

A 'Khazar Prince' at the Walls of Medieval Kiev

The Collision of Princely Succession in the Russian *Primary Chronicle*

Aleksandr Koptev

In a previous article I examined the Nordic custom of establishing a client by offering him a sword, which was also customary among the princes of early medieval Rus'.¹ The sword-offering appears in several episodes of the *Primary Chronicle* ('The Tale of Bygone years', ca. 1110) that depict political subordination in the pre-Christian epoch. A similar offering of a sword in *Heimskringla* and *Nóregs konunga tal (Fagrskinna)* demonstrates that there was a tradition of symbols and rituals common to early medieval northern and eastern Europe. The specific focus of my investigation was the narrative of the first encounter between the Khazar army and the Poljanian town Kiev, the dwellers of which offered the Khazars a sword in reply to their demand to pay them a tribute. This episode is included in the preface of the *Primary Chronicle*, which describes the very early history of Kiev before the arrival of the northern chieftain Oleg with his Rus' warriors.

After this time, and subsequent to the death of the three brothers in Kiev, the Poljanians were oppressed by the Drevljans and other neighbours of them. Then the Khazars came upon them as they lived in the hills and forests, and demanded tribute from them. After consulting among themselves, the Poljanians paid as tribute one sword per hearth, which the Khazars bore to their prince and their elders, and said to them, 'Behold, we have found new tribute'. When asked whence it was derived, they replied, 'From the forest on the hills by the river Dnepr'. The elders inquired what tribute had been paid, whereupon the swords were exhibited. The Khazars elders then protested, 'Evil is this tribute, prince. We have won it with a one-edged weapon called a sabre, but the weapon of these men is sharp on both edges and is called a sword. These men shall impose tribute upon us and upon other lands'. All this has

¹ Aleksandr Koptev, 'The Story of 'Chazar Tribute': A Scandinavian Ritual Trick in the Russian *Primary Chronicle*', *Scando-Slavica* 56 (2010), 189–212.

come to pass, for they spoke thus not of their own will, but by God's commandment. The outcome was the same in the time of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, when Moses was led before him, and the elders of Pharaoh foretold that he should subjugate Egypt. For the Egyptians perished at the hand of Moses, though the Jews were previously their slaves. Just as the Egyptians ruled supreme, but were themselves subsequently ruled over, so it has also come to pass that the Russes rule over the Khazars even to this day.²

My previous examination of this fragment showed that the story does not relate to a tribute to the Khazars, which Slavic tribes usually paid in silver or the valuable skins of squirrel, fox, or marten, but not in swords. The sword-offering was a custom that symbolised the acceptance by the recipient of their subordination to the giver. Thus, by offering a sword, the Poljanians suggested that the Khazars acknowledge the overlordship of Kiev by accepting it. The medieval compiler was clearly confused, as he transformed the original motif of offering a sword into a payment of tribute. It seems therefore obvious that there existed an earlier version of the story, according to which the offered sword implied the superiority of Kiev over the Khazars. According to the reconstruction of Aleksej Shakhmatov, the story of the meeting of the Khazars with the Poljanians received its final form in the 1110s in the *Primary Chronicle*, which was based on several previous compilations.³ Recently Aleksej Gippius argued that the section about Moses and Pharaoh was compiled no earlier than the hypothetical *Initial Compilation* (*Nachalnyj Svod*) ca. 1093–1095.⁴ Modern opponents of Shakhmatov's theories have to see the 'Khazar story' as the entry of the author of the *Primary Chronicle*, either the legendary monk Nestor, or the Hegumen Silvestre, who wrote between 1110 and 1118 following to unknown sources.⁵

² *The Russian primary chronicle: Laurentian text*, S. Hazzard Cross and O.P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor trans. and ed., The Mediaeval Academy of America: Cambridge, MA 1953 (hereafter *The Russian primary chronicle*), 58. For the Russian text, see *Laurentjevskaja letopis': povest' vremennykh let* in *Polnoe Sobranie Russkikh Letopisej* (hereafter PSRL), vol. 1, Leningrad 1926, 16–17. Also for the Eastern Slavic text according to Laurentian (1377), Radziwill (1490s), Academy (the end of 15th century), Hypatian (ca. 1425), and Khlebnikov (16th century) compilations, see *The Pověst' vremennykh lét: An Interlinear Collation and Paradosis*, Donald Ostrowski with David J. Birnbaum and Horace G. Lunt (eds) (Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature, Texts 10: 1–3), Harvard 2003 (hereafter *PVL: An Interlinear Collation*), 86–91.

³ See Aleksej A. Shakhmatov, *Razyskanija o Russkikh letopisjakh*, Moscow 1908 (reprint, Kuchkovo Pole, 2001), 385–386; 305–306; also Mikhail D. Priselkov, *Istorija russkogo letopisanija XI–XV vv.*, 2nd ed., D. Bulanin: Sankt-Petersburg 1996, 68–69.

⁴ See Aleksej A. Gippius, 'Rekosha družhina Igorevi... K lingvotekstologičeskoj stratifikazii nachal'noj letopisi', *Russian Linguistics* 25 (2001), 147–181 at 154–155.

⁵ For the criticism to Shakhmatov's methodology and new approaches to the authorship of the *Primary Chronicle*, see Vadim Yu. Aristov, 'Redaction, Compilation, or Chronicle? (on the genre

A curious aspect of the extant chronicle version is that the Khazar patriarchs interpret the sword offering more or less correctly - as a symbol of their subjection – whereas there is no clear indication that the Kievans think of it in this way. In other words, the Khazars appear to be better acquainted with the rituals of northern Europe than either the Rus' in Kiev or King Harald Finehair in the apocryphal tale of *Fagrskinna*, in which he is fooled by King Athelstan's offer of a sword. In fact, the use of this ritual at Kiev suggests that the original version told of a meeting between two leaders belonging to the same cultural circle, both of whom knew the significance of offering a sword.

The Nordic background of the story of the sword compels us to look for a prototype of the meeting of the Poljanians and the Khazar warriors in the time of Jaroslav the Wise. Prince Jaroslav was assisted by Scandinavian mercenaries in his conquest of Kiev in 1016–1019.⁶ The account of the Khazars' demand of tribute from Kiev in ancient times exists in an alternative version in the *Primary Chronicle* under 1023, when two prince-brothers divided the Russian country between themselves. Kiev was ruled by Prince Jaroslav, supported by the Varangians, who was challenged by Prince Mstislav with the support of the army abducted from the Khazar country. Mstislav's arrival at the wall of Kiev is analysed in this article as the key episode, which, on the one hand, allows clarifying the principles of succession in the Rjurikid family, and, on the other, the way the chronicles compiled these earlier narratives. I argue that the narrative masks events relating to conflicts among the sons of Vladimir the Great, at a time when ideas about the order of succession to the Kievan throne were changing under Byzantine influence. The replacement of the former pagan tradition of princely succession after the Christianisation of Rus' led to the rewritings of the history of this period in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. Ultimately I put forward a reconstruction of the earlier version of the Khazars' arrival at Kiev, when they were really offered and accepted a sword from the local people.

The Khazars' Arrival at Kiev in 1023

The struggle for rule over Kiev between the sons of Prince Vladimir the Great started after his death in 1015 and, as chronicles state, ended in the victory of Jaroslav in 1019. But in 1023, his brother Mstislav suddenly arrived from distant

of Rus' annalistic sources of 11th–13th century)', *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana* 13 (2013), 105–129.

⁶ For the Varangian mercenaries of Prince Jaroslav see *Lavrentjevskaja letopis'* in PSRL 1, 140; *Novgorodskaja pervaja letopis' starshogo i mladshogo izvodov* in PSRL 3, Moscow–Leningrad 1950 (reprint Moscow 2000), 174; Henrik Birnbaum, 'Jaroslav's Varangian Connection', *Scando-Slavica* 24 (1978), 5–25 = Henrik Birnbaum, *Essays in Early Slavic Civilization*, W. Fink: Munich 1981, 128–145.

Tmutorokan, indicating that the conflict was not settled. The *Primary Chronicle* (under the year 1023–1024) states that he wished to take the Kievan principedom but the Kievan people did not ‘accept’ him, so he became ruler in Chernigov:

Mstislav marched against Jaroslav with a force of Khazars and Kasogians. While Jaroslav was at Novgorod, Mstislav arrived before Kiev from Tmutorokan, but the inhabitants of Kiev would not admit him. He thus departed thence and established himself upon the throne of Chernigov.⁷

From this point onwards Chernigov plays an increasingly important role in the history of Rus', at least as it is represented in the chronicles.⁸ At the same time, Prince Mstislav is the first known Russian ruler of Tmutorokan. He actively struggled to expand Russian influence in Tmutorokan's neighbourhood and personally fought a single combat with a local chieftain, Rededja, thus securing the submission of the Kasogian tribe. The city of Tmutorokan belonged to the territory of the former Khazar Khaganate, which decayed after it was defeated by Prince Svjatoslav in 965.⁹ Despite the political decline of the Khaganate, a substantial part of the local population continued to retain the name of Khazars. For Byzantine chroniclers the territory north-east of the Black Sea was Khazar country even in the tenth and early eleventh centuries.¹⁰ And much later the Russian princes in Tmutorokan, who preserved their close links to Chernigov, are known to have held the title of ‘rulers of the Khazar country’. For instance, Prince Oleg the son of Svjatoslav, who was closely associated with Tmutorokan from 1078 to 1115, is called ‘an archon of Matrakha (Tmutorokan), Zikhia and the whole of Khazaria’ in an inscription on a seal.¹¹ The local Khazars appear in

⁷ *The Russian primary chronicle*, 134. For the Russian text, see *Laurentjevskaja letopis'* in PSRL 1, 147. Cf. PVL: *An Interlinear Collation*, 1169–1170.

⁸ See Volodymyr Mezentsev, ‘The masonry churches of medieval Chernihiv’, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 11 (1987), 367–372; David Miller, ‘Monumental Building and its Patrons as Indicators of Economic and Political Trends in Rus', 900-1262', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 38 (1990), 321–355; Jean Blankoff, ‘Černigov, rivale de Kiev?: à propos de son développement urbain’, *Revue des études slaves* 63 (1991), 145–155.

⁹ For Tmutorokan under the Russian rulership, see Nikolaj F. Kotljar, ‘Tmutorokanskoe knjazhestvo: realnost' ili istoriograficheskij mif', *Drevnejšie gosudarstva Vostočnoj Evropy*. 2003. *Mnimye realnosti v antichnykh i srednevekovykh tekstakh*, Vostochnaja literatura: Moscow 2005, 107–118; Viktor N. Chkhaidze, ‘Tmutarakan' – vladenie drevnerusskogo gosudarstva v 80-e gg. X v. – 90-e gg. XI v.', *Sugdejskij sbornik*, vol. 5, Gorobetz: Kiev-Sudak 2012, 251–270.

¹⁰ See Ioannis Scylitzae *Synopsis historiarum* / Recensuit Ioannes Thurn, Berlin 1973, 354.

¹¹ For the coins minted at Tmutorokan by Jaroslav's grandson, Oleg Svjatoslavich, see Valentin L. Janin and Gennadij G. Litavrin, ‘Novye materialy o proischozhenii Vladimira Monomakha', *Istoriko-arheologičeskij sbornik: Artemiju Vladimiroviču Arzichovskomu to his 60th anniversary*, Moscow State Lomonosov University Press: Moscow 1962, 204–221 at 208–210; Valentin L. Janin, *Aktovye pečati Drevnej Rusi X–XV vv*, vol. 1, Nauka: Moscow 1970, 26–29; Martin Dimnik,

the *Primary Chronicle* under 1079, when they captured Prince Oleg and sent him to Constantinople; and also under 1083, when Oleg 'cut them to pieces' after his return. Thus, when the chronicler wrote that 'the Russian princes rule over the Khazars *even to this day*', his usage of the name 'Khazars' was fully in keeping with that of others in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. For the Kievan people Prince Mstislav was the first known Russian ruler of the Khazar country who brought a 'Khazar' host to Kiev.¹²

In 1022, Jaroslav was in Novgorod, engaging in a struggle against the pagan priests (*volkhovy*); therefore, the statement of the chronicle that Mstislav made war on ('marched against') Jaroslav is a later interpretation. In fact, it was Jaroslav who, when informed of his brother's appearance, raised an army from the Varangians and marched against him from distant Novgorod.¹³ Unfortunately for him, his Varangians suffered a crushing defeat in the battle of Listven in 1024. After Mstislav's brilliant victory, according to the chronicles, the two brothers divided between themselves the whole territory controlled by the Rus', excluding the principality of Polotsk, which had already stood apart in the time of Prince Vladimir. The division was made 'according to the course of the Dnieper' between Jaroslav, who lived in Novgorod, and Mstislav, who held Chernigov. This would have been a very strange division of the country, given the geographic situation of Chernigov to the east and Novgorod to the north of the River Dnieper. The counterpart of Chernigov on the left bank of the Dnieper was Kiev on the right bank. The chronicle explains that Kiev was the city of Jaroslav, but says he 'was afraid to sit there' because of Mstislav, and occupied the city only after the two made peace.

'Oleg's status as ruler of Tmutarakan': the sphragistic evidence', *Mediaeval Studies* 55 (1993), 137-149; Aleksandr V. Gadlo, *Predystoria Priazovskoj Rusi. Očerki istorii russkogo knjazhenija na Severnom Kavkaze*, Sankt-Petersburg University Press : Sankt-Petersburg 2002, 162 and 174 not. 109; Jonathan Shepard, 'Close encounters with the Byzantine world: the Rus at the Straits of Kerch', in K.L. Reyerson, Th.G. Stavrou, J.D. Tracy (eds) *Pre-modern Russia and its world: essays in honor of Thomas S. Noonan*, Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden 2006, 37-46.

