THE KINGDOM OF RUS'

Christian Raffensperger

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For Iris and Malcolm

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Timeline of Events

This timeline contains events of relevance to Rus', as well as some major events that impact the larger medieval European world, in an attempt to more fully situate Rus' in medieval Europe. It continues from the first Viking explorations in eastern Europe through to the middle of the twelfth century when the picture of Rus' changes. It is selective and meant to illustrate a sampling of events related to the subject of this volume.

793	The first major Viking attack on England, at Lindisfarne.
Late 700s, early 800s	Viking attacks continue throughout western Europe, but raiding also takes place in the Baltic Sea and includes exploration down the Western Dvina and other rivers in eastern Europe.
859–862	The "Povest' vremennykh let" (PVL)—the main source for early Rus'—describes the arrival of the first Rusians in eastern Europe. They come initially as raiders, but then as invited leaders, to the local population. It is more than likely that this is a later justification for rule, given the chronicle's backing by the ruling family, descendants (theoretically) of Riurik.

882	Oleg, also known as Helgi, expands from his base in the north at Novgorod to conquer Kiev, creating the basis for early Rus'.
907	Oleg leads an attack on Constantinople. The attack as described in the PVL is an enormous success and terrifies the Byzantines. The PVL also records the resulting trading treaty, which grants the Rusians numerous trading privileges in Constantinople, testament perhaps to the success of the raid.
941	Igor, known as the son of Riurik, but more likely chronologically a relation of Oleg's, stages another attack on Constantinople. This one does not go as well, and the majority of the Rusian fleet is defeated by the Byzantines using Greek fire. The PVL records a treaty following this attack as well, and this treaty is much more favourable to the Byzantines in its terms.
969–972	Sviatoslav, son of Igor, seeing the opportunities offered by controlling the Balkan trade, "gold, silks, wine, and various fruits from Greece, silver and horses from Hungary and Bohemia, and from Rus' furs wax, honey and slaves" (PVL, s.a. 969), attempts to move his capital to the lower Danube. The Byzantine emperor John Tzimiskes contests this expansion and eventually defeats Sviatoslav in battle, forcing his return to Kiev. On the way to Kiev, Sviatoslav is killed by the nomadic Pechenegs on the River Dnieper, potentially at the behest of the Byzantine emperor.
988/89	Volodimer, son of Sviatoslav, makes an arrangement with Emperor Basil II of Byzantium. Volodimer provides mercenaries for Basil II to put down the simultaneous revolts of Bardas Phokas and Bardas Skleros in exchange for a marriage between Volodimer and Basil II's sister Anna *Porphyrogenita*. Pursuant to Anna and Volodimer's marriage, Volodimer converts to Christianity.

1015	Volodimer, later known as the Christianizer of Rus', dies and there is a struggle over the rule of Rus' within his kinsmen. During the struggle, two of Volodimer's sons, Boris and Gleb, are killed at the bidding of their rival Sviatopolk. Boris and Gleb's non-resistance to their killing leads to their eventual sainthood within Rus'. They become the first two native saints of Rus' and of the ruling dynasty (known alternately as the Riurikids or Volodimerovichi).
1018	Iaroslav the Wise, son of King Volodimer, wins the initial phase of the succession battle and takes up the rule of Kiev. His rule, until 1054, is often known as the Golden Age of Rus'—a time of increasing interconnectivity with the rest of Europe, growing Christianization, the first law code, and many other developments.
1042	Elisabeth, daughter of King Iaroslav, is married to Harald Hardrada. Harald had fled Norway after the defeat of King St. Olaf and found refuge in Rus' with Iaroslav the Wise and his wife Ingigerd. Harald lived and worked in Rus' for some time before going to Constantinople and serving the Byzantine emperor as a member of his Varangian Guard. Eventually leaving Constantinople, he returned to Rus', marrying Elisabeth, and then returning to Norway where, using Elisabeth's familial connections, he claimed the throne of Norway.
1043	Volodimer, eldest son of King Iaroslav, leads a massive attack on the city of Constantinople, the first in one hundred years. Potentially this is in retaliation for an unresolved attack on Rusian merchants.
1043	Iziaslav, son of King Iaroslav, is married to Gertrude, the daughter of Mieszko II and sister of Casimir of Poland. Gertrude would become an important part of Iziaslav's political career, helping to provide aid to him during his two expulsions from rule of Kiev.

