the closest to the Byzantine-held lands of Bulgaria and to the more Byzantine-influenced land of Hungary, so there might have been an interest in maintaining such ties. Some decades later there was a great deal of interaction between a Rostislavič ruler, Jaroslav Osmomysl (who was the nephew of this Volodarovna), and the Comneni, as described by Ioannes Kinnamos.

Though the PVL mentions this marriage, there is nothing to substantiate that reference, so it retains an air of mystery. It may be accepted that a Volodarovna married a Byzantine, but exactly who he was and what his position was is as yet unknown.

Malfrid M’stislavna (tables 13, 15)

Being ruler of Novgorod allowed one to make a wide array of foreign connections. This was no different for M’stislav Volodimerič, especially since his wife was Kristín, daughter of King Inge Steinkelsson of Sweden. M’stislav made use of his wife’s, as well as his own, Scandinavian connections to arrange the marriages of two of his daughters.5

Malfrid M’stislavna is an enigma in the Rusian sources, where she does not appear. We know, however, from Latin and Old Norse sources that she married King Sigurd “the Crusader” of Norway.7 V. T. Pašuto has dated this marriage to 1111, and added that she was in Schleswig at the time as a guest of Duke Welf.8 Those details cannot be confirmed, but the approximate time of the marriage is correct. Sigurd was on crusade in the eastern Mediterranean from 1107–1110,9 and at the time of his return was only twenty years old, thus it was reasonable that he would not have married before leaving. Why the marriage was arranged remains a mystery, though perhaps there is a simple explanation, such
as increasing preexisting family ties or tying together Baltic powers such as Rus’ and Norway. A. F. Litvina and F. B. Uspenskij, however, have noted Orderic Vitalis’s conclusion that Sigurd returned from the crusades via Rus’, and met and married Malfrid while there. Though this is not widely accepted, it provides an interesting possibility, and another example of the many Scandinavian royal visitors to Rus’. Snorre Sturluson in his Heimskringla narrates the history of the Norse kings, but Sigurd’s marriage to Malfrid, or “Malmfrid” as she is referred to in the text, receives very little description, though her genealogy is extensively traced, especially her Scandinavian connections. This may be because the marriage to Malfrid was slightly fraught, as is apparent from Sigurd’s demand that he be allowed to marry his mistress Cecilia, though the author prefaces this with such statements as “his mind wandered.” Malfrid is not mentioned at all in the episode, only Sigurd and multiple bishops who unsuccessfully attempted to dissuade the king from his goal. But even if he did marry Cecilia, who left him in 1130 when he was on his deathbed, he never set aside Malfrid, and may in fact have been married to both at the same time. The Heimskringla presents this as the whim of an older king, and no other reason is available to us, though the story may also be a set piece designed to portray the negative foreign influence of German ecclesiastics in Scandinavia, which would make the whole episode suspect. The issue of inheritance, which might have motivated such a decision, was not in doubt as Malfrid had borne him a daughter, Christina, and a previous mistress, Borghild, had given him a son, Magnus, so he had a living male heir. Although Magnus was illegitimate, this was not a problem in early twelfth-century Scandinavia. Sigurd died in 1130, leaving Malfrid a widow. But unlike many women in dynastic marriages, she did not return home upon her husband’s death; instead she stayed in the Norwegian royal court as stepmother to the new king, Magnus, which placed her in an effective position to aid her sister the next year.

In 1131, Knud Lavard, duke of Schleswig, king of the Abodrites, and not insignificantly husband of Malfrid’s sister Ingeborg, was murdered by his cousin Magnus Nielsso. After a failed bid at retaliation by Lothar, king of the German Empire, Knud’s brother Eric took up his cause and began to battle Magnus Nielsso and Magnus’s father. According to Saxo Grammaticus, Magnus of Norway approached Eric, who was acting as guardian for his sister-in-law Ingeborg and her children, about a marriage alliance between Magnus of Norway and Ingeborg and Knud’s eldest daughter Kristín. As part of that alliance, Eric proposed that he also marry Malfrid, Magnus’ stepmother, to strengthen the ties between them. The main purpose of the alliance was that Magnus, who had inherited the vast majority of his father’s fleet and arms, would assist Eric in his battle against Magnus Nielsso. As
it stands, this is already a fascinating tale of a double dynastic marriage
designed to advance the cause of two realms. Eric needed weapons and
ships, and Magnus needed a measure of support in terms of manpower
and legitimacy as he waged a semi–cold war with his uncle Harald.23
But if one takes into account the Rusian factor, and reads Saxo’s account
with that purpose and with a better opinion of the importance of
women than a medieval writer would have had, the story becomes even
better. After Knud Lavard was murdered, the German king attempted
to avenge him, but was bought off. Eric, his brother, attempted to
avenge him, but was beaten. It took the intervention of Malfrid to
push Magnus to make the overture to Eric to aid his cause, which was,
in fact, the cause of Malfrid’s sister, and eventually of Malfrid’s infant
nephew Valdemar, who was named after their grandfather, Volodimer
Monomax. The marriage for her may simply have been a way of causing
the alliance to take immediate effect, as Kristín, Knud’s daughter, was
yet too young to be married.24 Considering the web of family relations
involved it is easy to see how Malfrid could have been a driving force
to aid her sister’s family.