¹² These 'Khazars' may not have been Khazars at all, in our sense of the term. It seems likely that the Byzantine and Russian use of Khazars in this sense, to refer to any Turkic peoples occupying the steppe north of the Black Sea (where the Khazars once dominated, the 'Khazar country'), is comparable to the Frankish and other west Europeans' frequent use of 'Avars' to refer to Magyars, because the territory they settled in was the same that had formed the Avar Khanate before its destruction by Charlemagne. Mstislav's army may well have included Pechenegs, Kasogians, Oghuz, Khazar remnants and a Rus retinue, but they were called 'Khazars' because he ruled the '(ex-)Khazar country'.

¹³ Jaroslav employed the Varangian warriors of a certain Jakun, who was recently identified with the Norwegian king Haakon Ericsson (*Hákon Eiríksson*) expelled from his country by Olaf Haraldsson. See Savva M. Mikheev, 'Varjazhskie knjazja Jakun, Afrikan i Shimon: literaturnye sjuzhety, transformazija imen i istoričeskij kontekst', *Drevnjaja Rus': Voprosy medievistiki* 2(32) (2008), 27-29.

In the *Novgorodean First Chronicle* there is no mention of Mstislav, and only under the year 1037, when he died, is it noted that 'Jaroslav re-built the city of Kiev and the Church of St. Sophia was completed'. In the parallel texts of the *Hypatian Chronicle* and the *Laurentian Chronicle* under the years 1024 and 1026, there are traces of two different versions of the peace agreement between Jaroslav and Mstislav. According to the version under 1024, Mstislav let Jaroslav have Kiev after the Battle of Listven, arguing that his brother was *older* than he:

Then Mstislav proposed to Jaroslav that the latter, as the eldest brother, should remain in Kiev, while the Chernigov district should belong to Mstislav. But Jaroslav did not dare to return to Kiev until they were properly reconciled. So Mstislav settled in Chernigov, and Jaroslav in Novgorod, though Kiev was occupied by subjects of Jaroslav.¹⁴

This fragment emphasizes Jaroslav's seniority over his brother. Without the 'seniority' of Jaroslav, the only motive given for Mstislav's refusal to seize the full rewards of his victory, there is no logic in the chronicle version of these events and its construction disintegrates. If Mstislav accepted Jaroslav's 'seniority' as a reason to cede Kiev to him after his victory at Listven, he was surely aware of this supposed seniority before his victory, in which case it must be asked why, according to the chronicle itself, he attempted to install himself in Kiev in 1023, an attempt which he abandoned only after the people of the city rejected him. In addition, the chronicle does not explain why Jaroslav still felt it necessary to fight a battle against Mstislav in 1024 when the latter was supposedly obliged to defer to him as his senior. It seems more likely that both brothers aimed to possess Kiev but that Mstislav reached the city faster from Tmutorokan than his brother did from Novgorod.

After Mstislav had won his great victory over the Varangians at Listven, one might expect that he would enjoy the fruits of his victory. Instead, for some reason, he voluntarily yielded to Jaroslav. The reason given, that Jaroslav was older, is obviously a later explanation and not the original reason for Mstislav's refusal to occupy Kiev. This version of events seems appropriate to the political situation after the death of Prince Jaroslav the Wise. The idea of seniority among brothers comes from his mouth in the *Primary Chronicle* under 1054, but it actually became relevant only in the 1070s, when relationships between the sons of Jaroslav became strained.

Mikhail Priselkov suggested that the image of Mstislav as an ideal prince who honoured the seniority of his brother and voluntarily gave him the city of

¹⁴ *The Russian primary chronicle*, 135. For the Russian text, see *Laurentjevskaja letopis'* in PSRL 1, 148. For versions see *PVL: An Interlinear Collation*, 1180–1181.

Kiev was created by Nikon, the learned monk of the Kiev Monastery of the Caves. Nikon visited Tmutorokan several times in the 1060s and 1070s, when he was in conflict with the Kievan princes.¹⁵ According to Shakhmatov, Nikon participated in the creation of the hypothetical *Compilation* of 1073.¹⁶ As a part of his program for resolving the princely quarrels, the story of Mstislav could have been added to the original version of the events in an early chronicle, which Shakhmatov identified with the so-called *Oldest Compilation*.¹⁷ From 1078 to 1088 Nikon was a Hegumen of the Monastery of the Caves. It is understandable, therefore, that from the 1070s onwards the chroniclers depicted Jaroslav as the oldest brother among the sons of Prince Vladimir at the moment of the latter's death; as such he had the right to rule in Kiev in accordance with the principle of seniority.

According to the *Primary Chronicle*, under the year 1026, the brothers made peace by dividing Russian territory 'according to the course of the Dnieper':

Jaroslav recruited many soldiers and arrived at Kiev, where he made peace with his brother Mstislav near Gorodets. They divided Rus' according to the course of the Dnepr. Jaroslav took the Kiev side, and Mstislav the other. They thus began to live in peace and fraternal amity. Strife and tumult ceased, and there was a great calm in the land.¹⁸

By concluding this peace, Jaroslav recuperated his losses in the Battle of Listven and thereafter played on equal terms. This fragment emphasises the equality of Jaroslav and Mstislav. They are both princes 'alien' to Kiev, the one having ties with the Varangians and the other with the 'Khazars'. By the reference to the 'Khazars', the chronicler obviously tried to neutralize the impression which the well-known connection between Jaroslav and the Scandinavians produced. This version is more appropriate to the situation in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, when the sons of Prince Svjatoslav, the son of Jaroslav the Wise who died before his co-ruling brothers, struggled for equality with their cousins, the descendants of Jaroslav's two other sons, Izjaslav and Vsevolod. The descendants of Svjatoslav claimed to preserve the principdom of their father in Chernigov and Tmutorokan. While the sons of Vsevolod had close

¹⁵ See Gadlo 2002, 251–253.

¹⁶ For a discussion of the problem, see Vladimir Ja. Petrukhin, 'Nikon i Tmutorokan: k problemam rekonstrukcii nachalnogo letopisanija', *Vostochnaja Evropa v drevnosti i srednevekovje*, Vol. XV: *Avtor i text*, Nauka: Moscow 2003, 194–198.

¹⁷ See Priselkov 1996, 68–69.

¹⁸ *The Russian primary chronicle*, 135–136. For the Russian text, see *Lavrentjevskaja letopis'* in PSRL 1, 149. For versions see *PVL: An Interlinear Collation*, 1182–1183.

connections to Novgorod and northern Europe, the sons of Svjatoslav held the title of 'rulers of the Khazar country'.

The situation of the second half of the eleventh century can also explain the strange division of the Russian territory 'according to the course of the Dnieper'. According to Arsenij Nasonov, a separation of the Kiev, Chernigov and Perejaslavl' princedoms from the formerly united Rus' (*Russkaja zemlja*) began after the 'testament of Jaroslav the Wise' in 1054.¹⁹ The most contentious border, that between the Kiev and the Chernigov principalities, was agreed as the Dnieper. It is natural, therefore, that the princes paid particular attention to this area. The first division 'according to the course of the Dnieper' took place between the sons of Jaroslav the Wise in the 1060s and '70s. Izjaslav, who was supported by the Polish king Boleslaw II, occupied Kiev, while his brother Svjatoslav of Chernigov united in his hands all the land on the left bank of the Dnieper, including Rostov and Novgorod, and controlled the youngest Vsevolod in Perejaslavl'.²⁰ After the death of Svjatoslav in 1076 and Izjaslav's return from Poland, two brothers again separated their domains 'according to the course of the Dnieper': Izjaslav received Kiev and Vsevolod was installed in Chernigov. But Izjaslav was killed in 1078, and Vsevolod became prince of Kiev. In this role he again divided the family ownership 'according to the course of the Dnieper'. His son Vladimir Monomakh received Chernigov and Perejaslavl' on the left bank of the Dnieper, and Jaropolk son of Izjaslav was given the cities of Vladimir and Turov on the right bank of the Dnieper. After the death of Prince Vsevolod in 1093, once again 'according to the course of the Dnieper', the spheres of influence between Svjatopolk son Izjaslav (Kiev and the western regions of the Dnieper) and Vladimir Monomakh (Chernigov, Perejaslavl', Rostov, and Novgorod) were separated. It was at this time that the *Initial Compilation* was supposedly compiled, and the chronicler sought to attribute the idea of 'the division according to the course of the Dnieper' to Prince Jaroslav the Wise, the founder of the dynasty, in order to give it legitimacy. Prince Jaroslav's reign thus set a precedent for his descendants, and his time was described in the mould of a 'foundation myth'.

What did 'the division according to the course of the Dnieper' between Jaroslav and Mstislav mean? Was it the result of a random correlation of forces, as described by the chronicle? Or is the will of the later compiler manifested in it, looking at the early events in the light of the clichés customary since the second half of the eleventh century? Or are we presented with some unknown rule that determined the division of principalities in this way? The resolution of

¹⁹ See Arsenij N. Nasonov, '*Russkaja zemlja*' i obrazovanie territorii drevnerusskogo gosudarstva, Academy of Science of the USSR Press: Moscow 1951, 60.

²⁰ See Vladimir N. Kuchkin, 'Formirovanie i razvitie gosudarstvennoj territorii vostochnykh slavjan v IX-XIII vekakh', *Otechestvoennaja istorija* 3 (2003), 71–80 at 73–74.

this problem is closely related to another question. Why did Mstislav become prince of Chernigov, which was his city thereafter until his death in 1036?

In the *Primary Chronicle*, Chernigov does not appear among the cities distributed by Prince Vladimir the Great among his sons. This is very strange, because Chernigov and Perejaslav' are mentioned in the treaties with Byzantium made by Prince Oleg and Prince Igor in 907 and 944 respectively. After Mstislav's death, Chernigov became one of the most important cities in Rus'. A possible reason for Chernigov's absence among the cities distributed to the sons of Vladimir the Great might be the hostility between the descendants of two sons of Jaroslav the Wise, Svjatoslav and Vsevolod. This enmity determined the nature of politics in Rus' during the second half of the eleventh and the early twelfth centuries.²¹ The fighting between the two clans had a strong influence on the annalistic version of earlier events. Vsevolod's descendants, who finally won the struggle and who controlled the writing of the Russian chronicles, took care to minimize the role of Chernigov, the inherited domain of their cousins, the descendants of Svjatoslav.

As a result the chronicle placed Mstislav in Tmutorokan, arguing that it was his father, Prince Vladimir, who had installed him there. It seems possible, however, that Mstislav installed himself in Tmutorokan as a result of his conquest of this city. His father, at the end of his reign, most likely sent him to an expedition against Tmutorokan. The situation in the northern Black Sea region became complicated in 1015, as a result of the revolt of the Byzantine archon Georgius Tzoulas. Byzantium received assistance from Kiev, ruled by Vladimir the Great, who was married to a Byzantine princess. John Skylitzes shortly informs us that in January of 1015, the Emperor from Constantinople

sent a fleet against Khazaria under the command of Mongos, the son of Andronikos, duke of Lydos. With the cooperation of Sphengos, the brother of Vladimir and brother-in-law of the emperor, he subdued the region and actually captured its governor, George Tzoulas, in the first engagement.²²

According to Skylitzes, Sphengos (or Sfengus) was a brother of Vladimir the Great and a leader in the joint Byzantine-Kievan campaign to depose Georgius Tzoulas, who declared himself the Khagan of the local Khazars. Some historians, such as Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard, hypothesize that Sfengus is identical with Mstislav, son of Prince Vladimir, rather than with his

²¹ Cf. Martin Dimnik, 'Oleg Svyatoslavich and his Patronage of the Cult of SS. Boris and Gleb', *Medieval Studies* 50 (1988), 349–370.

²² John Skylitzes, *A synopsis of Byzantine history, 811–1057*, trans. John Wortley, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge - New York 2010, 336 (Ioannis Scylitzae *Synopsis historiarum*, 354).

brother.²³ However, this suggestion is unlikely as it seems that each leader led different armies: Sfengus perhaps departed from Constantinople by sea, while Mstislav went overland from Kiev.²⁴ Sfengus waged war in the Crimea, while Mstislav was sent to the Taman peninsula in order to prevent the spreading of the revolt to the Bosphorus and the local tribes, in particular to the Khazars. In other words, although the same reason lay behind their missions, Sfengus was sent to Chersonesus and Mstislav to Tmutorokan.²⁵ According to the chronicles, the early Russian princes often acted together with an older military attendant of the rank of *voevoda*. The *voevoda* was frequently a kin-relative of the prince, as Rjurik's relative Oleg was with Prince Igor or Svjatoslav's brother-in-law Dobrynja with Prince Vladimir, his nephew. Thus Sfengus could well have been Prince Vladimir's brother, who was sent to the south together (or separately) with his nephew Mstislav.²⁶

Mstislav proved himself an outstanding warrior and received the nickname 'the Brave'. His feats of arms in Tmutorokan, described in the *Primary Chronicle* under 1022, suggest that he may have been the prince who established Russian control over the 'Khazar country'.²⁷ The events can also be seen in another light. Vladimir Petrukhin suggests that Mstislav, as the inheritor of Khazar political traditions in the role of Tmutorokan's ruler, pretended for the territory, which had paid tributes to the Khazar Khaganate in the ninth and tenth centuries.²⁸ After his legitimation in Tmutorokan, Mstislav went to Rus', and having failed to establish his capital in Kiev, installed himself in Chernigov. Arsenij Nasonov drew attention to the *Primary Chronicle* account of Mstislav's return from Tmutorokan in 1023, in which there is no mention of any resistance to him.²⁹ Mstislav had no need to drive any prince out of Chernigov, something that a chronicler friendly to Jaroslav would surely not have forgotten had it occurred. All this allow suggesting that Mstislav was either installed in Chernigov by his father before the expedition to Tmutorokan, or placed himself

²³ Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus: 750–1200*, Longman: London / New York 1996, 201; Shepard 2006, 30–34.

²⁴ See Valerij P. Stepanenko, 'K istorii srednevekovoj Tavrii', *Vizantija i spednevekovyj Krym / Antichnaja drevnost i srednie veka* 26 (1992), 125–133.

