A COMPANION TO GLOBAL QUEENSHIP
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Edited by
ELENA WOODACRE

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CONTENTS

List of Illustrations ......................................................... viii
Acknowledgements ......................................................... ix
Contributors ................................................................. ix

Chapter 1. Introduction: Placing Queenship into a Global Context
ELENA WOODACRE ......................................................... 1

Part I Perceptions of Regnant Queenship

Chapter 2. When the Emperor Is a Woman: The Case of Wu Zetian 武則天 (624–705), the “Emulator of Heaven”
ELISABETTA COLLA ....................................................... 13

Chapter 3. Tamar of Georgia (1184–1213) and the Language of Female Power
LOIS HUNEYCUTT .......................................................... 27

Chapter 4. Regnant Queenship and Royal Marriage between the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Nobility of Western Europe
HAYLEY BASSETT .......................................................... 39

Chapter 5. Queenship and Female Authority in the Sultanate of Delhi (1206–1526)
JYOTI PHULERA ............................................................ 53

Chapter 6. Anna Jagiellon: A Female Political Figure in the Early Modern Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth
KATARZYNA KOSIOR ....................................................... 67

Chapter 7. Female Rule in Imperial Russia: Is Gender a Useful Category of Historical Analysis?
OREL BEILINSON .......................................................... 79
Chapter 8. The Transformation of an Island Queen: Queen Béti of Madagascar
   JANE HOOPER.................................................................95

Chapter 9. Female Rangatira in Aotearoa New Zealand
   AIDAN NORRIE.............................................................109

Part II Practising Co-Rulership

Chapter 10. The Social–Political Roles of the Princess in Kyivan Rus’, ca. 945–1240
   TALIA ZAJAC...............................................................125

Chapter 11. Impressions of Welsh Queenship in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries
   DANNA R. MESSER.....................................................147

Chapter 12. Queen Zaynab al-Nafzawiyya and the Building of a Mediterranean Empire in the Eleventh-Century Maghreb
   INÉS LOURINHO..........................................................159

Chapter 13. Al-Dalfa’ and the Political Role of the umm al-walad in the Late Umayyad Caliphate of al-Andalus
   ANA MIRANDA............................................................171

Chapter 14. The Khitan Empress Dowagers Yingtian and Chengtian in Liao China, 907–1125
   HANG LIN.................................................................183

Chapter 15. Dowager Queens and Royal Succession in Premodern Korea
   SEOKYUNG HAN.........................................................195

Chapter 16. The Ambiguities of Female Rule in Nayaka South India, Seventeenth to Eighteenth Centuries
   LENNART BES.............................................................209

Part III Breaking Down Boundaries: Comparative Studies of Queenship

Chapter 17. Helena’s Heirs: Two Eighth-Century Queens
   STEFANY WRAGG........................................................233
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>The Hohenstaufen Women and the Differences between Aragonese and Greek Queenship Models</td>
<td>LLEDÓ RUIZ DOMINGO</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>The “Honourable Ladies” of Nasrid Granada: Female Power and Agency in the Alhambra (1400–1450)</td>
<td>ANA ECHEVARRÍA and ROSER SALICRÚ I LLUCH</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Comparing the French Queen Regent and the Ottoman Validé Sultan during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries</td>
<td>RENÉÉ LANGLOIS</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Queens and Courtesans in Japan and Early Modern France</td>
<td>TRACY ADAMS and IAN FOOKES</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>The Figure of the Queen Mother in the European and African Monarchies, 1400–1800</td>
<td>DIANA PELAZ FLORES</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td></td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures

4.1 Family tree of the queens of Jerusalem ................................................................. 40
8.1 Eighteenth-century southwestern Indian Ocean .......................................................... 96
15.1 The queens and kings of the Koryŏ (918–1392) .......................................................... 204
16.1 Geographical locations in early modern south India mentioned in the main text or footnotes ................................................................. 211
16.2 Genealogical chart of the Nayakas of Ikkeri showing the (probable) family relations of Queens Chennammaji and Virammaji, with rulers in capitals and dotted lines indicating adoptions ................................................................. 212
16.3 Genealogical chart of the Nayakas of Madurai showing the (probable) family relations of Queens Mangammal and Minakshi, with rulers in capitals and dotted lines indicating adoptions ................................................................. 214
16.4 Details of murals depicting Queen Mangammal of Madurai receiving the royal sceptre from the local goddess, Minakshi, through a priest (left) and attending a divine wedding with her grandson, Vijayaranga Chokkanatha Nayaka (right); Unjal Mandapa (central ceiling), Minakshi Sundareshvara Temple, Madurai ................................................................. 218
16.5 Statues thought by some scholars to depict Queen Virammaji of Ikkeri and her adopted son, Somashekara Nayaka III; Rameshvara Temple, Keladi ................................................................. 219
16.6 Book covers of (from left to right) Mahādēvi, Vīra sīrōmaṇi keḷadi kannamma rāṇi (in Kannada); Gayatri Madan Dutt and Souren Roy, Chennamma of Keladi: The Queen Who Defied Aurangzeb (in the Amar Chitra Katha series); Nāka Caṇmukam, Rāṇi maṇkammā (in Tamil) ................................................................. 225
19.1 Genealogical chart of the Nasrid dynasty in late medieval Granada ................................................................. 256

Tables

15.1 Queen dowagers of the Chosŏn (1392–1910) ................................................................. 200
15.2 Queen mothers of the Chosŏn (1392–1910) ................................................................. 201
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Part II

PRACTISING CO-RULERSHIP
WRITING TOWARDS THE end of his life, Prince Vladimir Monomakh (d. 1125) of Kyiv (Kiev) gave his sons the following advice in his twelfth-century Instructions (Pouchenie): “Love your wives, but grant them no power [vlast’] over you.”¹ From Old Norse sagas and Latin sources, it is known that Vladimir’s first wife was the Anglo-Saxon princess Gytha, the daughter of the last Anglo-Saxon king of England, Harold Godwineson.² The thirteenth-century necrology of the monastery of Saint Pantaleon in Cologne commemorates her as “Queen Gytha.”³ Yet her husband’s advice book for his sons never mentions her by name, or acknowledges her role as a patron. The contrast between Gytha’s status as “queen” according to external

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¹ “Zhenu svoi liubitē, no ne dati im nad’ soboi vlasti,” in Ostrowski, Pověst Vremenných Lět (hereafter PVL), vol. 3, 1917; see also Pověst sobranie russikh letopisě (hereafter PSRL), vol. 1, Lavrentevskaja letopis, 246; and The Russian Primary Chronicle (hereafter PC), 210–11, appendix 1; discussed in McKenzie, “Women’s Image in Russian Medieval Literature,” 18.

² According to the thirteenth-century Deeds of the Danes of Saxo Grammaticus, the marriage between Gytha and Vladimir was arranged by King Sven Estridsson of Denmark, who was related to both dynasties through his mother, princess Estrid of Denmark. Following the Battle of Hastings in 1066, Harold Godwineson’s surviving sons and daughter had fled to their cousin in Denmark: Saxo Grammaticus, Gesta Danorum, vol. 2, 798–801.


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4 The relatively limited historiography on both elite and ordinary women in Kyivan Rus’ is summarized and surveyed in García de la Puente, “Gleb of Minsk’s Widow,” 348–49n2; and Michalowska, “Klostergründungen Russicher Fürstinnen,” 275n1. On the various geographic terms used in Russian and Ukrainian scholarship to describe the medieval land of Rus’ from the nineteenth century onwards, see Voitovych, Kniazhna doba na Rusi, 11.

5 Kollmann, “The Seclusion of Elite Muscovite Women,” 170, 174–79; and Clements, A History of Women in Russia, 35–37. Future research needs to be done on change and continuity in the status of princesses after 1240/41 in lands outside Muscovy that were once part of Rus’, including Galicia-Volhynia (which was ruled by a branch of the Riurikid dynasty until its extinction in 1340) and what became the Duchy of Lithuania.
leader Riurik (Scandinavian: Hrorikr). According to the twelfth-century *Primary Chronicle*, also known from its opening lines as the *Tale of Bygone Years*, in 862 various quarrelling East Slavic tribes invited the Varangian Riurik and his two brothers to settle in their territory and rule over them. Since the eighteenth century an ongoing debate—the so-called “Normanist controversy”—has raged as to the veracity of this narrative and the Scandinavian origins of the Rus’ people who gave their name to the lands under their control.

However, today there is broad scholarly consensus, based on onomastics (name studies) and archeological and textual evidence, that the ruling dynasty of Rus’ was originally dominated by Scandinavian members, and also that the ethnonym/toponym “Rus’” (from the Finnish word for Swedes, *Ruotsi*, related to the English word “rowers”) is Scandinavian in origin. At the same time, though, scholars have acknowledged the multi-ethnic and multicultural nature of early Rus’, which included not only Scandinavian and East Slavic but also Finno-Ugric and Turkic peoples.

In the eighth and ninth centuries the earliest Scandinavian trading settlements in the territory of Rus’ were located in the Baltic littoral basin, in the north of present-day Russia (including the towns of Riurikovo Gorodishche/Holmgard and Staraia Ladoga/Aldeigjuborg). However, by around 900 to 940 changing trading patterns led various Scandinavian settlers to turn southwards and to consolidate their power over Kyiv (Kiev), originally a Khazar/East Slavic trading emporium. The first historically verifiable Rus’ leader and progenitor of the “Riurikid” dynasty to emerge from this cultural context was Oleg (Scandinavian: Helgi; d. 912/922). The social and political roles of the princess in Kyivan Rus’ therefore were shaped by a hybridity of ruling traditions absorbed by the Rus’ from various cultural groups over several centuries of settlement.

