

The Struggle for Control over Kiev in 1235 and 1236

The years 1235 and 1236 are important in the history of Kievan Rus' because they witnessed a major reorientation in the status quo between the families of princes. Historians have argued that the most powerful political centres during the first half of the thirteenth century, and more specifically, during the second quarter of that century, were the principalities of Galicia-Volyn' in the southwest and Rostov-Suzdal' in the northeast. They claimed that the other principalities, such as Chernigov and Smolensk, did not play a significant part in the history of this period. Thus, for example, the nineteenth-century historian M. Pogodin wrote that there was no chronicle evidence concerning Chernigov after 1217 since, owing to internecine wars, it had become too weak to participate even to the smallest degree in the political conflicts of this period.¹ His view became commonly accepted by later historians,² so much so that M.N. Tikhomirov, when writing about the history of Kievan Rus' for the first half of the thirteenth century, limited his discussion to the regions of Rostov-Suzdal' and Galicia-Volyn', ignoring the principalities of Chernigov and Smolensk.³ There is, however, one dissenting voice among Soviet historians concerning the importance of the princes of Chernigov. A.N. Nasonov has claimed that the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth century witnessed a struggle for supremacy in Rus' between two of the strongest principalities — Rostov-Suzdal' and Chernigov.⁴ The rivalry was terminated only with the death of Mikhail Vsevolodovich, prince of Chernigov, in 1246.⁵

The purpose of this article is to investigate the nature of the power struggle which followed the sack of Kiev in the spring of 1235. The

1. M. Pogodin, *Drevniia russkaia istoriia do mongol'skago iga*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1872), I, 384.

2. See, for example, P.V. Golubovskii, *Istoriia severnoi zemli do poloviny XIV stoletia* (Kiev, 1881), pp. 189-92; V.V. Mavrodin, "Chernigovskoe kniazhestvo," in *Ocherki istorii SSSR, period feodalizma IX-XV vv.*, 2 vols (Moscow, 1953), I, 400; V.T. Pashuto, "Vnutripoliticheskoe polozhenie Rusi v nachale XII v.," in *ibid.*, I, 770-71.

3. M.N. Tikhomirov and S.S. Dmitriev, *Istoriia SSSR*, I (Moscow, 1948), 55-56.

4. A.N. Nasonov, "Vladimiro-Suzdal'skoe kniazhestvo," in *Ocherki istorii SSSR, period feodalizma IX-XV vv.*, I, 334.

5. *Mongoly i Rus'* (Moscow, 1940), p. 27; see Table I:27.

sequence of events in this conflict has not yet been ascertained or analysed. It is important that this be done because an investigation of this rivalry, as presented by the sources, dictates a different interpretation of the significance of these principalities to the one traditionally held by historians. It will be seen that after the fall of Kiev the authority of the Rostislavichi, the princes of Smolensk,⁶ collapsed. It was neither the Romanovichi of Volyn⁷ nor the Vsevolodovichi of Rostov-Suzdal',⁸ however, who replaced them as the most powerful family of princes in southern Rus'; this was done by the Ol'govichi of Chernigov.⁹

In 1214 the Rostislavichi asserted their authority over southern Rus' when Mstislav Romanovich of Smolensk, the senior prince among the Rostislavichi,¹⁰ drove Vsevolod "the Red" (*Chermnyi*) of Chernigov, the senior prince among the Ol'govichi,¹¹ out of Kiev.¹² During the following decade of Mstislav's rule the Rostislavichi established their hegemony over an area which extended far beyond the principality of Smolensk, their patrimony. They controlled Toropets north of Smolensk,¹³ Polotsk which was located to the west of it,¹⁴ Turov on the river Pripiat'¹⁵ and, for a time

6. The Rostislavichi were the descendants of Rostislav Mstislavich of Smolensk who died in 1168; see Table II:4.

7. The Romanovichi were the sons (Daniil and Vasil'ko) of Roman Mstislavich, the prince of Volyn' and Galicia, who was killed in Poland in 1205; see Table IV: 9, 16, 17.