²⁵ Gadlo 2002, 253 and 255, argues Mstislav's appearance in Tmutorokan in 1010 and his campaign against the Kasogians to 1016 or 1017.

²⁶ The relationship between uncle and nephew resembles the institution of fosterage (Russian *kormilstvo*) to which we drew attention in the previous article. See Koptev 2010, 200–201.

²⁷ For more detailed discussion, see Gadlo 2002, 247–263.

²⁸ Vladimir Ja. Petrukhin, 'Nachalo khristianstva na Rusi vo vtoroj polovine X – pervoj polovine XI v.' in B.N. Florja ed., *Khristianstvo v stranakh Vostochnoj, Jugo-Vostochnoj i Zentralnoj Evropy na poroge vtorogo tysjacheletija*, Jazyki slavjanskoj kultury: Moscow 2002, 114.

²⁹ See Nasonov 1951, 62–63.

in Chernigov after his return because the prince of the city perished in the continuing internecine strife and his throne was free.³⁰

After the death of Vladimir the Great his son Jaroslav, who was ruling in Novgorod, had probably taken advantage of Mstislav's absence from Rus' and marched against Kiev. According to the chronicles, during the conflict of 1015-1019, the brothers Boris, Gleb, Svjatoslav and Svjatopolk were murdered, while the other Prince Vladimir's sons, Vsevolod, Stanislav, Pozvzd and Sudislav disappeared from history. The return of Mstislav caused Jaroslav to gather new mercenaries hastily in order to preserve the fruits of his victory over his other brothers. The victory of Listven gave Mstislav the opportunity to control Kiev. In the situation he found himself in after this defeat, Jaroslav may well have been forced to retreat to Novgorod and remain out of Mstislav's reach until his death, that is, for the whole of the period 1024-1036.³¹ If this was the case, why did Mstislav return to Chernigov rather than taking the throne of Kiev? The answer to this question can be found in the relationship among the sons of Vladimir the Great.

The sons of the Kievan prince Vladimir the Great

The clash between Jaroslav and Mstislav originated in the previous rivalry between the sons of Prince Vladimir the Great following his death in 1015. According to the *Primary Chronicle*, in the feud of 1015 to 1019, three of Vladimir's sons were killed, three of their brothers disappeared, one escaped into exile and died in an unknown place, one survived the fratricide and lived in obscurity, and only Jaroslav and Mstislav remained at the head of Rus'. This version of the history is a later formulation masking the original course of events beneath chronicle accounts that have been shaped to later needs.

In the *Primary Chronicle* under 1024, Mstislav is represented as the younger brother of Jaroslav, and this is the only explanation given for his unexpected rejection of the benefits of his triumph in the battle of Listven. In reality, the concept of seniority among the brothers became relevant only after

³⁰ Recently Aleksej S. Schavelev, 'Mstislav Vladimirovich's Chernigovian Rus': manque kingdom', *Istoria: network scientific-educational journal* 5(13) (2012), 70–74, has drawn attention to the information of Scylitzes that after the death of Prince Vladimir the Great and his wife Anna the Byzantine, 'a man named Chrysocheir, a relative of his, embarked a company of eight hundred men and came to Constantinople, ostensibly to serve as mercenaries' (John Skylitzes, *A synopsis*, trans. John Wortley, 347). Schavelev suggests that the mercenaries of Chrysocheir inhabited the camp of the princely retinue in Shestovitsa alongside of Chernigov. Installing himself to Chernigov, Mstislav thus perhaps occupied the vacated position of Chrysocheir replacing him there.

³¹ See Franklin and Shepard 1996, 201–205, where the authors argue that Jaroslav spent a fair proportion of his time in Novgorod even after the peace with Mstislav in 1026–1036. Cf. Andrej L. Nikitin, *Osnovaniya russkoi istorii: Mifologiya i fakty*, Agraf: Moscow 2001, 264–265.

the 1070s, and Jaroslav may well have been younger than the chroniclers claimed.³² In the *Primary Chronicle* there are two lists of the sons of Vladimir the Great, under 980 and 988.³³ The first list specifies the children according to their mothers, the wives of Vladimir:

6488 (980). Now Vladimir was overcome by lust for women. His lawful wife was Rogneda, whom he settled on the Lybed', where the village of Predslavino now stands. By her he had four sons: Izjaslav, Mstislav, Jaroslav, and Vsevolod, and two daughters. The Greek woman bore him Svjatopolk; by one Czech he had a son Vysheslav; by another, Svjatoslav and Mstislav; and by a Bulgarian woman, Boris and Gleb.³⁴

Rogneda is obviously represented as Prince Vladimir's most significant wife because she was the mother of Jaroslav, the ultimate victor in the struggle for Kiev. However, the *Laurentian Chronicle*, sub anno 1128/6636, gives a somewhat different impression of Rogneda, who plotted revenge against her husband because of his offense, and ultimately was sent by him away from his princely court. Shakhmatov argues that both versions of Rogneda's story as it appears under 980 and 1128 derive from the later Novgorodian tradition, which asserted the superiority of the clan of Jaroslav's descendants (*Rjurikovichi*) in comparison to his brother Izjaslav's descendants (*Rogvolodovichi*) ruling in Polotsk.³⁵ Izjaslav was placed in Polotsk by his father, and the later compilers needed a reason to explain why the elder brother (and his descendants) was removed from the succession to the Kievan throne. Rogneda's attempt to kill Prince Vladimir was invented as a later addition to her original story to clarify the destiny of her son

³² The *Laurentian Chronicle* in PSRL 1, 162 refers to the death of Prince Jaroslav under 1054 and informs us that he was 76 years of age – that is, he was born in 978/9. The *Radzivilian Chronicle* in PSRL 38, 62 under 1016 relates he took the Kievan principedom at the age of 28, which would mean he was born in 988/9. According to the *Sophian first chronicle* in PSRL 6:1, 2nd ed., Moscow 2000, 129, Jaroslav was 18 in 1016. Prince Vladimir married Rogneda in 978 and Jaroslav was not their first child, so he could not be born in 978. He is thought to have been given a lifetime of 76 years by a later chronicler in order to represent him as older than his brother-rival Svjatopolk.

³³ See Ludolf Müller, 'Studien zur altrussischen Legende der Heiligen Boris und Gleb. III. Die Quellen der Chronikerzählung: 3. Die Namenslisten der Söhne Vladimirs in den Chronikartikeln über die Jahre 980 und 988 und im "Skazanie" über Boris und Gleb', *Zeitschrift für Slavische Philologie* 65 (2007/2008), 1–23.

³⁴ *The Russian primary chronicle*, 94. For the Russian text, see *Laurentjevskaja letopis'* in PSRL 1, 79–80. For versions see *PVL: An Interlinear Collation*, 571–573.

³⁵ Shakhmatov 2001, 109, 130, 177, 181–182, 267, 370. Shakhmatov favours the chronological priority of the version under 1128, while Francis Butler, 'The House of Rogvolod', in F.B. Uspenskij ed., *Imenoslov. Istoricheskaja semantika imeni*, 2, Indrik: Moscow 2007, 189–204 at 198–200 claims the precedence of the version under 980.

Izjaslav.³⁶ Her revenge in turn needed a reason and therefore the compiler had to use the motif of violence also known from the stories of the daughter of the Chersonese ruler and prince Jaropolk's widow, all having been raped by Prince Vladimir. The rape performed publicly perhaps was the part of a pagan wedding ritual.

All Kievan princes, after Jaroslav had established himself there in 1036 as the sole ruler in the land of Rus' assuming the entire sovereignty, were the descendants of Rogneda. In the hierarchy of wives second place is attributed to a Greek woman, the third to a Czech woman, the fourth to another Czech, and the fifth to a Bulgarian woman, who has been frequently suggested to have been the Byzantine princess Anna.³⁷ It is not possible to correlate the ages of Rogneda's sons and those of their (half-) brothers from other wives of Vladimir, because two or more of them were probably have been living with him simultaneously, and the children by different wives could therefore have been born alternately. According to the order of the names, one Mstislav was the second of Rogneda's sons and Jaroslav was the third. The second Mstislav was born of an unnamed wife of Prince Vladimir, simply defined in the chronicle as 'another'. The wording suggests that she may have been Czech, as was the mother of Vysheslav mentioned before her.³⁸

Igor Danilevskij draws attention to the two daughters in this list and argues that the list of Prince Vladimir's sons was modelled on the example of the biblical list of the twelve sons of the patriarch Jacob.³⁹ In this case the chronicler had information about ten sons of Vladimir the Great and added the two daughters of Rogneda to the list to give him the same number of children as Jacob.⁴⁰ According to this conception, Jaroslav was portrayed as a new Josef, not the oldest but the cleverest son of Vladimir the Great, the new Jacob.

³⁶ The motif of the wife's attempt to kill her husband seems to come through Scandinavian influence. See Adolf Stender-Petersen, *Die Varägersage als Quelle der Altrussischen Chronik*, Aarhus University Press: Aarhus–Leipzig 1934, 210–244 esp. 215–220; Inés García de la Puente, 'The Revenge of the Princess: Some considerations about Heroines in the PVL and in other Indo-European Literatures', in J. A. Álvarez-Pedrosa and S. Torres Prieto (eds.), *Medieval Slavonic Studies: New Perspectives for Research*, Institut d'études slaves: Paris 2009, 193–202 at 196–197; Savva M. Mikheev, 'Legenda of Vladimire i Rognede i skandinavskaja tradizija', in F.B. Uspenskij ed., *Imenoslov. Istorija jazyka. Istorija kultury*, Aleteja: Sankt-Petersburg 2010, 169–179.

³⁷ *Letopisnyj sbornik imenuemyj Tverskoj letopis'ju* in PSRL 15, Sankt-Petersburg 1863, 73. For Anna as the mother of Boris and Gleb, see Vasilij N. Tatischev, *Istorija Rossijskaja* (Sobranie sochinenij, 2), Ast: Moscow 2003, 614, 623; Sergej M. Solovjev, *Sochinenija*, 1: 1-2, Mysl': Moscow 1988, 195; Andrzej Poppe, 'Zemnaja gibel i nebesnoe torzhestvo Borisa i Gleba', *Trudy Otdela Drevne-Russkoj Literatury* 54 (2003), 304–336 at 308–313.

³⁸ Strictly to say, she could be 'another woman' or 'another Czech'. See Müller 2007/2008, 7.

³⁹ See Igor N. Danilevskij, *Povest' vremennykh let: germeneoticheskie osnovy letopisnykh tekstov*, Aspekt Press: Moscow 2004, 169–173; also Savva M. Mikheev, 'Razlichija v opisanijakh sobytij i vzaimootnoshenija tekstov Borisoglebskogo zikla', *Slavjanovedenie* 5 (2007), 3–19.

⁴⁰ On two sisters of Jaroslav, see Müller 2007/2008, 5–6.

The list of 980 was probably created by an earlier chronicler at the time of Jaroslav the Wise. For him it was neither possible nor necessary to deny the seniority of any of his brothers from wives other than his mother, Rogneda. It is stressed in the list that the brothers born of various wives by one father, which perhaps had some significance in that period. Martin Dimnik argues that the seniority of Vladimir's sons was determined by the status of their mothers rather than by their age.⁴¹ This would indicate that Mstislav the future prince of Tmutorikan was the son of the second Czech wife of Vladimir rather than the son of Rogneda, who was older than Jaroslav. Most likely, Jaroslav regarded himself as more significant than Mstislav and the legal successor of his father because his mother was the first and therefore the 'senior' wife of Prince Vladimir.

In the second list under 988, Vladimir's sons are not organized according to their mothers, as in the first list, but in a random order, listed alongside the cities they ruled at the moment of their father's death:

6496 (988) Vladimir was enlightened, and his sons and his country with him. For he had twelve sons: Vysheslav, Izjaslav, Jaroslav, Svjatopolk, Vsevolod, Svjatoslav, Mstislav, Boris, Gleb, Stanislav, Pozvzd, and Sudislav. He set Vysheslav in Novgorod, Izjaslav in Polotsk, Svjatopolk in Turov, and Jaroslav in Rostov. When Vysheslav, the oldest, died in Novgorod, he set Jaroslav over Novgorod, Boris over Rostov, Gleb over Murom, Svjatoslav over Dereva, Vsevolod over Vladimir, and Mstislav over Tmutorokan.⁴²

This list was also modelled after the list of the twelve sons of the biblical Jacob. The names of nine of the brothers appear in both lists, under 980 and 988, suggesting that these nine were the real sons of Prince Vladimir. The sole Mstislav of the list is placed after Jaroslav and Svjatoslav, giving a clear indication that he was the son of the Czech wife. One can assume that Mstislav son of Rogneda was dead by 988, and that his half-brother with the same name was perhaps born after his death.⁴³ As such he could be younger than Jaroslav. It is likely, however, that both lists were created no earlier than the mid-eleventh century, when only two sons of Prince Vladimir were still alive, Jaroslav the Wise and an enigmatic Sudislav, who was imprisoned by his brother. It is therefore likely that the earlier chronicler wrote within living memory of Vladimir's reign and the subsequent kin-strife, or at least had

⁴¹ Martin Dimnik, 'The 'Testament' of Jaroslav 'The Wise': A Re-examination', *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 29 (1987), 369–386 at 373–374.

⁴² *The Russian primary chronicle*, 119. For the Russian text, see *Laurentjevskaja letopis'* in PSRL 1, 121. For versions see *PVL: An Interlinear Collation*, 944–948.

⁴³ For Mstislav's genealogical place, see Müller 2007/2008, 8-9, 11–12, 16.

detailed information of Vladimir's wives and sons, while the second list was created later, when the only Mstislav that was remembered was the son who took part in the political life of Rus' after Vladimir's death.

