Kingdom of Rus'

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Christian Raffensperger

Introduction

The Problem with Names

For better or for worse, names define concepts, ideas, people, and entities of all sorts. Whether the issue is the title of a medieval ruler or Pluto's designation as a planet, names once given become enshrined in the imagination and become difficult to change, or for those changes to become accepted. There have been many books and journal articles written over the course of hundreds of years that have designated the ruler of Rus' as a "prince" or "duke" and thus the territory he rules as a "principality" or "duchy." On rare occasions, there have been scholars who have differed from this consensus, such as Andrzej Poppe, who used "king" for the ruler of Rus', with the rationale that,

> Since, in early Medieval Europe, the Slavic title *kniaz'* was equivalent to the Latin title *rex*, and since the Rus'ian rulers are constantly referred to in medieval sources as *reges*, I break here with the historiographic tradition of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and return to the medieval usage and meaning of this title.

But Poppe did not discuss the issue further. Similarly, working on thirteenth-century Galicia (in western Rus'/modern western Ukraine), Mykola Andrusiak made the argument that one of the prominent rulers of Galicia in that time should be called a king.[1] While these rare scholars have bucked the tradition of translating kniaz' as "prince," there

has, until now, not been a concerted argument about the use of translation and its relationship to the shaping of the identity of Rus'. Thus, this book will attempt to make what seems like a complex argument: that the ruler of Rus' should be called a king, not a prince; and thus Rus' should be called a kingdom, not a principality.

The process of overturning literally centuries of usage is a difficult one, but this book demonstrates that Rus' of the eleventh and twelfth centuries was not only part of medieval Europe but, in fact, a kingdom. Furthermore, it shows the consequences that making such a seemingly small change will have on our modern interpretation of what medieval Europe looks like. However, making such an enormous change is difficult, and requires stepping through discussion of titles, language, and the study of the Middle Ages. However, at the end, the result will be a newly expanded medieval Europe, without an ahistorical line dividing it into East and West.

Attempting to solve this problem begins with the issue of naming itself—names have power. This concept, that words, names, or labels define ideas, has been explored in academia in recent decades under the label, "the linguistic turn." The linguistic turn has influenced nearly all of academia and caused a reevaluation of the way academics articulate ideas. Even more, that reevaluation has caused a rethinking of the basic constructs that academics are working with as their building blocks: words. It is very important for our study of history to understand that concepts are often created and apply to a specific place and time; and then to apply them accurately and appropriately and not over-broadly.

Applying this concept starts with "Rus'," the name of the medieval polity under discussion. Rus' occupied part of the territory of three modern states—Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. This situation has caused historical confusion

when dealing with the name of this medieval territory. For some, such as nationalist historians of Ukraine and Russia, claiming the name of Rus' as their exclusive heritage creates historical legitimacy for their preferred government to rule the territory of the Dnieper River valley, which was the heartland of medieval Rus'. (This is certainly apparent in the current appropriation of the history of Rus' by Vladimir Putin in his campaign to claim territory from Ukraine.) For others, even medieval scholars, it is simply an issue of lack of knowledge of the appropriate medieval terminology. The name "Russia" is a known quantity and thus ends up as a label on maps covering both the medieval and modern periods. For still others, there is the issue of convenience (even when they know better). Rus' is a label that requires an explanation. It even has an odd diacritic at the end that some, but not all, scholars use in English to represent an Old East Slavic character (a "soft sign") that does not exist in English. Even more confusingly, the adjectival form of Rus' is "Rusian," which most people, and most spell-check software, want to convert to "Russian." Thus proper historical terminology can be difficult to use when talking with a broad audience. Moreover, it does not serve as a label well beyond the medieval period. The political situation of Rus' becomes increasingly complex over the thirteenth century and begins to splinter into multiple polities over the course of that period and into the fourteenth century as well. Thus, for any class or book, textbook for example, that crosses over that period, Rus' is a difficult label to use. For my own purposes, I have used "Medieval Russia" as a label for the class that I teach about Rus', because it extends into the period of the rise of Muscovy, and it fits into a broader sequence of classes in the Russian and Central Eurasian Studies Program that includes "Imperial Russia" and "Soviet Russia." And yet, despite all those reasons for not using "Rus'," it is the temporally correct

name for the medieval polity based at Kiev on the River Dnieper. Using it also allows us to sidestep a nationalist quagmire. But it does, admittedly, require an explanation.