8. The Vsevolodovichi were the descendants of Vsevolod Iur'evich "Big Nest" (*Boľshoe Gnezdo*), who died in 1212. Two of his sons were involved in the events of 1235 and 1236: Iurii Vsevolodovich, grand prince of Vladimir in Rostov-Suzdal', and his younger brother Iaroslav Vsevolodovich of Pereiaslav' Zaleskii who was also prince in Novgorod. See Table III: 4, 8, 9.

9. The Ol'govichi were the descendants of Oleg Sviatoslavich, the grandson of Iaroslav the Wise, who died in 1115; see Table I:2.

10. See Table II:10.

11. See Table I:14.

12. The Novgorod First Chronicle, *Novgorodskaia pervaiia letopis' starshego i mladshego izvodov*, A.N. Nasonov (ed.) (Moscow, 1950), pp. 53, 252 (hereafter cited as *NPL*).

13. This town was ruled by the descendants of Mstislav Rostislavich, the youngest of the Rostislavichi; see Table II:8. For example, under the year 1209 the Laurentian Chronicle records that Mstislav Mstislavich went to Toropets "his own principality" (*Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei*, vol. I [1926], col. 435 [hereafter cited as *PSRL*]). Later, in the winter of 1225-26, the Novgorod First Chronicle states that David, the younger brother of Mstislav Mstislavich and prince of Toropets, was killed by the Lithuanians (*NPL*, pp. 64, 269).

14. It is difficult to ascertain the precise extent of the control of the Rostislavichi over the principality of Polotsk. Various sources suggest that it was extensive. The Novgorod First Chronicle states that, in 1222, the "Iaroslavitsi" (the inhabitants of Smolensk) "captured Polotsk on 17 January from the princes Boris and Gleb" (*NPL*, p. 263; this information is not found in the older *Sinodal'nyi spisok* of the chronicle). P.V. Golubovskii, in his work on Smolensk, claims that according to ancient tradition only the inhabitants of Polotsk called the descendants of Iaroslav the Wise "Iaroslavitsi." In order to distinguish which "Iaroslavitsi" attacked Polotsk, the chronicler added "smolniane," i.e., inhabitants of Smolensk (*Istoriia Smolenskoi zemli do nachala XV st.* [Kiev, 1895], p. 198). The Polish

up to 1221, the republic of Novgorod.¹⁶ In 1219 they also won Galicia from the Hungarians.¹⁷ Thus, between the years 1219 and 1221, when they controlled the largest expanse of territory in Rus', the princes of Smolensk could boast of ruling lands which extended, continuously, from Novgorod in the north to Kiev and Galich in the south and southwest. Consequently, for the decade following 1214, their authority in southern Rus' remained undisputed.

After Mstislav Romanovich was killed by the Mongols at Kalka in 1223,¹⁸ the power of the Rostislavichi began to wane. The military losses suffered at the hands of the Mongols, the death of Mstislav Mstislavich "the Bold" of Galich in 1228,¹⁹ the rivalry for control over Smolensk which followed the death of Mstislav Davidovich in 1230,²⁰ a famine during the years 1230 to 1232,²¹ and the raids of the Lithuanians on the principality of

historian J. Długosz states that in the same year in which David Mstislavich of Toropets was killed by the Lithuanians, the latter also attacked Polotsk. Mstislav Davidovich, prince of Smolensk (see Table II:15), marched to the defence of the town with forces from Smolensk and came upon the Lithuanians by surprise. He killed most of them (*Longini canonici Cracoviensis, Historiae Polonicae*, 12 books in 2 vols. [Leipzig, 1711-12], book 6, col. 619). This information suggests that Polotsk, which had been captured by the Rostislavichi in 1222, was still under their suzerainty in 1226. Finally, the fact that in 1232, when the influence of the Rostislavichi was already on the decline, Sviatoslav Mstislavich, the son of Mstislav Romanovich, was able to conscript the forces of Polotsk to help him occupy Smolensk (see *NPL*, pp. 72, 281) indicates that the control of the princes of Smolensk over Polotsk, at the height of their power, must have been extensive.

