Dressing a Wolf in Sheep's Clothing: Toward Understanding the Composition of the Life of Alexander Nevskii

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Dressing a Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing:
Toward Understanding the Composition of
the Life of Alexander Nevskii

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Abstract
The Life of Alexander Nevskii is written in two styles: a hagiographic style and a secular style. Scholarly views are divided over whether the Life was written by one person in two different styles or by two persons, either a hagiographic writer and secular editor or a secular writer and hagiographic editor. The present article hypothesizes that the Life was probably written initially in a secular style as a military tale (the “wolf”) in the second half of the thirteenth century. This Tale was the foundational layer for the subsequent writing of the Life. Some time later, probably in the second half of the fourteenth century (before 1377), an ecclesiastical redactor edited the text adding phrases in a hagiographic style (the “sheep’s clothing”), thus creating a chronicle tale about the life of Alexander Nevskii. In the second half of the fifteenth century, a further editing took place as anti-Tatar interpolations were added, thus creating the First Redaction of the Life of Alexander Nevskii. Following a text critical analysis, this article reconstructs the First Redaction of the Life, in which the two styles are delineated. Then the article provides a translation into English of the hypothetical version of the non-extant military tale about Alexander Nevskii.

Keywords
Alexander Nevskii, military tale, saint’s life, hagiography, reconstruction, textual criticism

A number of investigators have pointed out that the Life of Alexander Nevskii juxtaposes hagiographic and secular elements. They have, however, interpreted that combination in different ways in regard both to the authorship question and to how the Life was composed.
In the following article, I present my own hypothesis that the composition represented a three-step process. My goal is to shed light on the origins of this singular literary composition. It seems to me that a complete secular military tale was written in the second half of the thirteenth century as a celebratory exposition of Alexander’s military achievements and glory (the “wolf” of the title of this article). Then, some time later, perhaps in the second half of the fourteenth century (before 1377) an attempt was made to transform that secular military tale into a saint’s tale (ПОВСТЬ О ЗЕМТНЯ) by adding pious sentiments and religious topoi (the “sheep’s clothing”). Only in the second half of the fifteenth century was the final form of the text we know as the First Redaction of the Life completed with the addition of anti-Tatar interpolations.

In 1915, Nikolai Serebrianskii proposed that the Life was written by “a younger contemporary of the prince, a monk of the Rozhdestvenskii monastery” and that it “was written not for placement in a chronicle but for church use.” Thus, he sees the hagiographic elements as preceding many of the secular elements added later, such as the sections pertaining to the six brave men at the battle on the Neva and the khan of the Eastern Country.\(^1\) In 1968, Norman Ingham described in some detail the relationship of the styles; namely, that, although the framing of the text is hagiographic, the middle parts “are distinctly secular in substance and style.” The military events are told as they would be in a military tale but with a “few pious” sentiments subjoined. Like Serebrianskii, Ingham deemed it probable that the author was a monk. In contradistinction to Serebrianskii, Ingham thought this same monk adopted a standard style for describing military matters and did not need to borrow from a secular work or have it added by someone else. Thus, the author, according to Ingham, wrote the Life in two distinct styles.\(^2\)

In 1974, John Fennell also detected two styles in the Life: “the hagiographical passages are distinct from the annalistic episodes, but sometimes religious sentiments are tacked on to purely military clichés.”\(^3\) The first example he cited of this adding on of “religious sentiments” is the description of

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\(^1\) Nikolai Serebrianskii, Drevene-russkie kniazheskie zhitiia. Obzor redaktssii i teksty (Moscow: Sinodal’naia tipografiia, 1915), 178–180.


Alexander’s “returning victorious (vozvratisya s pobedyu)” after the battle on the Neva—the author of the Life tacks on the phrase “praising and glorifying the name of his Creator.” The second example Fennell cited is Alexander’s treatment of the enemy after he razed the fortress that the Livonian knights had built “on Alexander’s land”: “some he killed, others he took with him, and others he pardoned and let go.” The author of the Life adds, “for he was merciful beyond measure.” Also, like Ingham, Fennell thought this was the work of only one individual, “a cleric” who could write in both the style of hagiography and in the style of the chronicle military tale. Yet, Fennell implies this may have been a two-step process with the adding-on of pious sentiments to a secular text occurring within an overall hagiographic framework. Fennell pointed to the entry in the Povest’ vremennykh let (PVL) for 1019 and the “Paroemia” of Boris and Gleb, both of which texts describe the Alta battle of 1019, as a possible model for the secular parts of the Life.

Also in 1974, Serge A. Zenkovsky, like Serebrianskii but in contrast to Ingham and Fennell, attributed the two styles to different individuals. Yet he reversed Serebrianskii’s order of stylistic composition; namely, a secular author, who was a “feudal warrior,” and a later redactor, who was “some ecclesiastic from the city of Vladimir.” For his determination that a military tale written by a warrior is at the core of the Life, Zenkovsky cited three pieces of evidence: (1) the title, “Tale of the Life and Courage of Prince Alexander,” is uncommon for a saint’s life; (2) the author’s reflection on the demise of Alexander—“A man may leave the house of his father but he cannot leave the house of his good lord; and if he has to, he should share the coffin with him”—is befitting of someone who owed secular allegiance to Alexander; and (3) the description by the author of the particulars of the deeds of those in Alexander’s army shows that whoever wrote the Tale “[p]robably . . . knew many of the prince’s warriors . . . .” The redactor, in Zenkovsky’s view, inserted quotations from and allusions to the Bible while altering the

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5 Begunov, Pamiatnik, 169.
“narrative and stylistic unity” and rearranging things in an unsystematic manner.\(^8\)

In 1979, A. D. Stokes, after discussing the arguments for and against their being genre of military tales in early Rus’, proposed that the Life of Alexander Nevskii had been originally written as a military tale that is no longer extant. According to Stokes, military tales may not have conveyed “a religious message.” Once, however, the land of Rus’ fully adopted Orthodoxy, “the defenders of Rus’ became also defenders of the faith, their martial exploits could acquire a religious significance.”\(^9\) He hypothesized that military tales “that praised the exploits of long-dead heroes in long forgotten struggles would hardly have been of interest to later copyists” so they modified them for “contemporary purposes.” As a result, in his view, no pure military tale is extant, but they exist in “adapted ‘adulterated’” form in which “it is difficult now to discern the true nature of the genre behind layers of later accretions.”\(^10\)

In the present article, I take further Stokes’ proposal that the Life of Alexander Nevskii developed from a military tale by attempting to reconstruct that no-longer-extant version of the tale. In contrast to the example of the Tale of the Destruction of Riazan’, which Likhachev, Fennell, and Stokes saw developing from a bare chronicle account to military tale to a religious tale, I propose that the military tale was used as the basis for the chronicle tale about the saintliness of the life of Alexander Nevskii. The chronicle tale was later modified into the First Redaction of the Life. In addition, I incorporate Zenkovsky’s suggestion that a secular author and a subsequent ecclesiastical redactor were responsible for the composition of the work we know as the Life of Alexander Nevskii. In doing so, I am not denying the possibility that one

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writer—whether secular or ecclesiastic—could write in both secular and hagiographic styles. I am saying, however, that, in this particular case, the circumstance that the secular passages together form a coherent unity (see below), the positioning and wording of the pious sentiments in an awkward manner in relation to the secular passages, and certain structural peculiarities of the Life tend to corroborate Zenkovsky’s hypothesis of a secular author and ecclesiastical redactor. I have argued elsewhere that the author wrote a secular tale sometime between 1263 (the year of death of Alexander) and the 1290s when the author would have been in his 50s (if one supposes he had been a young man in his 20s in the 1260s). I based this age estimate on the opening lines of the Tale concerning how he had been an eyewitness, while growing up, to some of the events he describes and that he obtained other information about Alexander from “my fathers” (“оть отца своих”). The author also claims that he heard about the details of the Battle on the Neva “from my Lord the Grand Prince Alexander and from others who at that time took part in that battle.”

