let us sketch the contents of Сказание and Повесть, the two works that are in the center of our attention. Сказание opens with a paraphrase of parts of the Old Testament about the genealogical tree of different Biblical rulers, which is taken over by historical tales about the rulers of the Roman Empire; the tales lead to Prince Prus whose lands are close to the East Slavic realms. When the prince of Novgorod dies, his successor becomes Prince Riurik from the Prussian land; Riurick is the first prince of Russia and is of the family of the first Roman emperor Augustus. Among his successors is Prince Vladimir, the grand prince of Kiev. Prince Vladimir, following in his heroic predecessors’ footsteps, assails the vicinities of Tsargrad (Constantinople), and as a sign of peace the Byzantine emperor Constantine Monomakh (Monomachus) sends Prince Vladimir a holy cross, an imperial crown, and other gifts (touched and admired by Emperor Augustus in the past). In this way Rus’ becomes Great Rus’, an independent and autocratic empire, and all Russian tsars after that are crowned with the imperial crown sent by Emperor Constantine Monomakh.

Повесть begins with the story of Mitia Maly who explains how he has found this tale in Rome; this is part of the narrative frame of Повесть. Then Повесть switches to the tale of the white cowl per se and commences with the illness of the Roman emperor Constantine sent to him by the Christian God because, after some tolerance of the Christians, the emperor begins persecuting them again. Many try to cure Emperor Constantine but to no avail. Finally, some suggest that he will be healed if he takes a bath in the blood of young boys. The emperor, however, would rather suffer than kill innocent children. One night the emperor sees in his dream Apostles Peter and Paul who tell him that God has sent them to reward his mercy over the young boys, and Constantine will recover only with the help of Bishop Sylvester, the leader of
the persecuted Christians in Rome. Emperor Constantine meets Sylvester, who remedies him by baptizing him. The emperor stops the ill-treatment of the Christians and rewards them. The thankful Constantine wants to make Sylvester not only pope but emperor of Rome as well. When Sylvester refuses the royal wreath, Emperor Constantine, following the guidance of Apostles Peter and Paul whom he sees again, presents Sylvester a magnificent fragrant white cowl. Now the pope becomes the supreme ruler of Rome, whereas Emperor Constantine leaves for Byzantium and turns the city into the new capital of the Empire under the name of Constantinople. The white cowl is in Rome and all popes after Sylvester worship it. But centuries later, spurred by the devil, the Roman Church develops the “Latin heresies” (i.e., proclaims the primacy of the pope over the entire Church). Now a pope after pope attempt to profane and destroy the cowl. However, the cowl is saved in a miraculous way. By an angel’s order the Roman pope sends the cowl to the patriarch of Constantinople. The patriarch, in his turn and obeying the voice of the same angel supported by the holy ghosts of Emperor Constantine and Pope Sylvester, turns it over to the archbishop of Great Novgorod because the faith of Christ is verily glorified only in Russia. The Russian tsar and the Novgorodian archbishop have been chosen by God for future power and glory; the patriarchal rank, in due time, will also be transferred from Constantinople to Russia. Повесть ends by closing the narrative frame; its finale tells how Archbishop Gennady (Gennadius) reveres the white cowl.

2. IDEOLOGY

Russian scholars often refer to the Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts as “publicistic” and “polemic”, whereas their English- and French-writing colleagues prefer the term “ideological”. Both the former and the latter, however, either take the meaning of the terms for granted (as with “ideology”) or use them loosely (as with “polemics” and “publicistics”). The definition of these terms is a problem of its own but for our purposes it is necessary to cast a glance in this direction. “Ideology” and its derivatives are used by Victor Terras (66-70, etc.), Serge A. Zenkovsky (323-324), and D. Strêmooukhoff (La tiare, 128), but their meaning is never explain-
ed. R.P. Dmitrieva calls Сказание a political and ideological work (5, 6, 152-156, etc.) but also does not clarify why this is so. The trend of working with tacit concepts culminates in Lur’e’s book whose topic is the ideological struggle in Russian publicistics during the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries (its title is Идеологическая борьба в русской публицистике конца XV – начала XVI века) but, strangely enough, the meaning of his central notion is never enlightened.

Now let us shift our attention to the terms “publicistics” and “polemics”. For D’iakonov, who speaks of “publicistics” throughout his book, the term stands for verbal manipulation creating fictions that must be presented as realities. Publicistics concocts “политические фикции о правах московских государей на царский титул” (142; see also 68, 79, 143-144, 150, etc.). Zhdanov uses the word “publicistics” extremely sparingly (see 114), but his description of Сказание and the pseudo-genealogies similar to it are in harmony with those of D’iakonov. Characterizing the possible author of Сказание as somebody of South Slavic background serving Russian state interests, Zhdanov speaks about

его начитанность и литературная сноровка, его безцеремонное обращение с фактами, тенденция лежащая в основе его произведений (111);

such works are

вымышленных генеалогий, составленных с целью оправдать [русские] притязания на римское царство (109).

Miliukov, in the same vein, writes that in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, after the fall of the Balkans to the Ottomans, the South Slavic immigrants to Muscovy created the ideology of Moscow as the Third Rome,

создавая отдельные элементы национальной легенды и проводя их в литературу при помощи тенденциозных вставок или цельных сказаний (3: 53).

D’akonov, Zhdanov, and Miliukov come close to Eco’s analysis of ideology, which I expose below, and their understanding of
publicistics is different from that of the Soviet authors. But what is the Soviet position? Lur’e, for instance, writes:

Характернейшей особенностью русской литературы XV-XVI вв. была ее публицистическая направленность, связь с острыми вопросами политической борьбы своего времени (Идеологическая борьба 3).

A.L. Gol’dberg offers the following definition:

(...) публицистикой в современной научной литературе принято именовать сочинения, посвященные острым вопросам политической жизни (Идея 148-149).

Still other scholars explain that publicistics deals with “the most important questions of the day” (Likhachev, History 353); it stands for non-fictional writing that treats social issues openly; it is often polemic, the personality of the writer is palpable, and this literature is expected to be read by many readers (History 394, 405; see also Lur’e, Идеологическая борьба 116-117, 510-511). With regard to polemic writing, Lur’e is of the opinion that it aims at exposing and debunking – „изложить и опровергнуть” (Идеологическая борьба 154; see also 159, 511) – the ideas of the opponent as, for instance, in the correspondence between prince Andrei (Andrew) Kurbsky and Tsar Ivan IV (123-126, 509-511; for the scholarship on the ideological struggles at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century see 7-38, 204-212.)

A more precise, semiotic definition of ideology is helpful to our project. According to Eco (Theory 289-297), who draws on Charles Sanders Peirce’s definition of the sign stating, among other things, that the sign stands for something else but only in some respects, ideology is a partial, non-contradictory, linear, and static semantic interpretation of the world that deliberately hides the global, contradictory, non-linear, and dynamic character of this same world and its semantic space viewed as a totality; the semiotic critique of ideology shows, through meta-semiotic statements, how the ideological part relates to the semantic whole. In our case, a historical and a theoretical illustration of the abstract definition of ideology can be provided:
(a) The historical example is the ever-growing suppression of the voices against the Muscovite prince in the Russian chronicles from the mid fifteenth century on, owing to the tendency of centralization of the political power in Muscovy (Lur’ë, Идеологическая борьба 58-59). A later instance of ideology is the decision of Metropolitan Makary (Macarius), in the 1540s, to collect all human knowledge in the 12 volumes of Великие Минеи Четии (The Great Menology) (Likhachev, History 349-351); Степенная книга (The Book of Degrees) compiled in 1560-1563 in Makary’s circle, has a similar closed and allegedly all-embracing structure (Likhachev, History 366-367). In semiotic terms, these projects are ideological because they present the limitless, nonlinear, contradictory, and dynamic semantic space of human knowledge as a limited, linear, non-contradictory, and static realm.

