

The Battle of Kulikovo

“H. Fren managed to read the following on the coins of the Great Prince Vassily Dmitrievich and his father (Dmitriy Donskoi): ‘Sultan Tokhtamysh-Khan, may his years last long’” – A. D. Chertkov, “Ancient Russian Coins: A Description” (Moscow, 1834; page 6).

1.

THE STRIFE OF THE LATE XIV CENTURY IN THE HORDE. DMITRIY DONSKOI AS TOKHTAMYSH-KHAN.

The Battle of Kulikovo and the “Conquest of Moscow”. A general overview

The present chapter is largely based on many important observations made by T. N. Fomenko, as well as a number of her concepts. Apart from that, the section on the history of the Donskoi Monastery and its connexions with the Battle of Kulikovo.

After the formation of the Great Empire in the first half of the XIV century as a result of Batu-Khan’s conquests (the same historical personality is also known to us as Ivan Kalita = Caliph), the state became divided into the following three parts:

- the Volga Kingdom, or the Golden Horde,
- White Russia, or the White Horde, and
- the Severskaya Zemlya = Ukraine.

Let us say the following about the word “*severskaya*” – it is related to the words Siberia and *sever* (“North”) – however, the word in question isn’t nec-

essarily referring to the northern direction (also bear in mind that many mediaeval maps were inverted in relation to their modern counterparts, with the North in the bottom and the South on top (see CHRON1 for more examples).

Towards the end of the XIV century there was a great strife in the Golden Horde, or the Volga Kingdom. About 25 Khans have ruled the country over the 20 years that passed between 1359 and 1380. The strife ends with the famous Battle of Kulikovo, where Dmitriy Donskoi (also known as Tokhtamysh-Khan, according to our reconstruction) had crushed the troops of Mamai, a military leader and the de facto governor of the Horde. We shall withhold from getting into the intricate details of the power struggle in the Horde that had preceded the Battle of Kulikovo.

In CHRON5 we shall converse at length about the book of the mediaeval historian Mauro Orbini entitled “On the Glory of the Slavs ...” published in 1601 and translated into Russian in 1722. Orbini writes the following in his description of the Kulikovo battle: “In the year 6886 since Genesis (according to the Russian chronology), Dmitriy, the Great Prince of Russia, had defeated Mamai, King of the Tartars. Three years later he put the troops of this king to complete rout once again – Herberstein is telling us that the bodies of the slain were covering the earth for 13 miles around the battlefield” ([1318], page 90; also [617]). It is however known that the troops of Mamai were crushed

by Tokhtamysh three years after the Battle of Kulikovo. This concurs well with our reconstruction, which identifies Dmitriy Donskoi and Tokhtamysh-Khan as the same historical personality.

Let us turn to the famous Battle of Kulikovo. First and foremost, it has to be noted that, according to the Russian chronicles, the reason for the battle had been a borderland dispute between Prince Dmitriy Donskoi of Novgorod the Great, and the Ryazan and Lithuanian princes Oleg and Holgerd. The latter conspired to drive Dmitriy away from the lands of Moscow, Kolomna, Vladimir and Murom, convinced that Moscow was Lithuanian by rights, whereas Kolomna, Vladimir and Murom belonged to the Ryazan principality. They invited Czar Mamai in order to implement this plan (see the “Tale of the Battle with Mamai” ([635], pages 136-137).

Thus, the chronicles describe the Battle of Kulikovo as a territory dispute for Moscow, Kolomna, Murom and Vladimir. The princes (or the khans) were planning to drive Dmitriy Donskoi away “either to Novgorod the Great, Byeloozero or the Dvina” ([635], pages 134-135). As you may remember, Novgorod the Great identifies as Yaroslavl, according to our hypothesis, while the regions of Byeloozero and the Dvina are the northern neighbours of Yaroslavl. Our reconstruction also suggests that the capital of Dmitriy had been in Kostroma, which is a neighbour of Yaroslavl, qv below. Everything becomes perfectly clear – the two princes plotted to drive Dmitriy back to his old capital.

As we know, the battle was won by Dmitriy Donskoi, who had conquered the Ryazan Principality and the eastern parts of Lithuania as a result, establishing himself in Moscow permanently.