Medieval names, as well as modern ones, are problematic creations that carry with them a variety of cultural baggage, and have been used (and misused) to delineate various groups and leaders. Medieval titles carry the same problem, especially when translated into another language with cultural baggage knowingly or unknowingly attached, as Florin Curta has also discussed in regard to the medieval Balkans.[2] To understand how Rus' is a kingdom, we need to start with an understanding of the titles of rulers—titulature. There are a variety of medieval European titles that have been translated into modern English as "king": *rex* (Latin), *konungr* (Old Norse), *cyning* (Anglo-Saxon), *rí* (Irish), and even occasionally *kniaz'* (Old East Slavic). These titles all had the root meaning of leader, and gained additional meanings or levels of meaning over time. The basic purpose of this book is to, through an investigation of titulature, demonstrate that Rus' was a kingdom. In so doing, I hope to point out some of the problems inherent in the modern, often unthinking use of titles, both in regard to Rus' and elsewhere in Europe. For example, Anglo-Saxon rulers, both before and after Charlemagne's imperial coronation in 800 (d. 814), claimed the imperial title themselves. They styled themselves *Basileus Anglorum* (emperor of the Angles) in a self-conscious appropriation of Byzantine titulature.[3] Both for Charlemagne on the continent and these rulers in England, they chose to use a Roman imperial title (*imperator* or *basileus*—both of which are translated typically as "emperor") to connect themselves to their shared Roman imperial past, as a way of appropriating some of that grandeur and legitimacy. However, if we then look at modern scholarship on these rulers who claimed the imperial title, it is only Charlemagne who is

given the title of "emperor" in English, sometimes "emperor of the Romans," more often "emperor of the Franks." The Anglo-Saxon rulers who used the imperial title are never referred to in English as "emperor of the Angles"; they are almost always called kings of whatever region they rule. Anders Winroth puts together a sentence that encapsulates the problems of titulature, including this example, quite beautifully: "In the eyes of Scandinavian chieftains aspiring to power, the religion of Emperor Charlemagne, the emperor in Constantinople, and the kings in the British Isles must have been a fine religion indeed."[4] Similarly, but in a slightly later period, the Ottonians and Salians ruled a territory that has been referred to anachronistically as the Holy Roman Empire, territorially as the German Empire, or simply as the *Reich* (Leyser, p. 216). The title that they used for themselves was much more often *rex* or *imperator Romanorum* (emperor of the Romans), rarely *Teutonicorum* (of the Teutons/Germans), but they are not referred to as Roman kings, or emperors, in secondary sources.[5]

The same situation is true for labels other than titles, even amongst specialists. The nearly universal formulation for the Eastern Roman Empire centred at Constantinople, especially after the fifth century, is Byzantium or the Byzantine Empire. This creates in the mind of the reader a certain picture, entirely different from that created by the names "Rome" or "Roman," which was the point of the creation of the concept. However, for the medieval people about whom we are writing, utilizing the concept of Byzantium is problematic, as none of them would have understood the term; all would have conceptualized of it as Rome, at least in some particulars, even if they did not like it. Our modern use of names can create a barrier to our perception of history and requires us, and our audience, to perform mental gymnastics each time we use the concept to keep in mind what "Byzantium" was, to whom, and when.

Combining these mental gymnastics with the shifting labels between medieval and modern titulature leads to the potential for confusion in our modern understanding of medieval history. To attempt to clarify this situation, this book offers instead the idea that there were no dukes or princes of Rus' in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; instead, there were kings. At its root, this argument is not all that complex—the chapters here will progress through a series of interconnected ideas to develop the argument. The first chapter lays out the background for the situation, including the traditional view of medieval Europe, and why Rus' should even be considered as part of medieval Europe. From there, chapter 2 looks back at how the translation of kniaz' as "prince" was established. Much like the conception of medieval Europe seen in chapter 1, it is an evolutionary process that starts with good ideas and then becomes stuck in the past, not evolving with new ideas or understandings. Chapter 3 moves into discussion of the titles for medieval rulers in general, including the problems with how those titles are applied. Chapter 4 addresses the issue of what was a kniaz', this title for a medieval Rusian ruler—what did they do, what were their functions? This flows into the next two chapters, which deal respectively with what titles medieval sources used for these Rusian rulers, and what titles Rusian sources used for their own and other rulers. All this combines to establish a baseline understanding of the rulers, their functions, and how they are referred to throughout medieval Europe. Finally, in the conclusion, we come back to one of the basic questions that historians ask, and which should be asked of historians: "So what?" The impact and consequences of making a kingdom of Rus' are seen in a couple of small examples that demonstrate the impact of even small changes on our perception and understanding of the past. All of this combines to articulate the larger idea that we need to not just