The alliance came in handy quite quickly, since Eric, Malfrid, and
Eric’s son Svein had to flee the next year (1132) after losing a battle to
Magnus Nielsson and his father. They were able to seek refuge in Nor-
way with King Magnus Sigurdsson, who sheltered them for a time.25
Unfortunately these marital ties were not as strong as money; that
winter Eric, Malfrid, and Svein were forced to flee in the night after
having been warned by Magnus’s wife Kristín (Ingeborg’s daughter and
Malfrid’s niece) that Magnus Sigurdsson had been bought off by King
Niels of Denmark.26 Kristín valued her natal ties more than her marital
ties and destroyed her marriage (she was repudiated afterwards)27 to
save her aunt and uncle.

It would be wonderful to have more details of the life of Malfrid,
as she seems to have led an interesting one. She was married at a
relatively young age, had to deal with a succession of mistresses sharing
her husband, was queen of both Norway and Denmark, and may have
arranged an international alliance to aid her sister and her family.

*Ingeborg M’sislavna*

(Tables 13, 15)

After assuming the Kyivan throne in 1113, one of the main goals of
Volodimer Monomax seems to have been to counter the foreign ties
of the Izjaslaviči and thus prevent them from seizing power. One of
the ways in which he did this was by arranging a marriage between
his granddaughter Ingeborg and Knud Lavard. Knud was a son of the
Danish king Eric Ejegod, but he had been displaced by his uncle Niels
after his father’s death on crusade.\textsuperscript{28} After he came of age he went to the court of Lothar, duke of Saxony,\textsuperscript{29} who appointed him to the vacant post of duke of Schleswig in 1115.\textsuperscript{30} The date of the marriage was not recorded, but it most likely occurred at this time.\textsuperscript{31} Lothar was a major power in central Europe and a foe of the Poles, and Knud was one of his favorites. This alliance meant that, as was the case with Evpraksija, the ruling power in Kyiv had protection against the Izjaslawići because the Poles were threatened from multiple sides.\textsuperscript{32} This was all part of Monomax’s overall plan to isolate Jaropolk Svjatopolčič in Volodymyr-Volyn and eventually drive him from power.

Saxo Grammaticus offers a different explanation for the marriage, one grounded in Scandinavian familial connections. He asserts that the marriage was arranged by Queen Margaret of Denmark, daughter of Inge Steinkelsson of Sweden and sister to M’stislav Volodimerič’s wife, Kristín. Margaret was married to Niels Sveinsson, the king of Denmark, who had succeeded Knud’s father, Eric Ejegod. According to Saxo, in an attempt to draw the family closer together and build support for her son Magnus, she arranged a marriage between her niece Ingeborg and her nephew by marriage, Knud (and also arranged another marriage between kinsmen).\textsuperscript{33} This is an important acknowledgment of medieval kinship ties and the power of marital ties, both of which are generally assumed and illustrated, but rarely stated outright in the sources. That said, this may be a rationalization of the marriage based on too little information and the author’s reliance on genealogical explanations for causation, as is evident in other places in Saxo. The marriage of Ingeborg and Knud was made in the large-scale arena of interkingdom politics, and while Saxo’s explanation is reasonable, the larger picture of European politics should also be considered when looking at this marriage.
In Saxo’s portrayal, Margaret seemed truly interested in building loyalty for Magnus, and once the two marriages she arranged had occurred, she divided her patrimony into three, keeping one piece for herself, and giving one piece each to her two nieces.\(^34\) Although we are forced to guess at the material means that other Rusian queens had, we know in the case of Ingeborg that she owned land in Sweden that was deeded to her from her aunt. Eric Christiansen in his commentary on Saxo notes that Scandinavian royal women regularly inherited property, though usually patrimonial, not royal, lands.\(^35\) This suggests that Kristín, wife of Mśtislav, would also have inherited patrimonial land in Sweden, which she could have kept to maintain herself in Novgorod or later deeded to her children.\(^36\) This is a fascinating insight into the maintenance of medieval women abroad in general, and specifically the maintenance of Rusian women and women in Rus’.\(^\)  