2. THE BATTLE OF KULIKOVO

2.1 The actual location of the Kulikovo field

Let us consider the historical reports of the famous battle that took place on the Kulikovo field in 1380. Nowadays it is presumed that the Kulikovo field is located between the rivers Nepryadva and Don (presently the Kurkinskiy region of the Tulskaia province, qv in [797], page 667) – some 300 kilome-

tres to the south of Moscow, that is. The most famous battle in Russian history is supposed to have taken place here, when the troops of Dmitriy Donskoi met the Tartar and Mongol army led by Mamai.

However, it is common knowledge that no traces of the famous battle were found anywhere on this “Kulikovo” field near Tula. One may well wonder about its real location – after all, there weren’t any weapons or burial mounds found anywhere in the vicinity of Tula – this, in turn, also makes one wonder about whether modern historians and archaeologists have indeed chosen the correct site for excavations.

On 6 July 1995 the “Rossiyskaya Gazeta” published an article by Nikolai Kireyev entitled “Where Are You, Kulikovo Field?” wherein he relates the long and futile history of excavations in the Tula region conducted by the archaeologists in search for the relics of the famous battle misplaced to these parts by the Romanovian historians. Let us cite the conclusions the author of the article arrives to:

“The members of the Tula Archaeological Expedition together with the colleagues from the State Museum of History have been conducting excavations on the Kulikovo field since 1982. More than 350 archaeological relics have been discovered and studied. The general view of the field as it has been over the last two thousand years was reconstructed [? – Auth] ... the flora and the fauna of the region, as well as the soil ... the 70-kilometre patch was studied by the specialists ... who had used geomagnetic photography for this purpose, as well as numerous other methods. A great many trenches were dug; the area was literally combed by soldiers and schoolchildren. There were even a number of attempts to use ESP for the search of the artefacts. However, years and years of research didn’t leave us with a single object that would allow us the claim that the battle in question was fought in the northern part of the field, between river Smolka and the village of Khvorostyanka ... However, this time the archaeologists were equipped with state-of-the-art metal detectors manufactured by the Fisher Research Laboratory in the USA. These instruments can find metal on the depth of up to 30 centimetres and detect its type. The results didn’t take long – the very first week brought an arrowhead in the region of Zelyonaya Doubrava, and a few more



Fig. 6.1. Chain mail allegedly found upon the Kulikovo Field in the Tulskaia Oblast. Historians are trying to convince us that this chain mail is some six hundred years old, which is highly doubtful – six hundred years underground would have transformed it into a solid mass of rusty metal with its original shape well beyond reconstruction. Taken from [974].

arrowheads were found near the village of Khvorostyanka, one of them from an armour-piercing arrow, and several belt strands, which used to be a standard ammunition item. The excavations carry on”.

Thus, we learn of a few arrowheads and several belt strands found on the site – too few artefacts for a huge battlefield.

Many of the books written about the Battle of Kulikovo contain photographs of the chain mail that was allegedly found on the Kulikovo field in the Tula region, *qv* in fig. 6.1. However, its excellent condition is highly suspicious for a 600-year old artefact. We are being told that this chain mail, made of very fine metallic rings, had spent 600 years buried in the ground only to be found, unfolded and taken to the museum, with pieces of wet ground gently removed. However, over so many years it would have transformed into a lump of rock and metal that wouldn't permit so much as to separate individual rings from

the caked mass. We are of the opinion that the chain mail in question is of a relatively recent origin and presented as “ancient” in order to provide a single military artefact allegedly found on the “Kulikovo field” near Tula.

2.2. Kulishki in Moscow and the Church of All Saints built in honour of the warriors slain in the Battle of Kulikovo on the Slavyanskaya Square in Moscow

Let us begin with the observation that some chronicles tell us directly that the Kulikovo Field used to be in Moscow.

For instance, the famous “Arkhangelogorodskiy Letopisets” describes the reception of the famous icon (Our Lady of Vladimir) in Moscow, during the invasion of Timur in 1402, and tells us that the icon was received in Moscow, “upon the Kulichkovo field”. The full text of the quotation is as follows:

“And the icon was brought forth, and Metropolitan Cyprian gathered a great mass of people upon the Kulichkovo field, where today we see a church of stone, the Church of Candlemas, in August, on the 26th day” ([36], page 81).