(b) The theoretical example is Toumanoff’s view of the genealogy and characteristics of the politico-religious idea of Moscow as the Third Rome. This idea, Toumanoff holds, has a Roman origin (412) and, accordingly, is burdened with the Roman contradiction between universality and partiality. The Catholic Church is objective: the universal character of Christianity concerns the entire world. Conversely, the universality of the Roman Empire is subjective: the Hellenistic oikoumene tends to designate only the world of Hellenism and, in its wake, the Roman Empire is thought of by its denizens as the orbis terrarum despite the awareness of other polities and peoples outside it (421-422). Consequently, for the Russians of the sixteenth century, “Holy Russia” was indeed the oikoumene, with its own Caesar and Patriarch and matrix of empire – Moscow the “Third Rome”. This subjectively-oecumenical, national-Orthodox corpus politicum mysticum was in the eyes of its denizens the only microcosm of the universe. The inherent

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5 Some other historical examples of ideology are these: the historical legends and tales incorporated in the fifteenth-century Muscovite chronicles, which are reworked according to the political views of the authors of the chronicles (Goldberg, У истоков 147); Великие Минеи Четии (The Great Menology) does not incorporate some vitae known up to the sixteenth century (Likhachev, History 353-354) and Повесть о Петре и Февронии (The Tale of Peter and Fevronia) because of the tale’s non-traditional character (Likhachev, History 359).
caesaropapism of this world was intensified by the writings and activities of the “Josephian” party of churchmen (444-445) 6.

3. THE PRINCIPLE POST HOC, ERGO ANTE HOC

The Hermetic principle post hoc, ergo ante hoc means that “a consequence is assumed and interpreted as the cause of its own cause” (Eco, Interpretation 51; see also 56, 59-60; and Eco, Limits 19) 7. Let us see how this principle applies to the Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts.

Filofei’s (Philoeus) Послание на звездочетцев (Epistle to the Astronomers, ca. 1523, Gol’dberg, Три „послания Филофея” 79) spells out the idea of Moscow as the Third Rome for the first time (Gol’dberg, Три „послания Филофея” 68). (“For the first time” is an assertion, which should be taken with a grain of salt, because, as the pre-revolutionary Russian scholars point out, the Moscow as the Third Rome idea was introduced in Muscovite political and literary life by South Slavic educated immigrants, who came to Muscovy after the fall of the Balkans to the Ottomans; see part 6). Filofei’s famous formulation reads: „Два убо Рима падоша. А третий стоит. А четвертому не быти” (Malinin, Приложения 45; see also Gol’dberg, Три „послания Филофея” 82). The idea is also expressed at length in Повесть (see Повесть 222-225). The most characteristic passage reads:

Ветхий бо Римъ отпаде от въры христовы гордостю и своено во- дею, в новем же Риме, еже есть в Константинграде, насилемъ агарянскымъ тако же христианська въра погибнеть. На третьем же Риме, еже есть на Русской земли, благодать святаго духа восия. […] Яко же бо от Рима благодать и слава и честь отъята бысть, тако же и от царствующаго града благодать святаго духа отымется в пленение агарянское, и вся святая предана будут от бога велицей Русстей земли (224).

6 Toumanoff (445-446) places Сказание and Повести о вавилонском царс- тве within the context of this nationalistic ideological partiality.

7 The principle post hoc, ergo ante hoc is part of the Hermetic tradition that spread from the Renaissance and infused romantic philosophy (Eco, Limits 18-20).
The principle *post hoc, ergo ante hoc* works on several levels in the Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts:

(a) The Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts are based on the principle *post hoc, ergo ante hoc* in its chronic/causal version, and this fact has important narratological consequences. Contemporary narratologists (Todorov, *Introduction* 41-46; Prince 11-12), elaborating on Aristotle’s *Poetics*, point out that, for the reader, causality in a traditional narrative is in solidarity with temporality, yet it is causality that plays the leading role. Thus the plot is built according to the rule not one after the other, but one because of the other. However, the Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts construct their plot by attenuating the historical causal relations and giving priority to the temporal ones. The fact that Rome, Constantinople, and Moscow come one after another in time is represented as their causal succession in the history of Christian faith and imperial power.

(b) The narrative supersession of historical causality with a quasi-historical chronological link is ideological because it limits the richness of historical causes and effects to a linear and restricted temporal succession of cities, empires, and churches. Historically, the fall of Rome and Constantinople is not the only reason for the rise of Muscovy Russia. In narrative terms, however, it is.

(c) The Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts construct history according to a hermeneutic or interpretive, that is, circular model. The classic formulation of this type of history is given by Hegel. (It is an open question how these Russian narratives can be concretely...)

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8 The accentuation on the chronism of the principle in our case is important because the principle has other forms as well: for instance, one based on etymology (Eco, *Interpretation* 51).

9 The tension between temporality and causality in the Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts has been pointed out on different occasions, but it has been analyzed mainly as a corollary of the efforts on the part of the authors and editors to construct a consistent narrative out of various sources or to please the interests of the day by reworking well known historical and textual data. See Toumanoff 443n92, 445n97, etc. For some concrete achronical problems in *Сказание* (and the works about the transfer of Byzantine gifts to Prince Vladimir Monomakh [Monomachus]) see Zhdanov 75-79, 97-98; for similar questions in *Повесть* see Strêmooukhoff, *La tiare* 125-126.

10 Zhdanov (118-151) explains in detail the relation between historical facts and their literary reworking in the set of texts to which *Сказание* belongs.
In concrete terms, the Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts build their circularity referring to prophets: the succession of Rome, Constantinople, and Moscow is fulfillment of prophecies. The prophecy in Filofei’s Послание на звездочетцев reads:

Уже бо христианской церкви исполнися блаженаго Давида глагол: се покой мои в век века, зде вселося, яко изволих их (Malinin, Приложения 45-46; see also Gol’dberg, Три „послания Филофея” 82).

In Повесть, the succession of the three cities is also prophesied: „яко же в создании града сего [Constantinople] явлено быть о сем“ (222)12. Still, even if the source is a prophecy, the narrative based on this source is a retrospective or quasi-prophecy (for the quasi-prophecies about the fall of Constantinople see D’iakonov 61-64). The retrospective narrative prophecies are made

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11 Hegel thinks that “Reason rules the world” (14) and explains: “It is not a presumption of study; it is a result which happens to be known to myself because I already know the whole. Therefore, only the study of world history itself can show that it has proceeded rationally, that it represented the rationally necessary course of the World Spirit […]” (12). This type of dialectic argument is interpretive or hermeneutic, i.e., it presupposes the imputation of a purpose to men in history or to Geist through men in history. This imputation is not undeniable on its own, and so it is convincing not by an argument but by the plausibility of the interpretation or by the examination of the whole (Taylor 214-221; see also Lauer 113). The logic in the Hegelian dialectic “has a circular and self-founding character” (Ricoeur, Main Trends 37). For the narrative connection between the beginning, the middle, and the end see also Prince 10, 26, and 52.