include eastern Europe in medieval Europe, but to utilize proper terminology for medieval European polities. In the case of Rus', this creates the largest European kingdom of the eleventh and twelfth century—the kingdom of Rus'.

Notes

[1] Andrzej Poppe, "The Sainthood of Vladimir the Great: Veneration in the Making," in *Christian Russia in the Making* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Mykola Andrusiak and A. Mykytiak, "Kings of Kiev and Galicia: On the Occassion of the 700th Anniversary of the Coronation of Danilo Romanovich," *Slavonic and East European Review* 33 (1955): 342–49.

[2] Florin Curta, "Qagan, Khan, or King? Power in Early Medieval Bulgaria (Seventh to Ninth Centuries)," *Viator* 37 (2006): 1–31.

[3] Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000*, 2nd ed. (Malden: Blackwell, 2003), p. 477; Walter de Gray Birch lists all of the titles claimed by Anglo-Saxon and Norman kings, including "*Anglorum basileus*" in his, "Index of the Styles and Titles of English Sovereigns," in *Report of the First Annual Meeting of the Index Society* (London, 1879), pp. 52–53.

[4] *The Conversion of Scandinavia: Vikings, Merchants, and Missionaries in the Remaking of Northern Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 140.

[5] Otto III and Henry IV were both crowned as emperors, as was Henry III, and all were crowned as *imperator Romanorum*. There is a good deal of literature on this subject, but Gerd Althoff and I. S. Robinson cover the topic well for our purposes. Gerd Althoff, *Otto III*, trans. Phyllis G. Jestice (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), pp. 83–97; I. S. Robinson, *Henry IV of Germany, 1056–1106* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 230–31.

Chapter 1

The Place of Rus' in Europe

Europe is a place. It is a continent, though with only impre-
cise divisions from Asia, and one that schoolchildren are
required to learn about as part of elementary geography
lessons. Europe is also an idea. This can be seen most
clearly in the expansion, and contraction, of the European
Union (EU). Is Ukraine "European" enough for membership
in the EU, as was discussed in the early 2010s? Or is Britain
becoming *too* European and thus needing to leave the EU,
as the Brexit (British Exit) campaign suggested in the
mid-2010s? For our hypothetical schoolchild learning their
geography, both Ukraine and Britain are included within
the boundary of Europe. However, in many minds, the ques-
tion remains: are they part of the idea of Europe?

Traditional Medieval Europe

This same quandary pertains to medieval Europe. In fact,
because it is in the past, it perhaps pertains even more,
as we can only impose our ideas upon it and it cannot argue
back. We can make the same distinction for medieval Europe
regarding geography versus idea, but even there, we run
into problems: the geography of Europe (or at least the
conceptualization of territory in the medieval mind) is still
being defined in the medieval period and so we are forced

further into the realm of ideas. The idea of medieval Europe, the one that is on the minds of non-specialists as well as most specialists, is one of castles, knights, princesses, dragons (yes, mostly non-specialists, but not all …). It is best represented by England, France, and the papacy, and does not really include very much else. The Vikings were outsiders attacking England, France, and the papacy. The crusades were England, France, and the papacy acting upon the Islamic world. The main events were the rise of Charlemagne (France is great); the Normans (from France) taking over England; King John signing the Magna Carta; the wars of Philip Augustus of France and King John for control over continental (French) territory; the wars of the various Edwards of England with Scotland (and France); the Hundred Years' War between England and France; and maybe the Great Schism, where there were two (at least) popes (who were usually backed by England and France). This may not be the exact curriculum offered, but it would enable most non-specialists to get by with a passing grade in medieval European history.