The church in question is on the Sretenka street; nearby we find the part of Moscow that is still known under its ancient name of Kulishki.

The opinion that Kulishki had once been a synonym of the Kulikovo Field was popular in Moscow as recently as in the XIX century! For instance, the almanac entitled “Old Moscow” and published by the Commission for the Study of City History gathered by the Imperial Archaeological Society of Moscow ([813]) mentions an “erroneous notion that the name of Kulishki in Moscow is derived from the name of the Kulikovo field” ([813], page 69). The very same page contains the passage that tells us about Kulishki having existed before Moscow.

The Church of All Saints exists in the region of Kulichki to this day: “according to ancient tradition, it was built by Dmitriy Donskoi in commemoration of the soldiers that had died on the Kulikovo field” ([841], page 143). It is referred to in the following manner: “the stone church of All Saints at Kulishki, as mentioned in a written source dating to 1488. The building has survived until the present day” (*ibid*). Its



Fig. 6.2. The Church of All Saints at Kulishki. According to our reconstruction, the troops of Dmitriy Donskoi had stood here before the Battle of Kulikovo. Photograph taken in 1995.



Fig. 6.3. St. Mamai. Mediaeval Georgian embossing. Photograph from the article of Prof. V. Beridze in the “Nauka i Zhizn” magazine, Issue 12, 1966.

name has remained the same – “Church of All Saints at Kulishki” (see fig. 6.2); the church stands right in front of the lower exit from the Kitai-Gorod underground station in Moscow, on the square known as Slavyanskaya today, nearby the Moskva River and Sol'yanka Street, which had once been known as “Kulizhki”, or “Kulishki” ([284], page 53).

It is presumed that “the word Kulizhki had stood for “boglands” ([284], page 62). Apart from that, the word “kulizhka” translates as “deforested land cleared for tillage”, according to V. Dahl’s dictionary ([223]). We also learn that “most of the Kulishki area in Moscow had been covered by orchards” ([841], page 143).

The Kulishki region had also included the Pokrovskiy Gate Square; the gate in question had once been known as Kulishskiy.

According to our conception, the famous Battle of Kulikovo has taken place in this part of Moscow; it had resulted in the defeat of Mamai’s troops that came from Western Russia, Ryazan and Poland by Dmitriy Donskoi, also known as Tokhtamysh-Khan. The presence of Polish soldiers in the “Mongolian” troops of Mamai might strike the readers as surprising; however, this is stated in the chronicles quite explicitly, qv in CCRC, Volume 25, Moscow & Leningrad, 1949, page 201; see also [363], Volume 5, page 462.

The consensual version claims that Mamai’s troops

were put to rout twice in the same year of 1380, the first time by Dmitriy Donskoi and the second by Tokhtamysh-Khan. Our hypothesis identifies the two of them as one and the same historical personality, which makes the second “defeat” a mere ghost duplicate. The “second defeat” of Mamai took place “at Kalki”. As we have already mentioned, “kalki” or “kuliki” are yet another version of the same name Kulishki, or the Kulikovo Field. The etymology of the word can be traced to the words *kulachki*, *kulak* and *kulachniy boy* – fists, fist and fistfight, respectively; it used to mean “place for fist-fighting tournaments”. A propos, Mamai-Khan is called Tetyak in the “Tale of the Kulikovo Battle”: “The godless King Tetyak, who was called devil in the flesh, started to tremble in terror” ([666], page 300). Tetyak might be a variation of the name Tokhta. Later compilers of the “Tale” must have already confused Dmitriy Donskoi = Tokhta-Mysh = Tokhta Meshech, or Tokhta of Moscow, for his foe, and used the name Tokhta for referring to Mamai.

Another little known fact that we must point out is that the name Mamai is a Christian name and can be found in the ecclesiastical calendar to this day. It appears to be a slight corruption of the word *mama* (mother) or *mamin* (mother’s); ancient Russians must have had two names of a similar origin – Batiy (Batu) derived from *batka* (father) and Mamiy or

Mamai – “mother’s son”. In fig. 6.3 we see a Georgian embossment of the alleged XI century depicting the Christian Saint Mamai.