The order of the sons in the list under 988 is quite telling. Prince Vladimir's two oldest sons, Vysheslav and Izjaslav, had died before their father, so that Jaroslav was represented as the oldest among the others. Even Svjatopolk is placed after him, although it was he who was the oldest surviving son at the moment of his father's death. Mstislav appears in the middle of the list, three positions below Jaroslav, after Rogneda's son Vsevolod and his own full brother Svjatoslav. The other brothers - Boris, Gleb, Stanislav, Pozvzd and Sudislav - were placed at the end of the list because none of them played a significant political role in the post-Vladimir era.⁴⁴ The latter three brothers are excluded from the succession in the entry of the *Primary Chronicle* under 988. Therefore, either they were too young to be installed in a city before their father died in 1015, or, more probably, their names belong to artificial figures, invented by the later chronicler to make the number up to twelve, replacing the two daughters of the first list. One can suggest that these fictitious 'sons of Vladimir the Great' perhaps were invented by peripheral local dynasts who in this way attempted to legitimize their right to their own princedoms, contesting in the second half of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth centuries against the Rjurikid clan, whose representatives were the descendants of Jaroslav the Wise.⁴⁵

Prince Vladimir's distribution of the cities to his sons does not correspond to the above order. The two oldest sons, who died before him, were given the so-called 'Varangian' cities, Polotsk and Novgorod. Polotsk was the native city of Rogneda, and there the descendants of her son Izjaslav later formed a dynasty, called *Rodvolodovichi* after her father, Rogvolod. Novgorod was the most important outpost of Kiev, which gathered tributes from a vast northern territory.⁴⁶ The *Primary Chronicle* places Vladimir the Great in this city

⁴⁴ Also there is no information of Vsevolod's role in the subsequent events in Rus', and therefore scholars suggests his identity with the Russian prince Vissavaldr from the Nordic saga of Olav Tryggvason. According to *Heimskringla*, Harald Grenske, a king in Vestfold, and Vissavaldr of Gardarik sought the hand of Sigrid the Haughty, widow of Eric the Victorious, who burned them to death in a great hall following a feast to discourage other suitors. See Jukka Korpela, *Beiträge zur Bevölkerungsgeschichte und Prosopographie der Kiever Rus' bis zum Tode von Vladimir Monomah*, Universität Jyväskylä: Jyväskylä 1995, 226, Nr. 986 and 987.

⁴⁵ The late *Sophian first chronicle* in PSRL 5, 120, *Novgorodean fourth chronicle* in PSRL 4/1, 90 and *Voskresenskaja chronicle* in PSRL 7, 313 place Stanislav in Smolensk and Sudislav in Pskov.

⁴⁶ *The Russian primary chronicle*, 61: 'Oleg set himself up as prince in Kiev, and declared that it should be the mother of Russian cities. The Varangians, Slavs, and others who accompanied him, were called Russes. Oleg began to build stockade towns, and imposed tribute on the Slavs, the Krivichians, and the Merians. He commanded that Novgorod should pay the Varangians tribute to the amount of 300 *grivny* a year for the preservation of peace. This tribute was paid to the Varangians until the death of Jaroslav.'

before he became the Kievan prince, although it seems possible that the chronicler described his conquest of Kiev from Novgorod on the model of his son Jaroslav's capture of the city in 1016–1019 and 1036. After Vladimir moved to Kiev the city of Novgorod was given to his oldest son Vysheslav. The third in the distribution list is Svjatopolk, who was placed by his father in Turov, a 'Varangian' city to the west of Kiev on the river Pripjat', which flows east from close to the Bug, then south into the Dnieper upstream from Kiev.⁴⁷ Turov was a link in a long-established trade-route from Kiev to Cracow and Prague.

It seems obvious that the way in which the cities were distributed was determined by their importance at the time, rather than by the sons' seniority. Therefore, after Turov we would expect the Drevljan country to be mentioned and the cities closest to Kiev, such as Smolensk, Chernigov and Perejaslavl', already known earlier from the *Primary Chronicle*. But these cities do not appear in the list. In fact, the 'Russian country' around Kiev is excluded from Prince Vladimir's inheritance. The Drevljan country, the most important region during the previous three generations, receded into obscurity. Svjatoslav is said to have been installed in the Drevljan country by Prince Vladimir, just as an earlier Svjatoslav, the son of Prince Igor, became prince in the Drevljan country in 946. The *Ustjuzhskaja chronicle* places Svjatoslav, son of Prince Vladimir, in the Drevljan city Ovruch.⁴⁸

In place of the cities close to Kiev, the chronicle mentions the distant northern cities Rostov and Murom and the even more distant Tmutorokan as the principdoms of Vladimir's sons. It seems likely that the northern cities were moved to the beginning of the list because Prince Jaroslav ruled in Rostov before he occupied Novgorod. Boris and Gleb were linked with Rostov and Murom much later, in the time of Jaroslav's descendants, because both brothers were had cults in Chernigov and Perejaslavl', which then held sway over the northern cities.⁴⁹ Considering that Gleb was killed not far from Smolensk, one could hazard a suggestion that he received this city (or one close to it) from his father. The last campaign of Boris against the Pechenegs, which he made before the death of Vladimir the Great, shows that his city is likely to have been close to the steppes south of Kiev. It would have made sense if the campaign was launched from Perejaslavl', which like Smolensk was excluded from the distribution among Prince Vladimir's sons in the *Primary Chronicle*.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ *The Russian primary chronicle*, 91: 'Rogvolod had come from overseas, and exercised the authority in Polotsk just as Tury, from whom the Turovians get their name, had done in Turov'.

⁴⁸ *Ustjuzhskaja chronicle* in PSRL 37, 30.

⁴⁹ See Dimnik 1988, 349–370.

⁵⁰ The *Reading on the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb* allows suggesting that Boris was allocated by his father to Vladimir of Volyn. See *Chtenie o svv. muchenikakh Borise i Glene*, in Dmitrij I. Abramovich ed., *Zhitija svjatykh muchenikov Borisa i Gleba i sluzhby im*, Izdanie Otdelenija Russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk: Petrograd 1916, 6, and the interpretation of Shakhmatov 2001, 91; Mikhail N. Tikhomirov, *Drevnerusskie goroda*,

Mstislav, who according to seniority belonged in the middle of the list, was placed by his father, or more probably according to the preference of the chronicler, in distant Tmutorokan. The distribution deliberately placed him further from his father and from Kiev than Jaroslav, who first received Rostov and then Novgorod. The chronicler who described this distribution aimed to exclude all doubts about the priority of Jaroslav over his brothers and his closeness to his father. At the same time, Chernigov, where Mstislav was prince from 1023 to 1036, the closest city to Kiev and the most important among the other cities, was not among those distributed to the sons of Vladimir the Great. Mstislav, as a successful and experienced military leader, was perhaps the most appropriate of the brothers to be installed there. As a working hypothesis, one can suggest that the key cities on the left bank of the Dnieper, Chernigov and Perejaslavl', were distributed by Prince Vladimir to Mstislav and Boris.⁵¹

At the same time, it may have been no accident that Prince Vladimir allocated the distant Rostov to Jaroslav. According to the later *Gustinskaja* and *Tverskaja Chronicles*, Jaroslav suffered from illness in his childhood and was a lame boy.⁵² In any case, his father did not consider him one of his closest attendants, and for this reason placed him in a less significant city far from Kiev. It is quite possible that Jaroslav occupied Novgorod after his oldest brother's death without permission from his father, after being invited by the Novgorodians, who aspired to independence from Kiev. This would also provide an explanation as to why Prince Vladimir was preparing for war against Novgorod and his own son when he unexpectedly died in 1015. A possible successor of Vysheslav in Novgorod, according to age, could be Svjatopolk.⁵³ It is speculative to suggest that Svjatopolk did not wish to hold Novgorod, hoping to receive Kiev after his father as his oldest son at that moment. This could be resulted in the imprisonment of Svjatopolk by his father, as Thietmar of Merseburg informs us, and the capture of Novgorod by Jaroslav, who profited with the lack of prince therein.⁵⁴

Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo politicheskoi literatury: Moscow 1956, 314. However, Andrzej Poppe, *Panstwo i kościół na Rusi w XI wieku*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe: Warszawa 1968, 176, suggests, perhaps correctly, that 'Vladimir' in this text is the name of Vladimir the Great, rather, than the name of the city.

⁵¹ I do not insist that Chernigov could be distributed to Mstislav and Perejaslavl' to Boris. Perhaps the situation was vice versa, if we will call to mind that until the death of Vladimir the Great, Chernigov could possess a princely army which went to Byzantium under the command of Chrysocheir after 1015 and before 1023.

⁵² *Gustinskaja Chronicle* in PSRL 40, Sankt-Petersburg 2003, 258; *Tverskaja Chronicle* in PSRL 15, 112-113.

⁵³ Cf. Igor N. Danilevskij, *Drevnaja Rus' glazami sovremennikov i potomkov*, Aspekt Press: Moscow 2001, 342-343.

⁵⁴ Thietmarus Merseburgensis, *Chronicon*, R. Holtzmann ed. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum nova series*, 9), Berlin 1935, 7.72-73, 486, 488.

The absence of Chernigov from the cities allocated to Prince Vladimir's sons gives us a clue to the time when the list was shaped. The allocation of 988 resembles the distribution of the cities by Vladimir Monomakh three generations later. In 1113, Monomakh, a grandson of Jaroslav the Wise, became the Kievan prince and distributed several subject cities among his sons. Two sons, Izjaslav and Roman, were already dead by this time, and the others were placed as follows: Mstislav in Novgorod, Svjatoslav in Perejaslavl', Vjacheslav in Smolensk, Andrej in Vladimir of Volyn and Jurij in Rostov. Polotsk, where the dynasty of Rogvolod's descendants (*Rogvolodovichi*) ruled, was naturally left out of the distribution, as were Chernigov, Murom, and Tmutorokan, ruled by the descendants of Svjatoslav, the son of Jaroslav the Wise. This distribution seems to be used by the chronicler or the compiler in 1113–1118 as the model for that of Vladimir the Great to his sons in 988.

Chernigov is missing from both distribution lists (with no explanation for this in 988/1015, unlike in 1113), and in both lists the prince of Chernigov is also tied to Tmutorokan. In 988 Murom was given to Gleb, supposedly because he was later a patron of the clan of Svjatoslav's descendants to whom the city belonged. Boris became a patron of the younger son of Jaroslav the Wise, Vsevolod, and his sons. This explains why he was placed in the city of their clan, Rostov. From 1088 to 1093, Turov, in which Svjatopolk was placed in the list of 988, was the city of another Svjatopolk, the son of Izjaslav, and was therefore excluded from the distribution to Prince Vsevolod's sons. Litvina and Uspenskij suggest that, by giving the name *Svjatopolk* to his son, Izjaslav may have wished to emphasize his right to succeed in Turov as his namesake had.⁵⁵

Thus the list of 988 was appropriate to the second half of the eleventh century and was most likely completed during the last redactions of 1116 or 1118. At that time the most important ideas were seniority among the brothers, brotherly love and respect for the oldest brother. In the 1070s the stories of Mstislav's deeds in Tmutorokan began to circulate in Kiev, and the ruling house had an interest in neutralizing his heroic image. This was achieved by eliminating Chernigov and its prince from the list. As a result, Mstislav was converted from the prince of Chernigov (or Perejaslavl') who led successful campaigns in the northern Caucasus into the prince of Tmutorokan who captured Chernigov. The new version of the list represents Jaroslav as older than both Svjatopolk and Mstislav.

A version of the list of Vladimir's sons is also known in *The story and passion and encomium of the holy martyrs Boris and Gleb*. The date of this hagiographical treatise is disputed, although recently scholars have been inclined to attribute it to the late eleventh or early twelfth centuries. This

⁵⁵ Anna F. Litvina and Fedor B. Uspenskij, *Vybor imeni u russkikh knjazej v X–XVI vv. Dinasticheskaja istorija skvoz prizmu antroponimiki*, Indrik: Moscow 2006, 27.

version unifies both lists known in the *Primary Chronicle*, with editorial interventions that betray its later origin:

Now this Volodimir had twelve sons, not by one wife, but by their several mothers. Among these sons, Vysheslav was the eldest, and after him came Izjaslav. The third was Sviatopolk, who conceived this evil murder. His mother, a Greek, was formerly a nun, and Jaropolk, Volodimir's brother, took her, and because of the beauty of her face, he unfrocked her, and begot of her this accursed Svjatopolk. But Volodimir, who was still a pagan, killed Jaropolk and took his wife, who was pregnant; and of her was born this accursed Svjatopolk. And he was of two fathers who were brothers, and for this reason Volodimir loved him not, for he was not of him. And by Rogneda he had four sons: Izjaslav, Mstislav, Jaroslav, and Vsevolod; and by another he had Svjatoslav and Mstislav, and by a Bulgarian woman, Boris and Gleb. And he placed them all in different lands as rulers. [...] He placed the accursed Svjatopolk as ruler in Pinsk, and Jaroslav in Novgorod, Boris in Rostov, and Gleb in Murom.⁵⁶

Svjatopolk is here placed third, after Vysheslav and Izjaslav who died early, and he was therefore the oldest among Vladimir's living sons in 1015. This indicates the hagiographical nature of this list, because the author quotes the words of Boris, who refuses to struggle against Svjatopolk, arguing that the latter is his older brother. The city of Svjatopolk is said to be Pinsk, instead of Turov as in the *Primary Chronicle*. Pinsk was on the same river as Turov, the Pripjat', but 150 km further from Kiev on the way to Poland. There is a clear hint of the connection between Svjatopolk and the Polish king Boleslaw I Chrobry. The Czech mother of Vysheslav is omitted; nevertheless, after the mother of Svjatoslav and Mstislav is named 'another', which means 'another Czech' in the chronicle. The list of the cities where Vladimir's sons ruled is limited to the four involved in the tragic story of Boris and Gleb. Svjatopolk is presented as a murderer and Jaroslav as an avenger.