One result of these cultural encounters was that, during the course of these centuries, Scandinavians adopted some ruling customs of the Turkic Khazars and the East Slavs. In historian and linguist Omeljan Pritsak’s memorable turn of phrase, “nomads of the sea” (Vikings) joined with “nomads of the steppe.” To give one example of this process of acculturation, until the middle of the eleventh century Riurikid male rulers occasionally used the Khazar Turkic title *qağan* to designate the symbolic supreme male ruler. Another source of Khazar influence on Riurikid practices of rulership was the use of a dynastic emblem on coins and pendants, among other objects, first in the form of a bident and then, from the tenth century onwards, a trident. Only male members of the Riurikids seemed to have used the bident or trident emblem to symbolize their authority.

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6 On the territorial extent of Rus’, see Christian, *A History of Russia*, 361. The appearance of the term “Rurikovich” to describe the ruling clan of this territory and the creation (and invention) of extended royal genealogies in the fifteenth century are described in Ostrowski, “Systems of Succession,” 30, 36. A concise history of the Riurikid dynasty is given in Poppe, *Christian Russia in the Making*, chap. 1 (”The Riurikid [sic] Dynasty or Seven Hundred Years of Shaping Eastern Europe,”) 1–25.

7 *PVL*, vol. 10.1, 103–4.


10 Ibid., 32; Christian, *A History of Russia*, 335.


13 All sources for Oleg’s life are given in Voitovych, *Kniazha doba na Rusi*, 203–10, with extensive further literature.


17 The function of such a graphic seems to have been similar to the clan emblems called *tamgas* (sing. *tamga*) used by the Khazars and other steppe peoples to symbolize the *qağan’s* power. See Franklin and Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus*, 120–21; Duczko, *Viking Rus*, 228–38; DRSM, s.v. “Znaki Riurikikovichel,” 302–4; and Kovalev, “Grand Princess Olga of Rus’ Shows the Bird,” 471–72.

18 Although an undated bident found on a bone pendant in Novgorod has sometimes been attributed to Ol’ga, Roman Kovalev argues that there is insufficient evidence to link this find to Ol’ga and that therefore “not one example of a bident–trident Riurikid emblem used by a princess has thus far been found”: Kovalev, “Grand Princess Olga of Rus’ Shows the Bird,” 483.
Little is known of the position of the princess before Christianity was adopted in Rus’. However, between the 940s and 960s (perhaps in 957) Ol’ga became the first member of the ruling Riurikid dynasty to convert to Christianity. Her grandson, Vladimir (Volodimer) Sviatoslavich (d. 1015), after marrying the Byzantine princess Anna (d. ca. 1011) and accepting baptism in 988 or 989, made Orthodox Christianity the official religion of the Rus’. Particularly from this time on, Orthodoxy and Byzantine cultural influence therefore were also factors that shaped the agency available to princesses in Rus’, though they were by no means the only cultural forces at play.

Martin Dimnik has characterized the role of Riurikid princesses in the post-Christianization period as, “in the main, ceremonial,” noting their presence at such dynastic rituals as weddings, funerals, church consecrations, and the installation of bishops. This chapter will show, the governance of towns that personally belonged to them and religious patronage were additional important social-political roles exercised by princesses in Rus’. These roles were in many ways analogous (though not identical) to the roles played by contemporary queens consort in western Europe. Native customs were equally important for shaping the agency available to princesses, especially the lateral succession system practised by the Riurikids, whereby male members of the dynasty established their right to rule over the major settlements of Rus’, as well as the concept described by Anatolii Tolochko as the “collective” or “clan” sovereignty of the dynasty. The roles available to princesses in Rus’ were shaped by a fusion of such local notions of rulership merged with ideals of Christian behaviour. In order to examine the range of activities available to princesses in Rus’, the chapter begins by considering the titles held by the princesses in Rus’ and their meaning, before discussing evidence for women’s participation in princely government and their role as patrons of ecclesiastical institutions.

**Titles of Princesses in Rus’ and Their Meaning**

The Old Slavonic title of k”negyni (variant spellings: kneginia, kniaginia) was the female version of the male title of rulership, k’niaz’, which shares a common root with the English word “king.” Reflecting the kingly social and political role of the k’niaz’, Latin sources throughout the Middle Ages translated this title as rex (pl. reges). It is notable that all members of the reigning Riurikid dynasty, not just the prince of Kyiv, were termed reges by Latin sources. Monarchical rule in Rus’ therefore was not concentrated solely in the prince of Kyiv, who was more like a first among equals. Rather, legitimacy lay in the dynasty as a whole—an important consideration for understanding the place of the princess in Rus’ society.

Just as kniaz’ was translated in Latin sources by the word rex, so too could k”negyni and its variants be rendered in Latin as regina. Scandinavian sources also refer to Rus’ princesses

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19 Prior to the adoption of Christianity, the Rus’ male elite were polygamous. Ibn Fadlān, an Arab traveller writing in 921/922, records that the king (malik) of the Rūsiyyah kept numerous concubines. See Montgomery, “Ibn Fadlān and the Rūsiyyah,” 14–20; and Pritsak, “The System of Government,” 573.

20 PVL, vol. 10.1. 386–408. The dates of Ol’ga’s conversion are contested, with a range given from the 940s to the 960s. However, the discovery of a palimpsest manuscript folio of the Byzantine contemporary source for Ol’ga’s conversion, the De ceremoniis, includes the note that Ol’ga was baptized during the “first indiction,” which would be between September 1 and 9, 957, probably on her arrival on September 8; see Poppe, Christian Russia in the Making, chap. 7 (“Once Again concerning the Baptism of Olga, Archontissa of Rus’”), 278; and Featherstone, “Ol’ga’s Visit to Constantinople.”

21 PVL, vol. 10.1. 817–953. The name of the Christianizer of Rus’ is somewhat problematic to render in English. The Old East Slavic text of the twelfth-century Primary Chronicle calls him “Volodimer,” similar to modern Ukrainian usage. The coins minted by the ruler himself call him “Vladimir” in Old Church Slavonic, which is closer to modern Russian. As Simon Franklin notes, either spelling is “correct”: Writing, Society and Culture in Early Rus., xi.


23 On the notion of the “collective sovereignty” (“kolektivnyi suzerenitet”) and “clan suzerainty” (“rodovyi suzerenitet”) of the Riurikids, see Tolochko, Kniaz’v Drevnej Rusi, 9, 23–35ff.


26 Soloviev, “‘Reges’ et ‘Regnum Russiae’,” 162.

27 The argument for the prince of Kyiv as a first among equals is Ostrowski, “Systems of Succession,” 30, 53.

28 Tolochko, “Problems of the Rus’ Princedoms,” 267; Shepard, “Rus’,” 385; Franklin, “Kievan Rus’,” 74.

29 Examples of texts that call Rus’ princesses by the Latin word for queen, regina, include the tenth-century Continuator of the Chronicle of Prüm, who calls Princess Ol’ga “regina Russorum”; Regino, Reginonis abbatis prumiensis Chronicon, 170. See also Soloviev, “‘Reges’ et ‘Regnum Russiae’,” 149.
by the title of “queen” (dröttning/drottning). The fact that foreign sources viewed the female members of the Riurikid dynasty as queens, daughters of kings or as similar to the status of queens in their own cultures suggests that comparisons can be made between the position and authority available to a queen in medieval Latin Christendom and the social-political roles exercised by the princess in Kyivan Rus’. For instance, in the Kingdom of Portugal, from the early twelfth century to the reign of Alfonso III (r. 1248–1279) royal daughters, and not just wives, bore the title of “queen” (regina). Moreover, the fact that there existed a separate title—k"nega— to denote the status of female members of the Riurikid dynasty is important, because it suggests that this title also carried with it the weight of some political authority. In Frankish lands, for example, the shift from calling a woman “the king’s wife” to giving her the separate title of “queen” denoted an increase in status and the stabilization of queenship as a separate office. The English translation for k“negyni, “princess” or, in older sources “duchess” (sometimes “grand duchess”), is therefore somewhat misleading. K“negyni, princess, should not be understood as signifying a young unmarried woman or a woman of lesser social status than a Latin Christian queen. Although, as we shall see, the functions of a k“negyni and a Western queen consort were not equivalent, both occupied the highest social position available to women in their respective medieval realms.

Byzantine sources simply refer to female members of the Riurikid dynasty as archontissai (“princesses”/”noble-women”) and male members of the dynasty as archontes (“rulers”/”princes”). According to Byzantine political theory, there could only be one true empire and one true emperor on earth, the basileus, to whom all other rulers were subject. Reflecting this Byzantine political theory, some inscriptions on lead seals in Rus’, discussed further below, refer to Rus’ princesses as archontissai. However, this bureaucratic practice of using seals to authenticate documents was introduced into Rus’ by Greek clergy, and thus reflects a Greek point of view on the nomenclature used for the Riurikid princely dynasty. Moreover, surviving lead seals that employ the archontissa title largely may have been owned by Byzantine brides who came to Rus’. Native Rus’ sources generally did not use Byzantine titulature.

Although the Riurikids had adopted some Byzantine cultural practices together with Orthodox Christianity, they adopted these cultural norms to local usage. For example, the Rus’ Church, despite being headed by a Greek metropolitan sent to Rus’ from Constantinople, employed Old Church Slavonic rather than Greek in its liturgical and religious texts, and drew on Bulgarian (rather than Greek) exemplars. While adopting a Byzantine Church structure as well as some aspects of Byzantine elite culture, the Riurikids also continued to maintain their own traditions of rulership. Of these, the most important for understanding the social and political positions of the Rus’ princess was the dynasty’s lateral succession system and the idea of the collective right of the Riurikid dynasty to rule.