The picture of medieval Europe that I have painted here is a slightly exaggerated one from the normative picture presented by many medieval historians and their textbooks. The maps in those books often end at the River Rhine, as if there was nothing to the east to be found. (I suppose it is fortunate that the mapmakers at least chose to forsake adding dragons in that territory and just left it blank.) Though not a textbook, the magisterial *Framing the Early Middle Ages* by Chris Wickham needs mention here. It creates a new idea of the Middle Ages, outside traditional, national boundaries of western Europe. It includes traditional western Europe, but also Iberia, north Africa, Egypt, the eastern Mediterranean, and Byzantium. However, it specifically does not include the Slavic world. Despite this work, the traditional idea of medieval Europe is a common

one and was created slowly over time, so slowly that it seems as if it has always been that way. Historians have looked at the creation of the idea of Eastern Europe, the idea of Byzantium, and the growth of similar ideas. What seems to be the case is that those ideas are largely a function of the early modern past. This is not the place to get into the specifics of those ideas, but suffice it to say that the idea of medieval Europe about which I am speaking did not spring forth fully grown from the collective minds of modern historians. It has gestated slowly through many minds and many histories over many years. It has also had a great deal of momentum added to it over that time due to various political developments that seemed to create differences in the European experience. Just a sampling would include the fairly early ideas of nation-state created in England and France, as opposed to the multiplicity of German and Italian polities; the growth of multinational continental empires of Germany, Austria–Hungary, and Russia, as opposed to the expansion to the Western Hemisphere of England, France, and Spain; or even the relatively recent Cold War division in Europe between democratic and communist states. They all helped build a mindset that the idea of Europe pertained to England and France, and perhaps some near neighbours, but not to everyone on the continent of Europe. It was a small step then to read that idea of Europe back into the medieval past, especially as the medieval past was seen as a tool to create modern legitimacy.

This mindset is inherently limiting, especially when historians are discussing the past. Yes, England, France, and the papacy were medieval Europe, but so were others; and those others were also actors, creating effects that resonated near and far, sometimes even affecting England and France. Imagining a medieval Europe without those people, places, religions, ideas, and so on created an inac-

curate sense of self-knowledge, as historians felt that they understood the actions and actors who populated their medieval Europe.

One of the most famous examples of this is the debate about feudalism. Through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, feudalism was an emblematic idea of the Middle Ages. However, in the last decades of the twentieth century, historians such as Elizabeth Brown and Susan Reynolds pointed out that the creation of the idea of feudalism hinged on late medieval French documents, and that it did not map to the majority of western Europe in the way that had been described for so long (not to mention the rest of Europe, of course). (See Richard Abel's overview of the debate and its history.) This revision to the understanding of feudalism caused a wave of reimagining both social and economic structures in regard to medieval western Europe. In the early twenty-first century, a further challenge emerged suggesting that feudalism may still be a valid term of discourse with a particular set of definitions. Some of those scholars, such as Yulia Mikhailova, used evidence not from western Europe, but from eastern Europe. The addition of new territory and new evidence changed the discussion, and added to the evidentiary base. Returning to Chris Wickham's broad new formulation of Europe, he suggested that medievalists often focus tightly in on one area, to the exclusion of the larger picture. Admittedly, including all of medieval Europe is a tall order, but the inclusion of a wider range of territory leads to a wider range of evidence, and thus we can construct a more accurate picture of medieval life.

Where this all leaves us is with the current description of medieval Europe being limited and inadequate. Instead of encompassing all of the continent of Europe, or the territory of Christian Europe, it traditionally only addresses a small subset of that territory. A better understanding of

the history, processes, and above all the breadth of medi-
eval Europe can be gained by looking at medieval Europe
in its entirety.

Rus' as Part of Medieval Europe

As the title of this section intimates, the medieval Europe
discussed here will be larger than the one addressed above,
which could be referred to as the traditional perspective.
(To their credit and to be fair, professional medieval his-
torians acknowledge this, but they do continue to focus
on what they know best, a common enough problem.) As
this book has the kingdom of Rus' as its particular focus,
that is the piece of Europe that I will add in here; how-
ever, it should be understood that similar arguments could
be, and have been, made for Hungary, Poland, and so on.
What I would like to provide here is a basic primer for the
interconnectivity of the kingdom of Rus' with the rest of
medieval Europe.[6] Ideally, through an examination of the
marital and religious ties, a picture will be created that
shows that Rus' was part and parcel of medieval Europe.
This will lay the foundation for the larger discussion of the
book regarding the title of the ruler of Rus', the title of the
polity, and the challenges and relevance of such questions
for medieval Europe as a whole.