Following the *Primary Chronicle*, the struggle for the Kievan throne among the sons of Vladimir the Great ended with the death of Svjatopolk in 1019. In scholarship, however, there is a suggestion that the image of Svjatopolk, son of Vladimir, in the *Primary Chronicle* is fashioned according to the image of another Svjatopolk, son of Izjaslav, who was a rival of Vladimir

⁵⁶ *The Narrative and Passion and Encomium of the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb*, trans. Marvin Kantor, in N. Rzhnevsky ed., *An Anthology Of Russian Literature From Earliest Writings To Modern Fiction: Introduction to a Culture*, Routledge: New York 2005, 21. For the Russian text, see *Skazanie i strast' i pokhvala svjatuju mucheniku Borisa i Gleba*, in L.A. Dmitriev ed., *Biblioteka literatury Drevnej Rusi*, t. 1.: XI–XII vv., Nauka: Sankt-Peterburg 1997, 328.

Monomakh at the end of the eleventh century.⁵⁷ Andrej Nikitin recently surmised that it was this Svjatopolk, son of Izjaslav, who was the first known as 'Svjatopolk the Accursed', being guilty (or accused) of ordering the blinding of Prince Vasilko, son of Rostislav, in 1097.⁵⁸ Therefore, it seems possible that the murder of Boris and Gleb was ascribed to Svjatopolk, son of Vladimir, only in the 1110s, when the final version of the *Story of the Martyrdom of Boris and Gleb* was completed.⁵⁹ Accordingly, the events of 1015–1019 were described by earlier chroniclers differently than by the compilers in the 1090s and 1110s.⁶⁰ Thietmar of Merseburg refers to the entry of Boleslaw and Svjatopolk into Kiev in 1018 and their admission into the Church of St. Sophia by a Kievan 'archbishop', an impossibility if Svjatopolk had been considered a fratricide.⁶¹ Since the name of Svjatopolk was also given to the oldest son of Izjaslav, who was born during the lifetime of his grandfather, Jaroslav the Wise, scholars suggest that the first Svjatopolk was not implicated in the murder of his brothers until this event, and that his name had not yet been subjected to an official curse in 1050.⁶²

As Shakhmatov has shown, the colourful description of the punishment Svjatopolk received from God is a borrowing from the account in the *Chronicle* of George Hamartolos of the death of King Herod (infamous for his massacres, including the murder of family members).⁶³ Dmitrij Likhachev assumed that the story was firstly interpolated into the *Pecherskij Compilation* by Nikon in 1073.⁶⁴ This assumption has recently been challenged, because the analysis of different versions of the martyrdom of Boris and Gleb indicates a later origin for the narrative of Svjatopolk's death.⁶⁵ The *Novgorodean First Chronicle*, whose text up

⁵⁷ Nikitin 2001, 67–72; also see Danilevskij 2001, 348–354.

⁵⁸ Nikitin 2001, 281–288.

⁵⁹ Andrzej Poppe, 'O zarozhdenii kulta svjatih Borisa i Gleba i o posvjaschennykh im proizvedeniyakh', *Russia mediaevalis* 8 (1995), 21–68 at 24, suggests that the first version of *The Story of the Martyrdom of Boris and Gleb* was written in connection with the festival of 1072, on the occasion of the third anniversary of Izjaslav's return to Kiev. According to Savva M. Mikheev, 'Svjatopolk sede v Kieve po otzi': *Usobiza 1015–1019 godov v drevnerusskikh i skandinaovskikh istočnikach*, Institut slavjanovedenija RAN: Moscow 2009, 148, the stories of Svjatopolk's killing of his brothers were most likely invented in the 1070s–1080s.

⁶⁰ For the arguments, see Danilevskij 2001, 336–355.

⁶¹ Thietmarus Merseburgensis, *Chronicon* 8.32, 530; Vladimir D. Koroljuk, *Zapadnye slavjane i Kievskaja Rus' v X-XI vv.*, Nauka: Moscow 1964, 248.

⁶² Mark Kh. Aleshkovskij, *Povest' vremennykh let: Sud'ba literaturnogo proizvedenija v Drevnej Rusi*, Nauka: Moscow 1971, 86; Mikheev 2009, 242.

⁶³ Aleksej A. Shakhmatov, 'Povest' vremennykh let i ee istochniki', *Trudy Otdela Drevne-Russkoj Literatury* 4 (1940), 57–58.

⁶⁴ Dmitrij S. Likhachev, *Russkie letopisi i ikh kulturno-istoricheskoe znachenie*, Izdatelstvo AN SSSR: Moscow-Leningrad 1947, 92.

⁶⁵ See Nadezhda I. Miljutenko, *Svjatye knjazja-mucheniki Boris i Gleb: Issledovanie i teksty*, Oleg Abyshko Press: Sankt-Petersburg 2006, 131–132.

to 1016 is considered identical to the *Initial Compilation* of the 1090s, presents a very short report of Svjatopolk's flight to the Pechenegs and his death 'in the country of Czechs and Ljakh's'.⁶⁶ Obviously the elaborate story of Svjatopolk's death was inserted into the *Initial Compilation* or the *Primary Chronicle* only at the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Igor Danilevskij argues that the story of his death was modelled after the biblical *Book of Proverbs of Solomon* (chapters 28 and 29) and the description of the flight of Antioch Epiphanes from Persia in the *Second book of Maccabees*.⁶⁷ Although scholars point out that Danilevskij selects chronicle and biblical texts randomly and thus ignores the meaning of the chronicle text, his general conclusion on the matter concurs with the assumptions of his colleagues.⁶⁸ Recently Andrej Nikitin pointed out that the highly improbable location of Svjatopolk's grave between the Czech lands and Poland was taken by the chronicler from the story of another Svjatopolk. This was Svjatopolk of Moravia (mentioned sometimes in the *Primary Chronicle*), who, to the surprise of his followers, fled from a battle and disappeared into a monastery 'between Poland and Bohemia', as Cosmas of Prague tells us in his *Chronicle of the Bohemians*.⁶⁹ There is therefore no reliable evidence of the death of Svjatopolk after the battle of Alta in 1019.⁷⁰

The story of the final battle at Alta in 1019 is now considered a pious fiction by most scholars.⁷¹ Danilevskij points out the similarity in the descriptions of both battles between Svjatopolk and Jaroslav, in 1016 and 1019.⁷² The second escape of Svjatopolk in 1019 seems to be a fictitious duplication of his flight to King Boleslaw in 1016. The battle of Alta in 1019 and the subsequent escape of Svjatopolk to Poland, during which he died, were invented by a later chronicler for two reasons: (1) to present Jaroslav as an avenger of his brother Boris, killed at the same place, and (2) to explain the transition of the Kievan throne from Svjatopolk to Jaroslav. The place at the Alta was chosen as a result of the Battle of Alta River in 1068, fought between a Cuman army on the one hand and the forces of the Russian princes Izjaslav of

⁶⁶ *Novgorodskaja pervaja letopis'* in PSRL 3, 175.

⁶⁷ Danilevskij 2001, 348-353; 2004, 67-70, 177-178.

⁶⁸ Andrej M. Ranchin, Aleksej V. Laushkin, 'K voprosu o bibleizmakh v drevnerusskom letopisanii', *Voprosy istorii* 1 (2002), 125-137 (= Andrej M. Ranchin, *Vertograd Zlatoslovnij: Drevnerusskaja knizhnost' v interpretacijakh, razborakh i kommentarijakh*, Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie: Moscow 2007, 24-41, 278-287); Aleksandr A. Shajkin, 'Ostavim vse kak est' (po povodu sovremennykh interpretacij ubijstva Borisa i Gleba)', *Trudy otdela drevnerusskoj literatury* 54 (2003), 342-359; Andrej L. Jurganov, *Ubit' besa. Put' ot Srednevekovja k Novomu vremeni*, Russian State University for the Humanities: Moscow 2006, 59-66.

⁶⁹ Nikitin 2001, 282-283.

⁷⁰ Also see Mikheev 2009, 127-134.

⁷¹ See Mark Kh. Aleshkovskij, 'Russkie gleboborisovskie enkolpiony 1072-1150 godov', in V.N.Lazarev ed., *Drevnerusskoe iskustvo. Khudozhestvennaja kul'tura domongolskoj Rusi*, Nauka: Moscow 1972, 120.

⁷² Danilevskij 2001, 341.

Kiev, Svjatoslav of Chernigov, and Vsevolod of Perejaslavl' on the other. The battle was a defeat for Rus', and when the princes Izjaslav and Vsevolod fled back to Kiev, the populace rose up, demanding arms to fight the Cumans. When these were not forthcoming, they freed Prince Vseslav of Polotsk, who had been imprisoned earlier by the sons of Jaroslav the Wise, and placed him on the Kievan throne. Izjaslav fled to his father-in-law, Boleslaw II of Poland, who provided him with military support, with which Izjaslav returned to Kiev the following May (1069) to take back the throne.

Jaroslav is unlikely to have fought at the Alta in 1019. In this year he married a Swedish princess, Ingegerd Olofsdotter, the daughter of King Olof Skötkonung and Estrid of the Obotrites. The marriage took place in Novgorod, and the young pair gave birth to their first son, Vladimir, in 1020. The marriage gave Jaroslav the military support of his new relatives, with which he undertook a new campaign against Kiev, but not until 1021. However, the expedition in 1021 was unsuccessful. Jaroslav had reached the village of Berestje near Kiev when he received a message that his nephew Brjachislav, prince of Polotsk, had captured Novgorod.⁷³ After a seven-day march, Jaroslav overtook Brjachislav at the River Sudomir as he was returning to Polotsk with prisoners and property. Brjachislav was defeated and fled to Polotsk, while Jaroslav returned the Novgorodian prisoners to their city. Then Jaroslav gathered forces for a new campaign to Kiev, but the Kievan people had been warned by his abortive march to Berestje and apparently turned for help to Mstislav in Tmutorokan. So it was that Mstislav arrived at Kiev with his retinue and the 'Khazars' of Tmutorokan in 1023.

The collision between the models of succession

After a brief meeting with the people of Kiev in 1023, Prince Mstislav placed himself in Chernigov, 150 km north of Kiev on the River Desna, and 55 km from the place where the Pripjat' flows into the Dnieper. Chernigov controlled the route to Kiev from northern Smolensk (and Polotsk and Novgorod beyond it) and western Turov (and Poland beyond that). The arrival of Mstislav saved Kiev, as Jaroslav had gathered Scandinavian mercenaries in order to reconquer the city of his father. In 1024 Mstislav defeated the Varangian army in the Battle of Listven and Jaroslav retired to Novgorod where he lived, 'in fear of Mstislav', until 1036. Chernigov is not far from Kiev and, as a result of the military superiority demonstrated in the Battle of Listven, Mstislav must have had more influence in Kiev than Jaroslav could exert from Novgorod. At the same time, Mstislav, who had every opportunity to occupy Kiev after Listven,

⁷³ The *Novgorodean Chronicles* repeat the information of the *Primary Chronicle* about Jaroslav's arrival to Berestje in 1022 also under the year 1017. Shakhmatov 2001, 164–165, suggested that the earlier Novgorodian campaign is a duplicate of the original text of 1022.

did not do that, but instead took up residence in Chernigov. To me the only possible explanation for this outcome seems to be that the Kievan principedom was already held by a legitimate prince who was a brother of Mstislav.

All that happened when Mstislav appeared outside the walls of Kiev in 1023 demonstrates that the city already had its prince, and Jaroslav's following attack against him shows that it was not the latter. According to my suggestion, after his arrival the Kievan people informed Mstislav that they already had a prince, and he acknowledged the seniority of his brother in Kiev. The alliance of the two brothers in Kiev and Chernigov seems to have been successful in maintaining peace in Rus' until the death of Mstislav. If this scenario is correct, it was not Jaroslav, but another, unknown brother with whom Mstislav divided the 'Russian country' (*Russkaja zemlja*) 'according to the course of the Dnieper'. One brother ruled in Kiev, over the right-bank territory, and the other, Mstislav, held Chernigov with left-bank Rus', simultaneously maintaining his power over the 'Khazar country' as far as Tmutorokan. Jaroslav did not participate in the governance of the 'Russian country' and could only wait in northerly Novgorod for a suitable opportunity to achieve his ambitions.⁷⁴ That opportunity came with Mstislav's death, and only then did Jaroslav attack Kiev and overcome the Kievan prince in 1036.

In order to clarify the identity of the enigmatic prince who ruled in Kiev between 1023 and 1036, we have to consider the earlier struggle among the princely brothers. According to the *Primary Chronicle*, Svjatopolk was guilty in the murder of three of his brothers, Boris, Gleb and Svjatoslav, who were killed on his orders in 1015. For this reason he was attacked by Jaroslav and died after three-year fight between the brothers. Jaroslav received Kiev as the victor and holy avenger. Thietmar of Merseburg writes that Vladimir the Great had three sons and 'left the whole of his legacy to two of his sons, while the third had been put in prison; this third son later escaped and fled to his father-in-law'.⁷⁵ Thietmar does not mention the names of Vladimir's sons and perhaps did not know them. Although the number of Vladimir's sons was much greater than three, Thietmar mentions this number several times. The 'third' son must be Svjatopolk, whose father-in-law was King Boleslaw I of Poland. Svjatopolk, together with his Polish wife, was arrested by his father and imprisoned in Kiev, which means that he was not considered a successor. Neither could Jaroslav, whom Vladimir declared an enemy and against whom he wished to send an army, be his successor. Vladimir Koroljuk and recently Nikolaj Kotljarski

⁷⁴ See Nikitin 2001, 264–265.