12 For the prophetic texts in Filofei see Lur’e, Идеологическая борьба 486-487; Lur’e, Заметки 457-460; Schaedel, Moskau 41, 77; Schaedel, Introduction C-D (no page numbers in Schaedel’s Introduction are given; I use the letters A, B, C, and D for the four pages of Introduction). Zenkovsky (323-324) explains that Повесть is based on a prophecy in the Book of Daniel (7:27) that had been reworked by John Scoto Erigena (the ninth century) and Joachim de Fiore (the twelfth century). For the prophetic sources of the Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts see also Miliukov 3: 54.
after, not before, the event. Moscow is proclaimed a successor of Rome and Constantinople after the fall of Byzantium to the Turks in 1453 (all scholars, despite their disagreements, maintain that the Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts were written after this date: see note 1; and Zhdanov 114), and after Muscovite Russia had acquired power\(^\text{13}\). The Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts concoct narratives in which the beginning (Rome) and the middle (Constantinople) are properly understood only when one already knows the end or the whole (Moscow and its religious and political ambitions)\(^\text{14}\).

To sum up: the principle *post hoc, ergo ante hoc* applies to the Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts in the following way: the consequence (the fifteenth-sixteenth-century power of Muscovy) is the cause of its own cause in the sense that, in terms of narrative identity, Muscovy fabricated a Rome and a Constantinople, which served the ideological and political goals of the Russian state and church; in other words, Rome and Constantinople were portrayed

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13 Gol’dberg writes: “А тот комплекс историко-политических идей, который открыл собой новую fazу в формировании идеологии русского централизованного государства, появился в летописных сводах не в сороковых годах (после Флорентийской унии) и не в пятидесятых (после взятия Царьграда турками), а лишь в семидесятых годах XV в.” (У истоков 148).

14 In the political practice of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, the reinterpretation of the beginning and the middle through the end was something usual: „Придая Москваской Руси черты избранной богом державы, составитель свода 1493-1494 гг. вводит дополнительные детали, призваные изобразить дело так, будто Москва не только теперь, но и с давних пор (по крайней мере с прошлого столетия) является могущественнейшим городом Руси […]” (Gol’dberg, (У истоков 150). Also: “All the Russian princes (ending with Ivan IV himself) appeared in *The Book of Degrees* [Степенная книга] as men full of “virtues pleasing the Lord”. The desire to ascribe “piety” to all of them [Russian rulers] made it necessary to “amend” Russian history to a far greater extent than this was done in chronicle-writing. Under the influence of “political passions and interests” chronicle writers frequently introduced changes into the accounts written by their predecessors, but such changes usually affected recent history only; they were more cautious about tampering with accounts of the distant past. Not so with the compilers of *The Book of Degrees*. Seeking to extol the whole dynasty of Kiev-Vladimir-Moscow princes, they turned boldly to the distant past, radically revising the descriptions of Ivan the Terrible’s ancestors and removing everything that did not fit in with a eulogy to them” (Likhachev, *History* 366-367).
and interpreted as earlier historical versions of Muscovy. Historically, however, Muscovite Russia (the consequence) emulated Rome and Byzantium (the cause).

On the compositional level, Повесть partially solves the tension between prospective and retrospective prophecy by means of Послание Дмитрея Грека (The Epistle of Demetrius the Greek), which precedes the tale of the white cowl *per se* as its narrative frame. In Послание (The Epistle) it is said that the story of the transportation of the white cowl from Rome to Constantinople and to Novgorod, which is the core of Повесть, was written down after the events had taken place and, one may infer, Повесть is not a story of the fulfillment of a prophecy:

Aз же ръх: „Есть ли написание здѣсь?” Он же рече: „Есть ново написание здѣсь, а древняго нѣсть” (200).

On the lexical level, the oscillation between prospective and retrospective prophecy is demonstrated by the interchangeability of the words „папа” (“pope”) and „епископъ” (“bishop”) (see 202-214). Sylvester is initially called „епископъ” (Селивестру епископу християнскому [202]); then he is „папа” (Селивестръ папа римский [202]); then again „епископъ” (епископъ христианский Селивестр [202]); and so on. The two words are interchangeable before Emperor Constantine formally pronounces Sylvester pope (compare with: „чтяше его яко бога и отца его себе нарече и папою именова” [208]). After Sylvester becomes pope, his appellation by the narrator is always „папа”, but Apostles Peter and Paul and a voice from heaven call him „епископъ” (210) or „Епископе” (the vocative of „епископъ”) (212).

4. NARRATIVE IDENTITY

Narrative identity (Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* 3: 186-189, 246-249) is a concept from philosophy of narrative (see Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* 3: 180-192). For our purposes it can be presented in the following manner:
(a) Narrative identity pertains to events that a community holds to be important because it sees in them a beginning, a return to its origins.

(b) The epoch-making events establish or reinforce the consciousness of a community and its members with regard to its or their identity. These events produce strong ethical feelings; they are the opposite of ethical neutrality.

(c) Narrative identity is not substantial, that is, it does not come from a name denoting a subject identical with himself. It is a dynamic identity allowing mutability of a subject of action. The subject can be individual (as in psychoanalysis), or collective (as Jews in relation to the Bible). To define an identity is to answer the question “who is the agent of this?” The answer to this question is the story of a life, and this story is narrative identity.

(d) Narrative identity is based on a circular relation – the individual or the community builds his or its identity by receiving the stories which he or it has invented. This circularity is not vicious but healthy (see Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* 1: 53-54; see also 1: 3-4, 41, 54, 71-76, 3: 248).

(e) Narrative identity is an unstable one because it is possible to constitute several plots on the same events and, for this reason, to compose different, even opposed plots about our lives. Thus narrative identity is simultaneously a solution of the problem of identity and its new problematization.

(f) Speaking of the ultimate limits of narrative identity, Ricoeur points out that it becomes equivalent to true self-constancy only when the narratively identified subject is ready to act in a certain way, that is to say through ethical responsibility as the highest moment of self-constancy. In this way, narrative identity trespasses the verbal boundaries and becomes praxis. From this point until the end of this paper I discuss the six aspects of narrative identity as they apply to *Сказание* and *Повесть*.

5. NARRATIVE IDENTITY AND THE ORIGINS OF A COMMUNITY
Both Сказание and Повесть are quasi-historical narratives that, through a “causal” chain of events, lead the reader/listener back to the origins of Russian power. In Сказание, there are three axial points with which Russian community connects its origin:

(a) The biblical axial point: this is the story of Noah, his sons, and their ancestors. This point, accordingly, relates Russian community to the Christian world in general: the genesis of the Russian people coincides with the biblical genesis. This axial point has a second, specifically Russian version, which defines Christianity as Orthodox Christianity. That was also a Byzantine point of view because in the Eastern Roman Empire the church and the state were the two sides of the same structure under the supremacy of the state (Medlin 17-32, esp. 24, 30, 70-71).

In Сказание, the imperial insignia are inseparable from the Christian symbols; the cross comes before the crown:

От своего же царского вы снимает животворящий крест от самого животворящаго дерева, на нем же распятся владыка Христос.