32 Stafford, Queens, Concupines, and Dowagers; Earengight, Queenship in Medieval Europe, 79–122.
33 The title “grand prince” (velvykyi kniaz) and “grand princess” (velyaika kniaignya) were mostly used as honorific, rather than political, titles in Kyivan Rus’, since “velkyi” had (and has) the same range of meanings as Latin magnus and Greek megalos: great, senior, elder, famous, glorious, and so on. It was often used only after a prince’s death in his eulogy. Isaievych, “On the Titulature of Rulers,” 220–21; Poppe, “Words that Serve the Authority”; Vodoff, “La titulature des princes russes,” 140.
38 Valentín Ianin has attributed one seal with the inscription Monomachis to the Greek wife of Vsevolod Laroshiviy, who was a relative of Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (d. 1055): Aktovy pechaty Drevnei Rusi, 17–19. However, this view has been disputed by Alexander Kazhdan, who suggests that it should be interpreted as monache, meaning that the seal belonged to a nun, rather than to Vsevolod’s wife: “Rus’-Byzantine Princely Marriages,” 417. Based on a new exemplar of this seal, Selit attributes it to the ownership of the Rus’ princess Maria Dobroniega (d. 1087): “War Maria […]?” Another seal containing the Greek title archontissai has been attributed by Ianin to Theophano Mouzalona, the Byzantine-born wife of Prince Oleg Sviatoslavich (d. 1115); see Aktovy pechaty Drevnei Rusi, 24–25; followed by Dinnik, “The Princesses of Chernigov,” 169.
39 Vodoff, “Remarques sur la valeur du terme ‘tsar’.”
40 Franklin, Writing, Society and Culture in Early Rus, 12–13; and “The Reception of Byzantine Culture”; Poppe, Christian Russia in the Making, chap. 9 (“The Christianization and Ecclesiastical Structure of Kievan Rus’ to 1300”), 343–44.
The Succession System in Rus' and Its Effect on Princesses’ Roles in the Dynasty

The complex system of succession in Kyivan Rus’, with its emphasis on the transfer of power between men, limited the role that women could play in governing directly. Indeed, the process of succession was so complicated and so often resulted in internecine warfare that some scholars have questioned whether it can be described accurately as a “system” at all.41 The precise nature of the way in which the Riurikid dynasty understood succession in Rus’ and the degree to which this succession system underwent changes over the tenth to thirteenth centuries have been the subject of intense scholarly discussion over the past twenty years.42 Nonetheless, it is readily apparent from the Rus’ chronicles that the Riurikids did not practise exclusive primogeniture. Until the Muscovite period, descent from Riurik was not an important factor in legitimizing princely succession, and this shadowy figure disappears in the Primary Chronicle after 882.43 Instead, rule over the various towns of Rus’ passed not just vertically, from father to son, but also horizontally.44 It was vertical, in that succession, from the eleventh century onwards, became restricted to the descendants of Vladimir Sviatoslavich (d. 1015).45 Furthermore, a prince’s father or grandfather had to have ruled previously in a town in order for a prince to have a recognized claim to rule in that same town.46 Succession was also horizontal, in that the rule of towns passed from elder brother to younger brother, according to genealogical seniority in the dynasty, before passing back to the children of the genealogically senior brother. This lateral system may well have been influenced by the Riurikids’ contact with steppe societies.47

In the early eleventh century, for instance, Vladimir Sviatoslavich divided his realm among his twelve or thirteen sons. Some of these sons received inheritable land, such as the realm of Polatsk (Polock), taken from newly subjugated rival dynasties.48 Others received the rule of towns that passed laterally from brother to brother, so that the death of one brother seems to have triggered a general transfer of territory among the ruling clan.49 Because of this feature, from the sixteenth century onwards the succession system of Rus’ has also been described as a “rota” or “ladder” system, though some scholars have been highly critical of this term.50 Despite Vladimir’s seeming provisions for the future, at his death in 1015 a bloody succession struggle broke out among his sons—a frequent characteristic of Riurikid rule. For this reason, some scholars have even gone so far as to suggest that the Riurikids practised “blood tanistry,” a term originally used to describe the Scottish clan system, whereby the most capable military male earned the right to rule.51 The ultimate victor of the conflict in 1015, Vladimir’s son Iaroslav the Wise, instituted a lateral succession system at his own death in 1054.52 At the same time as making Kyiv the common patrimony (otchina) of the descendants of his three eldest sons, Iaroslav also gave all his sons cities of Rus’ as inheritable patrimonies that would pass directly to their descendants.53 The hereditary patrimonies of the various branches of the dynasty also passed “laterally”: from elder to younger surviving sons before passing back to the children of the first son.54 The principle of the inheritability of the

49 Ibid., 580–82.
50 Ostrowski notes that the idea of a “ladder” system does not appear in any contemporary early Rus’ source: “Systems of Succession,” 39. Dimnik accepts the general lines of the theory, arguing that the “ladder” system of succession would allow “one or two members in each family of Yaroslavichi [descendants of Iaroslav the Wise] to rule the common patrimony of Kiev in rotation”: Power Politics in Kyivan Rus’, 10.
51 “Blood tanistry” as a succession practice is also a characteristic of steppe societies, such as the Chingsids of the Mongol Empire; Christian, A History of Russia, 366; Ostrowski, “Systems of Succession,” 51.
53 Iaroslav’s eldest surviving son, Iziaslav, got the city of Turov; the next eldest, Sviatoslav, got Chernihiv (Chernigov); and the third eldest, Vsevolod, received Pereiaslav. PVL, vol. 10.2, 1274–75.
54 Franklin, “Kyivan Rus’,” 79. The descendants of sons who were not able to sit on the thrones of their father (for instance, if they died before their uncles) became izgoi, or debarred from succession, and were ineligible to rule the otchina; Kollmann, “Collateral Succession in Kyivan Rus’,” 381. However, they could rule other cities; Ostrowski, “Systems of Succession,” 50.
otchina was confirmed at the Congress of Liubech in 1097, attended by the (male) descendants of Iaroslav the Wise. Such clan congresses to settle disputes demonstrate the “corporate” nature of Riurikid monarchy: a prince’s right to rule in the Rus’ principalities needed to be recognized by the clan as a whole. As the Riurikid clan became increasingly large in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and new regional centres of power emerged, particularly Galicia-Volhynia in the southwest and Vladimir-Suzdal’ in the northeast, princely warfare intensified not only for the throne of Kyiv but also for rule over local centres as well.

Novgorod remained a special case in the succession system. Initially the prince of Kyiv had been able to impose a lieutenant (posadnik) to rule in his name or to nominate one his sons to rule. However, following an uprising against princely rule in 1136, the vêche (popular assembly) of Novgorod was able to impose a contractual relationship with the prince: in the second half of the twelfth century and in the thirteenth, princes from the different branches of the dynasty were invited to rule at the pleasure of the merchants, bishops, and local noble (boyar) families. If they were not able to defend the city’s interests satisfactorily they were expelled, and others from a different branch of the Riurikid family were invited by the vêche to take their place. In other cities as well, local town assemblies could play decisive role in choosing which princes would rule over them. For instance, in 1113 Kyiv’s vêche invited Prince Vladimir Monomakh to rule over them. As Rus’ was highly urbanized compared to other medieval policies, with around 300 separate settlements by 1240/41, the decisions made at town assemblies could be an important factor in who got to rule which town.

This complex political context is crucial for understanding both the limits placed on princesses’ power in Kyivan Rus’ and the opportunities for agency available to them. Women played no direct part within this system of lateral succession, nor could they be invited to serve as Novgorod’s military protectors. Because of their inability to inherit the throne of Kyiv or other patrimonies, women are hardly mentioned at all in the most important native narrative source for Kyivan Rus’, the twelfth-century Primary Chronicle and its local continuations.

In this way, a princess’s political authority, even more so than a Western queen’s, came not from her own self-standing position but, rather, from her position in relation to her male relatives: to her father, husband or son. The fact that a princess’s role in Kyivan Rus’ was understood in relation to her male relatives is most strikingly expressed in the fact that princesses are rarely mentioned by name in the Rus’ chronicles, and instead either are simply called by their title (kniagynia and its variants) or are referred to obliquely as the daughter or wife of Prince X.

Even more telling is the fact that the birth of children, a crucial role played by royal women in any given dynasty, is often recorded in Rus’ chronicles using a passive construction that eliminates mention of the mother involved. To give one example of the standard formula: “A son was born to Iaroslav and he called him Vladimir.” write the compilers of the Primary Chronicle, omitting mention of the fact that Iaroslav’s wife was the Swedish princess Ingigerd. As a result, up until

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57 The complex political rivalries that emerged in Kyivan Rus’ in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries have been treated in numerous works. For a political overview, see, for instance, Fennell, The Crisis of Medieval Russia, 4. The expansion of the Riurikid dynasty in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in terms of increases in both the number of its family members and their power bases, is one of the reasons why scholars have criticized a “Kievocentric” approach to early Rus’ history; Franklin and Shepard, The Emergence of Rus’, xix.
58 DRSM, s.v. “Kniaz’”, 402; Franklin, “Kievan Rus’”, 83. David Christian notes that the twelfth-century institution of the vêche may have influenced the Primary Chronicle’s portrayal of the ninth-century “Invitation of the Varangians” as “a sort of contract” between Riurik and the Slavic tribes: A History of Russia, 364.
59 Multiple examples of town assemblies having a determining role in succession in the eleventh and twelfth centuries are given in Ostrowski, “Systems of Succession,” 50.
60 Franklin, “Kievan Rus’”, 83; Dimnik, Power Politics in Kievan Rus’, 53.
61 Christian, A History of Russia, 363.
63 Raffensperger, Reimagining Europe, 65. The most famous literary work of Kyivan Rus’, The Lay of Igor’s Campaign (Slovo o polku Igorevu), likewise does not give a personal name to its female heroine: Igor Sviatoslavich’s wife is called “Iaroslavna,” in the poem, which merely indicates that she is the daughter of Prince Iaroslav the Eight-Witted (Osmomysl) of Galicia (d. 1187). Franklin and Shepard, The Emergence of Rus’, 295.
64 PVL, vol. 10.2, 1161.
the middle of the twelfth century there are very few Kyivan Rus’ princesses whose names are even known to us.\(^{65}\) For example, the Kyivan Chronicle, which covers events from 1118 to 1199/1200, mentions only thirty-six princesses in total, out of whom only six are called by their personal name.\(^{66}\)