⁷⁵ Thietmarus Merseburgensis, *Chronicon*, 7.73, 488: 'Post haec rex ille plenus dierum obiit, integritatem hereditatis suae duobus relinquens filiis, tercio adhuc in carcere posito, qui postea elapsus, conjuge ibidem relicta, ad socerum fugit'; Aleksandr V. Nazarenko, *Nemezkie latinojazychnye istochniki IX–XI vekov*, Nauka: Moscow 1993, 126, 141; *idem*, *Drevnjaja Rus' na mezhdunarodnykh put'akh*, Jazyki Russkoi Kultury: Moscow 2001, 452–453.

suggest that the two successors in Thietmar's *Chronicon* were Boris and Mstislav.⁷⁶ Such a suggestion is motivated by the fact that only two princes, Boris and Mstislav, were permitted to have armies during the lifetime of their father. The objection against Mstislav is the fact that he was far in the south and Thietmar hardly could have known of him. Andrzej Poppe sees in the two brothers Boris and Gleb, according to his assumption that they had the right for succession as the sons of Anna the Byzantine.⁷⁷

The 'Russian country' that Vladimir the Great left to his two sons was the territory of Kiev with nearby Chernigov and Perejaslavl'. The northern cities Polotsk, Novgorod and Rostov, as well as Turov, were outside the 'Russian country'. The sons who were installed in these cities were not considered by Vladimir the Great as his successors in Kiev. That is clear from the example of Izjaslav who was placed by his father in Polotsk, for the purpose his successors would not claim the Kievan principedom. Also the descendants of Vysheslav, who was installed by Vladimir at Novgorod, were debarred from ruling Kiev. As it follows from the *Primary chronicle*, the Drevljan country neighbouring to Kiev was separated from the 'Russian country' and therefore Prince Svjatoslav, who ruled therein, was also excluded from the succession to his father's throne.

Recently Savelij Senderovich has drawn attention to the tendency of the chronicles to emphasize the role of the younger brothers in the succession to the throne in Kiev (Vladimir, Jaroslav, and Vsevolod).⁷⁸ He thinks this reflects the desire of the chronicler to prove the right of succession to the Kievan principedom of the younger branch of Prince Jaroslav's descendants, which became relevant at the time of Vladimir Monomakh. The compiler of the *Primary Chronicle* (or the *Initial Compilation* of 1093–95) wrote in the context of the situation when the descendants of Jaroslav's younger son Vsevolod drove the descendants of his two older brothers, Izjaslav and Svjatoslav, from Kiev. As a justificatory example, the chronicler used the biblical paradigm of the victory of a junior son over his elders (Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Joseph over his brothers, Ephraim over Manasseh, and others).

The idea of the favourite younger brother, however, is found already in the *Sermon on Law and Grace*, supposedly delivered in Kiev by the Metropolitan

⁷⁶ See Koroljuk 1964, 235–239; Nikolaj F. Kotljars, 'Mstislav Tmutorokanskij i Jaroslav Mudryj', *Drevnejšie gosudarstva Vostočnoj Evropy, 1998 g.*, Vostochnaja literatura RAN: Moscow 2000, 134–142.

⁷⁷ Andrzej Poppe, 'Der Kampf um die Kiever Thronfolge nach dem 15. Juli 1015', in C. Kumke, ed., *Beiträge zur 7. Internationalen Konferenz zur Geschichte des Kiever und des Moskauer Reiches*, (*Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte*, 50), Harrassovitz: Wiesbaden 1995, 275–296 at 288–289. Also see Miljutenko 2006, 82–83, 86.

⁷⁸ Savelij Senderovich, 'Metod Shakhmatova, rannee letopisanie i problema nachala russkoj istoriografii', *Iz istorii russkoj kultury*, vol. 1, *Drevnjaja Rus'*, Jazyki Russkoi Kultury: Moscow 2000, 487–494 at 492–493.

Hilarion at some time between 1037 and 1050.⁷⁹ Senderovich recognises the motif in Hilarion's use of the biblical story of Abraham's two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, born by different wives, Hagar and Sarah.⁸⁰ This allows us to suggest that the earlier Russian princes followed another trend than was established in the testament of Jaroslav the Wise in 1054. The principle of seniority in the Rjurikid family most likely originated from a symbiosis of Old Russian and Byzantine traditions of succession and emerged after the Christianisation of Rus'.⁸¹ Vladimir the Great was himself the youngest son of his father and perhaps Old Rus' tradition forced him to leave his throne in Kiev to his own youngest son. Perhaps this was the reason for his conflict with the oldest son Svjatopolk, whose claim to Kiev was supported by his Polish relatives. If Gleb and Boris really were sons of Anna or Vladimir's second Christian wife (who was his widow prisoned by Boleslaw), it would well explain the rivalry between them and Svjatopolk.⁸²

It must have been a serious problem for Vladimir the Great after his baptism. He had to leave the throne to a son of Anna the Byzantine (the youngest of his sons) and simultaneously had to follow the Byzantine principle of seniority, according to which his successor was Svjatopolk. After the unexpected death of Prince Vladimir, Gleb had to flee from Kiev, where Svjatopolk seized power by bribing the local people. On his way (perhaps to Jaroslav in Novgorod), Gleb was killed at the Smjadyn river near Smolensk. Undertaking to avenge for him, Jaroslav considered himself as Gleb's substitute among the three legitimate successors of the 'Russian country'. For Metropolitan Hilarion, as well as for the early chronicler in Shakhmatov's supposed *Oldest Compilation*, Jaroslav was Vladimir's legitimate successor because he was younger than Svjatopolk. The controversy between the principles of seniority and minority was the basis of the struggle for the Kievan throne between Svjatopolk and Jaroslav. Although Jaroslav exploited the idea of minority in his earlier career, it follows from the chronicles that later he accepted the principle of seniority and bequeathed it to his sons in his testament of 1054. Therefore, the later chronicles had to portray him as the eldest among his brothers.

⁷⁹ See *Sermons and Rhetoric of Kievan Rus*, trans. Simon Franklin, Harvard University Press: Cambridge 1991, 3–29.

⁸⁰ Savelij Senderovich, 'Slovo o zakone i blagodati' kak ekzegeticheskij tekst. Ilarion Kievskij i pavlikianskaja teologija', *Trudy Otdela Drevne-Russkoj Literatury* 51 (1999), 43–57.

⁸¹ See the suggestion in Vladimir Ja. Petruchin, *Drevnjaja Rus': Narod. Knjazja. Religija* (Iz istorii russkoj kultury, 1), Jazyki slavjanskoi kultury: Moscow 2000, 176.

⁸² For Anna as mother of Boris and Gleb, see Miljutenko 2006, 74–77. According to Aleksej P. Tolochko, 'Istorija Rossijskaja' *Vasilija Tatischeva: Istochniki i izvestija*, *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*: Moscow, Kiev 2005, 445–458, the idea could be the invention of a sixteenth-century compiler, who attempted to harmonise the suggestion that Prince Vladimir became monogamous after his baptism with the information of the biographies of Boris and Gleb.

Installing himself in Kiev in 1015, Svjatopolk sent messengers to his brother Boris saying 'that he desired to live at peace with him, and would increase the territory he had received from his father'.⁸³ These emissaries are listed as a certain Putsha with several noblemen (*bojare*) of Vyshgorod.⁸⁴ At the moment of Prince Vladimir's death, Boris was the only prince who had an army not far from Kiev, and the destiny of the Kievan throne depended on his support. Therefore Svjatopolk sent the *bojare* to him for negotiations. Supposedly they were leading warriors of his father's *družhina* in Vyshgorod (otherwise there would be no reason for Vladimir's *družhina* to appear at the Alta).⁸⁵ According to the chronicle they met Boris at the river Alta when he was returning with the army from his mission to the steppes. The chronicle preserved traces of their negotiations, depicting them as an offer by Vladimir's *družhina* to conquer Kiev for Boris. But Boris refused to fight Svjatopolk, arguing that the latter was his older brother.⁸⁶ This argument might well have been invented for the later hagiography, which emphasized this 'behaviour etiquette' as the model for all representatives of the princely clan. The idea of seniority among princes became relevant after the 1070s, and the cult of Boris and Gleb was used to make it popular with the help of hagiographic stories created in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. Also already after the Baptism of Rus' by Prince Vladimir the Great, the Byzantine tradition of seniority was assimilated and came to compete with pre-Christian principles of succession. In this context the behaviour of Boris, especially if he really was the son of Anna the Byzantine, gave a new ideological justification for the principle of seniority in the Rjurikid family. The *Primary Chronicle* states that 'when the soldiery heard these words, they departed from him, and Boris remained with his servants'. The behaviour of the Russian warriors would be understandable, if the Rus' did not yet follow the principle of seniority in the princely succession.⁸⁷ In the story, the later hagiography utilized the earlier legal collision between the two principles of the succession to the princely throne.

Both the chronicles and the hagiography claimed that, defending the principle of seniority, Boris remained alone with his servants and was killed by the assassins sent by Svjatopolk. The *Primary Chronicle* ascribes the murder of

⁸³ *Laurentjevskaja letopis'* in PSRL 1, 126.

⁸⁴ Nikitin 2001, 285, points out that the name 'Putsha' is associated with the name of Putjata, who was the general (*voevoda, tysjachskij*) of Svjatopolk, son Izjaslav. It means that the names of the noblemen under 1015 could be fictitious. Cf. Mikheev 2009, 243–244.

⁸⁵ Anton A. Gorskij, *Rus': Ot slavjanskogo rasselenija do Moskovskogo zarstva*, Jazyki slavjanskoj kultury: Moscow 2004, 108.

⁸⁶ *PVL: An Interlinear Collation*, 1047.

⁸⁷ One can suggest that the 'paternal *družhina*', which had left Boris, departed and went to Constantinople with Chrysocheir as mercenaries (see n. 30 above). It is disputable, however, whether they went to Byzantium after Boris had refused to attack Svjatopolk or later, after his actual death.

Boris to Putsha and other *bojare*, who as we have seen above were messengers of Svjatopolk for negotiations. There is however a room for doubt in the fact that they murdered Boris. Actually they achieved their purpose to subordinate Boris to Svjatopolk and therefore they had no any reason to kill him. It should be noted that Boris was murdered twice in the *Primary Chronicle*.⁸⁸ First the murderers stabbed him with spears outside the tent, wrapped the body in a canvas and loaded it onto a wagon. Then, as they made their escape they heard that Boris was still breathing, and notified Svjatopolk that he was still alive. Svjatopolk sent two Varangians to finish Boris off, and one of them plunged his sword into his heart. It seems odd that the killing was first attempted at the River Alta, 90 km southern from Kiev, and completed not far from Vyshgorod, where Boris was buried, ca. 20 km north of Kiev. It is likely that we have two different murders here, and that of Boris was actually the second of them. Recently Savva Mikheev has argued that the story of the killing of Boris was modelled on the legendary death by hanging of Agni (the Swedish king hung on a tree by his golden torque).⁸⁹ In both stories (about Boris and Agni, as well as Burizlafr in *Eymunder Saga*) common motifs are traceable – the return of the prince (*konungr*) from the campaign, the setting of his tent, the golden object, a princely attribute, the lying down of the prince to sleep, and the killing of the prince, in which the gold object plays a role.⁹⁰ The *Primary Chronicle* described the killing of Boris on this model, at the same time combining two different events.⁹¹ If Boris was murdered somewhere north of Kiev, who, then, was killed at the Alta?

It is known that Svjatopolk sent his messengers to Boris secretly and quickly, perhaps to forestall his brother Svjatoslav, suspecting that the latter also had a claim on their father's throne. Svjatoslav held the Drevljan country, closest to Kiev. The chronicles separate the Drevljan country, where Svjatoslav was placed by his father, from the 'Russian country' with Kiev. However, there is reason to suggest that the division could arise later, after Vladimir the Great.

⁸⁸ Savva M. Mikheev, "Razdvoenie" ubijstva Borisa i istorija borisoglebskogo zikla', *Drevnjaja Rus': Voprosy medievistiki* 3(21) (2005), 68–69, suggests that an early chronicler, who first recorded the story, used two oral sources deriving from a common narrative about the murder of Boris. The more complete one of them enumerated the *bojare* whom Svjatopolk ordered to kill Boris, while the other used rumours about the two Varangians who murdered him.

⁸⁹ Mikheev 2009, 219–230.

⁹⁰ See David A.H. Evans, 'King Agni: myth, history or legend?', in U. Dronke, G.P. Helgadottir, G.W. Weber, H. Bekker-Nielsen (eds) *Speculum norroenvm: Norse studies in memory of Gabriel Turville-Petre*, University of Southern Denmark Press: Odense 1981, 89–105.

⁹¹ There are some traces of interventions by later compilers in the earlier text of the *Primary Chronicles* under 1015 and 1019. The double murder of Boris is associated with the double escape of Svjatopolk to Poland after the two lost battles of Ljubech in 1015 and Alta in 1019. The murder of Boris in 1015 was placed to Alta in order to explain the battle of Alta in 1019 as the revenge for his death. The idea itself of the battle of Alta appeared only after 1068 when the real major battle took place there.

In 1023, Mstislav and his brother (unknown yet) divided the 'Russian country' 'according to the course of the Dnieper'. If this formula implies the 'Russian country' in narrow sense, the Drevljan country on the right bank of the Dnieper (as well as Kiev) was its part.⁹² The separation of these two countries supposedly became a reality only after the division of the spheres of influence between the brothers 'according to the course of the Dnieper' in 1023–1036. At the time of Jaroslav the Wise and his descendants, the southern Peresjalav replaced Ovruch in the arrangement of the 'Russian country'. Therefore, the compilers of the 1090s–1110s depicted Prince Igor's tax collection (*poludie*) in 944 as his campaign for tribute in alien country and his funeral ritual, performed by Princess Olga, as her campaign against the rebellious people.⁹³ If the suggestion is correct, Svjatoslav in Ovruch could be one of the three brothers, who had to rule the 'Russian country' according the arrangement of their father (and one of two successors, according to Thietmar).