Fennell cited of two pious motif interpolations, but one can ask how many more of the pious expressions were added during the process of reediting the Tale into the Life. My resulting hypothetical reconstructions (see appendices A and B) are an experiment in progress. I wanted to see how much of the religious wording and other interpolations of the Life it was possible to eliminate and still have a text that made sense. Somewhat surprisingly, I found that all the religious components could be dispensed with and a coherent narrative remain. Whether the original military tale about Alexander Nevskii had no, a few, or many religious components I cannot say. Some scholars may consider this exercise to be pointless, for they may, as Ingham and Fennell did, see only one author of the Life, which was written then as a complete work at one time (although Fennell does seem to imply a kind of two-step process could have been involved). Other scholars may agree that two individuals—an author of the core military tale and a redactor who added hagiographic phrases—are involved but are unwilling to accept that the military tale was written without any expression of pious sentiments. They are welcome to add back religious components as they see fit, but I hope that, when doing so, they will provide reasons for what they are restoring.

The First Redaction of the *Life* is extant in full or in part in 13 MS copies (one of which dates to 1377, two of which date to the second half of the fifteenth century, seven to the sixteenth century, and three to the seventeenth century). The MSS that contain the First Redaction of the *Life* are listed here in alphabetical order according to the sigla that Begunov assigned them:12

- A = RGB, sobranie Moskovskoi dukhovnoi akademii, fond 173, № 208 [ca. 1550];
- Ap = GAAO, sobranie rukopisnykh knig, № 18 [1550–1575];
- E = GIM, sobranie E. V. Barsova, № 1413 [ca. 1600];
- B = RGB, sobranie Iosifo-Volokolamskogo monastyrâ, fond 113, № 523 [1550–1575];
- I = IRLI, R. IV, op. 24, № 26 [ca. 1550];
- J = RNB, sobranie M. P. Pogodina, № 416 [1550–1575];
- M = GIM, Muzeiskoe sobranie, № 1706 [1550–1575];
- O = RGB, sobranie A. N. Ovchinnikova, fond 209, № 281 [ca. 1650];
- II = GAPO, sobranie Pskovo-Pecherskogo monastyrâ, fond 449, № 60 [1450–1475] (beginning and end only);
- Th = RNB, sobranie M. P. Pogodina, № 641 [1550–1575];
- P = GIM, Sinodal’noe sobranie, № 154, fols. 156–162v [end of 15th century].14
- P = RGB, sobranie Olonetskoi seminarii, fond 212, № 15 [1625–1650];
- Y = GIM, sobranie A. S. Uvarova, № 279 [1650–1675].

Five versions of the First Redaction of the *Life of Alexander Nevskii* have been published.15 In 1882, Archimandrite Leonid (L. A. Kavelin) published the *Life* from the MS. Moscow Ecclesiastical Academy (MDA), no. 208.

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In 1913, Vilho Mansikka also published the Life from A. Neither Leonid nor Mansikka provided a critical apparatus of readings from other copies. In 1915, Serebrianskii published \( \Pi \) and \( P \) in parallel columns with variants from \( A \).

Also in 1915, S. A. Bugoslavskii, in a review of Mansikka’s book provided the first publication of the Life with a critical apparatus of readings from multiple copies. Bugoslavskii used Mansikka’s diplomatic edition of \( A \) as his copy text and provided variants from seven copies: \( \mathcal{L}_0 \), \( \Pi_c \), and \( \Pi \) from already published versions; \( \Pi \) from the MS; and \( B, P \), and \( \mathcal{Y} \) from readings for those copies that Mansikka gave in his monograph. Bugoslavskii noted that, because Mansikka did not provide all the readings from \( B, P \), and \( \mathcal{Y} \), his (Bugoslavskii’s) readings from those MSS “are not able to be fully exact.” Instead of altering the copy text, Bugoslavskii separately proposed three pages of improvements to it. In suggesting these improvements, Bugoslavskii depended mainly on agreements of \( \mathcal{L}_0 \) and \( \Pi_c \) where \( \mathcal{L}_0 \) is extant, and on agreements of \( \Pi_c \) and \( \Pi \) where \( \mathcal{L}_0 \) is not extant. Begunov was dismissive of Bugoslavskii’s publication: “The attempt of S. A. Bugoslavskii at publishing the ‘original’ redaction of the Life according to the Academy copy (MS. GBL, MDA, \( \mathcal{N} \) 208, XVI c.) with introduced variants from other copies is hardly able to be considered successful.” Furthermore: “The publication of S. A. Bugoslavskii was not exact: the variants are provided from the cited text in Mansikka’s monograph and not from the manuscripts.” This criticism is a little harsh since Bugoslavskii acknowledged that the readings for three of the copies he used were incomplete and based on whatever he could glean from Mansikka’s comparisons, but the readings for the other four were complete, being based on three published versions and one de visu examination of the MS. For 50 years, until Begunov’s editions superceded it in 1965,

\[ (A) \]

16 Archimandrite Leonid, Skazanie o podvigakh i zhizni sv. blagovernego velikogo kniazia Aleksandra Nevskogo, (St. Petersburg, 1882).
17 Vilho Mansikka, “Zhitie Aleksandra Nevskogo (Razbor redaktii i teksty),” Pamiatniki drevnei pis’mennosti, 180 (St. Petersburg, 1913).
18 Serebrianskii, Drevne-russkie kniazheskie zhitiia, Teksty, 109–120.
22 Begunov, “K voprosu,” 349, fn. 5.
23 Begunov, Pamiatnik, 13.
Bugoslavskii’s was the best critical edition of the First Redaction available but was rarely cited.