However, at the same time, princesses drew some authority from the fact that political legitimacy was based in the Riurikid dynasty collectively.\(^{67}\) They drew both power and prestige from their membership in this ruling family. This value of blood membership in the Riurikid family as a legitimizing factor in rule can be seen in the fact that the only princesses who are mentioned by name in the chronicles are the daughters of Rus’ princes—those born on Rus’ soil—rather than brides from outside the dynasty.\(^{68}\) With two important exceptions—Ol’ga, who was probably born a commoner, and Vladimir Sviatoslavich’s wife, the Byzantine princess Anna—the foreign wives of Rus’ princes are mentioned in native chronicles solely by their title as “princess” and not by their personal names.\(^{69}\) For example, the frontispiece of the Izbornik (Miscellany) of 1073, made for Prince SviatoslavJaroslavich, depicts Sviatoslav with his wife and their sons (fol. 1v) offering the codex to an enthroned Christ on the facing folio (2v).\(^{70}\) All the male princes in the image are clearly labelled in gold: Glěb, Oleg, David, Roman, Jaroslav, and Sviatoslav. Only the woman, probably Sviatoslav’s second wife, the German noblewoman Oda of Stade, is labelled in gold as “the princess” (kněgyni).\(^{71}\) Although the donor portrait here generally follows Byzantine conventions, the anonymity of the princess reflects Riurikid, rather than Byzantine, practice.\(^{72}\)

Oda’s anonymity should not be taken as a sign of hostility at this time towards Latin Christians (Catholics). The majority of the Riurikids’ marriages during the eleventh to thirteenth centuries were concluded with their Latin Christian neighbours.\(^{73}\) Princesses from Latin Christendom came to Rus’ to become the wives of Rus’ princes, and, vice versa, princesses born in Rus’ left their homeland to become queens consort in Latin Christendom.\(^{74}\) As Barbara Evans Clements notes, the fact that Riurikid princesses “became the brides of foreign kings […] attests to the fact royalty abroad regarded Rus’ princes as their equals—and their daughters, therefore, as suitable consorts.”\(^{75}\)

In the tenth to thirteenth centuries these intermarriages were largely free of the hostilities that would later emerge between today’s Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism.\(^{76}\) For instance, Latin Christian princesses were not rebaptized when they married into the Riurikid dynasty.\(^{77}\) Only in 1484 did the Council of Constantinople proclaim a standard rite for receiving Catholics into the Orthodox Church, but it did not include rebaptism but, rather, only chrismation with holy oil of the person entering the Orthodox Church.\(^{78}\) Moreover, it is possible that a foreign princess could have been referred to in Rus’ both by her natal name and by the name of a saint venerated in the Orthodox Church calendar (synaxariôn), because the Riurikids practised “double-naming.”

When a prince or princess was born into the Riurikid dynasty, he or she received two names: a dynastic (“secular” or “clan”) name of pagan origin and a Christian baptismal name of a saint or biblical figure.\(^{79}\) The first “dynastic” name linked a princess to the Riurikid dynasty, while the baptismal

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65 From the middle of the twelfth century on, when Rus’ began to fragment politically, internal marriage and military alliances among the various branches of the Riurikid dynasty became more frequent. As women became more important for cementing these alliances between cousins, they are mentioned more often in the chronicles; Litvina and Uspenskii, Vybor imeni u russkikh kniazei, 256–58, 264.

66 Smorag-Różyczka, Bizantyjsko-ruskie miniatury, 24.

67 Tolochko, “Problems of the Rurikids,” 267; Shepard, “Rus’,” 385; Franklin, “Kievan Rus’,” 74.

68 Smorag-Różyczka, Bizantyjsko-ruskie miniatury, 24.

69 Ibid., 24–25. Olg’a’s origins as a commoner are known only from sixteenth-century Muscovite sources; Voitovych, Kniazha doba na Rusi, 215.

70 Izbornik Sviatoslava 1073 goda, fols. 1v–2r.

71 Dimnik, The Dynasty of Chernigov, 1054–1146, 36–38; and “The Princesses of Chernigov,” 165; Nazarenko, Drevniaia Rus’, 516–19. This frontispiece is the oldest manuscript attestation to the title of princess in Rus’; Srezeneskii, Slovar’ drevnerusskogo iazyka, vol. 1.2, 1397.

72 Preobrazhenskii, Ktitorskie portrety, 97.


74 Raffensperger, Reimagining Europe, 47, 71.

75 Clements, A History of Women in Russia, 6.


77 Ibid., 67–107.

78 Heith-Stade, “Receiving the Non-Orthodox,” 421, 424–25. Chrismation was added to compensate for the perceived deficiency of Latin baptism, which did not include this conferral of the “seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit”; Meyendorff, Byzantine Theology, 195.

79 Litvina and Uspenskii, Vybor imeni u russkikh kniazei, 111–74, 238–64; Uspenskii (= Uspenskii], “The Prince and His Names,” 346–64.
name linked her with a particular patron saint who acted as her spiritual protector. This practice of double-naming was not unique to the Riurikids but was shared by other newly Christian dynasties in Hungary, Poland, Bohemia, Scandinavia, and the Balkans. As we shall see, a princess's connection to her namesake patron saint also seems to have been a source of authority for her.

**Marriage, Crowning, Clothing, and Installation in Power**

Unlike Western queens and unlike Byzantine empresses, princesses in Kyivan Rus' were not endowed with public authority in a coronation ceremony separate from their marriage. In Rus', such a separate ceremony did not exist. Consequently, a princess's marriage ceremony probably also served as her formal installation in power. The earliest record for the use of the Byzantine marriage rite in Rus' is found in the writings of Metropolitan Ioann II (r. ca. 1076/77–1089), who noted that the princes and boyars (non-princely nobles) celebrated marriages in the canonical manner with priestly blessing and crowning. One could speculate that the wedding crown mandated by the Byzantine rite could have served the additional function of endowing a princess with more secular authority as well. This interpretation is suggested by the fact that the same word (Greek: stephanos; Slavonic: věnn'ts) could mean both a bridal crown and the crown of a male or female ruler. However, strictly speaking, the Riurikids did not possess royal regalia in the sense of inheritable semi-sacred objects essential to the assumption of legitimate power.

Two splendid examples of trapezoidal diadems composed of linked golden enamelled plaques have survived, which, based on contemporary Byzantine comparanda, were probably worn by Rus' princesses. More numerous are finds of temple pendants also made of cloisonné enamel based on Constantinopolitan fashions (known in Slavic historiography as koly; sing. kolt), which in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries hung down from crowns worn by both Rus' princes and princesses in a manner similar to Byzantine jewelled pendants (pendoulia). These pendants were hollow on the inside, probably in order to contain perfumed fabric or fragrant oil. On the basis of such finds, art historian Olenka Pevny has reconstructed the Rus' princess's crown as "a tall headdress surmounted by a gold diadem with enamel inlay and pearls. On both sides of the headdress temple pendants were suspended by ornate gold chains." Together with surviving diadems and temple pendants, manuscript illustrations also provide tangible evidence of the way in which a Riurikid princess's clothing projected her power and authority. For example, a miniature in the late eleventh-century prayer book belonging to the Polish-born princess Gertruda (d. ca. 1108?), the widow of the Rus' prince Iziaslav Iaroslavich (d. 1078), depicts her in a purple dress, golden patterned cloak, red shoes, and jewelled headdress over a white kerchief. Purple was the imperial colour par excellence, though by the end of the twelfth century high Byzantine officials had begun to wear it as well. 

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81 Uspenskii, "The Prince and His Names," 2, 17.
83 Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium*, 103.
84 Dimnik, "The Princesses of Chernigov," 166.
85 Sreznevskii, *Slov’ drevnerusskogo iazyka*, vol. 1.1, 488.
86 Ostrowski, "Systems of Succession," 35.
87 One of the surviving diadems depicts a *Deisis* scene: the Mother of God and John the Baptist pray before Christ, flanked by the archangels Michael and Gabriel, and the apostles Peter and Paul (Saint Petersburg, State Russian Museum, inv. BK 2756). The plaque on the extreme right depicts an unlabelled female figure wearing a crown. The other diadem depicts Alexander the Great ascending to heaven in a chariot pulled by griffins, a scene from the third-century *Romance of Alexander* (Kyiv, Ukrainian Museum of Historical Treasures, inv. DM 1783). Although these crowns could have been belonged to either men or women, a comparison with Byzantine images makes it more likely that these crowns were worn by Rus' princesses; Durand, Giovannoni, and Rapiti, *Sainte Russie*, 114, fig. 8, and 130, cat. item 34.
89 Ibid., 132; Pevny, "Kievan Rus'," 310.
90 Pevny, "Kievan Rus", 313. A visual representation of the princess's headdress is also found in DRSM, s.v. "Odezhda," 567, ill. 2.
92 Kazhdan and Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture*, 79.
were also usually worn only by the Byzantine imperial family, though in Byzantine art they are also worn by the Mother of God and biblical kings to indicate their exalted status.\textsuperscript{93} The “accuracy” of the miniature is debatable. Cultural contacts between Byzantium and Rus’ could have had an impact on the way in which the Riurikids dressed, but it is equally possible that the Kyivan artist simply copied Byzantine conventions of ruler portraits to produce his image of Gertruda’s costume.\textsuperscript{94} However, occasional mentions of fabrics in the Rus’ chronicles suggest that Rus’ princesses were indeed richly dressed in furs, in silks imported from Byzantium and in samites—twilled cloth woven with silver or gold threads.\textsuperscript{95} Theresa Earenfight has called medieval queens “highly visible” in medieval life, but “often obscured” in the sources.\textsuperscript{96} Such was also the case with princesses in Kyivan Rus’, who, in actuality, wore striking headdresses that visually emphasized their elite status, setting them apart from women of lower social strata, but who remained nearly invisible in the Rus’ chronicles.