Dynastic Marriage

One of the easiest ways to demonstrate that Rus' was
part of medieval Europe is to look at actual, physical con-
nections between Rus' and the rest of medieval Europe.
Royal families, as is well known from more modern his-
tory, are deeply interconnected and medieval Europe was
the beginning of this interconnectivity. I will outline three
examples of dynastic, royal marriages between Rusian
princesses and royals from the rest of Europe. These

three marriages are just examples of a much larger set of marriages connecting Rus' with the rest of Europe (see Raffensperger, *Ties of Kinship*). It should be remembered that marriages at this elite level were not just the union of one man and one woman; they were negotiated by emissaries, often high ecclesiastics. The ceremonies were grand spectacles. The bride brought with her not only a dowry, but an entourage of people who spoke her language and worked as assistants, advocates, and guards, as well as carrying out many other duties. In effect, each of these marriages is a diplomatic embassy right in the very bedchamber of a foreign ruler.

Agafia, also called Agatha, was the daughter of Iaroslav the Wise (d. 1054), one of the greatest rulers of Rus' in the middle of the eleventh century. Agafia was, most likely, his eldest daughter and potentially the first to get married. Part of what led to Iaroslav's fame and greatness was his propensity for giving sanctuary to royals, especially children, exiled from their homelands for one reason or another. While they were living at his court, Iaroslav also often arranged marriages for these exiles with his family members. This was obviously a gamble, but if the exiled royal prince were to return to his homeland and rule, one of Iaroslav's daughters would be his queen.

The case of Agafia began in this way, as did so many others. In the early eleventh century, Cnut the Great (d. 1035) took power in England and exiled the previous ruler's sons, Edmund and Edward. After a circuitous journey, those exiled princes ended up in Rus' at the court of Iaroslav. Iaroslav gave them a home, and married his daughter Agafia to Edward, who is known in modern scholarship as Edward the Exile. Edward and Agafia left Rus' in company with Agafia's sister Anastasia and her husband Andrew (d. 1060). Andrew, a fellow exile in Rus', was returning to Hungary to take his place on the throne. In

1054, Edward the Exile and Agafia were summoned to England by King Edward the Confessor (d. 1066), who was hoping that Edward would be his heir and continue the line of kings of Wessex that was interrupted by Cnut and restored by Edward the Confessor. Unfortunately, upon Edward the Exile's arrival in England in 1057 he died under mysterious circumstances. Newly widowed, Agafia travelled to Scotland, where she made a home for her family and arranged the marriage of her daughter Margaret with the Scottish king Malcolm III (d. 1093).

Though the marriage may not have served Iaroslav's initial purpose of having his daughter become queen of England, it almost worked. And for our purposes it provides evidence of the deeper interconnectivity of Rus' with one of the stalwarts of traditional medieval Europe—England. Agafia did marry the English prince, they did have children, and those children continued the tradition of dynastic marriage, such that Iaroslav's granddaughter became queen of Scotland (later, his great-granddaughter, daughter of Margaret and Malcolm III, did become queen of England). In fact, Agafia's son, Iaroslav's grandson, Edgar Aethling (Prince Edgar) fought against William the Conqueror (d. 1087) after 1066, and allied with his half-Rusian cousin King Philip of France (d. 1108) to do so.

Much like the example of Agafia above, Cnut the Great is responsible (indirectly) for this marriage as well. In 1030, the forces of King Cnut defeated King (later St.) Olaf of Norway (d. 1030), and multiple partisans of Olaf fled Norway, including Olaf's younger brother Harald. Harald travelled east to Rus', where he took refuge with Iaroslav, and with Iaroslav's wife Ingigerd, who was a Swedish princess and whose sister was married to King St. Olaf. Harald did not stay long in Rus', but he seems to have developed a relationship with one of Iaroslav's daughters during that time—later identified as Elisabeth.