In 1947, V. I. Malysh ev published a diplomatic edition of \( \mathcal{J} \) with facsimiles of the first three folios (fol. 317–318).\(^{24}\) In 1965, in an analysis of the relationship of the *Slovo o pogibebe russkoi zemli* to the *Life of Alexander Nevskii*, the researcher Iu. K. Begunov focused solely on the First Redaction of the *Life*. In order to depict the relationship of the known-by-that-time 13 copies of the First Redaction, Begunov constructed a three-branch stemma codicum in which \( \mathcal{J} \) occupied its own distinct branch (see figure 1).\(^{25}\)

\[\text{Figure 1 Begunov’s stemma for the Life of Alexander Nevskii}\]

The readings of \( \mathcal{J} \), thus, should have equal status in determining the archetype with the readings of the common protograph of \( E [HcP\mathcal{J}] \), on one


hand, and $\text{MAp}$, on the other hand. Begunov provided two edited versions of the text of the Life. In the first version, he presented a diplomatic edition of $\text{Pi}$ with a full critical apparatus containing variant readings from the other 12 MS copies. He corrected $\text{Pi}$ only when he thought there was a scribal error in it. In the second version, Begunov “reconstructed” what he considered to be a text closer to the archetype of the Life than any single MS. He used $\text{Pi}$ as his copy text and provided readings from other MSS only when he changed it. Begunov did not follow his stemma in his reconstruction of the Life. For example, he added the word “домоводень” after the phrase “Понеже слыша от отец своих,” in the introductory paragraph of his reconstruction (187.3), although that word is testified to only by $E$ and $P$. By the rules of stemmatics it could not have been in the archetype for it would require positing an independent dropping of that word in three different places in Begunov’s stemma—in $L$, in the protograph of $\text{Pi}$ and $Y$, and in the protograph of the right branch. As a result of this and similar counter-stemmatic changes, his “reconstruction” turns out to be further from the archetype than his diplomatic edition of $\text{Pi}$.

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26 Begunov, Pamiatnik, 158–180.
28 See, in particular, adding “хозяя” in 187.12 on the basis of $Y$, adding “же” in 189.55 on the basis of $BP$, changing “от Немень” to “их” in 190.12 on the basis of $\text{MAp}$, adding “баше” in 191.25 on the basis of $LY$, changing “Господи” to “Боже” in 191.28 on the basis of $BP$, adding “а” in 191.39 on the basis of $Y$, adding “в ризах со кресты” in 191.41–42 on the basis of $BPY$, changing “их” to “а” in 192.50 on the basis of $\text{LBPY}$, changing “меже бы ему” to “ему же бы” in 192.52–53 on the basis of $P$, adding “на мир щедротами” in 192.70–71 on the basis of $BP$, adding “мира” in 192.72 on the basis of $BP$, adding “учить” in 192.73 on the basis of $BP$, changing “дивна” to “славна” in 193.75 on the basis of $\text{LBP}$, adding “царя” in 193.81 on the basis of $BP$, adding “господя” in 193.82 on the basis of $BP$, adding “до возвестия Ибн абибель” in 193.83–84 on the basis of $BP$, adding “уже б о не обрещется таковую князь ни одинъ в земли Суждальскихъ” in 194.83–84 on the basis of $BP$, adding “земля” in 194.99 on the basis of $P$, changing “24” to “23 дню” in 194.3–4 on the basis of $\text{LBPY}$, changing “хотя” to “хотяста” in 194.5 on the basis of $P$, adding “Земь же нашему славы, прославляющему святая своя в веки вековь. Аминь,” in 194.8–8 on the basis of $\text{LBP}$.

29 In 1969, Begunov reprinted this version as a plain text in his “Zhitie Aleksandra Nevskogo,” on the even-numbered pages in “Izbornik.” Sbornik proizvedenii literatury drevnei Rusi, ed. L. A. Dmitriev and D. S. Likhachev (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1969), 328–343. It has no italics where he had changed his copy text, no footnotes, and no final hard signs on words. A translation into modern Russian appears on
In 1997, Michele Colucci reassessed Begunov’s stemma and, although accepting for the most part the relationship of copies that Begunov proposed, made one major adjustment. Colucci moved \( \mathcal{L}v \) to the right (AAp BΛMOPPiI) branch of the stemma (see figure 2). Thus, he argued, in effect, that \( \mathcal{L}v \) should not be given its own equal status with the other two branches in determining primary readings, but that \( \mathcal{L}v \) and AAp BΛMOPPiI (his \( n.a.s \)) together determine readings that are equal in status to those of BPsRU (his \( y.p. \)). He attributed those cases where the readings of \( y.p. \) agree with \( \mathcal{L}v \) against those of AAp BΛMOPPiI to a secondary contaminative influence of \( \mathcal{L}v \) on \( y.p. \). In addition, he attributes the agreements \( P \) and \( L \) with \( P \) and \( U \) to a contamination of \( P \) with \( U \). Colucci pointed out that Begunov did not use his own stemma in reconstructing the text of the Life.

Not using a stemma, even though one was diagrammed, usually with the designation “a schema of the relationship of copies,” was typical for Soviet textology, which, following D. S. Likhachev, held that using a stemma to help determine readings was “mechanistic textology.” Colucci also expressed doubt about the odd-numbered facing pages. In 1981, for the series Pamiatniki literatury dreveni Rusi, V. I. Okhotnikova reprinted Begunov’s reconstruction of the text of the First Redaction of the Life from his Pamiatnik with a commentary. “Zhitiia Aleksandra Nevskogo, editing, translation, and commentary by V. I. Okhotnikova, in Pamiatniki literatury dreveni Rusi: XIII vek, ed. L. A. Dmitriev and D. S. Likhachev (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1981), 426-439, 602-606.

30 M. Koluchchi [Michele Colucci], “Pervonachal’naia redaktsiia ‘Zhitiia Aleksandra Nevskogo’: zameki po istorii teksta,” TORDL 50 (1997): 252–260. Colucci’s cases of when \( \mathcal{L}v = y.p. \neq y.p. \) are 162.8–11, 166.92–99, 167.42–43, 167.45–47, 167.51, 167.62–63, and 168.88–92. Of these, all but the first involve a lacuna in the left-branch’s \( Hc \) and \( \mathcal{Y} \), which presupposes their absent readings had they existed would have agreed with those of \( B \) and \( R \). Even Colucci’s first case is not entirely solid since \( O \) of the right branch agrees with \( B \) and \( P \) of the left. Colucci’s cases of when \( \mathcal{L}v = y.p. \neq y.p. \) are 160.53, 161.17, 161.28, 161.51, 163.97–100, 163.1–2, 165.41, 165.52, 166.93, 166.6, 166.12, 167.18, and 168.12. Of these, 166.93, 166.6, 166.12, and 167.18 also involve a lacuna in \( Hc \) and \( \mathcal{Y} \), and 165.52 involves an idiosyncratic reading of \( Hc \). The idiosyncratic readings of \( \mathcal{L}v \) that Colucci considers to have “real editorial significance” he gives as 166.8–86, 166.1–5, 166.97–99, and 167.25–26. Colucci numbers his cases according to the page number and variant of Begunov’s critical edition (Begunov, Pamiatnik, 158–180).


Begunov’s use of a “codex interpositus”—that is, a hypothetical intervening copy “between a manuscript (or group of manuscripts) and its protograph” (253). Use of such an intervening copy between the archetype and the readings suggested by the MS copies was also characteristic of Soviet textology. It allowed the modern editor to overrule the testimony of the MS copies by claiming readings for the archetype that were not supported by the MSS.