1049	Pope Leo IX is chosen as pope. He is the most well known of the German popes and is often considered to be the initiator of what came to be known as the Gregorian Reforms (named after Pope Gregory VII), and thus the Investiture Controversy. He is also associated with the schism of 1054, due to his appointment of Cardinal Humbert to lead a mission to Constantinople, a mission that resulted in the mutual excommunication of pope and patriarch.
1051	Anna, daughter of King Iaroslav (often known as Anna of Kiev), is married to Henry Capet, the ruler of France. Anna becomes an important part of Henry's government, gives birth (and name) to his heir Philip I, and becomes Philip's regent after Henry's death.
1053	Vsevolod, son of King Iaroslav, is married to a daughter of the Monomakhos clan of Byzantium. Potentially this is in relation to a settlement following the Rusian raid on Constantinople in 1043. Vsevolod and the Monomakhina's son, Volodimer will appropriate his mother's familial identity in his name—Volodimer Monomakh.
1054	Iaroslav the Wise dies and power in Kiev passes to his son, Iziaslav. King Iziaslav will rule peacefully for fourteen years.
1066	Harald Hardrada of Norway invades Anglo-Saxon England. He is defeated at Stamford Bridge by King Harold Godwinsson. Harold himself will be beaten later that year at Hastings by Duke William the Bastard of Normandy. Harold's daughter Gyða will end up in Rus' where she marries Volodimer Monomakh, son of Vsevolod Iaroslavich.
1068	King Iziaslav is expelled by the Kievans after a perceived failure to defend them from the nomadic Polovtsy. He seeks refuge in Poland with his kinsman, Bolesław II, who helps him return to rule in Kiev in 1069.

1071	King Iziaslav is expelled a second time. This time he is usurped by his two younger brothers Sviatoslav and Vsevolod. Iziaslav and his family's travels in exile include a stay in Poland and in the German Empire, where Emperor Henry IV sends an emissary to Sviatoslav on his behalf. It also includes the marriage of Iziaslav and Gertrude's son, Iaropolk, to a German noblewoman, Cunigunda. Cunigunda and Iaropolk ultimately were successful in gaining the assistance of Pope Gregory VII, who incentivized Bolesław II to help return Iziaslav to the Kievan throne a second time in 1077.
1071	The Seljuk Turks defeated the Byzantines at the Battle of Manzikert. This battle set the stage for consistent internal conflict within Byzantium and the loss of much of Anatolia for the Byzantines. It is also the catalyst for the eventual rise to power of Alexius Komnenos.
1078	King Iziaslav dies and is succeeded by his only living brother Vsevolod. Vsevolod will rule Rus' until 1093 and will cement his family's power during that time.
1081	Alexius Komnenos seizes the imperial throne in Byzantium. Alexius will rule until 1118. He is not only the progenitor of the Komneni dynasty of emperors, but he is also the father of Anna Komnena (who wrote the *Alexiad* about her father), as well as the emperor who makes the request for assistance that begins the First Crusade.
1089	Evpraksia, daughter of King Vsevolod, is married to Emperor Henry IV of the German Empire. She had initially been married to Margrave Henry III the Long of Stade circa 1082, but he died soon after. This marriage is an attempt to cement an alliance between the German Empire and Rus' to bolster Henry IV's anti-pope Clement III. Clement III actively corresponds with Metropolitan Ioann II of Kiev.

1093	King Vsevolod dies and is succeeded by his nephew, Sviatopolk Iziaslavich. This instance of a peaceful, uncontested succession from uncle to nephew follows the collateral succession model in Rus'.
1095	Evpraksia, daughter of King Vsevolod, speaks at the Papal Synod at Piacenza on behalf of Pope Urban II and against her husband Emperor Henry IV. This helps Urban II win the Investiture Controversy over Henry IV, though an ultimate settlement will not come until early in the next century at the Concordat of Worms. This Papal Synod is also the site for Alexius Komnenos's request for assistance from the papacy that will ultimately transform into the Popular and First Crusades.
1113	King Sviatopolk Iziaslavich dies. He is succeeded by his cousin, Volodimer Monomakh. This is one of the last uncontested and peaceful transitions between families within the larger Volodimerovichi clan within Rus' in the twelfth century. Volodimer himself will institute, or attempt to institute, lineal succession and pass power on to his son, Mstislav/Harald.
1125	King Volodimer Monomakh dies and is succeeded by his son, Mstislav/Harald. Mstislav was also called Harald in Scandinavian sources, attributable to his mother's familial influence. She was Gyða, daughter of Harold Godwinsson, the last Anglo-Saxon king of England.
1138	The death of Bolesław III in Poland leads to the division of Poland amongst his sons. The sons, led by half-brothers Władysław II and Bolesław IV, engage in internal conflict, which helps to hasten splits within Poland, leading to smaller, more autonomous territories after this point.