The above translates as follows: Dmitriy Donskoi fights against a military leader with a Christian name!

Finally, we must also mention that the name “Kulichkovo”, qv above, is persistently read as “Kuchkovo Field” by Romanovian historians (see [284], for instance – or page 143 of [841], where we read that “the Kuchkovo field had been located near the modern Sretenskiye Gate”).

What could possibly be the matter here? Why cannot historians give us a verbatim quotation from the chronicle that calls the field in question Kulichkovo, and very blatantly so? The possible explanation might be their reluctance to provide the readers with so much as an opportunity to trace the obvious connexion between the Kulichkovo Field and the famous Kulikovo Field, the battleground of Dmitriy Donskoi. This reluctance may be of a subconscious nature; however, we consider it to be done in absolute awareness of the purpose and the consequences – in the XVII-XVIII century, at least, when the false interpretation of Russian history came to existence. This also resulted in new geographical localizations of several important events in Russian history.

2.3. The information about the Battle of Kulikovo: origins and present condition

The primary source of data related to the history of the Kulikovo battle in one way or another is the *Zadonshchina*. According to the Scaligerites, “one has every reason to believe that the *Zadonshchina* was created in the 1480’s, soon after the Battle of Kulikovo, when Dmitriy Donskoi had still been alive” ([635], page 544).

A later source is the “Tale of the Battle with Mamai”, which “is most likely to have been written in the first quarter of the XV century” ([635], page 552). It is allegedly based on the *Zadonshchina*; we also learn that “the Tale of the Battle with Mamai contains passages from the *Zadonshchina*; they were inserted into the original text of this oeuvre, as well as later editions” ([635], pages 549-550).

The implication is that the *Zadonshchina* is the primary source. Let us study its actual text.

There are six copies of the *Zadonshchina* that have survived until our day; the earliest is in fact a condensed rendition of the first half of the book. As for the rest, “the text of the other copies was mangled by the scribes rather severely ... Each individual copy of the *Zadonshchina* contains a tremendous number of defects and distortions, rendering the publication based on a single copy unable to give the readers an impression of the work’s full text, hence the old tradition of reconstructing the text of the *Zadonshchina* after a comparative analysis of all existing copies” ([635], page 545).

All the copies date from the XVI-XVII century, the sole exception being the earliest one, which contains a mere half of the *Zadonshchina* and dates from the end of the XV century ([635], page 545).

The fundamental edition of the *Zadonshchina* ([635]) instantly attracts our attention by its propensity to use italics for a great many geographical locations, indicating that all such fragments were reconstructed by later historians from a comparison of different copies, as it is openly stated on page 545 of [635]. It also turns out that original geographical names were frequently replaced by something entirely different. We often see the names Don and Nepryadva in italics, and this leads us to the following questions: what were the original names as given in the sources, and why were they replaced by Don and Nepryadva?

2.4. Mamai’s headquarters on the Krasniy Kholm (Red Hill) near the Kulikovo Field vs. the Krasniy Kholm, Krasnokholmskiy Bridge and Krasnokholmskaya Embankment in Moscow

It would be expedient for the readers to procure a map of Moscow and use it for further reference. According to the Russian sources, Mamai’s headquarters during the Battle of Kulikovo had been located on a certain Red Hill (Krasniy Kholm), qv in [183], Volume 1, pages 98 and 101. Several days before the battle, the Russian “guards of Melik were driven towards Nepryadva and the Red Hill, which gave a unique view of the entire surrounding area, by the Tartar troops” ([183], Volume 2, page 98). During the battle, “Mamai was giving orders to his soldiers from his headquarters on the Krasniy Kholm, accompanied by three princes” ([183], Volume 1, page 101). “Czar Mamai