Figure 2 Colucci’s stemma for the Life of Alexander Nevskii

Here I will limit myself to discussing briefly how I edited the text and why I chose to place \( H_6 \) above the common protograph of all the other copies. In editing a text for publication, an editor has several options, which are dependent on the goal of the edition and on the relationship of the extant manuscripts to each other. As I wrote recently in the journal *Kritika*:

If one copy is clearly best representative of the archetype or authorial text, then it should be used as the copy text and variants provided from the other copies only to show the history of the development of the text. If no single copy is best and if the manuscript tradition is “open” (i.e., no clear genealogical relationship

can be established among the copies), then picking and choosing readings from different copies based on the knowledge, skill, and intuition of the editor is to be preferred. If the manuscript tradition is “closed” (i.e., a clear genealogical relationship can be determined), then a stemma should be used.  

In the case of the First Redaction of the Life of Alexander Nevskii, we have a hybrid situation in regard to the MSS. For the first 44.5% of the text of the Life, in my opinion, a “best” copy exists in \( \mathcal{L}_0 \), but the last 55.5% of the text of the Life is missing in that copy. For the remainder of the text of the Life to the end, a closed tradition exists whereby no one copy is demonstrably better than all the others, although a clear genealogical relationship can be established. Thus, for the last part of the text, I resorted to a stemma to help determine the “best” (i.e., closest to the archetype) reading.

In Appendix A, I present my reconstruction of the First Redaction archetype. For the most part, my reconstruction is similar to the version of the First Redaction that Begunov edited and published in 1965. It differs from his version in two major respects. First, I used \( \mathcal{L}_0 \) for the copy text for the first part of the text and resorted to a stemma for the last part, whereas Begunov used \( \mathcal{P}_c \) as his copy text throughout. Second, my understanding of the relationship of the MS copies to each other differs from his (see figure 3). As a result, in particular choice of words and phrases, I accepted the primacy of readings in the MS copies in a different hierarchical order; namely, where \( \mathcal{L}_0 \) is extant, I accepted the reading of \( \mathcal{L}_0 \) except to correct scribal accidentals; otherwise, I considered \( \gamma \) and \( \delta \) to be of theoretical equal value in determining \( \beta \).

In practice, \( \delta \) tends to represent \( \beta \) more often. As Colucci demonstrated the readings of right-branch MSS are more often closer to \( \mathcal{L}_0 \) than are those of left-branch MSS. The agreements of \( \mathcal{L}_0 \) with \( \mathcal{P}_c \) that Colucci sees as placing \( \mathcal{L}_0 \) in the right branch of the stemma might better be understood as occurrences of agreements of the right-branch copies with the primary reading of \( \mathcal{L}_0 \) (\( \alpha \)). Thus, where \( \mathcal{L}_0 \) is not extant, I tended to favor the agreements of \( \delta \) (agreements of \( \mathcal{P}_c, \mathcal{P}_d, \mathcal{P}_e, \mathcal{P}_f, \mathcal{P}_g, \) and \( \mathcal{P}_h \)) over \( \gamma \) (agreements of \( \mathcal{P}_c, \mathcal{P}_d, \mathcal{P}_e, \mathcal{P}_f, \mathcal{P}_g, \) and \( \mathcal{P}_h \)), when the two disagree. Finally, I rarely looked to \( \mathcal{L}_{III} \) alone or \( \mathcal{A}_A \mathcal{B}_M \mathcal{O} \mathcal{E}_O \), except

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insofar as they agree with $\Pi_t$ or are able to correct some scribal accidental in $\Pi_t$. In the case of certain readings, this represents an almost complete reversal of Begunov's hierarchical placement and results in a reconstruction that is closer to the text that would result from Bugoslavskii's proposed improvements than either to Begunov's critical apparatus version or to his reconstruction. I also see contamination of the common protograph (θ) of $\Pi_t$ on the common protograph (ε) of $\Lambda\Pi$, whereas Colucci saw the contamination going in the opposite direction. Although I agree with Colucci in general terms concerning the dangers of using a *codex interpositus*, I propose having β as in effect an intervening hypothetical copy between the MSS and α is justified here.

*Figure 3* My preferred stemma for the *Life of Alexander Nevskii*

When turning the military tale into a saint’s tale, the fourteenth-century redactor inserted new sections (indicated as the italicized parts in Appendix A). But, even then in the second half of the fifteenth century, three additional sections were interpolated (indicated with the bracketed designations C-1, C-2, and C-3 in Appendix A). Toward the end of the Tale, “a mighty khan of the Eastern Country” summons Alexander to him (section A-1 below). Then Alexander goes to Vladimir with his army. News of his coming reaches the
mouth of the Volga River, and the Moabite women frighten their children, warning them of Alexander’s coming (C-1). He receives the blessing of Metropolitan Kirill to go to the khan (B-1). Alexander goes to the khan who honors him and lets him go (A-2). No explicit description of Alexander’s return from the khan is given in the text of the Life at this point, as the reader is left to construe from the ensuing section that he did return. In that section, Khan Batu gets angry at Alexander’s brother, Andrei, and sends his general Nevruy to devastate the Suzdalian land (C-2).

Alexander rebuilds the cities and churches and returns the refugees to their homes. From Alexander’s rebuilding activities, the reader can suppose that Alexander had returned from his visit to the khan, unless he undertook the rebuilding of Rus’ cities and churches from Sarai. A quotation from Isaiah 1: 16, 17, 23 and 56: 1–2 and a peroration about how God had endowed the land “with wealth and glory” follows.

Then the reader is told about the sending of a letter by the Pope to Alexander asking to be allowed to send two cardinals to instruct him in Catholicism, but Alexander turns the request down (B-2). In the next section, “foreign peoples” (inoplemenniki) are violently forcing the Rus’ to serve in the ranks of the army, but Alexander goes to the khan and pleads with him not to drive his people into misery (C-3). The description that Alexander “went” (poide) to the khan is another indication in the Life that Alexander had returned from his previous trip. In the next section Alexander sends his son Dmitrii to the Western country, where he conquers some German land and takes the city of Iur’ev returning with prisoners and booty. The Life then abruptly begins to describe Alexander’s return from the khan without transition. After the previous section describing Dmitriii’s campaign in the Western country, the α reading merely states: “Князь великий Александъ вълды отъ иноплеменникъ” (“Grand Prince Alexander went from the foreign peoples”). ΠΕΡΥ attempt to smooth the transition from the previous section by adding the phrase “Отецъ же его” (“His father”) at the beginning of the sentence.

The general assumption among scholars is that transmission of the text of the Life remained stable for almost 200 years after it was first composed, from ca. 1280s to the second half of the fifteenth century and that the First Redaction represents the late thirteenth-century version. Only then did

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34 As Zenkovsky pointed out, the campaign of Nevruy against Andrei Iaroslavich occurred under Batu’s successor Sartaq. Zenkovsky, Medieval Russia’s Epics, Chronicles, and Tales, 233, fn. 27. For an analysis of the chronicle accounts of this campaign, see my “The Tatar Campaign of 1252,” Palaeoslavica 17, no. 2 (2009): 46–64.
transmission become volatile with the text undergoing many changes over the course of the next 100 or so years. I have proposed that the text originally composed in the second half of the thirteenth century underwent a major transformation in the mid to late fourteenth century. What resulted was a sequence of nested insertions within a foundational layer framework; that is, these interpolations may have occurred in the mid to late fifteenth century when the First Redaction was created. I have designated that foundational layer with the letter “A”, the first layer of insertions with the letter “B”, and the second (later) layer with the letter “C”.

