The figure of Batu looms large in medieval Russian history and Old Russian literature. Batu commanded the Mongol armies which conquered Russia in the thirteenth century, and he was the founder of the Golden Horde, which ruled Russia for nearly two and a half centuries. His descendants sat on the throne of the Golden Horde for as long as it existed. Since Chingis Khan had died before the Mongols subordinated Russia, it was his grandson Batu who played the role of Scourge of God in Russian eyes. Batu served as the model in Old Russian literature of how the worst enemy of Orthodox Christian Rus' behaved. Batu's exploits became the standard of comparison for judging Tatar evil-doers in Russian thought. Thus the image of Batu is a legitimate barometer of Russian attitudes toward the Tatars during the period of the "Tatar Yoke."

The image of Batu was relatively stable in Old Russian literature through the fifteenth century, but there is a further blackening of his reputation in two texts from the period of the "liberation from the Tatar Yoke," the epistle to the Ugra River of Bishop Vassian and, from the middle of the sixteenth century, the Kazanskaia istoria (Kazan' History) written about the Muscovite annexation of Kazan'. In passages of these two works the monstrosity of Batu's misdeeds is given even greater accent.

However, the treatment of Batu in two other monuments of Old Russian literature stands distinctly apart. The depiction of Batu in the vita of Mercurius of Smolensk and in the "Tale of the Death of Batu" is atypical not only in its historical inaccuracy but more so in its intellectual stance, its attitude toward Batu. The historical significance of texts with unreliable historical information obviously lies in what the texts demonstrate about the mentality and attitudes of their authors and presumably the audience for which they were intended. In the best of all possible worlds it should be feasible to correlate innovations in Russian attitudes toward the Tatars with changes in Russo-Tatar relations. Unfortunately, the vagaries of medieval Russian manuscript transmission make dating texts difficult, and thus integrating their evidence about medieval Russian intellectual history with the broader historical context more problematic. However, a relatively precise case can be made which suggests the historical circumstances in which the "fictionalizing" (as I shall call it) portrayal of Batu could emerge.

The dominant image of Batu was first formulated in the accounts of the Mongol campaigns of conquest in the thirteenth century, that against the
northeast in 1237-38 and Kiev and the south in 1240. In these narratives Batu epitomizes power and its merciless exercise. Other thirteenth-century literary monuments also express this attitude toward Batu. In the reconstructed primary redaction of the vita of Aleksandr Nevskii, from the 1280s, Batu is described as an awesome figure, "a powerful tsar' from the eastern land, to whom God had subordinated many peoples, from the east to the west." Nevskii is offered the choice of making obeisance to Batu or facing the destruction of his land; he opts for the former. The "honor" which Nevskii receives from Batu is as much a function of Batu's grandeur as it is of Nevskii's much vaunted reputation. Although Batu is not lauded in the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle, nevertheless Daniil of Galicia-Volhynia does bow before Batu, on bended knee call himself the "slave" (kholop) of the khan, promise to pay tribute, and drink kumiss. There is no question of Batu's power in this annal, even if the chronicler is critical of Daniil for submitting to the infidel Horde. Thirteenth-century Russian sources, therefore, created an image of Batu which accurately reflected his power and influence over Russian affairs, and which resonated with the reality of Mongol superiority over Russia at the time.

In literary works about the battle of Kulikovo Field in 1380 Batu emerges as the standard against which subsequent Tatar leaders are compared. In the Zadonshchina the Genoese at Kaffa taunt the already defeated Mamai by telling him that he is not the equal of Batu, who had 400,000 warriors and "plundered from the east to the west." In the Expanded Redaction of the "Chronicle Tale" (letopisnaia povesti) of the battle of Kulikovo Mamai is credited with the intention of imitating Batu, i.e., spilling Russian blood, looting Russian churches, and destroying Rus'. According to the "Basic Redaction" of the Skazanie o Mamaevom poboishche (Narration of the Battle with Mamai), Mamai questioned "old Tatars" about how Batu plundered the Russian Land, took Kiev, killed Russian princes, and looted churches and monasteries. Mamai compared himself to Batu as he gathered many hordes and rode toward Rus'. In the literary works of the Kulikovo cycle Batu became the historical model of Tatar destruction of Russia, the classic case, the recognized symbol of Tatar depredations against Rus'. It is hardly surprising that in an age in which his-

2. Ibid., II, cols. 784-87.
6. PSRL, IV, 75.
7. Povesti o Kulikovskoi bitvi, pp. 44, 47.