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15 The quasi-historicity of the two texts and the “causal” unfolding of the events in them become clearer when one studies their heterogeneous sources. For instance, Сказание reworks Spiridon-Savva’s Писание (Haney 359n1) to which, with numerous inconsistencies, it appends biblical stories (Haney 359-360n1-3, 5, 8-10), a rewriting of probably the Russian version of Александрия (Alexandriad) translated from Serbian (Haney 360n11, 362 n25), various historical facts which are often confused (Haney 361-363n12, 15-17, 21, 22, 28, 32, 33), and so on. Dmitrieva (97-98) points out that the texts related to Сказание have been specially reworked to give them documentary and historical plausibility. The fullest account of the sources of Сказание is in Dmitrieva 14-109; see also Zhdanov 98-118.

16 The genealogy of the Muscovite rulers is one of the two major indicators of their honor (the second is the level of their power); the genealogy goes back to some axial point; in the case of Ivan IV, this is the Roman emperor Augustus (D’iakonov 146-158).
Снимает же от своего главы и царский венец и поставляет его на блюде злате (190).

In doubling the religious axial point by presenting it, first, as biblical and, second, as Byzantine and Orthodox, Сказание repeats the pattern of the first grand narrative of Russian narrative identity – Повесть временных лет (Primary Chronicle). In the entries for 6494-6496 (986-988) (Повесть временных лет 98-136), the Philosopher, who construes the Orthodox faith to Prince Vladimir, combines the double character of the religious axial point. He is Greek, that is, Orthodox („Посемь же прислаша грыци къ Володимеру философа […]” [100]), but he starts elucidating Christianity by succinctly retelling the Bible from Genesis to the New Testament (102-120). The idea that the Orthodox ruler is the highest ruler in the world is Byzantine (D’iakonov 162). The political message of Сказание with regard to this axis is not different from the principle of Russian theocracy, if it is true what the pre-revolutionary and the Western scholars maintain, namely, that Russian theocracy imitates the Byzantine one in the sense that in both secular power dominates but also serves the ecclesiastical one (see Medlin 78-124).

An important narrative characteristic of this double, biblical-Orthodox axial point is that it is aesthetically marked, whereas the other two axial points – the imperial and the domestic ones – are not. The Orthodox axial point is represented as a locus of beauty and affluence; conversely, other religions, including Catholicism, are shown as ugly and meager. This is the case in both Сказание and Повесть: imperial and ecclesiastical insignia are beautiful and valuable by themselves and, moreover, they are surrounded by imagery of precious materials and ornate space. The white cowl, for instance, is repeatedly characterized by its fragrance (Повесть 212, 214, 220, 228). The East Slavic model of this aesthetic markedness of the biblical-Orthodox axial point is again in Повесть временных лет. There, Russians become Orthodox because Byzantine Christianity is the most beautiful, whereas all other religions, Catholicism included, are beautyless, homely, poor, and beggarly (Повесть временных лет 122-124; for contrasts between beautiful Orthodoxy and unsightly Catholicism see also Повесть 216, 222, and so on). The beauty of Orthodoxy is both concrete
(precious materials, embellished spaces) and symbolic: it is the beauty of faith. In Повесть временных лет we read:

Мы убо не можемъ забыти красоты тоя, вскажд бо человекъ, аще вкусить сладка, послѣди горести не принимаетъ, тако и мы не имамъ сде быти (124).

The double – literal and symbolic – meaning of the central images in the Russian texts of narrative identity can be seen in Повесть as well: „кургъ спасения” (204) is literally the bowl where Emperor Constantine is cured from his disease, but also the vessel of the holy baptism: „здравъ будешь и живота вѣчнаго сподобишься” (204). Also:

Сий бѣлыя клобукъ прообразуетъ свѣтло Христово тридневное воскресеніе (226).

(b) The political, pagan, and Greco-Roman axial point17: the imperial story starts with Alexander of Macedonia (and his predecessors Seostr, Felix, and Naktavan), and continues with the Ptolemy dynasty in Egypt, Julius Caesar, and Augustus18.

(c) The domestic axial point: it marks the beginning of the first Russian dynasty, the Riuriks. (This is another reference to Повесть временных лет, the grand narrative providing the basis for Russian narrative identity; see Повесть временных лет 36). The leader of Novgorod Gostomysl is succeeded to the throne by Prince Riurik from the Prussian land, who is of the family of the Roman emperor Augustus through his relation to Prus, the first ruler of Prussia and a relative of Augustus’.

Повесть intertwines the same three axial points:

17 Passing from the first to the second axial point, Сказание changes its sources: from Genesis it goes to Александрия (Haney 360n11).
18 Toumanoff, with the methods of a contemporary scholar, bases his analysis of the politico-religious idea of Moscow as the Third Rome on the two premises given by the biblical and the imperial axial points in Сказание: he deals with the unity and the tension between Christianity and the pagan imperial Greco-Roman heritage in Byzantium and Muscovite Russia.
(a) The religious one is the conversion of Emperor Constantine to Christianity and the rich gifts which Christian churches receive from the monarch.

(b) The Greco-Roman political axial point is the origin of the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium), when Emperor Constantine moves the capital from Rome, which remains center only of the spiritual power, to Constantinople, the new center of political power. Повесть gives an account of these two axial events simultaneously:

(1) the separation of the political and the spiritual axial events happens in the thirteenth year of Emperor Constantine’s rule (212-214);

(2) the figures symbolizing the two events – Pope Sylvester and Emperor Constantine – appear to Patriarch Filofei together (222-224).

The ideological twist in describing the unity of the two axial points is that Roman popes from the very beginning are Orthodox: “вся православные папы и епископы” (214). On lexical level this paradox is expressed by the interchangeability of the appellation of the head of the Roman and Orthodox church: both are called popes and patriarchs. In this way the double character of the religious axial point, which we have seen in Сказание, is reiterated in Повесть: Christianity is Orthodoxy. This is an example of how history and narratives differ. These lexical observations make sense only from a narrative point of view, but not from a historical one, because the pope of Rome was always a patriarch, one of the five, and all popes were Orthodox till 1054.

(c) The national-Orthodox axial point is the moment when the Novgorodian Archbishop Vasilii (Basil) accepts the gift of the Greek patriarch – the white cowl (226-230).

6. THE COMMUNAL ETHEO AND THE CIRCULARITY OF THE NARRATIVE IDENTITY

It is difficult to illustrate directly, on the basis of the fifteenth-sixteenth-century sources, how narrative identity generates strong ethical feelings. Nevertheless, the duels of the Soviet scholars with their pre-revolutionary and Western colleagues demonstrate it indirectly. That is why I touch upon this problem to suggest how
narrative identity, in this respect, outlives by centuries the concrete narratives that have produced it; the texts are forgotten, but narrative identity as a communal ethos keeps on living.

Before I delve into my subject it is necessary to point out that in this section, the Soviet scholars, on the one hand, and their pre-revolutionary and Western counterparts, on the other, are juxtaposed solely within the limits of the theory of narrative identity. The academics’ national origin (Russian or Western), the era of their research (the time before the October Revolution or the communist epoch), or their ideological preferences (Marxist or non-Marxist) have but a secondary importance in this study. As I explain in the final paragraph of this part, the Soviet scholars as well as the medieval Russian authors tend to practice various forms of what is termed finalist interpretation, whereas the pre-revolutionary and Western researchers side with operational interpretation. Consequently, the reader should not expect to find a historical overview of the battles of the Soviet medieval experts with the pre-communist Russian and Western pundits on the topic of Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome. The goal of my project, as explained in the beginning, is theoretical rather than historical. Here history serves first and foremost to elucidate theoretical issues; this explains why the post-communist writings on Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome are omitted. If in this section or my work in general one searches for detailed answers to such multifaceted issues as imperial mentality or ideological manipulations as regards imperialist stratagems, he or she may be disappointed because the paper’s focus is different, namely, narrative identity. Imperial mores or imperialist ideological discourses are dealt with not for their own sake but inasmuch as they shed light on narrative identity.