**Governance: Administration, Justice, Regency**

The ceremony of princely marriage in Rus’ was concluded not only with the Byzantine Christian ceremony of crowning but also with the secular custom of the bestowal of a wedding gift (věno) from husband to wife, which, in the case of princesses, was a town that she could rule in her right.\textsuperscript{97} This land would then support her in her widowhood.\textsuperscript{98} The Rus’ custom of giving a princess a town as a bridal gift is recorded by both native and foreign sources.\textsuperscript{99} We first read of it in the *Primary Chronicle* when Vladimir Sviatoslavich, having seized the Byzantine city of Cherson, gave it back to Emperor Basil II as the bride gift after converting to Christianity and marrying the Emperor’s sister, Anna, in 988/989.\textsuperscript{100} Later, the thirteenth-century saga of Snorri Sturluson records that in 1019 the Swedish princess Ingigerd demanded the town of Aldeigjuborg as a gift upon her marriage to the Rus’ prince Iaroslav the Wise.\textsuperscript{101} According to Henrik Birnbaum, Aldeigjuborg should be identified with the early Scandinavian settlement of Staraia Ladoga, which became subsequently “known as Ingigerd’s land (Finnish *Ingeri-maa* ... Russian *Ižera*, now *Ižora*).”\textsuperscript{102}

After her husband’s death a princess was able to maintain control over her bridal gift, and perhaps also over a portion (chast’) of her husband’s estate.\textsuperscript{103} The right of women to own movable goods and purchase land other than the *otchina*, which required the agreement of all the family to be sold, was codified in the Expanded Version of the *Russkaia Pravda*, the twelfth-century version of the cumulative Rus’ law code first issued by Iaroslav the Wise.\textsuperscript{104} A number of examples of land-ownership by princesses are mentioned in the Rus’ chronicles and in surviving graffiti etched into the walls of Kyiv’s Saint Sophia Cathedral. According to the *Primary Chronicle*, for example, Princess Ol’ga owned the village of Ol’zhichi as well as riverside “fowling preserves” (*lovishcha*).\textsuperscript{105} The twelfth-century *Kyivan Chronicle* records that, in 1168, Prince Rostislav Mstislavich died in a village belonging to his sister, Princess Rogneda Mstislavich.\textsuperscript{106}

A Riurikid princess evidently may have exercised public authority not only in her own lands but also in her husband’s city. Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard highlight the following example. Between 1100 and 1120 a certain man called Zhiznomir sent a birch bark letter to a man called Mikula in Novgorod: “You bought a slave-girl in Pskov,” he

\textsuperscript{93} Smorag-Rozycka, *Bizantyi-ruskie miniatury*, 29.
\textsuperscript{94} Pushkareva, *Zhenshchiny drevnej Rusi*, 159.
\textsuperscript{95} Smorag-Rozycka, *Bizantyi-ruskie miniatury*, 26; Pushkareva, *Zhenshchiny drevnej Rusi*, 158.
\textsuperscript{96} Earenfight, “Highly Visible, Often Obscured.”
\textsuperscript{97} Early Rus’ sources speak about a marriage gift given by the husband to the wife: the věno (from věnit’, “to buy”; compare the Latin vendere). By contrast, the earliest recorded use of the word for dowry, *přidano*, dates to 1497; Sreznevskii, *Slovar’ drevnerusskogo iazyka*, vol. 1, 1, 487; Pushkareva, *Women in Russian History*, 44; and *Zhenshchiny drevnej Rusi*, 105.
\textsuperscript{98} Dimnik, “The Princesses of Chernigov,” 174.
\textsuperscript{99} For a list of towns owned by princesses, see also ibid., 173n50.
\textsuperscript{100} PVL, vol. 10.2, 904.
\textsuperscript{101} Heimskringla, ed. Jónsson, 258; trans. Hollander, 342.
\textsuperscript{102} Birnbaum, “Yaroslav’s Varangian Connection,” 11.
\textsuperscript{105} PVL, vol. 10.1, 381–82; English translation in PC, 82.
\textsuperscript{106} PSRL, vol. 2: *Ipatjevskaia letopis, sub anno* 6676 (1168), 531; Voitovych, *Kniazha doba na Rusi*, 468.
that this seal belonged to Kristin (d. 1122), the Swedish wife of Prince Mstislav Vladimirovich (d. 1132). In these seals, a princess’s authority to issue public documents seems to be derived from the authority of her patron saint, whose sacred image was depicted upon the seal. The second type of seal, which first appears in finds dating to the late eleventh century, also includes the image of a female saint on one side and, on the other, a mysterious talismanic Cyrillic inscription “D’NĔSLOVO,” perhaps two words, “dno slovo”: “herein [is] a message.” The third type of seal references its female owner directly, either through the formula “Lord, help thy servant X,” found in seals dating from the end of the eleventh century to the early twelfth, or, by referring to its female owner using the title archontissa. Consequently, it seems that, in the visual rhetoric of seals, a princess’s authority to issue a document was justified chiefly not by appealing to her relationship with her husband or other male relatives, or even to the land that she ruled (there is no Rus’ equivalent to the Western Dei gratia regina protocol), but, rather, in reference to the authority of her heavenly patron saint and namesake.

Despite the lack of documentation, the ownership of seals is indicative of possible administrative or judicial roles undertaken by a princess. The period from the 1130s to the 1150s has even been described as the “Polatsk Matriarchate.” Valentin Ianin, who first coined this term, based his hypothesis both on seals ascribed to female owners—Sofia, the wife of Sviatoslav Vsevolodovich and her daughter Predslava, who took the monastic name Euphrosyne (discussed below)—and on the fact that the Rus’ chronicles describe a power vacuum at this time that have might allowed these women to take power. This power vacuum existed from 1129, when their male kinmen were exiled to Constantinople by Prince Mstislav Vladimirovich of Kyiv, to the early 1150s. However,

107 “Gramota: oṭ Zhiznomira k Mikule: kupil esi robu: pl"skovë: a nynë me: v tom: ela k’nagyni." Birch-bark letter no. 109, Neversky Dig, homestead "D," in Gramoty, "Birchbark Literacy from Medieval Rus," www.gramoty.ru. See also Franklin, Writing, Society and Culture in Early Rus, plt. 9; and an English translation in Franklin and Shepard, The Emergence of Rus, 290.


109 Aktovy pechaty Drevnei Rusi, 17–19, 21–23, 28, 33, 69, 71, 84, 102, 156, 171, 173, 183–84, 209–10, 231–32, 234. Some of Ianin’s attributions seem questionable. For example, he identifies a seal of one Maria with the wife of Vsevolod Ol’govitch. However, the name “Maria” of Vsevolod’s wife is known only from later sources; see Pevny, “Dethroning the Prince,” 67.

110 Aktovy pechaty Drevnei Rusi, 84; Pushkareva, Zhenschiny drevnei Rusi, 36–37; García de la Puente, “Gleb of Minsk’s Widow,” 372–73.

111 For the use of seals in general as evidence for the princesses’ power in Rus, see Pushkareva, Zhenschiny drevnei Rusi, 9, 37; and Women in Russian History, 17, 51; and Franklin and Shepard, The Emergence of Rus, 300.

112 Aktovy pechaty Drevnei Rusi, 33, tab. 4, no. 39.
beyond surviving administrative seals we have no further details on the rulership of this area by women at this time.

Besides such isolated cases of female rulership, Riurikid princesses could play an occasional role in intercession and diplomatic negotiation. Scandinavian sagas portray Íngridr as counselling her husband Ívarr the Wise and even brokering the final peace treaty during the succession crisis that followed Vladimir Sviatoslavich's death in 1015.\textsuperscript{120} In a frequently commented upon passage in the \textit{Primary Chronicle}, Íngridr's granddaughter, lanka Vsevolodovna (d. 1112/1113) daughter of Prince Vsevolod jaroslavich and a Greek princess, also played a diplomatic role. In 1089 her father sent her to Constantinople to bring back to Rus' the Greek appointee to the head of the Church hierarchy, Metropolitan Ioann III the Eunuch (r. 1089–1090).\textsuperscript{121} Lanka was a nun, and her status as a consecrated woman might have played some part in the reason why she was chosen for this ecclesiastical mission. However, her membership both in the Riurikid dynasty, through her father, and the Byzantine imperial house of Monomachos, through her mother, might also have made her an ideal person to serve as an intermediary between the courts of Constantinople and Kyiv.\textsuperscript{122}

Because a princess did not have any claims on the family patrimony, and hence suspect interests of her own, she could be the ideal go-between to make peace between warring family members.\textsuperscript{123} However, the occasional ability of a princess to act as intercessor or diplomatic go-between in Rus' contrasts greatly with the ceremonial function of a queen's intercession in western Europe, who played a recognized role at court in tempering the king's mercy. By the tenth century this intercession was justified in western European texts by the Old Testament model of Queen Esther and by the New Testament model of Mary, believed to intercede for Christians in the heavenly court before her son, Christ's, stern judgement.\textsuperscript{124} The Marian model of an intercessor queen, highly developed in western Europe, is strikingly missing in the rhetoric of surviving texts from Kyivan Rus'. Although the monastic compiler of the \textit{Primary Chronicle} has the Patriarch of Constantinople say to Princess Ol'ga “Blessed art thou among the women of Rus’ without directly echoing Saint Elizabeth’s greeting to Mary in the Visitation, he uses this Marian motif not to underline any abstract powers of intercession held by Ol'ga but, rather, specifically to praise Ol'ga’s conversion to Christianity.\textsuperscript{125}