1146	The death of King Vsevolod Olgovich can be considered to be the end of unity within Rus'. After this time, it is more likely than not that the various rulers of the Rusian cities and regions go in separate directions rather than considering themselves subordinate to the king in Kiev. Primarily this will include Novgorod's increasing ties with the Baltic world of the Hanseatic League; and in the southwest, Galicia-Volhynia's ties are strengthened with Hungary and Poland.
1147	The Second Crusade is called by Pope Eugenius III. The Second Crusade involves not only rulers such as Louis VII of France going to fight in the Crusader states, or attempting to, but also new crusading venues such as Iberia and the Baltic. The creation of crusading in the Baltic against the pagan Wends leads to an expansion of the crusading ideal in which not just Muslims, but now pagans also become the target of crusade.
1150s and 1160s	Iurii Dolgorukii, son of Volodimer Monomakh, and his son, Andrei Bogoliubskii, develop the northeast of Rus' and eventually create their own power centre there, in Vladimir-Suzdal. The creation of a northeastern centre increases the multipolarity of Rus' but also moves one key pole even further from the rest of medieval Europe. The family centred in the northeast will have very few ties with medieval Europe as a whole, but will go on to become the centre of the eventual Muscovite ruling family of Russia.
1159	Henry the Lion, duke of Saxony, rebuilds the port city of Lübeck on the Baltic as a trading city for all of northern Europe. The refoundation of Lübeck will lead to dramatically increased trade in the Baltic, and eventually the creation of the Hanseatic League.

Late 1190s–early 1200s	Rise of crusading in the Baltic. Led by representatives from the Archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen, largely German crusaders begin conquering territory around the Western Dvina River basin, building churches, and spreading Christianity. This expansion of German, Christian power will eventually bring them into conflict with the neighbouring kingdoms of Rus'.
1204	The soldiers of the Fourth Crusade, acting in conjunction with the Venetians, under Doge Enrico Dandolo, sack Constantinople. This event helps to create a further divide between Roman and Orthodox Christianity.
1215	King John is forced to sign the Magna Carta by the English barons as a consequence of his persistent taxation to fund his wars against Philip Augustus of France.
1222	Papal Legate William of Sabina orders non-Roman churches closed in Dorpat on the Baltic. This helps to harden the border between Roman and Orthodox Christianity.
1237/38	The Mongols arrive and attack the Rusian city of Riazan, on the border of the steppe and forest zone. This is the beginning of persistent contact with the Mongols for Rus' and for Christian Europe.
1240	Kiev is sacked by the Mongols. Repercussions are felt throughout Europe, as Kiev was home to people from throughout medieval Europe who communicated about the attack back to their respective places of origin.

1241	The Mongols defeat armies at Mohi and Legnica, destroying a majority of the knighthood of central and eastern Europe from Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary in particular. The death of Khan Ogedei forces a withdrawal of the Mongol armies to the steppe north of the Black Sea. This results in the inclusion of Rus' within the Mongol world empire, and the exclusion of the rest of Europe, thus creating one element of a border between Rus' and the rest of Europe that had not existed earlier.
1240s	A crusade is launched against Rus' and led by both the Swedes and the crusading order known as the Sword Brothers. The crusade of the Swedes was defeated by the ruler of Novgorod, Alexander, and it was where he gained the epithet, Nevsky. He then later defeated the attack of the Sword Brothers at the famous "Battle on the Ice." These events further harden the divide between Roman and Orthodox Christianity, helping to separate Rus' from the rest of medieval Europe.

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.