What is at stake in the debates between the Soviet scholars, on the one hand, and the pre-revolutionary and the Western scholars, on the other hand, and how does it relate to this particular aspect of narrative identity? The core of the matter is whether Muscovite Russia constructs its imperial identity imitating Byzantium or, conversely, by being original and indigenous. The pre-revolutionary scholars hold that Muscovite Russia in this respect follows Byzantium, and the Western scholars take over and elaborate on this idea. One of the earliest formulations of this thesis is made by D’iakonov who writes:
Но в настоящее время не может подлежать спору то положение, что самая идея самодержавной власти позаимствована из Византии (v).

His whole book is an expansion of this thought. The most detailed presentation of this tenet in reference to the Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts is in chapter III (especially 60-90) where D’iakonov also touches upon Сказание and Повесть. Zhdanov connects Сказание and the idea of Moscow as the Third Rome in this way:

Но ведь Константин, основатель второго Рима, был действительно римским императором; римская власть переселилась на берега Босфора в его лице. Каким путем и по какому праву римская власть, удаленная из Константинова града, должна переселиться в Москву? Московский князь не мог быть провозглашен римским императором. Оставалось перенести вопрос на почву генеалогических отношений и исторических связей, отыскать для перенесения империи в Москву какия-нибудь основания в былом. Нужно было предъявить права на наследство и представить при этом оправдательные документы. Сказание о князех владимирских имеет значение такого именно документа (109).

The core of Medlin’s book states that Muscovite Russia takes over the ideas and practice of Byzantine theocracy or divine government; his idea, in a nutshell, sounds like this:

But it [Russian theocracy] is a theocracy, similar to its Byzantine prototype, in which the secular authority is acknowledged as supreme (92).

Schaeder, like Medlin, also echoes the pre-revolutionary Russian scholars. After quoting Filofei’s assertion that Moscow succeeds Rome and Constantinople (see Malinin, Приложения 45), Schaeder concludes that

in characteristic metamorphoses, its influence on both secular and ecclesiastical developments has continued to the present day [i.e., 1970] and is still a determining factor in the life of Soviet Russian society (Introduction A; no page numbers in Schaeder’s Introduction are given; I use the letters A, B, C, and D for the four pages of Introduction);
(for Shaeder’s use of the pre-revolutionary Russian scholarship see Lur’е, *О возникновении*). Conversely, Soviet scholars hold the opposite, namely, that Muscovite Russia created its state ideology all by itself. Lur’е makes a typical statement:

В советской литературо-воведческой и исторической науке вопрос о формировании идеологии Русского централизованного государства подвергся серьезному пересмотру. Прежде всего исследователи обратили внимание на то, что в развитии этой идеологии идея „византийского наследства” не играла, в сущности, никакой роли [...] ни до появления теории „Москвы – третьего Рима”, ни после нее Русское государство не выдвигало никаких претензий на Константинополь […] (Идеологическая борьба, 353; see also 346-357, 366-367, 374, 374n96, 377-380, 390-391).

Dmitrieva writes with regard to Сказание as follows:

Следует ли идеи Сказания о князьях владимирских считать выражением теории „третьего Рима”? Прослежив отражение политических идей в дипломатической борьбе, мы убедимся, что, используя идеи Сказания, русское правительство нигде и никогда не применяло во внешнеполитических переговорах в XVI в. Теорию „Москвы – третьего Рима”. Сказание преследовало несколько иные цели, чем утверждение преемственности власти из Византии, оно говорило о величии Русского государства и его древних традициях, что могло служить защите прав государства и государей; поэтому Сказание свободно и использовалось в дипломатической практике (136-137).

Dmitrieva concludes her book on a similar note:

В Сказании вовсе не было идеи заимствования власти со стороны, путем передачи ее России из Византии, как нередко трактовались идеи этого памятника в буржуазной исторической науке, которая включала его в цикл произведений, связанных с идеей „Москвы – третьего Рима”, Москвы – наследницы Византии, в XVI в. характерной по преимуществу для церковных кругов (155).
The scholarly battles of the Soviet scholars with their Western colleagues are in the wake of what scholars such as Lur’ë and Dmitrieva say.19

What is the methodological frame within which the Soviet scholars develop their argument of the indigenous character of Russian imperial identity? The pre-revolutionary and the Western scholars, their Soviet colleagues hold, do not work with the concrete Old Russian texts, that is, inductively, but theorize deductively and a priori. They sacrifice reality to their abstract tenets. The Soviet scholars view their approach as inductive, and find an anchorage of this belief in the fact that they are Marxists, and Marxism is a materialistic doctrine (see Lur’ë, О возникновении).

My argument in this part of the essay consists in showing the inconsistent logic of the Soviet scholars. If I demonstrate this, I can return to the major idea of the pre-revolutionary and the Western scholars about the derivative character of Russian imperial identity, and reinterpret some of its aspects with modern theoretical instruments. I proceed in two steps:

(a) I show some flaws in the argument of the Soviet scholars (1) methodologically and (2) as found in the very verbal fabric of Сказание and Повесть;

(b) I offer an explanation of the motives fueling the Soviet views. The second level of my argument relates to the problem of narrative identity as a type of communal ethos produced in a circular manner.

(a) (1) Soviet position with respect to the inductive scholarship does not explain why inductive thinking is more productive in the domain of medieval Russian studies than the deductive one. Given the fact that many of the material objects of the fifteenth and the sixteenth century are irrevocably lost, deduction is often the only way to think about the past, whereas induction, owing to the lack of material, often leads to endless guesses that cannot be proved. The best examples are the conjectures about the dating and author-

19 See the debates between Gol’dberg (Три послания Филофея”; and Идея) and Kämpfer (Sendeschreiben); see also Gol’dberg’s critique (Идея 144) of Toumanoff and Just; see as well Lur’ë’s attack (Идеологическая борьба 352-353; and Заметки) on Schaeder, Medlin, Strêmooukhoff (Moscow), and Denissoff.
ship of a given Old Russian text. Lur’e himself (Идеологическая борьба 502), for instance, time and again underscores the fact that we know only Orthodox texts from the end of the fifteenth century, whereas the works of the heretics whom he studies have been destroyed. Lur’e deduces the lost heretic texts from the texts of their Orthodox opponents. In this way, he performs exactly the same operation as his pre-revolutionary predecessors, whom he accuses of deduction. Moreover, what is Lur’e’s explanation of Russian medieval social history through Marx and Engels (Идеологическая борьба 48, 178-180, 184, 333), who analyze not Russian, but Western Middle Ages, if not another example of deduction? Lur’e also points out that there are certain parallels between the Russian political theories during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and the political theories in the West during the Middle Ages (О возникновении 633n30). Such cases demonstrate that induction and deduction go hand in hand – even in the works of the Soviet scholars who praise themselves as strictly inductive materialists. Or, as Tzvetan Todorov explains the priority of deduction in literary studies, “it is not the quantity of observations, but the logical coherence of a theory that matters” (The Fantastic 4; see also 3-4).