The *Knýtlinga Saga* offers up a third version of the marriage to contrast with the two already given. This later saga states that Knud Lavard knew of Ingeborg and her family and that he dispatched a friendly Baltic trader whom he had converted to Christianity, Vidgaut, as his emissary to “Harald” (Mśtislav Volodimerović) to negotiate a marriage agreement. Harald is clearly identified via his, his mother’s, and his wife’s genealogies. In the saga Vidgaut successfully impresses Harald with tales of Knud, about whom Harald has already heard, and with Ingeborg’s consent the marriage is arranged. Vidgaut then returns to inform Knud, who prepares for the festivities while Ingeborg is dispatched from Rus’ “with a splendid retinue.”\(^37\) This version of the story is particularly interesting, as it contains many details that are not seen elsewhere that develop the ideas behind the importance of dynastic marriages—that is, an emissary is sent to arrange the marriage, the consent of the woman involved is received, and the bride brings a retinue with her to her new kingdom.\(^38\) The details are very important in the dynastic marriage process, and the account in *Knýtlinga Saga* becomes more convincing because of their inclusion. Whether Knud arranged the marriage himself via the embassy of Vidgaut, or whether it was arranged through the auspices of Queen Margaret, is impossible to say with any certainty. Even if Margaret had arranged the marriage, an emissary to her sister Kristín and her brother-in-law Mśtislav would have been required, as would an accompanying retinue for the returning bride. While not always mentioned, these parts of the dynastic marriage tradition were still necessary, and thus the stories might contain complementary pieces of information.  

Knud’s relationship with his uncle and cousin was a complex one. Niels was, most likely, the rightful heir to Knud’s father Eric Ejegod, as the Danes practiced a system of lateral succession from brother to brother (similar to Rus’).\(^39\) Thus, Knud’s loyalty to Lothar of Saxony
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and Knud’s subsequent naming as king of the Abodrites are viewed as evidence of animus between Knud and Niels, especially in light of later actions. This situation is made more complicated by evidence from the chronicle of Helmold, who notes a collegial relationship between Niels as king of Denmark and Knud as a powerful neighbor. This relationship, while not necessarily friendly, was in Helmold’s portrayal worrisome to Margaret, who was interested in the succession of her own son to the throne (a concern also made evident in Saxo). Her worries were, in all likelihood, well founded, as following a system of lateral succession, Knud would have precedence over her son Magnus, which is likely why she incited Magnus to kill Knud. Margaret’s actions, while plausible, also fit into the medieval topos of the manipulative queen, and thus must be read with caution. Magnus’s plotting roused Ingeborg to warn her husband about Magnus, about whom she had misgivings because of a premonition in a dream. A dream foreshadowing the future is a tool of the narration of saint’s lives (Knud is later sainted), as well as other medieval writings, but it does serve as another mention of Ingeborg, and notice of her agency. Knud disregarded his wife’s advice, and in 1131 Magnus arranged for an ambush, killing Knud after giving him the kiss of peace. Eight days after the death of her husband, Ingeborg gave birth to their fourth child, their first son. The boy was named Valdemar, in honor of Ingeborg’s grandfather and the patriarch of her family, Volodimer Monomax. This was probably an attempt to explain the foreign name of Valdemar, which could more easily be explained by maternal influence, as has been shown in other Rusian cases, particularly the case of the firstborn daughter of Ingeborg, Kristín. Further, if one accepts some truth in her premonition and warning, that would require her to be in some proximity to Knud soon before his death.

As we have seen in the case of the dynastic marriage of her sister Malfrid, Ingeborg was aided by her brother-in-law Eric, who looked after her and her children and fought to avenge her husband, his brother. Ingeborg also received assistance from her sister, who was able to arrange the aid of her stepson King Magnus of Norway, and even married Eric Emune, who after avenging his brother Knud became king of Denmark. While waging his war against Magnus, Eric operated from land in Scania in Sweden, using the people and resources of that territory as his own. Where he came by this land is unknown, but it can be suggested that this was part of the territory given to Ingeborg or Malfrid by their mother Kristín, who had gotten the land from her father Inge Steinkelsson, king of Sweden. This land may have been granted permanently or temporarily to Eric to aid him in his campaign against the murderer of Ingeborg’s husband.
Ingeborg’s last known appearance in the primary sources is at the death of King Eric Emune, when the people of Denmark ask for her son Valdemar to be made king. However, because of his age (only eight years old), Ingeborg and other counselors advised that Eric Lamb be made king until Valdemar reached his age of majority. Adviser was a typical role for a mother to play, but it is atypical for it to be recorded, so this an important instance to keep in mind. Unfortunately it is the last instance in which she is mentioned. It is known that one of her three daughters, Katrina, “was married in the east,” which in the language of the Knýtlinga Saga almost always refers to Rus’. Ingeborg would have likely had a hand in the marriage, but her actual involvement is uncorroborated. Nevertheless, the sources that we do have of her, and her role in these events, creates the picture of a remarkable life for the Rusian princess, including several items that show her loyalty, or consideration for, her natal family.