In any case, when Svjatopolk usurped the Kievan throne, the Drevljan prince felt himself bypassed because his Ovruch was situated at half the distance from Kiev to Turov. Svjatoslav, who could not have mobilized an army, most likely left Ovruch to meet his brother Boris, in order to persuade him to take joint action against Svjatopolk. I suggest that he arrived at the military camp of his brother when Svjatopolk's messengers were already there.⁹⁴ Seeing that Boris was not his ally against Svjatopolk, Svjatoslav decided to go to Hungary, perhaps hoping to get support from his relatives there. Then the messengers of Svjatopolk murdered him in order to prevent any possible attack on Kiev by him in the future. Svjatoslav and his son who was with him were killed in his marquee under the cover of night. When the monks rewrote the chronicles with the canonization of Boris and Gleb in mind, the compilers combined the murder of Svjatoslav (by the *bojare*) with the later assassination of Boris (by the Varangians), in order to make Svjatopolk guilty of the latter.

According to the *Primary Chronicle*, Svjatoslav was killed by the men of Svjatopolk 'in the Hungarian mountains, after causing him to be pursued as he fled to Hungary'?⁹⁵ Tatischev wrote that one of the versions of *Stepennaja Kniga* claimed Svjatoslav had fled there to his father-in-law.⁹⁶ The *Nikon Chronicle*

⁹² For the narrow meaning of the term 'Russian country' (*Russkaja zemlja*) (i.e., Kiev, Chernigov, and Pereiaslavl'), see Nasonov, 1951, 216–220; Charles J. Halperin, 'The Concept of the Russian Land from the Ninth to the Fourteenth Centuries', *Russian History* 2 (1975), 29–38; Donald Ostrowski, 'Systems of Succession in Rus' and Steppe Societies', *Ruthenica* 11 (2012), 29–58 at 42 with bibl. in not. 61.

⁹³ See Aleksandr Koptev, 'An Indo-European Funeral Ritual in the Russian Primary Chronicle sub anno 945', *Ollodagos* 24 (2010), 183–224.

⁹⁴ The real place of the meeting is not known because the place at the Alta was chosen by the later compiler as a result of the Battle of Alta River in 1068.

⁹⁵ *Lavrentjevskaja letopis'* in PSRL 1, 139. For versions see *PVL: An Interlinear Collation*, 1114–1115.

⁹⁶ Tatischev 2003, 630.

refers to the birth of Svjatoslav's son, Jan, in 1002, of whose destiny nothing is known.⁹⁷ In the annalistic reference to the killing of Boris it is mentioned that a youthful servant (*otrok*) was murdered together with him; his name was George and he was a Hungarian by birth.⁹⁸ He is said to have been beloved of Boris, who gave him a gold neck-ring, and the murderers cut off his head to remove it. It is tempting to see Svjatoslav's son Jan (pagan name) in this young man George (Christian name). He was killed with his father, rather than with Boris. Thus, the only prince who could have been killed at the Alta in place of Boris might be Svjatoslav. In the seventeenth century Dominico Calin listed, in a genealogical study, Svjatopolk, Borislav and Svjatoslav as the first three and placed Jaroslav as the fourth among the living sons of Vladimir the Great.⁹⁹

In the late autumn of 1015 (*Primary Chronicle*) or 1016 (*Novgorodean First Chronicle*), Jaroslav arrived in the 'Russian country' with a Novgorodian army.¹⁰⁰ The army of Svjatopolk and Boris met the Novgorodians near Ljubech on the Dnieper, some 150 km north of Kiev and about 40 km from Chernigov.¹⁰¹ Jan Dlugosh also states that Svjatopolk together with Boris defended the Kievan country against Jaroslav.¹⁰² Some scholars have attempted to reconstruct the events of that period by using *Eymunder Saga* (*Eymundar þáttur hrings*), which they believe has preserved the memory of Prince Jaroslav's struggle against his brothers.¹⁰³ Indeed, some details suggest that it might have been Jaroslav, not

⁹⁷ *Letopisnyj sbornik imenuemyj Patriarshej ili Nikonovskoj letopisju* in PSRL 9, Sankt-Petersburg 1862 (reprint Moscow 1965 and 2000), 68.

⁹⁸ See *Laurentjevskaja letopis'* in PSRL 1, 134.

⁹⁹ See Dominico Francesco Calin de Marienberg, *Virtus Leonina ex conspicuo et percelso vetustissimorum ac potentissimorum Russiae ducum sanguine*, Typis Leopoldi Voigt, Universitatis Typographi: Wien 1683, 16.

¹⁰⁰ For the view that the Liubech battle took place in 1016, see Aleksandr V. Nazarenko, 'O datirovke Liubechskoi bitvy', in B.A. Rybakov, O.L. Novikova (eds) *Letopisi i chroniki. Sbornik statei. 1984g.*, Nauka: Moscow 1984, 13–19; but the *Primary Chronicle* may here be using a year beginning in September.

¹⁰¹ For the interpretations of the battle of Ljubech, see Ludolf Müller, 'Studien zur altrussischen Legende der Heiligen Boris und Gleb (6): III. Die Quellen der Chronikerzählung: 2. Die Erzählung über die Schlacht bei Ljubeč', *Zeitschrift für Slavische Philologie* 64 (2005/2006), 245–278; Petr P. Tolochko, 'Ljubechskaja bitva v istochnikakh i istoriografii', in P.P. Tolochko, *Kiev i Rus': Vibrani tvoriv 1998-2008 rr.*, Academperiodica: Kiev 2008, 127–139; Vadim Ju. Aristov, 'Ljubezka bitva 1016 r. v rannjomu litopisanni (do diskusii navkolo idei O.O. Shachmatova)', *Ukrains'kij istorichnij zhurnal* 1 (2013), 147–164.

¹⁰² Jan Długosz, *Annales seu cronicae incliti regni Poloniae: liber secundus*, Panstwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe: Warsaw 1964, 183. Cf. Miljutenko 2006, 87–88.

¹⁰³ Nikolaj N. Il'in, *Letopisnaja statja 6523 goda i ee istochnik*, Moscow 1957, 156–169; Aleshkovskij 1971, 129–131; Anatolij M. Chlenov, 'Zur Frage der Schuld an der Ermordung des Fürsten Boris', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 19 (1971), 321–346; Aleksandr S. Khoroshev, *Politicheskaja istorija ruskoj kanonizatzii (XI–XVI vv.)*, Moscow State Lomonosov University Press: Moscow 1986, 26–32; Danilevskij 2001, 336–354. For the discussion of the problem, see Mikheev 2009, 152–264.

Svjatopolk, who organised the murder of their brother Boris, *Burizlafr* in the saga.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, *Eymunder Saga* confuses the relationships between the northern princes Jaroslav (*Jarizleifr*) of Novgorod and Brjachislav (*Uartilaftr*) of Polotsk, and its composer is unlikely to have known more of the events around Kiev. From the point of view of the Nordic mercenaries, the Kievan prince against whom they struggled was Boris (*Burizlafr*). Perhaps it was because he was the military leader, while Svjatopolk held little interest for them as he was personally less engaged in military affairs. The chronicle episode of the 'second killing' of the wounded Boris by two Varangians most likely belongs to the Battle of Ljubech, in which he fought alongside Svjatopolk against Jaroslav. As he was wounded, Boris was transported on a carriage to the bank of the Dnieper or to neighbouring Chernigov (or Schestovitsa).¹⁰⁵ When informed of this Jaroslav sends his Varangians to kill him.¹⁰⁶ This hypothesis agrees with the version of *Eymunder saga*, although the brave Eymundr clearly did not confess that he had killed the wounded prince. The body of Boris was delivered to Vyshgorod, the city situated on the river route from Ljubech to Kiev, and was buried there. Having suffered a defeat in the battle of Ljubech, Svjatopolk fled to Poland. Later in 1018, he was restored to the Kievan throne by his father-in-law, King Boleslaw I.

Danilevskij drew attention to the nickname of Svjatopolk, *Okajannyj*, which is generally understood as 'accursed' on the analogy of the biblical Cain, who killed his brother Abel. He states that in the Old Russian language, this word meant not only a 'curse', but also 'wretched, miserable' and 'long-suffering, unfortunate'.¹⁰⁷ According to the dictionary of Sreznevskij, in Church Slavonic the word 'okajannyj' was used to mean 'unhappy', 'pitiful', 'sinful', 'sad'.¹⁰⁸ Svjatopolk was sinful because of his birth 'from two fathers': that is, his mother was not yet married with Vladimir the Great at the moment she conceived him. Max Fasmer's etymological dictionary gives the meaning 'blame, condemn, reproach' for the verbs *okajat'*, *kajat'*. The earlier sense of the nickname, *condemned*, is easily associated with the fictive (pseudo)name *Sudislav*

¹⁰⁴ For the identity of *Boris* and *Burizlafr*, see Mikheev 2009, 200–211.

¹⁰⁵ John Skylitzes, *A synopsis*, 347, in his account of Chrysocheir who came to Constantinople as a mercenary with 800 warriors, connects their leaving Rus' with the death of Anna, 'the emperor's sister'. Because Anna died in 1012 and Chrysocheir left Rus' only after Vladimir's death in 1015, it seems possible to connect his departure with the death of Boris. Chrysocheir's leaving Rus' after the victory of Jaroslav meant that he and his warriors were hostile to him.

¹⁰⁶ For the killing of Boris in or after the battle of Ljubech in 1016, see Kotljarskiy 2000, 139–140; Mikheev 2009, 245 (cf. 261–262).

¹⁰⁷ Danilevskij 2001, 348.

¹⁰⁸ Izmail I. Sreznevskij, *Materialy dlja slovarja drevnerusskogo jazyka*, vol. 2, Izdatelstvo Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk: Sankt-Petersburg 1902, 640. Cf. Boris A. Uspenskij, *Boris i Gleb: vospriiatie istorii v Drevnej Rusi*, Jazyki Russkoi Kultury: Moscow 2000, 33–35.

in its literary meaning of 'condemned prince'.¹⁰⁹ According to the dictionary of Vladimir Dal', *okajannyj* means 'eruptive, alienated, devotee of desecration'. *Okajannyj* also sounds similar to *okhajannyj*, with the meaning 'berated', so that *okajannyj* in the sense of 'cursed' perhaps originated from 'slandered, victim of lies'. It seems very probable, therefore, that Svjatopolk was initially portrayed as 'sinful', then 'slandered', 'unfortunate', and only finally as 'accursed'. The last definition was applied to him under the strong influence of hagiographical literature identifying him with the biblical Cain.

According to the *Primary Chronicle*, after Mstislav's death in 1036 Jaroslav had one remaining brother by the name of Sudislav, whom he shut in a prison ('*porub'*) in Pleskov, where he was held for 24 years, until 1059. Only after Jaroslav had been dead for over five years did his sons, Izjaslav, Svjatoslav and Vsevolod, release Sudislav. The 'triumvirs' forced their uncle to swear an oath that he relinquished his right to the throne of Kiev. Being a generation older than them, Prince Sudislav could potentially otherwise have claimed the Kievan principedom. Sudislav became a monk at the St. George Monastery in Kiev, where he died in 1063.¹¹⁰ The statement of the late *Nikonovskaja Chronicle* that Sudislav was allocated Pskov by his father and that it was his principedom until his imprisonment, is based only on the identification of Pleskov as this city.¹¹¹ However, *Pleskov*, which also appears in the 903 entry of the *Primary Chronicle* as the native settlement of Princess Olga, was identified with the historical Pskov only later, and the exact location of this toponym is not clear.¹¹²

In my opinion, it is the imprisoned Kievan prince who is hidden behind the euphemistic name of Sudislav. The name *Sudislav*, unique in the Rjurikid family, is associated with the Russian verb *cydumь* (*suditi*, lit. 'to judge', but more common 'to consider') and might be code for 'condemned prince'.¹¹³ In the 1036 entry in the *Primary Chronicle* we find the statement that Jaroslav placed his brother Sudislav in prison because the latter 'was slandered in front of him'.¹¹⁴ The chronicler indirectly confirms the meaning of the word *okajannyj* in relation to Svjatopolk as *okhajannyj* (*slandered*) and thus gives a connection between him and Sudislav. The chronicler who inserted the euphemistic name

¹⁰⁹ It is noteworthy that Prince Vladimir the Great had imprisoned Svjatopolk, as Jaroslav the Wise later did with Sudislav.

¹¹⁰ See *Lavrentjevskaja letopis'* in PSRL 1, 151, 162, 163; *PVL: An Interlinear Collation*, 1198, 1287–1288, 1294–1295.

¹¹¹ *Nikonovskaja letopis'* in PSRL 9, 57.

¹¹² The tradition of Princess Olga as a daughter of a ferryman associates her with the Kievan ferriage and the story of the foundation of Kiev by the ferryman Kij in the *Primary Chronicle*. So, the *Pleskov* could be situated not far from the Kievan ferriage alongside of Vyshgorod, which is mentioned as the city of Olga in the *Primary Chronicle* under 946.

¹¹³ Only for the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries a nobleman (*bojarin*) from Galicia is known under the name Sudislav. See Litvina and Uspenskij 2006, 25–26 and not. 61.

¹¹⁴ *Lavrentjevskaja letopis'* in PSRL 1, 151.

of Sudislav into the list of Prince Vladimir's sons under 988 wrote not earlier than the twelfth century or even later. He was then sure that the name belonged to a certain prince, whereas the earlier author of the 980 list did not mention Sudislav, most likely because he knew him as Svjatopolk. Once the generation that remembered the events of 1036 had gone, Svjatopolk and Sudislav were no longer identified as one and the same person. The names were regarded as designating two different people, each of whom were given their own principalities by later chroniclers.

Thus, my hypothesis is that the fratricidal struggle originated in the collision between an old tradition of leaving Kiev to the youngest son and the new principle of succession according to seniority that had arrived in Rus' after the Christianisation in 988. Prince Svjatopolk had survived the disorder and ruled in Kiev with the support of his brother Mstislav until the latter's death. In 1036 Jaroslav took Kiev away from his brother and imprisoned him under the name Sudislav.