**A-1:** The khan summons Alexander

**C-1:** At the death of his father Iaroslav, Alexander goes to the city of Vladimir and news reaches the mouth of the Volga. Moabite women frighten their children by saying “Alexander the prince is coming.”

**B-1:** Alexander consults with Metropolitan Kirill who gives him his blessing to go.

**A-2:** Alexander goes to the khan, who renders him honor and lets him go.

**C-2:** Batu gets angry at Andrei and sends the general Nevruy with an army to ravage the Suzdal’ land. Prince Alexander rebuilds the destroyed churches and the cities gathering the home of the people who had fled during the invasion. Quotation from Isaiah.

**B-2:** The Pope writes to Alexander wanting to send two cardinals to teach him about the Catholic faith, but Alexander turns his request down.

**C-3:** The foreign people were violent forcing the Rus’ to serve in the ranks of the army, but Alexander goes to the Khan and pleads with him not to drive his people into misery.

**B-3:** Alexander sends his son Dmitrii against the Western land. Dmitrii conquers some of the German land and takes the city of Iur’ev, returning to Novgorod with prisoners and booty.

**A-3:** Alexander returns from “the foreign people” (“отъ иностранных”), goes to Nizhni Novgorod, then Gorodets where he falls ill and dies.

Thus, if one reads sections A-1 / A-2 / A-3 one after the other, one has a complete narrative: Alexander is summoned by the khan, he goes to the khan, is
honored, and returns from the khan. This sequence is what I posit was the way the Tale originally read; that is, the foundational layer. The second (B-1), fourth (B-2), and sixth (B-3) interpolations were most likely added in the fourteenth century (pre-1377) when the military tale was turned into a saint’s tale. Thus, one can read the sequence as A-1 / B-1 / A-2 / B-2 / B-3 / A-3 for the sequence as it probably was in the continuation of Ḡe. The first (C-1), third (C-2), and the fifth (C-3) interpolations were most likely added in the post-1448 period, when anti-Tatar rhetoric began to pervade Church literature about the steppe people. That is the sequence of the First Redaction as we now have it.

For the sake of consistency, I normalized the text throughout, which includes standardizing spelling, expanding abbreviations, adding front and back yers after superscript consonants in final position, and inserting modern punctuation. I have not provided variant readings, for which one may consult the diplomatic edition of Ḡe with critical apparatus that Begunov edited and published in 1965. Those parts that I believe were added to the Tale to transform it into a Life are italicized. In Appendix B, I provide an English translation of the non-italicized parts; that is, of the Tale as it may have existed before attempts were made in the fourteenth century to turn the military tale into a saint’s tale. Here we see a spare but structurally well-organized Tale with an introduction, in which the “thematic clue” is a story about a brave ruler; in this case, the Emperor Vespasian. Then follow three stories—the first involves a ruler from the Northern Country, the second involves a ruler from the Western Country, the third involves a ruler from the Eastern Country. The Tale closes with Alexander’s death and a lament by the author. Into this foundational layer were added religious sentiments, biblical allusions and quotations, and digressive stories in the mid-fourteenth century to make the saint’s

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tale, almost half of which appears in \( \text{Lv} \), and then into the First Redaction in the second half of the fifteenth century.

Appendix A

Житие Александра Новского: Первая редакция (реконструкция)

Тою же леты. Преставился великий князь Александр сына Ярослава. Скажем же мужество и житие его. О Господине нашем Иисус Христе Сыне Божий азъ худъ грьмким недостойным начаю писати житие великого князя Александра сына Ярослава внука Всеволода понеже слышахъ отъ отецъ своихъ и самовидца емъ върсту его и радъ бышъ исповѣдать святое жжыне и честное и славное во яко же Приготовися рече „Въ ложителе душу не вводитъ премудрость на высокихъ бо храмъ есть посередъ жите сложище при вратъ сихъ писати присьдить.“36 Аще и гробъ еже утолнъ молитвою свято Госпожи Богородицы поспѣшенъ святое князя Александра начатокъ полого.

Си бь князь Александръ Богоюмъ роженъ отъ отца милостиваго и мужества пакы же кроткаго князя великаго Ярослава и матери святое Федосьи. Яко же рече Исайя пророч.: „Тако глаголеть Господь: „Княза азъ учика священи бо суть азъ вожъ“37 и. Воистину безъ Божия бо повелыша же бь княжение его. Но и върстъ его неч енныхъ человѣкъ, и глас его—какъ труба въ народѣ и жи его—аки жи Иосифъ38 иже бь поставленъ его Египетскаго царя второго царя въ Египтѣ. Сила бь его—часть отъ силы Самсонъ. Да ль бь ему Божь премудрость Иосифову и храбрѣство же аки царя Римскаго Епифаниса иже бь плывилъ всю Подъюндоскую землѣ и ныдъ исполнися къ граду Атапату приступить и шедше граждане и оувѣдыша поль его, и осташся единѣ, и, възврати силу ихъ ко вратомъ ко гряднымъ, и посмѣвся дружинъ свои, и укори я, река: „Оставите мя единого“. Также и си князь Александръ бь побѣдная а не побиымъ.

36 Cf. Wisdom 1: 4; Proverbs 8: 2–3.
37 азъ вожъ changed from а вожъ in \( \text{Lv} \).
38 Cf. Isaiah 13: 3.
39 Иосифа changed from Есива in \( \text{Lv} \).
И сего ради ньвто силень оть Западных странь иже нарицаетя слуги40 Божьи оть тьхъ приде, хотя видѣти дивины то вързать его яко же древе цесааря Ужска приходь кь Соломону хотели слышати премудрость его. Также и се именемь Андрѣя, видѣть цесарь Александръ возвратися кь своимъ и рече: „Прошедь страны, и языки, не видѣхь таковаго и вь цесааря ни вь князяхъ князя“.

Се же слышаъ, король части Римское оть полуночнаго страны, такое мужество цесааря Александра и помысли вь собь: „Да поида плынь землю Александрову“. И собра силу велю наполни корабля многи полковъ своихъ подвижес вь силь таждъ исполнися духымъ ратнимъ. И приде вь рьку Неву шатся безумнемъ, послѣ сны загордевѣсъ кь цесаарю вь Новгородѣ рече: „Аще можеши противитись мнѣ то се емь здь уже плынь твою“.