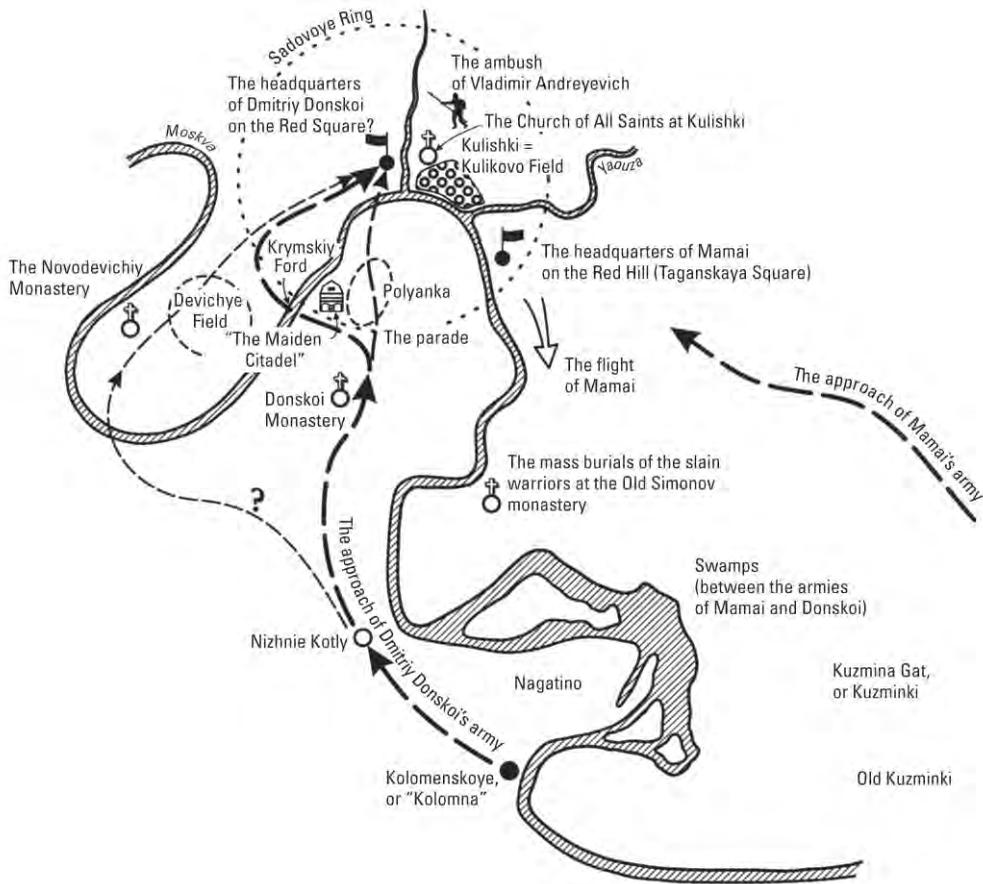


Fig. 6.4. The route taken by Dmitry Donskoi's army to the battlefield. This area is now part of central Moscow, still known as Kulishki. Our reconstruction.

and three evil princes came to the top of a tall hill and stood there in order to observe the bloodshed" ([362], Comment 76 to Volume 1, page 29). Seeing as how there was a Red Hill near the Kulikovo Field, it would make sense to look for a similar name in the vicinity of Kulishki in Moscow. Can we find one?

As a matter of fact, we can. There is a very tall hill right next to the Kulishki; it had once been known as Krasniy Kholm. Its top is the famous Taganskaya square, near the Yaouzskiye Gate. Could Mamai's headquarters have been located here? Moreover, the famous Krasnokholmskaya Embankment of the Moskva River and the Krasnokholmskiy Bridge can still be found in this very area. The actual Krasniy Kholm isn't indicated on any maps formally; however, there

is a Krasnaya Gorka (another Russian word for "hill") near the Kremlin, where the old building of the Moscow State University is located ([284], page 52).

The Kulishki field in Moscow is surrounded by several hills, one of them housing the Red Square and the Kremlin; this hill may well have been known as "Krasniy Kholm". It is possible that the headquarters of Mamai was located on this very hill during the Battle of Kulikovo.

2.5. Kuzmina Gat in the Battle of Kulikovo and the neighbourhood of Kuzminki in Moscow

Mamai's troops stopped at Kuzmina Gat before the actual battle, qv in [635], page 163.