Conclusion: how the story of Khazar's tribute was shaped

Returning from Tmutorokan in 1023 Prince Mstislav arrived at Kiev with his retinue (*družhina*) and an army consisting mostly of the people who were called in Rus' as 'Khazars'.¹¹⁵ He sent his messengers to Kiev and required the Kievan people to obey him but they rejected his claim. If, as is suggested above, Kiev was held by Prince Svjatopolk, he probably, in accordance with Rus' custom, sent a sword to his brother, which the messengers bore to their prince. The messengers and the Khazar lords of the princely retinue decided that the sword was given them as the symbol of subjection and tribute, but Prince Mstislav obviously recognised the ritual as customary among the early Rus', signifying Svjatopolk's claim to pre-eminence over his brother.

An indirect contemporaneous indication of the custom can be seen in the chronicle of Gallus Anonymus, who depicted the entry of the Polish king Boleslaw into Kiev in 1018:

Bolesław thus met with no resistance when he entered this grand and rich city. As he did, he drew his sword and struck it upon the Golden Gate, to his followers' amazement. When they asked the reason for this, he laughed gleefully and explained: 'Just as my sword pierces the Golden Gate of the city at this hour, so on the night to come the sister of this most cowardly king, whose hand had earlier been refused me, will

¹¹⁵ According to the *Primary Chronicle*, Mstislav was accompanied by a force of Khazars and Kasogians. The words 'and with the Kasogians' possibly originated in the additions by Nikon in 1073, and may have been lacking in the earliest version of the chronicle (the *Oldest Compilation*, according to Shakhmatov), if it existed.

be ravished. And she will not be joined to Bolesław as his lawful wife, but as his concubine and on one occasion only, that with this act the insult done to our people may be avenged, and shame and disgrace be brought upon the Ruthenians'.¹¹⁶

As is well known, Gallus Anonymus' history is incorrect in many details. As the Golden Gate of Kiev is believed to have been built in 1037, it is likely that the story belongs rather to the capture of Kiev by Bolesław II in 1069. Bolesław I hardly was seeking to humiliate Predislava; rather, by entering into a relation with the princess he sought to confirm his right to the Kievan country, and then took the lady together with her entourage to Poland.¹¹⁷ But the fragment that includes Bolesław's use of his sword, which is secondary in the narrative by Gallus, seems to be a satirical treatment of a custom that he was apparently familiar with. Unlike Mstislav, who retreated from Kiev in 1023, Bolesław entered the city in 1018. During his entry together with Svjatopolk, the Kievan people were discussing the relationship between the Russian prince and the Polish king. Common opinion obviously considered Bolesław subordinate to the Kievan prince. His demonstrative strike of his sword upon the gate of Kiev was intended to show that he was entering the city as the victor and ruler, in comparison with those who accepted the offering of a sword.

Having taken the sword received from Kiev, Prince Mstislav publicly recognized the seniority of his brother, departed thence and established himself upon the throne of Chernigov. Henceforth and until his death in 1036, the relationship of Mstislav with his brother Svjatopolk in Kiev resembles the model of the relationship of military governor (*voevoda*) to a prince. This model appears in the *Primary Chronicle* in the pairs of the chieftain Oleg and the young prince Igor, the *voevoda* Sveneld and Prince Igor, Sveneld and Princess Olga, Sveneld/Asmud and Prince Svjatoslav (son of Igor), Sveneld/Blud and Prince Jaropolk (son of Svjatoslav), Dobrynja and Prince Vladimir (son of Svjatoslav), Buda and Prince Jaroslav (son of Vladimir). Mstislav apparently followed this long tradition, his rule in Chernigov serving to protect the throne of his brother in Kiev. The same role of protector of the Kievan prince was played by Boris in 1015 and, after him, by King Bolesław in 1018. Bolesław, by striking his sword upon the gate, showed his attendants that he was not inferior to Svjatopolk. Perhaps he did so because the people of Kiev were of a different opinion. During their meeting with Prince Mstislav in 1023, the Kievan people seem to be able to unify the ideas of ministration to the sovereign and respect to the older brother. The joint rule of Svjatopolk and Mstislav from 1023 to 1036

¹¹⁶ *Gesta Principum Polonorum / The Deeds of the Princes of the Poles*, Paul W. Knoll and Frank Schaer (eds), Central European University Press: Budapest-New York 2003, 42–43.

¹¹⁷ See Jacek Banaszkiwicz, 'Bolesław i Peredsława: Uwagi o uroczystości stanowienia władcy w związku z wejściem Chrobrego do Kijowa', *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 97 (1990), 3–35.

created the background for the idea (so popular by the future chroniclers) that the younger brother recognizes the authority of the older one and the older brother does not seek to be 'a sole ruler' (*samoderzhetz*), but gives the younger prince his fair share. In 1036, with the protector Mstislav dead, Jaroslav conquered Kiev and eliminated the Kievan prince.

On the one hand, the events from 1015 to 1036 reflected a change in the principles of succession to the Kievan principedom. The order of succession before 1054 is unclear.¹¹⁸ Following the chronicles, one can suggest that there was an archaic custom, according to which the indivisible 'Russian country' had been jointly ruled by three brothers in a generation – (1) Jaropolk, Oleg, Vladimir, (2) (Svjatoslav, Boris, Gleb), and (3) Izjaslav, Svjatoslav, Vsevolod.¹¹⁹ The increase of the role of princely retinues (*druzhina*) led to the rivalry and bloody conflicts among the brothers. Vladimir the Great attempted to remove his oldest sons from Kiev in order for the 'Russian country' to be given only to three of his sons. Supposedly, these three were the killed princes Svjatoslav, Boris and Gleb. Alternatively, one can suggest that the youngest, Gleb, who always was alongside his father, was not yet named among the heirs before Prince Vladimir's death. Within the tradition favourable to the youngest son, the Kievan people could consider Gleb a successor to his father in Kiev. Then the two brothers, to whom Vladimir, according to Thietmar, entrusted the 'Russian country', could be Svjatoslav in Ovruch and Boris in Chernigov.¹²⁰ The old Rus' tradition of succession, which Vladimir attempted to follow, came in conflict with the Byzantine principle of seniority and individual succession, which became the norm in Kiev after Christianisation. In the conflicts of 1015–1024, Svjatopolk, Boris and then Mstislav supported the priority of senior brother, while Jaroslav defended the former Russian tradition favourable to the youngest son.

After Jaroslav's establishment in Kiev in 1036, Metropolitan Hilarion honoured him as the younger but legitimate son of Vladimir the Great in comparison with the older Svjatopolk. In the *Sermon on Law and Grace*, Jaroslav is portrayed as analogous to Isaac, son of Sarah, who became the legitimate heir

¹¹⁸ For the problem, see Ostrowski 2012, 29–31.

¹¹⁹ The chronicler extends the pagan triadism to the past, calling into existence the triads of Rjuric, Sineus, Truvor and Oleg, Askold, Dir. The urgent death of Sineus and Truvor / Askold and Dir (as well as the abjection of the latter as 'bojare') shows the way of thinking of the Christian compiler who needed a sole prince to rule the country. For princely triadism, see Martin Dimnik, 'Succession and inheritance in Rus' before 1054', *Mediaeval Studies* 58 (1996), 87–117.

¹²⁰ If my suggestion for the late separation of the Drevljan country from the Russian country is not correct, Prince Svjatoslav did not belong to the successors to Vladimir the Great. At that rate, the two sons whom Vladimir left his inheritance to could be Boris in Chernigov and Gleb in Kiev. Then Svjatopolk in Kiev and Mstislav in Chernigov imitated the order suggested by their father but on the basis of seniority.

of Abraham, unlike the firstborn Ishmael, a son of the bondswoman Hagar. At the end of his life, Jaroslav the Wise attempted to combine the principle of seniority and the Old Russian custom of succession, willing his three oldest sons to rule the 'Russian country' jointly with the senior brother superior among them.¹²¹ His younger sons did not participate in the succession because they received their own princedoms, as was also the case earlier with the oldest sons of Vladimir the Great. Jaroslav's descendants divided the 'Russian country' in three autonomous princedoms centred in Kiev, Chernigov and Perejaslavl'. The principle of seniority determined now their position in the succession to the Kievan throne. The equalization of Chernigov and Perejaslavl' with the other principalities, like Novgorod, Smolensk, Vladimir or Rostov, allowed adding the princes who ruled in these cities to the circle of successors to Kiev. According to Old Rus' custom, only one of the legitimate three brothers could claim the Kievan throne. After the separation of the three principalities of Kiev, Chernigov and Perejaslavl' (and Drevljan country) from the 'Russian country', a ladder system of the succession (*lestvitsa*) was formed; this was legitimated by the Council in Ljubech in 1097.¹²²

On the other hand, the opposition of Novgorod and Kiev from 1015 to 1036 affected Hilarion's *Sermon on Law and Grace* and the first chronicles supposedly written around 1050. At that time, however, Jaroslav was still correctly depicted as a younger brother and Svjatopolk was not yet eliminated from the chronicles. As an 'illegal usurper', from the point of view of the Old Rus' tradition, he was supposedly imprisoned in Pleskov. After his death in 1063, his image was no longer relevant. The meeting of Svjatopolk and Mstislav in 1023 was refashioned by chroniclers in a way favourable to Jaroslav. For Jaroslav's descendants it was certain that by refusing to accept Mstislav, Kiev demonstrated its fidelity to Prince Jaroslav, whose right to rule there was indubitable. Svjatopolk was not longer needed to the chroniclers. In the chronicle between 1019 and 1036 he was replaced by Jaroslav, although the latter was absent from Kiev. As a result the real reasons for Mstislav's arrival at Kiev and his installation in Chernigov became obscured and received a new explanation in the refusal of the Kievan people to accept him. For Jaroslav's descendants, it was Prince Jaroslav who as the elder brother, instead Svjatopolk, divided the Russian territory 'according to the course of the Dnieper' with

¹²¹ For modern theories of the succession in early Rus', see Ostrowski 2012, 41–51. Also Aleksandr V. Nazarenko, 'Rodovoj sjuzerenitet Rjurikovickej nad Rus'ju (X–XI vv.)', *Drevnejšie gosudarstva na territorii SSSR*. 1985, Nauka: Moscow 1986, 149–157; idem, 'Porjadok prestolonasledija na Rusi X–XII vv.', *Iz istorii kultiry*, vol. 1: *Drevnjaja Rus*, Jazyki Russkoj Kultury: Moscow 2000, 500–519.

¹²² Martin Dimnik 1987, 369–386, argues that Jaroslav designated his three eldest sons and their descendants as the only legitimate heirs to Kiev. They were to follow a lateral system of succession.

Mstislav. The division received now a new reason as a consequence of the battle of Listven.

According to the new imperative, Jaroslav gained a foothold in his position as older than his brothers. At the same time, Nikon brought the evidence of Mstislav's heroic activity in the south from Tmutorokan.¹²³ To neutralize the favourable impression given by these tales, a later chronicler stressed that in the Battle of Listven the victor Mstislav did not spare the local Severians and cared only for his retinue (*druzhina*).¹²⁴ In the same battle the instigator of the internecine war, Jaroslav, lost only the Varangians in his army, implying that he ensured the safety of his own Novgorodians. In this way, the chronicle gives Mstislav the role of an alien prince who cared more for his 'Kasogians and Khazars' than he did for Russians. In addition, the compiler emphasises that it was Mstislav who attacked Jaroslav in 1023, thus representing Jaroslav as a victim of his brother's aggression (actually, Jaroslav was far from Mstislav, in the north).

By the end of the eleventh century Chernigov became the subject of competition between the descendants of Jaroslav the Wise and the story of his brother Mstislav lose its significance. The author or compiler of the *Primary Chronicle* is known to have added an introductory section to the basic version of 1095. He gave a sketch of the relationships between the Slavs and their neighbours around Kiev in the south and Novgorod in the north. For the situation in Novgorod he used the legendary story of the invitation of the Varangians. In order to balance the tribute which the tribes of the Slavonians, the Krivichians, the Merians, and the Chuds paid to the Varangians, the compiler searched for a corresponding story for the south. In earlier times, the powerful neighbours of Kiev were the Khazars, who received tributes from the Radimichians, the Vjatichians and the Severians. To describe their relationship with the Kievan people, who were called the Poljanians, the compiler borrowed from an early account the obsolete tale of the arrival of the Khazars of Prince Mstislav at Kiev in 1023.

In the introductory section of the *Primary Chronicle*, the original version of the events in 1023 was elaborated after the words: 'After this time, and subsequent to the death of the three brothers in Kiev, the Poljanians were oppressed by the Drevljans and their other neighbours'. The three brothers in the pre-852/6360 section are Kij, Schek and Khoriv, the mythical founders of Kiev. An earlier chronicle, which did not yet have the introductory section,

¹²³ For tales of Tmutorokan in the *Primary Chronicle*, see Gadlo 2002, 247–261; cf. Aleksej P. Tolochko, 'Chernigovskaja 'Pesn' o Mstislave' v sostave islandskoi sagi', in P.P. Tolochko ed., *Chernigov i ego okrug v IX–XIII vv. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, Naukova dumka: Kiev 1988, 165–175.

¹²⁴ In the previous version it was Khazars of whom Mstislav did not spare rather than the Severians.

possibly depicted the first encounter of the Poljanian people of Kiev with the Khazars as occurred in 1023. The three brothers, whose death was mentioned in the earlier compilation (perhaps of 1095), would have been Gleb, Svjatoslav and Boris, who perished during the struggle for the Kievan principedom in 1015-1019. The *Primary Chronicle's* vague statement that 'the Poljanians were oppressed by the Drevljans' can be understood in the context of Prince Vladimir the Great's installation of his son Svjatoslav in the Drevljan country (under 988). The 'oppression' resulted in an attempt by Svjatoslav to seize the Kievan throne from his brother Svjatopolk, and ended with the murder of the Drevljan prince. The name of Mstislav was removed from the old text, so the Khazars became the main focus of the story. Their chieftains were necessarily interpreted as tribal elders, and the ritual offering of a sword was presented as the tribute payment of one sword per hearth.

Aleksandr Koptev, Doctor of Historical Sciences
Docent of Tampere University
Aleksandr.Koptev[at]uta.fi