Александръ же, слышаъ словеса ихъ, разгорѣся сердцемъ и вьніѣ вь церквь святые Софія, падь на колѣнь предь олтаремъ, нача молитися со слезами: „Боже хваленъ, и праведны Боже велики и крѣпки Боже превоззвы созданы небо и землю и постави предъ нами языкъ и повели жить не преступая вь честь царей“.41 И вѣпримь псалмическую пышную рече: „Суди, Господи, обида ми вѣлѣвши бо возмущись со мнѣ, приими оружье и ишо станиц вь помощь мнѣ“.42 Скончавъ молитву встать поклонися архипископу. Архипископъ же Спиродонь блюсловеся его и отпусти. Онъ же вьніѣ изь церквь утиралъ слезы, и нача крѣпить дружину свою, и рече: „Не вь силахъ Божьи вь правдѣ. Помянемь Псалмословиа “Си бо оружин си на коней мы же во имя Господа Бога нашаго призовемь те сплыть бытья и падомъ мы же встахомъ прости бѣгомъ“.43 И си рекѣ понѣдѣны ны вь маль дружинѣ, не сождавшись со мнѣ силою своею, но уповавъ на святые Троицу.

Жалостно же и слышати яко отецъ его, честныя Ярославъ великии не бѣ видалъ такого встаная на сына своею, милого Александра, ни оному бысть послати когда въсть кь отцю: еже бо ратни приближися. Тѣмъже мношь Новгородци не

40 слуги added.
41 Deuteronomy 32: 8; 2nd Kings 19: 15.
42 Psalms 34: 1–2.
43 Psalms 19: 8–9.
совокупились бы на понеже ускори князь пойти.

И прийде на ны въ день вскресенья, на память святых опочивъ 600 и 30 бывши збора въ Халкидонъ и святого мученику Корику и Улия и святого князя Болгарского крестившаго Русскую землю и мнѣ же върну велику къ тѣмъ мученикомъ Бориса и Глѣб.

И въ некто мужь старшина въ земли Ихерскому44 именемъ Пелагія поручено же бысть ему страж зорьскай. Всприят же святов крещеніе и жившее посредь роду своею попано свѣда. И напечь бысть и изъ его въ святомъ крещечь Филій. Жившее богуегодо въ среду и въ плѣтк пребывалъ въ ачъбѣ. Тѣже спобы боначъ Божъ видѣти видѣнные страшили во тѣ день. И сказемъ вкратци.

Увидаше силу ратныхъ, идѣ противу князя Александра, да скажетъ ему стани и обрызгъ ихъ. Столицу же ему при краи моря, стрежашеть обою путь, и пребысть всю ноцъ во бдѣны. Якоже нача восходить сонце и слыша шумъ страшенье по морю и вѣдъ насадъ единъ гребущъ, посредь насада столица мученику Бориса и Глѣба въ одеждѣ червлѣнныхъ, и бѣсть руцъ держася на рымъ гребучъ же стоящу аки многою одѣны. И рече Борисъ: Брате Глѣбѣ, понем греши дать поможе сродникову своему Александру видѣти же таковов видѣнне и съмѣна таковыя гласъ онь мученику, стополистъ трепещеть, дондexe насада очью ею.

Потомъ скоро пришла князь Александру, онъ же видѣвъ князя Александра радостнымъ очища исповѣди ему единому. Князь же рече: Сего не рѣчи никому.

Оттолѣ потщався нахъ на нѣ въ 6 часы днѣ [въ лето 6748].45 Бѣсть съча вѣлика надъ Римляны, и избѣ множествъ бесчисленныхъ ихъ и самовы королевы взыски печать на не осѣрѣть своими конемъ.

Здѣ же явишася 6 мужъ храбрыихъ [с самыѣ с нимѣ исполку его].46

Единъ именемъ Гаврило Алексічъ сен47 нахъ на шенку

44 Corrected from Жерскому.
45 Bracketed words are not in AArВВЛМОПпПеРУ, Лп: read: се же бысть въ лето 6745.
видъвь королевича мяц под руку и взыла по досць и до самаго коробля по ни съ жожаху с королевичем ныже текошь перед нымь а самого еме свергаша и с конемь в воду 48 з досць и Божьему милостыю неврежень 49 бысть и паки наяха, и бись с самымь воеводою середи полку ихъ.

2 именемь Свбяслав Якуновичь Новгородець сенъ наяха многоажды на полкъ ихъ и бляшеть единь топоромь не имья стражь вь души своего. И паде ныколио отъ руку его и подивишься силъ и храбрству его.

3и Яковъ родомь Полочанинъ ловчивъ бсть у князя. Сенъ няха на полкъ с мечемь и похвали его князь.

4 Новгородець именемь Мыш. Сенъ пышь натече на корабли и погуби. 3 корабли з дружиною своемь.

5и Отъ молодыхъ его именемь Сава. Сенъ въдахъ в шатерь велики, королевъ золотоверхий и подъ столько шатерны. Полчи Александрови, видъвше шатра паденье възрадовалась.

6и Отъ слугъ его именемь Ратмьрь. Сенъ бись пышь и ступишь и мище. Онь же отъ многихъ ранъ паде и тако скончась. Си же вся слышашь отъ господина своего великого князя Александра и отъ иньхъ, иже в то время обротошась в тои съчи.

Бысть же в то время чудо дивное, яко же во древняя дни при Ежки цеарѣ, едя прида Сенакирать, Асуринскій цеарь на Иерусалимъ гошь плантити 47 градъ святись Ерусалимъ венецу изиде ангелъ Господня убы и отъ полка Асуринска 185 тысячь, И въставши утро, обротошась трупъ мертвы всѣ. Такоже бысть при побдѣ Александрови, едя побдъ короля обь онъ полъ руки Ижееръ, иже же не бв проходъ полку Александрову. Зырп

47 сенъ changed from се in Лв.
48 ААрВ.ДМОП: море; БР: Неву; ИПсУ: lacuna.
49 Corrected from неприятъ in Лв.
50 сенъ changed from се in Лв.
51 Сенъ changed from Се in Лв.
52 Сенъ changed from Се in Лв.
53 Сенъ changed from Се in Лв.
54 Corrected from въхъ.
55 Сенъ changed from Се in Лв.
56 плантити changed from плантити in Лв.
объявила много множество избяных от ангела Господня. И остановился побежал трупы мертвых своих на памятник корабля истопиша корабль в море. Князь же Александр возвратился с победою, хвалу и славу имя своего Творца Отца и Сына и Святого Духа.

Въ 2-е же льто по возвращении с победою князя Александра, ввысь придоша отъ западния страны и въ градища57 градъ въ отечествѣ Александровъ. Князь же Александра издыда на ня воскоре и изверже градъ ихъ изъ основания, а самехъ изъшша инъ въ собою приведе, а иныхъ, помимова, отпуще: бъ бо множество паче мира.

По победу же Александровъ, яко побѣди короля, въ третии годъ, въ зимнее время, понде на землю немецкую въ силъ велицѣ, да не хвалятся, ркуще: "Укоримъ Словенскія языкъ ниже себѣ."