The inductive method does not explain why some pre-revolutionary authors, who use both deduction and induction, are not plausible. Lur’e (Идеологическая борьба 351-352, 354), to refer to him again for an example, thinks, on the one hand, that V. Malinin in his book on Filofei’s cycle of epistles follows the deductive tenet formulated by D’iakonov in relation to the imperial theory of Moscow as the Third Rome but, on the other hand, that Malinin is an inductive scholar. Lur’e’s critique of Malinin is controversial. Similar inconsistency in the juxtaposition between inductive and deductive scholarship can also be discovered in Lur’e’s critique of some Western scholars (Идеологическая борьба 352-353; and О возникновении).

(2) The pre-revolutionary Russian and the Western scholars have written extensively on the influence of South Slavic (Bulgarian and Serbian) culture on Russian culture and politics, and its role in grafting the idea of Moscow as the Third Rome onto Muscovite consciousness (Miliukov 3: 50-57; Medlin 38-61, 66-77; for the South Slavic impact on Сказание see Zhdanov 102-112). Miliukov makes a characteristic summary of these views:
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программа для Москвы, новой наследницы Царьграда, была во всех главных чертах намечена югославянскими [i.e., Bulgarian and Serbian] претендентами. Намечена была тогда же и там же и самая идеология [i.e., Moscow as the Third Rome], пригодная для Москвы в ее новом положении (3: 51).

This, however, is a deductive statement according to the logic of Soviet researches. Can one reach the same conclusion through inductive observations based on the texts of Сказание and Повесть? Let us try. If one reads Сказание and Повесть closely, as the Soviet researchers claim they do, it becomes clear that the idea of Moscow as the Third Rome is expressed, among other things, through a language heavily colored by South Slavic forms that, if we go further, are influenced – as a language of religion and culture – by Byzantium. A demonstration of such reading of Сказание and Повесть would take too many pages to be undertaken here. I present only the conclusion of my detailed analysis of the works and the translation of Повесть in accordance with my project. As an example of the problematic affirmation of Soviet scholars that they read closely the following fact can be mentioned. N.N. Rozov is the leading specialist in the textual reconstruction of Повесть (see Повесть ... как памятник and Повесть о ... кло-буке). He also comments on this work in Памятники литературы древней Руси ([Комментарии]) where the original is placed side by side with the translation in contemporary Russian made by V.V. Kolesov. One can infer that Rozov is acquainted with Kolesov’s translation of Повесть. If this is the case, one wonders why Повесть is inconsistently translated – which also means misunderstood – with regard to its South Slavic layer. In the translation, the rendering of four key pairs of words – „глава”/„голова” (“head”), „глас”/„голос” (“voice”), „град”/„город” (“city”), and „золото”/„золото” (“gold”) – is unsystematic (the first word in these pairs is South Slavic, the second East Slavic or Russian). As a rule, the correct alternation of the South Slavic/abstract and the East Slavic/concrete forms in the translation is convincing only where these words appear together in short passages, i.e., where their abstract and concrete semantics can be directly compared. However, in the work as a whole where one has to relate elements that are not close to each other and where one needs not only lin-
guistic but also systematic understanding of the text, the translation of the key words is far from satisfactory. Often instead of one of the words in the pair (for instance, the East Slavic/concrete one) one encounters the other (the South Slavic/abstract one) and vice versa. Such examples show that even the best textual specialists do not always understand systematically what they read. To read inductively is one thing; to trace the relations between the elements of the text as a whole is a different matter.

By means of such analyses one reaches the conclusion that Russia of that time has no indigenous language to express its (allegedly) indigenous imperial identity. If one holds, with Soviet scholars, that Russian imperial identity does not owe anything to Byzantium and South Slavic culture, it would mean that one separates the content of the message (Russia’s indigenous imperial identity) from its expression (the language influenced by South Slavic and Byzantine overtones). But a separation of this sort is idealistic through and through because it assumes that ideas exist separately from their material expression, and this idealism subverts the materialistic claims of Soviet scholars. Therefore, Soviet researchers encounter a dilemma: they have either to accept that Russia follows Byzantium, Bulgaria, and Serbia at least by using a certain language or to give up the so called Marxist basis of their inductive method.

(b) If the indigenous/inductive thesis of the Soviet scholars is not plausible, the question arises as to why they hold it. The answer to it leads straight to the communal ethos of narrative identity. My thesis is that the Soviet empire constructed its narrative identity as an indigenous identity (the Soviet Union as the pioneer of communism, the power successfully resisting world imperialism, and so on). As a corollary, in the field of medieval studies, Soviet narrative identity is projected on the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century burgeoning Muscovite empire. To put it differently, Muscovite Russia, retrospectively and according to the principle post hoc, ergo ante hoc, is viewed as the prototype of the Soviet Union. The circular relation consists in the fact that Soviet com-

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20 The dynamic interchangeability of the indigenous identity of the medieval and the Soviet empire can be seen clearly in the works of art where the formation of Muscovite Russia is treated from a Soviet perspective. Perhaps the
munity builds its identity by receiving the scholarly stories that it has invented itself. The process is facilitated by the fact that both the medieval and Soviet narrative identities are imperial identities, and their ethos is imperial ethos. For this reason, the circularity is not only hermeneutic (see note 11) but chronological as well: the narrative identity from the Soviet empire is projected on Muscovite Russia, and from Muscovite Russia back to the Soviet empire. The only problem standing in the way of this double circularity is the indigenous/non-indigenous character of the two empires' ideology. Muscovite Russia thinks of itself as an imitative empire, whereas the Soviet Union views itself as an indigenous empire. As we have seen, the imitative is transformed into indigenous by the scholarly technique of inductive reading used by the Soviet researchers.

The debate between the pre-revolutionary scholars, on the one hand, and the Soviet researchers, on the other hand, can be summarized in broader theoretical and historical terms (see Todorov, Symbolism 95-170, esp. 163-170). Both the medieval authors of the Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts and their Soviet ancestors, paragon of this is Eisenstein’s film Иван Грозный (Ivan the Terrible) (1944-1946).

21 D’iakonov (140-146) writes about the failure of Ivan IV’s diplomacy as regards the Polish-Livonian state, which rejected his pretenses for a tsar’s title. This is yet another example illustrating my point, though in a negative way. Ivan IV’s lack of success is owing to the fact that the stories of one’s identity are valid only within the community that invents and receives them, but not outside it.