Ol'ga is the most famous example of a female regent in Kyivan Rus’, ruling on behalf of her minor son Svitostrlav Iaroslavich (d. 972) from the death of her husband Igor (Scandinavian: Helgi), in 945, to Svitostrlav’s majority, around 960/961.\textsuperscript{126} As she was the first member of the Riurikid family to convert to Christianity, the \textit{Primary Chronicle} devotes an exceptionally detailed description of her regency.\textsuperscript{127} Despite some folkloric elements in its narrative, the \textit{Primary Chronicle} also provides practical descriptions of Ol'ga’s rulership, including how she avenged her husband’s death, and how she travelled around her realm with her minor son and his retinue collecting tribute and judging the people.\textsuperscript{128} Her status as regent is confirmed by the contemporary Byzantine account of her visit to Constantinople and baptism there, the \textit{Book of Ceremonies}. As well as calling Ol'ga the “archontissa” (female ruler) of Rus’, the \textit{Book of Ceremonies} also refers to her by the male title of “hégemôn,” or “leader, commander.”\textsuperscript{129} In addition to these written sources, the discovery of a tenth-century silver trapezoidal pendant in 2008 from the burial of a male royal revenue collector in Pskov seems to confirm Ol'ga’s status as a de facto regent.\textsuperscript{130} As Roman Kovalev has demonstrated, the

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{10} Theodoricus monachus, \textit{Historia de Antiquitate regum Norwagien-sium}, 34; Morkinskinna, 89–90; Vikings in Russia, 46, 85–89.
\bibitem{11} \textit{PVL}, vol. 10.3, 1669–70; discussed in Franklin and Shepard, \textit{The Emergence of Rus}, 300.
\bibitem{12} Allegedly lanka had been engaged to Constantine Doukas in 1074, but this view has been convincingly disputed in Kazhdan, “Rus–Byzantine Princessly Marriages,” 418.
\bibitem{13} Raffensperger, \textit{Reimagining Europe}, 61–62; Clements, \textit{A History of Women in Russia}, 6.
\bibitem{14} Huneycutt, “Intercession and the High-Medieval Queen,” 126–46; Shepard, “Marriages toward the Millennium,” 17.
\bibitem{15} “Blagoslovena ty v zhenakh Rus’skykh,” \textit{PVL}, vol. 10.1, 392; English translation in PC, 82; discussed in Homza, “The Role of Saint Ludmila,” 196. Ol’ga would later be canonized in the thirteenth century; ibid., 194–95.
\bibitem{17} McKenzie, “Women’s Image in Russian Medieval Literature,” 23.
\bibitem{20} See the detailed argument in Kovalev, “Grand Princess Olga of Rus’ Shows the Bird.”
\end{thebibliography}
pendent depicts on one side a bident, symbolizing the young Prince Sviatoslav’s authority, surmounted by a key, symbolizing Ol’ga’s role as caretaker of the royal household.\textsuperscript{131}

In subsequent centuries following Ol’ga’s reign a princess’s explicit political roles became restricted. Guardianship of a young boy was usually given to an orphaned prince’s uncles, rather than to his mother.\textsuperscript{132} The system of lateral succession rather than primogeniture meant that there was no lack of heirs, and the mother of a child prince did not have special status.\textsuperscript{133} Despite this legal limitation on female power, the Rus’ chronicles do record three examples of de facto regency in Rus’, though in two of these three cases female rule was met with male opposition. The first case, as Christian Raffensperger points out, followed the death of Sviatoslav Ol’govich in Chernihiv (Chernigov) in 1164, when his second wife, Katerina, the daughter of the Novgorod posadnik Petrilko, briefly assumed the throne in his stead.\textsuperscript{134}

The phrase the chronicle uses to express Katerina’s rule is that she literally “sat” (“a kneginí sëdëti”).\textsuperscript{135} As Inés García de la Puente has proved convincingly, the verb sidëta or sëdëti, “to sit,” is a synecdoche for “to sit on the throne” — i.e. to rule.\textsuperscript{136} The stock phrase “to sit on the throne of one’s father,” or simply “sitting on the throne” (“sidëta na stole”), is used both in Rus’ chronicles and on inscriptions on coinage struck by Riurikid rulers to describe the installation of a prince through his ceremonial sitting upon his ancestors’ throne.\textsuperscript{137} Similar customs of elevating a ruler upon a throne were also followed in Scandinavia.\textsuperscript{138}

García de la Puente analyzes the use of the phrase “sitting on the throne” in the context of her argument for the remarkable forty-year reign of a princess by an unknown name (called “Anastasia” in a seventeenth-century source).\textsuperscript{139} This princess was the daughter of Prince Iaropolk Izyaslavich (d. 1086/1087), and the widow of Glĕb Vseslavich (d. 1119), who came from a cadet branch of the Riurikid dynasty descended from Vladimir Sviatoslavich, and who ruled Minsk (today in Belarus).\textsuperscript{140} García de la Puente examined the eulogy on the death of Glĕb’s widow given in the twelfth-century Kyivan Chronicle, which is unusually detailed for the mention of a woman, and which states: “In that year, the blessed princess of Glĕb Vseslavich, the daughter of Iaropolk Izyaslavich, died having ‘sat’ following her prince for forty years.”\textsuperscript{141} García de la Puente demonstrates that the verb “having sat” (sëdëvshi) in this case meant “sat on the throne,” and that there was precisely a power vacuum in Minsk between Glĕb’s death in 1119 and his son Volodar’s rule in 1159 that could have permitted Glĕb’s widow to take power.\textsuperscript{142} However, the fact that Glĕb’s widow did have three sons, Rostislav, Volodar, and Vsevolod, who were alive during her reign confirms the custom that a princess could not rule in her own right, but only indirectly on the basis of her blood relationship to her male relations.\textsuperscript{143}

The third example of de facto regency comes from thirteenth-century Galicia-Volhynia, two principalities in western Rus’ that, in 1199, were united under the ruler of the powerful prince Roman Mtsislavich. Roman’s widow, a Byzantine princess, ruled as regent for her sons Daniil (Danylo) Romanovich (d. 1264) and Vasil’ko Romanovich (d. 1269) from 1205, when her husband was killed in battle, until around 1219, when she entered a female monastery.\textsuperscript{144} However, even after she had become a nun she seems to have continued to play

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., esp. 482. Kovalev’s further argument, that the depiction of a falcon’s head surmounted by a cross on the other side of the pendant represents Ol’ga’s veneration of Freyja/Mokosh, is intriguing, but does not find direct corroboration in the written sources.

\textsuperscript{132} Litvina and Uspenskii, Výbor imeni u russkikh kniazei, 71–110, 265, 452–53. However, the twelfth-century Expanded Redaction of the Russkaia Pravda did allow a widow who did not remarry to exercise guardianship over her children; see Michalowska, “Klostergründungen Russischer Fürstinnen,” 278n25, with further literature.

\textsuperscript{133} Dimnik, “The Princesses of Chernigov,” 172.

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 173–74; Raffensperger, Ties of Kinship, 163n3.

\textsuperscript{135} Heinrich, “The Kievan Chronicle,” 266; PSRL, vol. 2, sub anno 6672 (1164), 523.

\textsuperscript{136} García de la Puente, “Gleb of Minsk’s Widow.” Only the expanded Redaction of the Kyivan Chronicle, which is unusually detailed for the mention of a woman, and which states: “In that year, the blessed princess of Glĕb Vseslavich, the daughter of Iaropolk Izyaslavich, died having ‘sat’ following her prince for forty years.” García de la Puente demonstrates that the verb “having sat” (sëdëvshi) in this case meant “sat on the throne,” and that there was precisely a power vacuum in Minsk between Glĕb’s death in 1119 and his son Volodar’s rule in 1159 that could have permitted Glĕb’s widow to take power. However, the fact that Glĕb’s widow did have three sons, Rostislav, Volodar, and Vsevolod, who were alive during her reign confirms the custom that a princess could not rule in her own right, but only indirectly on the basis of her blood relationship to her male relations.

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\textsuperscript{138} Shepard, “Rus,” 395; Tolochko, “Problems of the Rurilikids,” 267.
a role in governance. For example, the late thirteenth-/early fourteenth-century Galician-Volhynian Chronicle, the main narrative source for this region, describes her as making a peace treaty from still pagan Lithuanians together with her sons Daniil and Vasil'ko sometime after her monastic vows.\(^{145}\)

However, speaking once again to the fact that a Rus' princess’s political authority was always derived from her male relatives is the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle's silence on the name. It refers to her simply as “the princess,” “Great Roman’s Princess,” “the princess, Roman’s spouse” or “Roman’s grand princess.”\(^{146}\) Her name and precisely genealogy have consequently been the subject of scholarly debate: while older works refer to her as “Anna,” Alexander Maiorov has recently made the case, based on Greek and Latin sources, that her secular name was probably Euphrosyne, while her monastic name was either Anna or Maria.\(^{147}\)

Although this princess managed to rule on behalf of her sons for several years, her power was constantly contested by the local boyars of Galicia-Volhynia, who tried to replace her with male princes from a rival branch of the Riurikid dynasty, the Igorevichi.\(^{148}\) In describing one of her expulsions from the town of Halich (Galich) by the boyars, the anonymous compiler of the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle notes that she went temporarily to the town of Belz, because “she wished to rule herself” (“khotšchba bo kняžhiti sama”).\(^{149}\) Roman Mstislavich’s widow in the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle was able to rule only through the military intervention of her allies in the face of local opposition, rather than from the existence of any institutionalized office of regency.