Уже бо бяше взятъ градъ Псковъ, и тиуны у нихъ посажены. Техъ же князъ Александр изыма и градъ Псковъ свободи отъ пленна. А землю ихъ повоева и пожже и полона взя безъ числа, а овъ ихъ ищече. Оне же, изъ городъ, собокупишася и рѣша: "Поищемъ побѣдимъ Александра и имеемъ его руками". Егда приближивася, и поочниша стражѣ. Князь же Александра оплывился и поионша противу себѣ, и наступиша море Чудское обоихъ множества. Отецъ же его Ярославъ послалъ бѣ ему на помощь брата меньшаго Андрѣя въ множе храбриыхъ, яко дрвле у царя Давида силни и кралицы. Тако и мужи Александровы исполняше духа ратна: бяха бо сердца ихъ, авы молятъ, и рѣша: "О княже нашъ драги! Ныже приси ярѣла намъ положи глада с IDX за тя". Князь же Александра воздвѣй руце на небо, и рече: "Суди, Боже, и разсуди про мя мое отъ языка величны и помоли мя. Боже, яко же дрвле Монсльвы на Амалию и градищу мое му Ярославу на ожаваннѣ Святополку".58

Бѣ же тогда день суботны, въходи солнце, съступился облакъ. И бысть сича зла и труськи отъ хопин злебене и звукъ отъ мечанаго сучения, яко же морю померзлия двинутся; не бѣ видны имя; покры бо ся кровью.

57 въѣстра changed to вѣстрища in Le. End of Le.
Си же слышах отъ самовидя, иже рече мн, яко видишь полкъ Божий на въздухь, пришедши на помощь Александру. И поблудъ в помощь Божию, и даша патрии полчи своя и спать и яко по вѣру, и не въ како утешен. Эже просили Богъ Александра предъ всѣми полки, яко Иисус Наввына у Ерехона. А иже рече: "Имемъ Александра руками", сего дать ему Богъ въ руку его. И не обрывался противникъ ему въ брани никогда же. Возвратйся князъ Александра съ побоюю славною. Быше множество полону въ полку его, ведыхъ босы подле конии, иже именуются ридалы.

И яко же приближся князъ къ граду Пекову, изулеми же и попове и весь народъ срѣтша предъ градомъ, подающе хвалу Богову и славу господню князю Александру, поню пышне: "Посольны, господи, кроткому Давыдуъ побдйть иконымены и върному князю нашему оружень крестыны свободити градъ Плесковъ отъ иконыменъ рукъ Александровон".

"О, невьласи плежаоччи! Аще се забудете и до правнучатъ Александровыхъ, уподобитесь Жидолы, иже яже претъ господь въ усты и манко и крестеръ печенимъ, и сихъ всѣхъ завыша Богъ своего, изведшаго я изъ работы Египетовъ.

И началъ слыть имя его по свѣтъ странамъ и до моря Египетскаго, и до горъ Араатскихъ, и обону страну моря Варяжскаго, и до великаго Рима.

Въ то же время умножися языкъ Литовскій и началя пакостити волости Александровъ. Онъ же, выезжая, и нача избивати я. Единою клотися ему выехать, и поблудъ 7 ратии единь всея одинъ, множество князи ихъ ихъ, а овъ рукамъ исть; слуги же его, ругающеся, взахять я въ хвостотъ конии своихъ. И начаша блюстися именя его.

[A-1] Въ то же время некто царь сильенъ на Восточны странь, eti are be Bogw pokoribw mnogia azyki, ow vystoka daee i do zapada. Ты же царь, слышавъ Александра тако славна и храбра, послалъ къ нему послы и рече: "Александре, въ ли мн, яко Богъ покори мнъ многыя языки. Ты ли единъ не хочешь покоримся силь моей? Но аще хочешь съжти землю свою, то скоро прини къ мнъ, и да узришь честь царства моего."

[C-1] Князъ же Александро приди во Володимерь по умертвы отца своего въ силь великъ. И бысть трооже пришедъ его, и промычалъ въсть и до усть Волвы. И начаша жены
мониторчных полушати діти своя, речіце: "Александръ есть!"

[B-1] Сдудувъ же князь Александъръ, и благослови его епископъ Кирилъ, и пои́де к цареви.

[A] И видъвъ его царь Батыпъ, и подивись, и рече велюжамъ своимъ: "Воистину ми повѣдаша, яко нѣсть подобна сему князы... Почесть же и честно, отпусти и.

[C-2] И потомъ же раздѣвлась царь Батыпъ на брата его, межгию Андрей, и послѣ воеводу своего Невру повओова землю Сужальскую. По плаченіи же Невру князь великомъ Александръ церкви въздвигнувъ, рады исполнитвъ, люди распужены събра въ домы свои. О таковыя бо рече Исааи пророкъ: "Клязь блязъ въ странахъ — тихъ, уплывъ, кроткъ, съмерень — по образу Божию есть",59 не вѣнялъ богатства не презъ кровь праведччию, сиротъ и вдовицы въ правду суды, милости людьми, блязъ доочадцемъ своимъ и вълицемъ отъ страны приходящихъ миролюб. На таковой Богъ признаеетъ: Богъ бо не ангеломъ любить, но человекомъ си ища умилостивлю и показаетъ на мире милость свою. Распостране же Богъ землю его богатствомъ и славою, и удолжъ Богъ имъ.

[B-2] Никогда же прииоша къ нему послы отъ папы, изъ великою Римъ, речи: "Папа нашъ тако глаголетъ: "Слызахомъ тя князя честныя и дина, и землю твою велика. Сего ради послажомъ къ тоби отъ десятидесетъ кординала двьъ чтетра — Ага́да да и Гьмьонта, да послужишь учения ихъ о законѣ Божи"." Князь же Александръ, здудувъ съ мудрецъ своими, встшись къ нему и рече: "Отъ Ада́ма да до потова, отъ потова до разделения змъкъ, до начала Авраама, отъ Авраама до прозви Писаравъ сквозь Чернное море, отъ переса сыновъ Писаравъ, до умертия Давида царя, отъ начала царства Соломона да Австста и да Христаева роселства, отъ роселства Христаева до спасти и воскресения господни, отъ всересения же его и до воззвенія на небеса, отъ вѣстившага на небеса до царства Константиновъ, отъ начала царства Константиновъ до первого собора, отъ первого собора до седьма — си всѣ добръ свѣддане, а отъ всеръ учения не принимаемъ... Они же всѣрещіяся всѣвоселы. И учжоншиа дни живота его. Енъ бо верьолюбецъ и мънихолюбецъ и ки‐цаля люби, митрополита же и

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епископы чтили и акы самоо творца.

[C-3] Ек же тогда нужда велика отъ потаны: гонятуть христианъ, велеся съ собою воинствовати. Князь же великий Александръ пошел къ цареви, давы отмолил люди отъ броды.

[B-3] А сына своего Дмитрия поселя на Западныхъ страны, и вся полки свои посла съ князомъ, и въ нихъ своихъ домочадцы, рекши къ князю: «Служите сынови моему, акы самому лиы, вельмъ живополъ своимъ». Пойдя Ярославъ съ сыновыми своимъ въ силъ вельми, и плавица городъ Юревъ, и възвратился въсяя съ многимъ полоцомъ и съ великою честью.

[A-3] Князь великий Александръ вздь отъ иноплеменникъ и доеди Новагорода Нижняго и ту пребывъ мало здравъ, дошедя Городца, разболься.

О, горь тобъ, бдны человече! Какъ можешь написати кончину господина своего! Какъ не испадета ти зныши вкупъ съ слезами! Какъ же не урвется сердце горкыя тугы! Отца бо человькъ можетъ, а добра господина не могу оставити: акы бы льз, и въ гробъ бы льзъ съ нымъ!