22 The indigenous and the imitative traditions coexist and, in constructing a narrative identity, one of the two trends is underscored. Here are two examples of the indigenous tradition: (a) In the sixteenth century, in Russia there was a strong belief in the non-imitative character of Russian narrative identity: the Russian church has its beginning not through Byzantium, but through Apostle Andrew (D’iakonov 69). (b) Famous texts plead for Muscovite Russia’s indigenous political power. Ivan III refuses to be proclaimed a king by the German emperor because Ivan is already, by God’s will and through long indigenous tradition, a ruler of Russian lands: „Мы божию милостию государя на своей земли изначала, от первых своих прародителей и постановление имеем от бога, как наши прародители, так и мы, а просим бога, чтобы нам дал бог и нашим детем и до века в том быти, как есмя ныне государи на своей земли, а постановления как есмя наперед того не хотели, так и ныне не хотим” (qtd. in Lur’e, Идеологическая борьба 374; and D’iakonov 147-148).
despite the opposition of their understanding of these texts (imitative versus indigenous), practice what in hermeneutics is known as finalist interpretation. In this interpretation, the final meaning is known in advance, and interpretation itself is only the exploration of different roads to reach the absolute and immutable truth known beforehand. This truth may have different historical forms: the Christian Orthodox doctrine as in the Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts or the quasi-Marxist tenets as in the Soviet scholarship. In each case this interpretation bears different names: patristic exegesis or Marxist analysis, respectively. The stress of the Soviet researchers on the inductive operations (pseudo-Marxist materialism) is but a means of reaching the predetermined meaning, not a goal in itself. The emphasis on the method in this case is a part of the philological – or operational – tradition, but the focus is on the subordination of the method to the predetermined meaning. Conversely, the pre-revolutionary and the Western interpretations belong to the category of operational interpretation, that is, the strategy which does not regulate the final meaning to be reached, but the operations leading to the meaning of the text. In terms of history, operational interpretation pertains to pluralistic bourgeois societies where there is no longer a universal single truth. Each strategy of interpretation – the finalist and the operational – is inseparable from an ideology (more pronounced in the former, and less in the latter case), which can loosely be termed imperial or anti-bourgeois and anti-totalitarian or anti-communist, respectively. If my analysis sides with the pre-revolutionary and Western, rather than with the Soviet scholars, it is because philology and the structural approach to literature both belong to the operational strategy, though they underscore different sides of interpretation.

7. NARRATIVE IDENTITY AS DYNAMIC IDENTITY

Two examples of this aspect of the narrative identity can be provided:

(a) Toumanoff writes: “Translatio imperii involved translatio urbis” (434). This elegant formula expresses the essence of his analysis of the genealogy and characteristics of the politico-religious idea of Moscow as the Third Rome. For Toumanoff, the real
change of the locus of power – *translatio imperii* – is always accompanied by narrative and ideological *translatio urbis*. In the terms of my essay, *translatio imperii* means the set of real political events, whereas the *translatio urbis* stands for the variety of plots that are concocted on the basis of these events. In other words, Toumanoff thinks that when Byzantium inherited the political power of the Roman Empire, it elaborated an ideology whose pivot was the plot of Constantinople as the new or Second Rome (422); in the fourteenth century, the Second Bulgarian Empire invented an ideology based on the plot of its capital, Tûrnovo, as the new Tsargrad (i.e., Constantinople) superseding Constantinople (434; this observation was first made by Miliukov 39; see also Zhdanov 109-112; Medlin 67; and Haney 355); when the Russian state in the fifteenth and the sixteenth century grew stronger, it chose as the basis of its ideology the plot of Moscow as the Third Rome (435ff).

(b) *Сказание* and *Повесть* are two different plots of the growth of Muscovite Russia during the fifteenth and sixteenth century. The first deals with Muscovite royal insignia, the second with Novgorodian (and later with Muscovite [see Zenkovsky 323]) church insignia. Compare:

Эта новгородская повесть [i.e., *Повесть*] – литературный коррелятив Сказания о князех Владимирских (Zhdanov 73n3; emphasis added).

Also:

Произведения на тему о передаче различных знаков высокого сана – царского и митрополичьего – уже были известны на Руси к тому времени (*Сказание о Вавилоне, Повесть о белом клобуке*) (Dmitrieva 97; emphasis added).

Or:

If the *Legend of the Grand Dukes of Vladimir* [i.e., *The Tale of the Grand Prince of Vladimir and All Russia*] brings the imperial purple
to Russia, the *Tale of the White Cowl of Novgorod* does the same for the symbol of church power (Terras 68; emphasis added)\(^{23}\).

Nevertheless, we have seen that these two narratives are not only different but are also similar: they are based on the complementarity of three axial points\(^{24}\). By combining the notion of ideology and this aspect of narrative identity, we can conclude that narrative identity, by telling one set of events in different ways, subverts the linearity and non-contradictiveness of ideology. N

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\(^{23}\) According to some fifteenth- and sixteenth-century ideological texts, Muscovite Russia appropriates not only the cowl but also many other Christian orthodox holy objects in Russia, which is a sign of God’s benevolence (D’iakonov 67n3, 69-73).

\(^{24}\) Here are four more examples of how one set of political events is narrated by opposite plots: (a) Some of the most noteworthy of fifteenth-century chronicle stories are those of Moscow’s victory over Novgorod in 1471 (one Novgorod and two Muscovite stories have survived). In one of the Muscovite stories, the “victory of the grand prince’s army is portrayed in many respects as a miracle that takes place with Divine assistance” (Likhachev, History 307). However, according to the Novgorod chronicle compiled shortly before Novgorod became part of Russian state, “the Novgorodians see no sign of a miracle in the grand prince’s victory; they find the cause of their defeat on the ground, not in the heavens” (Likhachev, History 308). (b) “Clearly challenging his fellow-countryman Philotheus, who extolled the realm of Muscovy as the Third Rome, the compiler of the *Pskov Third Chronicle*, compares it to the realm of Anti-Christ and writes: ‘That realm shall grow and the evil thereof increase’” (Likhachev, History 361). (c) In their correspondence, Tsar Ivan IV and Prince Kurbsky provide two different stories about Ivan’s childhood (Likhachev, History 405). (d) Russia adopts Christianity directly from the apostles; Russia adopts Christianity indirectly, from Byzantium (D’iakonov 69n5).

Ricoeur’s description of the non-substantiality of narrative identity can be augmented with the case, when two different sets of events are told by the same narrative. Two examples: (a) “Ivan [IV] declared in 1577 that his military successes were proof that Divine providence was on his side, and two years later Kurbsky explained the tsar’s failure in exactly the same way, as Divine judgment” (Likhachev, History 395). (b) Comparing Filofei’s three epistles – *Послание на звездочетцев (Epistle to the Astronomers)*, *Сочинение об обидах (Composition on Offences)*, and *Послание о крестном знамении (Epistle on Cross Omen)* – Gol’dberg (Три послания Филотея) concludes: “в некоторых случаях один и те же формулировки, будучи помещенными в контекст Сочинения об обидах, имели иной смысл, чем в первых двух посланиях” (89; see also 89-90).
rative and ideological discourses coexist, but in a state of differentiation and tension.

8. NARRATIVE IDENTITY AS TRUE SELF-CONSTANCY

The process of how narrative identity becomes true self-constancy through practical actions can be illustrated by the use of Сказание in political and church life during the sixteenth century. I am interested in the model of this transition, not in historical and textual details. The pattern has the following aspects:

(a) Practical action takes place in a pragmatic context; it is done by agents of action with their concrete goals (Ricoeur’s theory of narrative identity is connected with the phenomenological theory of action). Dmitrieva presents this context, agents, and goals by outlining the historical background on which Сказание is used during the reign of Ivan IV: the struggle between the boyars and the uprising in 1547 (110-111), “венчание Ивана IV на царство” (“Ivan IV’s marriage to the kingdom”) (111) in 1547, the goals of