During this time this princess may also have engaged in religious patronage. Polish archeologist Andrzej Buko has reassessed the original function of a thirteenth-century mortared tower located in Stołpie, near Chełm (formerly Kholm), the capital city of Galicia-Volhynia under the rule of Daniil Romanovich from the mid-1230s onward.\(^{150}\) While earlier research had assumed that the tower of Stołpie was always part of military fortifications, Buko’s excavations from 2003 to 2005 suggested that, in the 1220s, the tower, with an octagonal-shaped chapel on its upper floor, originally formed part of a monastery complex.\(^{151}\) Only in the 1280s was its building plan modified with additional fortifications.\(^{152}\) The architectural similarity of this tower complex to contemporary private chapels for Byzantine aristocrats suggests that it may have been founded by Daniil’s mother, the aforementioned Byzantine princess. Her role as founder of this monastery is suggested also by the fact that she took monastic vows near Chełm.\(^{153}\) She would have had the means and knowledge to impart contemporary Byzantine styles to Galicia-Volhynia.\(^{154}\)

### Religious Patronage

Religious patronage by the ruling dynasty, its female members included, was essential for the transformation of the land of Rus’ into a Christian realm. Princesses seem to have played this important role even before the “official” Christianization in Rus'. The remains of a mid-tenth-century palace in the old citadel of Kyiv and remains outside the citadel possibly identified as a chapel suggest that, following her baptism, Princess Ol’ga could have been responsible for commissioning Byzantine artisans to erect masonry structures based on Constantinopolitan models even prior to 988.\(^{155}\) This role of Christian patronage was continued by her successors. According to the twelfth-century Primary Chronicle, in 988/989, when the Byzantine princess Anna was reluctant to marry Ol’ga’s grandson, the still pagan prince Vladimir Sviatoslavich, her brothers urged her to do

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145 PSRL, vol. 2, sub anno 6723 (1215, recte: 1219), 735; Chronica Galiciano-Volinitana, 71; The Galician-Volhynian Chronicle, 26. The chronology of the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle is defective and has had to be reconstructed. If the chronology is taken literally, then Roman Mstislavich’s widow received a peace delegation at court two years after her entry into a monastery. If George Perfecky’s modified chronology is followed, then this event occurred the same year as, though subsequent to, her entry into monastic life.


147 Maiorov, “The Daughter of a Byzantine Emperor.”


149 PSRL, vol. 2, sub anno 6716 (1208, recte: 1211), 727; Chronica Galiciano-Volinitana, 42; Galician-Volhynian Chronicle, 22; discussed in Puskhareva, Zhenshschyny drevnej Rusi, 38.


151 Buko, “Byzantine Cultural Enclave in Central Europe?,” esp. 242–43.

152 Ibid., 243–44.

153 Ibid., 243.


155 Mezentsew, “The Circular Palace of Princess Olha.”
so, because through her God would turn the Rus’ land to repentance. 156

The Primary Chronicle does not provide further details on Anna’s activities after her marriage. However, one of the few surviving contemporary sources from the Byzantine Empire, the chronicle by Yahya of Antioch (an Arab Christian doctor), records that she built many churches upon her arrival in Rus’. 157 Indeed, between 989 and 996, in the wake of Anna’s marriage, Greek artisans came to Kyiv to help build a two-storey stone palace and the adjacent Church of the Mother of God, which became the newly Christianized dynasty’s palatine chapel (Latin: capella regia or palatina). 158 Because Vladimir gave a tenth of his treasury income to the maintenance of this palace church, it became known popularly as the Tithe Church. 159 The Tithe Church was modelled architecturally on the Byzantine palatine chapel, the Church of the Mother of God of the Pharos, located near the throne room of the imperial palace of Constantinople, which Anna would have known prior to her marriage. 160 This church and palace complex served as Anna’s residence in Kyiv during her lifetime, and, after her death, she was buried in a marble sarcophagus at the centre of the church, further underlining her role as promoter of the Christian faith in Rus’. 161

The role of Anna in building up Christianity in Rus’ is also suggested by the so-called “Church Statute” of Vladimir, which established independent ecclesiastical courts, though this text survives only in a corrupt version dating to the fourteenth century onwards. 162 According to this statute, Vladimir granted the Church privileges “having consulted with my princess Anna and with my children.” 163 More certain in dating is a Church statute issued in 1135–1137 by one Prince Vsevolod (though his identity is unclear), which confirmed the independence of church courts in Novgorod. He made these decisions, similarly, after he had “consulted with the Novgorod archbishop and with my princess, and with my boyars.” 164 In both these early privileges for the Orthodox Church, princesses play a key role as patrons and protectors.

Vladimir Sviatoslavich’s successor, Iaroslav the Wise, built the new stone Cathedral of Saint Sophia, which was flanked by the monasteries of Saint Irene and George, the patron saints of his wife, the Swedish princess Ingigerd, and himself, respectively. 165 While giving a special place to the patron saints of the ruling prince and princess at the centre of the realm, at the same time this urban layout also imitated that of Constantinople. 166 This emulation of Byzantine models can also been seen in the donor fresco of Kyiv’s Saint Sophia, painted around 1045/46 along the west, south, and north walls of the cathedral’s central nave, in which Iaroslav was depicted as leading his sons, and his wife Ingigerd was depicted as leading her daughters, in procession. 167 However, since this fresco survives only in a very damaged and fragmentary condition, scholars have suggested several ways in which the princely family originally might have been portrayed in the act of offering the cathedral to an enthroned Christ. 168 Nonetheless, scholars agree that it depicts both Ingigerd and

156 PVL, vol. 10.2, 850.
159 Poppe, “The Building of the Church of St. Sophia in Kiev,” IV 25, Kömpfer, “Eine Residenz für Anna Porphyrogenneta,” 102; Shepard, “Marriages toward the Millennium,” 25. Only in the eleventh century did tithing begin to be used to support the metropolitan and other bishops; Fennell, A History of the Russian Church, 55.
160 Poppe, “The Building of the Church of St. Sophia in Kiev,” 25; Kömpfer, “Eine Residenz für Anna Porphyrogenneta,” 102; Shepard, “Marriages toward the Millennium,” 25. The Tithe Church was destroyed during the Mongol taking of Kyiv in 1240, but its ruins survive, including fragments of its mosaic floor; Pevny, “Kievian Rus’,” 193.
161 Christian, A History of Russia, 348; Franklin and Shepard, The Emergence of Rus, 165; Shepard, “Marriages toward the Millennium,” 25.
164 “I pogadal esm’ s vladkyoiu i s svoeiu kniagyneiu [emphasis added] i s svoimi boliary’; ibid., 59–60; discussed in Pushkareva, Women in Russian History, 12.
165 PVL, vol. 10.2, 1198–1200.
166 Boeck, “Simulating the Hippodrome,” 294; Franklin and Shepard, The Emergence of Rus, 210–11.
168 Three main hypothetic reconstructions of the donor fresco exist. See Smorąg Różyczka, Bizantzynsko-ruskie miniatury, 110–18 (ills. 79–80); and Kozak, Obraz i vlada, ill. 16.
laroslav as sharing the imperial virtue of philanthropy, which “indicated the concern of a ruler for his people.”169 The fresco was located just below the princely gallery where Iaroslav, Ingigerd, and their children would actually have stood during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral.170

Andrzej Poppe has drawn attention, moreover, to the location of the donor fresco opposite to the Eucharist mosaic in the cathedral’s apse that depicts a mystical scene of Christ distributing bread and wine to his Apostles. These two scenes in parallel—the dedication by twelve members of the Riurikid family of the cathedral to Christ, and Christ distributing the Eucharist to twelve apostles—stressed the apostolic mission of the entire princely family, women included, in bringing Christianity to the people of Rus’.171 In this way, the donor portrait in the central nave of the cathedral also stressed that the ideal of Christian rulership rested not only in a single male prince but in all the members of laroslav’s family, including its women.172

Princesses in Kyivan Rus’ not only acted as co-patrons with their husbands and other family members but also could be founders in their own right. Endowing the foundation of a new monastery, rather than simply donating to a pre-existing one, required significant material wealth, and consequently in the Kyivan period was restricted only to the highest social strata.173 It was in their role as monastic or ecclesiastical founders, rather than as wives, mothers or administrators, that princesses were celebrated by the monastic compilers of Rus’ chronicles. In Orthodox Christianity, patronage created a reciprocal relationship between the monks or priests who were dependent upon a princess’s goodwill and generosity towards them.174 A donor/benefactor to a church or monastery in Orthodoxy Christianity was especially remembered in the prayers of the recipients of his or her generosity.175 Every Sunday the founders of a church would be commemorated during the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, together with church hierarchs.176

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries numerous examples appear of princesses who founded their own institutions.177 Pevny, for example, demonstrates the role of the widow of Prince Vsevolod Ol’govich (d. 1146) in founding a monastic church dedicated to Saint Cyril of Alexandria in twelfth-century Kyiv.178 Once again, we do not know this princess’s name (later seventeenth-century sources call her Maria), but the Kyivan Chronicle records in the year 1177/78 that “Vsevolod’s princess died, having accepted the monastic habit, and was laid to rest in St. Cyril’s, which she herself founded.”179 Similarly, in Novgorod in 1199, the wife of Prince laroslav Vladimirovich (d. after 1207) founded a monastery dedicated to the Nativity of the Virgin on Mikhailitsa Street (from which it was also known simply as “the Mikhailitsa”), for which the Novgorod Chronicle remembered her.180