Harald next travelled to Byzantium, where he served in the emperor's Varangian Guard and distinguished himself in multiple campaigns, sending money home to Iaroslav's court to keep it safe. Eventually, he too returned to Rus', which a Scandinavian skaldic poem recorded in the *Heimskringla* tells us was motivated by his love for a Rusian woman. Back in Rus', he married Elisabeth and promptly left for Scandinavia to attempt to claim the Norwegian throne, or a share of it, from the current ruler, his nephew Magnus (d. 1047). Elisabeth went with him, and was a key part of his attempt, as when they arrived in Scandinavia he used her familial connections (claiming her kinship ties as his own) to build relationships with other rulers, including King Sven Estridsson of Denmark (d. ca. 1076). These ties, as well as his own with Magnus, cemented his success and he claimed part of the rule of Norway. Elisabeth often travelled with her husband, even after having children, and she went along on the fateful voyage in 1066 that saw Harald, by then called Hardrada, killed during his assault on the north of England.

Elisabeth's marriage was another in the line of gambles that Iaroslav the Wise took with the marital fortunes of his children, but it certainly worked out. His daughter married one of the most well-known Scandinavian kings in Europe, one who fought in Rus', Byzantium, Scandinavia, and England, and came close to conquering the latter. She would not be the last Rusian woman to marry into a Scandinavian royal family.

The final union I would like to discuss actually concerns two dynastic marriages. This discussion will serve as an introduction to the next section on religious interconnectivity as well. Evpraksia was the daughter of Vsevolod Iaroslavich, ruler of Rus' from 1078 to 1093. One of the goals of Iaroslav, Vsevolod's father, had been to create a marital tie with the powerful German Empire. However,

despite his success in making marriages between his family and Byzantium, England, France, Hungary, Poland, and Norway, he had not been able to build a connection with the German Empire. It was not until the rule of Vsevolod that the conditions were right to make such a marital alliance happen. In the early 1080s, Henry IV, the German emperor (d. 1106), was in a struggle with the papacy known as the Investiture Controversy (which will be discussed more in the next section). As part of that conflict, an alliance with Rus' was deemed desirable and Henry IV and Vsevolod arranged the marriage of Evpraksia with one of Henry's subjects, also named Henry: Henry III the Long, margrave of the Saxon Nordmark (d. 1087). Henry IV himself was still married at this time, and thus he was unavailable for a marriage alliance. In addition, Henry III the Long was much closer in age to the teenage Evpraksia, making the pairing seem a kinder choice. Evpraksia's arrival in the German Empire was noted for its opulence and for the enormous baggage train she brought with her from Rus', indicative of the large entourage as well.

Soon after the marriage of Evpraksia and Henry III the Long, Henry died. Childless and thus with no tie or claim to her husband's territory, Evpraksia did not stay single long; Emperor Henry IV's wife died soon after, and so he and Evpraksia were married. In 1089, Evpraksia was crowned Empress of the German Empire. This marriage was not to be a success, but at the moment of the marriage it was clear that Evpraksia was the highest placed and most visible Rusian woman in the medieval world. (This is especially true as the queens of Rus' were often from other places—Iaroslav's wife was from Sweden, Vsevolod's from Byzantium.) The marriage was also part of Henry IV's attempt to build alliances with Rus', related to the Investiture Controversy; the demise of the marriage is related to that controversy as well. Only a few years into the mar-

riage, Evpraksia left her husband and began to speak out against him, in favour of Pope Urban II (d. 1099), Henry IV's opponent. Evpraksia spoke at multiple gatherings of bishops and finally at the papal council of Piacenza in 1095. At each gathering she spoke about her ill treatment at Henry IV's hands, and about the goodness and holiness of the pope (all stories written for her by papal propagandists).

The denouement of Evpraksia's life found her in a nunnery in Rus' where she eventually died in 1109 and was honoured with a burial in the most holy place in Rus'. Though her marriage did not work out the way that Henry IV and Vsevolod may have originally intended, it certainly elevated the position of Rus' on the medieval European stage, and cemented her as an actor on behalf of her family and Rus' in general.

These marriages taken together demonstrate the interconnectivity of the Rusian royal family (referred to by scholars either as the Volodimerovichi or Riurikids) with the other royal families of medieval Europe.[7] Women were the warp and weft of those connections, weaving medieval Europe's royal families into one large, interconnected tapestry of kinship relations.