Concrete data of how narrative identity becomes practical self-constancy is not always available: „Судьбу произведений древнерусской литературы в общественной жизни обычно проследить бывает трудно” (Dmitrieva 71). And also: „Хотя это произведение [Сказание] было создано еще при Василии III, но проследить, как им пользовалось правительство Василия III, не удается” (110; see also 97). I was unable to find data as to how Повесть was used for achieving true self-constancy; a negative indication for the inability of Повесть at a certain point of time to work in this direction is the fact that it was rejected by the Council in 1564 (Strêmooukhoff, La tiare 128, 128n2). About the idea of Moscow as the Third Rome as applied in political practice see also Zhdanov 112-118; and Lur’e, Идеологическая борьба 495, 495n311, who comments on Likhachev’s book Национальное самосознание (National Self-Consciousness), Maslennikov, and Chaev. D’iakonov’s book as a whole can be viewed as a demonstration of how Muscovite Russia’s narrative identity becomes true self-constancy in the form of a public law doctrine (D’iakonov 68-69). More concretely, D’iakonov speaks of praxis and narratives relate. One’s narrative identity not only creates a true self-constancy through actions but, reciprocally, one’s practical situation remolds one’s narratives of himself: the level of Ivan IV’s honor goes higher or lower, compared with that of the Polish-Livonian ruler, depending on his military successes or defeats (D’iakonov 154, 156, 162-164; see also 74-76, 78, 88-90).
the church group of the Josephians led by Makary (111-113), and so on. In some cases, Dmitrieva clearly emphasizes the agent, the goal, and the action:

церковь в лице Макария преследовала свои цели. В акте венчания была подчеркнута роль церкви и ее главы, оно было использовано для поднятия престижа церкви (113).

(b) Ritual is both symbolic and practical; it mediates between the text as a vehicle of narrative identity and practical activity that guarantees true self-constancy. Dmitrieva describes „чин венчания Ивана IV на царство” and compares it with „венчание Дми- 
трия Ивановича на великое княжение” (113-118). In her ana-
lysis, three moments are discussed:

(1) Сказание as a text relates to the ritual of „венчание”: parts of Сказание, reworked into Поставление, clarify on what gro-
unds the Russian ruler has the right „венчаться на царство”:
Поставление служит историческим введением к чину венчания и обоснованием венчания (117; see also 116-118).

(2) The ritual of „венчание” is both a symbolic and practical 
activity. In some chronicles, for example, the text of Поставление 
and the ritual are given together:

Общее между записями в Никоновской летописи и в Царствен-
ной книге заключается в том, что эти записи кратко излагают 
Поставление и чин венчания (117-118).

In addition, in Сказание a passage exists that speaks of the 
coronation ritual and thus meta-narratively connects the text with 
the ritual as practical action:

Оттого и доныне тем царским венцем венчаются великие княз
владимерстии, егда присла греческий царь Костянтин Манах, егда ставятся на великое княжение русское (Сказание 191).

(3) The ritual leads to practical activity, to true self-constancy 
through political action:
Таким образом, Макарий, являясь инициатором и главным участником обряда венчания, преследовал цели использования сильной царской власти в интересах церкви, но объективно он способствовал укреплению централизованной власти, оправдывая союз царской власти с иосифлянской частью церкви (116).

Finally, practical activity as true self-constancy, in dialectical fashion, gives birth to new stories of narrative identity:

Вскоре после венчания Ивана IV на царство на дверцах царского места, установленного в Успенском соборе в 1551 г., был вырезан текст повести о приобретении Владимиром Мономахом царского венца, восходящей к Поставлению (118; see also Zhdanov 113) 26.

Dmitrieva summarizes the connection between text, ritual, and political practice, that is to say the transition from narrative identity to true self-constancy through the mediation of the ritual, as follows:

Таким образом, Сказание о князьях владимирских нашло себе впервые вполне конкретное применение в идеологической борьбе за укрепление централизованного государства в самом обряде венчания Ивана IV, в чине этого венчания и в последующих мероприятиях (118) 27.

26 Ricoeur’s Time and Narrative is a dialectical phenomenological explanation of how praxis creates narratives (mimesis 1), how these narratives are formulated in fiction and historiography (mimesis 2), and how, through reading, we bring the fictional and historiographical narratives back to our practical life (mimesis 3). Dmitrieva, in her own philological and historical way, shows the same without theorizing on it.

27 Dmitrieva analyzes different aspects of what she terms the political role of Сказание in the years of Ivan the Terrible as tsar (110-156), all of which can be reinterpreted in our theoretical framework of narrative identity becoming true self-constancy. I only mention the other aspects of narrative identity as true self-constancy: (a) the role of Поставление and Сказание in the international recognition of the title “tsar” of the Russian ruler (119-123; esp. 121-123); (b) Сказание and the elaboration of royal genealogy of Russian rulers from the second half of the sixteenth century on (123-129; esp. 127-128); (c) the place of Сказание in the official chronicle (129-130); (d) the connection between Сказание and Степенная книга (130-134); (e) the relation between Сказание and Великие Минеи Четии (134-135); and (f) Сказание and the diplomatic activity of Ivan IV (135-151). Many of these aspects are reiterated by Haney (358-359). In Likachev (History 393), one
We can conclude that both Сказание and Повесть – and, it seems, all Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts – can be described by a triple criterion: first, they are ideological in the sense discussed in section 2; next, they follow the principle post hoc, ergo ante hoc as shown in section 3; and, finally, they create a certain type of narrative identity of the community that produces and uses them as explained in sections 4-8. In the light of this approach to the Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts, the more traditional view that Old Russian literature does not distinguish between imaginative fiction and pragmatic writings (Lur'e, Идеологическая борьба 66-74; Pypin 2: 87; Jagoditsch) has to be reformulated. It would be more accurate to say that the Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts are both imaginatively fictional and pragmatic, however, these two aspects dominate in different phases of the dialectical circularity between the symbolic and the practical. The concept of narrative identity, as we have seen, is a theory within a dialectic between cultural texts; the reading and understanding of these texts which cause changes in the receivers; the practical actions of the receivers; and finally the way these actions bring new symbolic meanings into practical reality which, in turn, provide symbolic material for new narratives (see Ricoeur, Time and Narrative; Ricoeur, “Mimesis”; Eco, Role 193-98; Eco, Limits 37-43; and Eco, Interpretation 144-45, 148-51). At this curve of the dialectical spiral when we deal with the Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome texts as predominantly literary creations we view them as fictional (in the sense of Aristotle’s Poetics), and they are studied by literary and language scholars. When, however, these same texts are considered from the point of view of another section of the dialectical spiral, namely, the practical actions of their readers, then their pragmatic qualities come to the forefront, and the texts are studied by historians and political and law experts. Therefore, Old Russian literature does distinguish between fictional and pragmatic writing, and the Moscow-as-the-Third-Rome reads how Ivan IV, in his correspondence with the Swedish king Johan III, calls him a son of peasants, whereas he calls himself an ancestor of Augustus Caesar, and for a proof quotes Сказание. Gol'dberg (Три послания Филофея” 92) also explains how Filofei’s cycle of epistles was used in the struggles of its time. Just (168-169) writes of how the Soviet government takes over the idea of Moscow as the Third Rome in its politics against the Catholics in the Soviet Union during the late 1940s.
me texts are an excellent example of this. The problem is to invent methodological tools that allow us to perceive these writings as artistically autonomous but also as entwined with praxis. Our central theoretical category in this essay, narrative analyzed phenomenologically (Ricouer) and semiotically (Eco) — that is, within a dialectical framework uniting, first, symbolically marked reality, second, narratives built on that pre-narrated reality, and, third, understanding these narratives and practical actions based on the changed habits of the people who understand the texts — is a concept broader than just fictional writing or pragmatic writing considered in a more traditional sense, that is to say separately and non-dialectically. Narrative empowers us to speak of fictional writing and utilitarian writing in their dialectic nexus.

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