Yet another princess who had a prominent role in creating her own religious foundation was Princess Maria Shvarnovna (d. 1205/1206), the first wife of Prince Vsevolod lurievič “Big Nest” of Suzdal’ (“Bolshoe Gnezdо,” d. 1212, so called because of his large family).181 In 1200 she founded a monastery dedicated to the Dormition of the Mother of God in the northern Rus’ city of Vladimir-on-the-Kliazma.182

170 Franklin and Shepard, The Emergence of Rus, 211.
172 Kozak, Obraz i vlada, 41; Poppe, “The Riurikid Dynasty,” 9; Shepard, “Rus,” 396.
174 Compare the remarks of Barbara Hill in Imperial Women in Byzantium, 157, with those of Rosemary Morris in Monks and Laymen in Byzantium, 138–39.
175 Hill, Imperial Women in Byzantium, 159.
176 “Deacon: Again we pray for the blessed and ever-memorable holy Orthodox patriarchs; and for the blessed and ever-memorable founders of this holy house”; John Chrysostom, The Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, 278. The Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom had already been translated into Old Church Slavonic by the ninth century; ibid., 269.
177 For the thirteenth century, see Michalowska, “Klostergründungen Russischer Fürsteninn.”
178 Pevny, “Dethroning the Prince.”
180 “In the same year Yaroslav’s Knyagiyna put up the church and the monastery of the Birth of the Holy Mother of God in Mikhailitsa Street, and they appointed Posadnik Zavid’s widow [Igumen]”; sub anno 6707 (1199), The Chronicle of Novgorod, 42.
181 Maria Shvarnovna’s family background is debated. Her patronymic indicates that her father had the unusual name of “Shvarn.” Older scholarship has suggested that this was a Czech name, but this view has been disputed recently. See Litvina and Uspenskii, Výbor imeni u russkikh kniazei, 374–81.
A few years later, on March 2, 1206, Maria herself became a nun at her own foundation, after having been ill for a number of years and after having given birth to her eighteenth child.¹⁸³ Just over two weeks after her entry into the monastery she died, and she was buried in the monastery’s church, where her sister and daughter were already buried.¹⁸⁴ The monastery thus became a necropolis for female members of the Vladimir-Suzdal’ian branch of the Riurikid dynasty, and this commemorative function might have been one reason for its founding.¹⁸⁵ Its significance as an emblem of the princess’s generosity is suggested by the name by which it is more commonly known: the Princess Monastery (Kniagiинин monasterы’).

However, perhaps the most famous pre-Mongol princess foundation was the monastery dedicated to the Holy Saviour founded in the twelfth century by Princess Predsla via Sviatoslava of Polatsk, known better by her monastic name of Euphrosyne (Eвfrosinia; d. ca. 1173). Hers is the only pre-Mongol Rus’ female monastery that has survived to this day.¹⁸⁶ However, unfortunately, there are no contemporary sources describing Euphrosyne’s role in establishing this monastic foundation. The earliest source is the sixteenth-century Book of Degrees of Imperial Pedigree (Stepennaia kniga), a work of imperial Muscovite historiography, though its section on Euphrosyne is probably based on an earlier Life.¹⁸⁷

Although the written source on her life survives only in late copies, visual evidence from the twelfth century confirms that Euphrosyne was both patron and administrator. Ianin claimed to have identified a seal belonging to her, which depicts her saintly namesake on one side with the Cyrillic inscription “Lord, help thy servant named Euphrosyne” on the rim and the Transfiguration of Christ on the other.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, until 1941 Belarus’ possessed an elaborate two-barred cross of enamelled plaques, gold, silver, saints’ relics, and pearls, whose inscription attests that it was commissioned by Euphrosyne in 1161 for her monastic church.¹⁸⁹ A posthumous thirteenth-century fresco in the side chapel of the monastic church depicts Euphrosyne as a nun and donor holding a model church in her hand.¹⁹⁰ Taken together, the seal, fresco, and precious cross confirm Euphrosyne’s importance as patron and administrator.

After their deaths, princesses were not necessarily buried at the side of their husband. Rather, like Western queens consort, they were buried either in family necropolises, which became increasingly common as the Riurikid dynasty fragmented into various branches in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, in female monasteries, in their own foundations or in the monasteries that had benefited from their patronage.¹⁹¹ They continued to be commemorated in the prayers of the monks to whom they had served as benefactors.¹⁹² For example, the Sinodik (necrology) of the male monastery of Saint Anthony in Liubech (dissolved in 1786), which dates to the seventeenth century but is based on earlier sources, commemorates 119 princes and forty-five princesses of Chernihiv who lived from the eleventh to fourteenth centuries.¹⁹³ While monks largely passed over in silence the role of princesses in the chronicles they wrote, they kept their memory alive in their prayers.

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¹⁸³ PSRL, vol. 1, sub anno 6714 (1206), 424; Michalowska, “Klostergründungen Russischer Fürstinnen,” 277.
¹⁸⁴ PSRL, vol. 1, sub anno 6714 (1206), 424. Maria Shvarnovna’s sister, Evgeniia, was buried at the monastery in 1201, and in 1205 Maria’s daughter Elena was buried there. Later, in 1271, Princess Maria Mikhailovna was laid to rest there; Voitovych, Kniazha doba na Rusi, 419; DRSM, s.v. “Kniagiинин,” 402; Michalowska, “Klostergründungen Russischer Fürstinnen,” 277.
¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 277–78.
¹⁸⁶ For the history of the monastery of Saint Saviour, see Senyk, Women’s Monasteries in Ukraine and Belorussia, 39; and Beliaev, “Spasskiй Eвfrosинievskий Monasterы v Plostske,” in DRSM, s.v. “Spasskiй Eвfrosинievskий Monasterы v Plostske,” 782–84.
¹⁸⁷ Stepennaia kniga, 433–47. The Stepennaia kniga was begun in the mid-1550s and completed either in the 1560s or as late as 1584; Lenhoff and Kleimola, The Book of Royal Degrees; DRSM, s.v. “Evfrosinia Polotskaia,” 272–73.
¹⁸⁸ “Gospodi, pomozhi rabe svoei Evfrosini naritsaemoi”; Aktovye pechaty Древней Руси, 231, 234 ill. 121a.
¹⁸⁹ Euphrosyne’s cross was removed from the Minsk museum by Nazi soldiers in 1941, and all efforts to locate it have thus far been unsuccessful. See Franklin and Shepard, The Emergence of Rus, 300; Franklin, Writing, Society and Culture in Early Rus, 58, 242; Pevny, “Dethroning the Prince,” 76, 102n91; and Pushkareva, Zhenshchyny drevnej Rusi, 37.
¹⁹¹ Dimnik, “Dynastic Burials in Kiev,” 79–80, 95, 99–100. See also García de la Puente, “Gleb of Minsk’s Widow,” 351, 376–78 appendix, where a chart of all death notices of princesses in the Kyivan Chronicle is provided.
¹⁹² See O Chernigovskikh kniaziakh, esp. 171, for the summary of findings.
Conclusion

When the Anglo-Saxon Gytha arrived as a refugee in Rus’ from the Battle of Hastings of 1066 to marry the Rus’ prince Vladimir Monomakh she would have encountered some elements of queenship that were familiar to her. She was given an official title of rulership, she was crowned during her marriage to a rex and she was dressed in rich clothing that exalted her social status above that of common women. The birth of legitimate children, the patronage of Christian church institutions, and the administration of towns personally belonging to her, as well as possibly some role in counselling her husband, were all “queenly” social and political roles that she would have taken on. She had enough wealth and power at her disposal to send gifts as far away as Cologne, where she was commemorated for her piety in the necrology of the monastery of Saint Pantaleon. Yet her husband warned his sons against giving a woman too much power, and her activities remained unremarked upon in the chronicles of the dynasty.

This silence of native Rus’ sources on Riurikid princesses was due to the fact that the princess in Kyivan Rus’ could not rule an otchina, a patrimony belonging to the dynasty as a whole. In the warrior society of Rus’, succession did not pass in the female line, and women’s political power never approached that of queens regnant in Latin Christendom or Byzantine empresses who ruled in their own right. Isolated attempts by women to rule as regents occurred either when male authority was absent, as in the case of Glĕb of Minsk’s widow, or when women were strong enough to defy direct male opposition, as in the rule of Daniil Romanovich’s mother in Galicia-Volhynia.

However, this hostility to direct female rule was somewhat counterbalanced by the notion that all blood members of the Riurikid dynasty shared the right to rule over the land of Rus’. Since political legitimacy was vested in the dynasty as a whole, its female members drew authority and prestige from their belonging to this family. They governed entire towns that belonged exclusively to their power, and possibly could have played a role in administration of their husbands’ cities as well.

Moreover, as members of this dynasty, women, like men, played a key role in spreading Christianity. Another major source of authority for princesses was their association with a network of saints, both through their baptismal names, which placed them under the special protection of a heavenly patron, and through their own patronage of monasteries or churches, which associated them to the Mother of God or to whichever saint to whom these churches were dedicated.

However, cultural influence from Byzantine Orthodoxy was just one factor in shaping the political and social roles of the princess in Rus’. In fact, the range of possibilities for agency available to her came from the varied traditions of rulership absorbed by the Riurikids in their vast domains, stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea steppe, which incorporated cultural influences from Scandinavians, East Slavs, Khazars, and other Turkic nomadic tribes, as well as from Byzantium. Future research could also consider the cultural impact of Latin Christian traditions of rulership brought to the Riurikids by royal women such as Gytha. In this way, the study of the social-political roles available to the Rus’ princess sheds light on the hybrid practices of rulership of the Riurikid dynasty as a whole.
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