Medieval Christianities

One of the defining features of medieval Europe is the power of the Christian Church. However, the image of an all-powerful medieval church is not an entirely accurate one, certainly not for the eleventh century, nor is the image of a Catholic Church split from the Orthodox Church. Certainly before 1204, there may have been disagreements between the patriarch of Constantinople and the pope in Rome, but the respective churches and their worshipers were largely in communion with one another. For our purposes, what this means is that Rus' was not

aligned with Byzantium and the Orthodox Church and thus was opposed to Rome and the Roman/Catholic Church. They were all part of one larger Christian world worshipping the same god by the same, general, rites and rituals. In discussing this, I will lay out three examples of religious interactions involving Rus' and the papacy, beginning with the Christianization of Rus', continuing with one particular church commemoration, and concluding with the Investiture Controversy mentioned above.

In 988 or 989, Volodimer, the ruler of Rus' (d. 1015), converted to Christianity in order to marry Anna *Porphyrogenita*, daughter of one Byzantine emperor and sister to two others. Volodimer was baptized in Cherson, a city on the Black Sea, by the bishop. When he returned to Kiev with Anna, he ordered the people of that city baptized as well. This is the story, in brief, of the conversion of Rus'. The ecclesiastical establishment of Rus' grew slowly from this point, and ecclesiastical officials from Byzantium eventually became dominant, headed by metropolitans (an office similar to archbishop) located in Kiev. However, from the very beginning of Rusian Christianity, there were strong ties with the papacy as well.

While Volodimer was besieging the city of Cherson, prior to his baptism, he received an emissary from the papacy bringing him the relics of St. Clement. These were particularly potent relics of a famous, sainted, early pope. This early bishop of Rome had been exiled to the Black Sea and died there, his relics only recovered centuries later by Constantine, later known as St. Cyril (often called the Apostle to the Slavs, as he was responsible for creating an alphabet for the Slavic language). The return of those relics to the Black Sea region, as a gift to this newly Christianized ruler, were meant to show the generosity of the papacy as well as to perhaps woo Volodimer into a closer connection with the papacy. The relics remained in Rus', and became

a prominent part of the Rusian Church. More embassies flowed back and forth with Rome, but nothing more seems to have come of this relationship in the late tenth century.

Those tenth-century embassies were not the end of contact between the papacy and Rus', however. Another important interaction occurred at the end of the eleventh century when a group of Italian merchants "liberated" the relics of St. Nicholas from Myra and took them to Bari in the south of the Italian peninsula. This was celebrated in Rome with the pope, Urban II, writing a new celebration for the Feast of the Translation of the Relics of St. Nicholas, which was to be celebrated on May 9. This celebration, however, was an affront to the Byzantines. It was from them that the relics were liberated as the merchants worried, purportedly, that they were unsafe in such close proximity to Islamic territory. Thus, Pope Urban II's celebratory feast, its text, and resulting yearly celebration were never incorporated into the Byzantine Church calendar.

This was not the case, however, in Rus'. This feast does occur in the Rusian Church calendar and was celebrated yearly on May 9, the same as throughout the Roman Christian world. It was most likely introduced into Rus' by a visit of a papal embassy in 1091, continuing the relationship between the two sides. This visit, too, was said to be one in which the papal emissaries brought relics for Rus'. Though the metropolitan of Rus' reported to the patriarch in Constantinople rather than the pope in Rome, the Rusian Church still enjoyed good relations with the papacy, including adopting holidays which, at least in some ways, were antithetical to the Byzantine, "Orthodox" Church. Such connections are representative of the place of Rus' within a larger, shared, Christian European world.

The last example of religious interconnectivity between Rus' and the rest of medieval Europe comes from an incident already mentioned in regard to the marriage of

Henry IV and Evpraksia Vsevolodovna: the Investiture Controversy. This controversy centred on the question of who had the power to grant authority to ecclesiastical officials—the pope or secular rulers. Pope Gregory VII (d. 1085) began the controversy (and the growth of papal power) by excommunicating Henry IV for his continued appointment of ecclesiastical officials. This controversy, begun in the 1070s, continued through multiple successors until the early twelfth century. The piece that we are interested in concerns Henry IV's attempt to bring Rus' into the struggle, on his side, and the failure of that attempt.