Any Muscovite will instantly recognize the place as the neighbourhood of Kuzminki in Moscow. Across the Moskva river we one finds the large district of Nagatino, whose toponymy hails from the Russian words *na gati*, or “on the hurdle”, a marshy place with log-roads that would be impossible to navigate otherwise.

Our reconstruction is as follows. Mamai was approaching Kulishki, or the centre of the modern Moscow, from the east, standing on the left bank of the Moskva river – the one where the battle was supposed to be fought.

Dmitriy was approaching the battlefield from the south, being on the right bank of the Moskva. He had to force a crossing before the battle.

The two armies met at the very centre of modern Moscow – at Kulishki, near Slavyanskaya Square and Sretenka Street, qv in the map (figs. 6.4 and 6.5).

Another detail to complement the picture is the fact that the troops of Dmitriy spent the night before the battle “on Berezouy” – the name can be translated as “bank” (whereas Mamai’s troops camped at Kuzmina Gat, qv in [635], pages 160-161).

It must be said that historians can’t find any traces of the Kuzmina Gat anywhere in the Don region; every single version they suggest contradicts the chronicle data. Historians end up accusing scribes of ignorance and inability to interpret history, writing things like: “one runs into several serious contradictions ... Apparently, the identification of the Kuzmina Gat suggested by the researchers is incorrect, or, alternatively, the author of the ‘Tale’ had a very vague notion of both armies’ itineraries” ([631], page 215). The text we quote comes from a voluminous research paper ([631]) under the general editorship of Academician B. A. Rybakov.

2.6. The identification of Kolomna as the starting point of Dmitriy’s march towards the Kulikovo Field

According to the chronicle, Dmitriy’s army set forth from Kolomna, where he went to meet his allies. Nowadays the location in question is identified as the town of Kolomna, some 100 kilometres away from Moscow. This is possible; however, we mustn’t reject another possibility, namely, that the Kolomna in question identifies as the well-known town of Kolomenskoye, which is a part of Moscow nowadays. Let us remind the reader that there had once been a gigantic wooden palace of the Czars on this site.

This hypothesis is also confirmed by the following evidence gathered from the “Tale of the Battle with Mamai”. When Dmitriy had found out about the battle to come, he had ordered his allies to head towards Moscow, which is where they promptly arrived” ([635], pages 140-141). The same chronicle reports a perfectly identical order given by Dmitriy, naming Kolomna as the meeting point this time ([635], pages 142-143). Apparently, what we see two duplicate re-

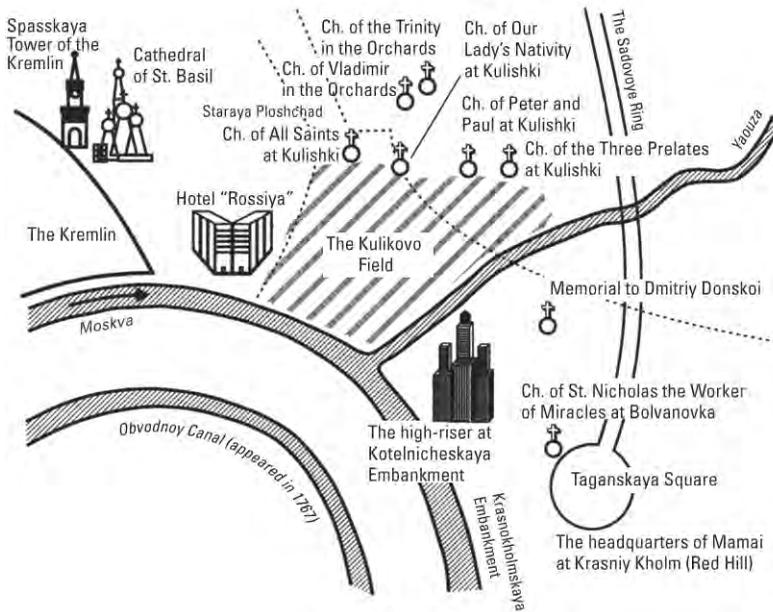


Fig. 6.5. The site of the Kulikovo Battle, or Kulishki in Moscow. We still see a great many monuments related to the Battle of Kulikovo, Dmitriy Donskoi and the name Kulishki.