Пострада жъ Богови цркъ, остави же земное царство и бысть многои: бо бо жестове его паце миръ вельцыя образа. Спободи же его Богъ больши чинъ препози то скламъ. И тако Господи дадъ его предать, съ миромъ месяца ноябрь въ 14 день, на память святого апостола Филиппа.

Митрополицъ же Кирилъ глаголаше: «Какъ моя голова, разумьшьше, акъ же зовㄊе съ земли Суздальскъ!» Первы и диаконы, черкицы, нищцы и богатици, и вси люди глаголаш: «Уже погребаисъ!»

Святъ же тять его понесонъ въ городъ Владимиръ. Митрополицъ же Кирилъ и боше, и вси народъ, мани и вельцы, съ льпъ и въ Боголюбовъ съ съльци и съ кандлы. Народи же съятутаут, хотыще прикоснуться честнъ и одръ святого тьма его. Бысть же воль и крещение, и тую же множество бысть, тако, я и земля потрястися. Положено же бысть тять его въ Рожестве святыхъ Богородицы, въ архимандриты вельцы, месяца ноября въ 24, на память святого отца Амфилохия.

Бысть же тогда чьдо дивно и памятъ достонъ. Егда убо положено бысть святаго тьма его въ раку, тогда Савостиу и Кирилъ митрополицъ хоты посяти ему рукъ, да
Appendix B
English Translation of Hypothetical Reconstruction of the Military Tale about Alexander Nevskii

That same year [6771] Grand Prince Alexander, son of Iaroslav, passed away. Let us speak [about] his courage and life as I have heard it from my fathers, as well as that which I was an eyewitness to while growing up.

Prince Alexander was born from a father Grand Prince Iaroslav, and from a mother Theodosia. He was taller than other men, and his voice as a trumpet reached the people. His bravery was like that of the Roman emperor Vespasian, who conquered the entire Judean land. Once, during the siege of the city of Jotapata, the burghers of the city sallied forth and defeated his regiment, and he remained alone. But he still chased their force to the city gates and thereafter he jeered at his own retinue and reproached them, saying: “You left me alone.”

So also was the Prince Alexander: he used to defeat [others] but was never defeated. Once, because of this, a certain powerful man, whose name was Andreas, of those who call themselves “the servants of God,” came from the Western Country for he wanted to see the marvel in the fullness of his life. He saw Prince Alexander, returned to his people, and told them: “I traveled through many countries and saw many people, but I have never met such a king among kings, nor such a prince among princes.”

Hearing about the courage of Prince Alexander, the king of the Roman part of the Northern Country, thought to himself, “I will go and conquer Alexander’s land.” And he gathered a great force and filled numerous ships with his regiments and he moved forth with great strength being inspired by a martial spirit. He came to the river Neva and, being carried away with madness, sent his envoys, filled with pride, to Prince Alexander in Novgorod, saying, “If you are able to resist me then [do so for] I am here already conquering your land.”
Upon hearing these words, Alexander’s heart burned and he led his small retinue against them, not waiting for the large force. It is a pity to hear that his honorable father, Iaroslav the Great, did not know of such an attack on his son, dear Alexander. Alexander did not have time to send news to his father for already the enemy was approaching. Even many Novgorodians had not joined him because the prince had already set out against them. He decided to go against them in the sixth hour of the day. There was a great battle with the Romans, and he killed a numerous amount of them. On the face of this king, he left a mark with his sharp spear. Here six brave men appeared.

The first was Gabriel by name, son of Alexis. He attacked a ship and, seeing there the royal prince sword in hand, he rode onto the gangway. Everyone escaped from the king back to the ship, but thereafter they turned and threw him and his horse from the gangway into the water. He got out of the water uninjured, charged them again and fought with the general, himself, among his troop.

The second, a Novgorodian Sbyslav by name, son of Iakun, on several occasions charged their troop and fought only with a battle-ax, not having fear in his heart. And several fell from his hand. The people marveled at his power and his bravery.

The third, Iakov, a man from a Polotsk clan, was the prince’s huntsman. He charged the troop with a sword, and the prince praised him.

The fourth one was a Novgorodian, Misha by name, who fought on foot in the stream against the ships. He destroyed three of the ships with his detachment.

The fifth, also from his young [men], Savva by name, entered into a large, royal golden-crowned tent and cut the tent pole. When Alexander’s regiments saw the tent fall, they were joyful.

The sixth, also from his servitors, Ratmir by name fought on foot and was encircled by many. He fell from many wounds several times and subsequently died. All this I have heard from my Grand Prince lord Alexander and from others who at that time took part in that battle.

In the second year after the return of Prince Alexander with his victory, they came once more from the Western Country and built a town on Alexander’s patrimony. Prince Alexander went quickly against it and razed the town to its foundations. Some of the enemy were executed and others were taken prisoner.

In the third year following Alexander’s victory, when he defeated the king, in the winter, Alexander went with a great force against the German land, “Let them not boast saying, ‘Part of the Slavic nation is beneath us.’” They had already taken Pskov town and installed their agents. Grand prince
Alexander Iaroslavich captured them and freed Pskov town from bondage. And he waged war against and set fire to their land. He took numerous prisoners and cut others to pieces. In the towns, they got together and said, “Let us go and subdue Alexander and take him with [our] hands.”

When they approached, the guards saw them. Prince Alexander drew up his regiments and went against [their] warriors. And when they came to Lake Chud there were many soldiers on both sides. His father Iaroslav sent him help [in the form of] his younger brother Andrei along with many brave men.

Prince Alexander returned from the victory with great glory. There were a multitude of prisoners accompanying his regiment. They who called themselves knights were walking shoeless next to the horses. When the prince approached Pskov town, the entire population met him in front of the town glorifying lord Prince Alexander.

And they began to hear his name throughout all countries, up to the sea of Egypt, to Mount Ararat, and on both sides of the Varangian Sea, and to Great Rome.

At that time, the Lithuanian nation was increasing and they began to sack Alexander’s territory. Going out against them, he began to defeat them. During one campaign, he defeated seven armies, killed many of their princes, and captured others. Mocking them, his servants tied them to the tails of their horses. And, they began to be aware of his name.

At that time, there was a powerful khan of the Eastern Country. That khan, hearing of the glory and courage of Alexander, sent him envoys, saying, “Alexander, do you not know that God has submitted many nations to me? You are the only one who is not willing to submit to my power. But if you want to save your land, then come soon to me and you will see the honor of my khanate.”

Having given due thought, Prince Alexander went to the khan. Upon seeing him, the Khan Batu marveled and said to his dignitaries: “I was told the truth—that there is no other like this prince.” Bestowing on him honor, he let him go.

The great Prince Alexander went from the foreign people to Nizhnii Novgorod and stayed there a few days in good health, but when he reached Gorodets, he became ill. Woe to you, poor man. How are you able to describe the passing of your lord? How do your eyes not fall out with tears? How does your heart not break from bitter straits? A man may leave his father, but cannot leave a good lord, and if need be, he lies with him in the grave.