In his quest to overthrow Pope Gregory VII, Henry IV named his own pope, Clement III (d. 1100) (traditionally referred to as an anti-pope). Clement III had the support of much of the German Empire, as well as elsewhere, and wrote to the metropolitan of Rus', in Kiev, for the support of the Rusian Church as well (a move taken in parallel with Henry IV's dynastic marriage negotiations with Vsevolod, the ruler of Rus'). Though the metropolitan rebuffed Clement III's advances, the attempt was important because it demonstrated that Rus' was another area—among many others such as France, Poland, and England—that the anti-pope attempted to sway to his side; he did not view it as untouchable or as part of another sphere of influence entirely.

This, however, is not the end of the story. When Evpraksia left her husband, Henry IV, she did so to side with the papacy against him. She travelled around Europe, speaking to gatherings of bishops, telling them about her husband's sins and about the greatness of the pope (by this time Urban II). Evpraksia's shift in loyalties helped to sway the Investiture Controversy into the hands of the papacy. This is especially true if it is accepted that she was also responsible for bringing over one of Henry IV's sons, by his first marriage, to the papal side as well.

If we were to imagine the traditional medieval Europe that does not include Rus', this story would never happen. But it did. And not only that, Evpraksia, who was empress of the German Empire and spoke on behalf of the Roman pope, was not shunned at home for allying herself with the Roman Christian world and its spiritual leader; instead she ended her life in Rus' as a nun, after her husband Henry IV's death, and at her death she was given a burial in the holiest place possible in Rus', as well as multiple mentions in the Rusian sources, which are largely reserved for men. All of this indicates that there was no religious animus regarding her time in the west, with either Henry IV or Pope Urban II; rather, she was honoured with a prestigious burial for her work representing Rus' and her family.

These few examples demonstrate the deep religious inter-connectivity throughout Europe, specifically between Rus' and the papacy. These ties are largely omitted from traditional histories and thus not only is Rus' left out, but so are large pieces of what might be going on in each of these situations. The Investiture Controversy is the most potent example, as it is told throughout textbooks on medieval history and yet Rus' never gets a mention, despite the enormous role played by Evpraksia. Incorporating Rus', and elsewhere, is an essential component to understanding what medieval Europe was, what happened there, and why.

Rus' was part of medieval Europe, even beyond the religious and marital connections illustrated here. The dominant trade routes in which they participated were with Byzantium to the south and Scandinavia to the north; Poland, Hungary, and the German Empire to the west; and of particular importance moving into the twelfth century was trade on the Baltic Sea. Rus' also shared craftsmen and artisans with multiple Italian cities, most popularly mosaicists originating from the Byzantine Empire. They

even used architects from the German Empire to build some of the churches in their new regions near the River Volga. The connections delineated here are just the tip of the iceberg in regard to building a picture of a larger medieval Europe, but ideally it will suffice as an introduction to this new vision of a new Europe.

A Better Look at Europe

Having built a larger medieval Europe, at least in outline form, we can see that it is a much different world from what is traditionally perceived as "medieval Europe." Hopefully, it is equally clear why building this larger medieval Europe is so important. Taking the Investiture Controversy as an example, we can see how including Rus', specifically Rusian politics and people, in the analysis of this controversy helps to tell a larger, more interesting and more accurate story. It is not just a story of the German Empire and the papacy, but one that includes nearly all of Europe—west and east.

The remainder of this book takes this a step further, looking at one specific example: titles. Titles are important indicators of status. In particular, when multiple individuals are listed together, title is a way to rank them and delineate who is the most powerful among friends, enemies, allies, and neighbours. The title of the ruler of Rus' is no different and therefore no less important. Thus, with Rus' firmly established in Europe, we can proceed to an examination of the titles of the Russian leaders in their proper context—that of medieval Europe as a whole.

Notes

[6] For a more in-depth examination of these issues, please see Christian Raffensperger, *Reimagining Europe: Kievan Rus' in the Medieval World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

[7] I prefer the term "Volodimerovichi" for the family ruling Rus' in this period because I believe it is more accurate than the more commonly used "Riurikids." Riurik was the mythical progenitor of the ruling family and not claimed as an honoured descendant until well after this period. Volodimer Sviatoslavich, on the other hand, was the Christianizer of Rus' in the late tenth century and the ruler back to which all subsequent kniazia attempted to trace their descent. Thus, I refer to those kniazia as the children of Volodimer, the Volodimerovichi. For more on this change in naming see Donald Ostrowski, "Systems of Succession in Rus' and Steppe Societies," *Ruthenica* 11 (2012): 29–58.