15. The eighteenth-century Russian historian V.N. Tatishchev states that in 1214 Turov forces helped the Rostislavichi to drive out the Ol'govichi from Kiev (*Istoriia Rossiiskaia*, 7 vols. [Moscow, 1962-68], IV, 345). In 1218 Rostislav Riurikovich, a Rostislavich (see Table II: 11), died in Turov (*ibid.*, p. 356). In 1219 Turov forces again marched with the Rostislavichi against the Hungarians in Galich (*ibid.*, p. 359).

16. Mstislav Mstislavich "the Bold" (*Udaloi*) (see Table II:17) ruled in Novgorod on two occasions: from 1210 until 1215 (*NPL*, pp. 51, 249; 53, 252), and from 1216 until 1218 (*NPL*, pp. 57, 257; 58, 259). In 1218 he was replaced by Sviatoslav Mstislavich, the son of Grand Prince Mstislav Romanovich (*NPL*, pp. 58, 259). In 1219 Vsevolod Mstislavich replaced his older brother (*NPL*, pp. 59, 260). Finally, in 1221 Vsevolod Mstislavich was driven out by the Novgorodians (*NPL*, pp. 60, 262). The only interval during which a Rostislavich did not rule was from the spring of 1215 (*NPL*, pp. 53, 252) until February 1216 (*NPL*, pp. 55, 253) when Iaroslav Vsevolodovich of Pereiaslav' Zaleskii was prince.

17. *NPL*, pp. 59, 260-61.

18. *NPL*, pp. 63, 266-67, and *PSRL*, vol. I (1926), col. 446. On the question of the dating of the Mongol invasion, see N.G. Berezhevskii, *Khronologiia russkogo letopisaniia* (Moscow, 1963), pp. 106-107.

19. *PSRL*, vol. I (1926), col. 450.

20. The Sofiiskii First Chronicle, *PSRL*, V (1925), 209; the Novgorod Fourth Chronicle, *PSRL*, IV (1915), 212; the Moscow *svod* of 1479, *PSRL*, XXV (1949), 125; the Nikon Chronicle, *PSRL*, X (1885), 102, and the Ermolinskii Chronicle, *PSRL*, XXIII (1910), 73.

21. According to the Novgorod First Chronicle, in 1230 an early frost on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, 14 September (*NPL*, pp. 69, 277) caused havoc in all Rus' "except in Kiev" (*NPL*, pp. 71, 280). The famine which followed lasted for two years. The sources consider it noteworthy that in Smolensk alone some 32,000 inhabitants perished

Smolensk in the 1220s²² were all factors instrumental in undermining the authority of the Rostislavichi. Therefore, it is not surprising that in the early 1230s their supremacy was challenged, once again, by the Ol'govichi. The latter had waited for an opportune moment to reassert their claim to Kiev ever since they had been driven out in 1214. Finally, in the spring of 1235, they succeeded. Their victory and the ensuing inter-princely rivalry for control over the "golden throne" brought about the complete collapse of the Rostislavichi.

Although there is evidence that the Rostislavichi and the Ol'govichi — that is, Vladimir Riurikovich grand prince of Kiev and Mikhail Vsevolodovich prince of Chernigov — renewed their rivalry before 1234,²³ their antagonism did not break out into an unbridled struggle for supremacy until late that year. According to the Hypatian Chronicle, as Mikhail Vsevolodovich was preparing to attack Kiev in the fall or winter of 1234, Vladimir Riurikovich summoned Daniil Romanovich of Volyn' and Galich to his aid and forced Mikhail to withdraw. In retaliation, the grand prince and Daniil marched on Chernigov. Then, the chronicler declares enigmatically but mistakenly, Mikhail's cousin Mstislav Glebovich "came to them" (*pride k nima*).²⁴ They pillaged the lands of Chernigov and lay seige to the town. But as they were unable to capture it, they concluded peace with Mstislav Glebovich and its inhabitants and retreated. After Vladimir and Daniil withdrew to Kiev, Iziaslav Vladimirovich, an Igorevich and a member of a cadet branch of the Ol'govichi,²⁵ continued to campaign against them. He brought the nomadic Polovtsy from the steppe and defeated Vladimir and Daniil near Torchesk, a town south of Kiev. Vladimir was taken prisoner, but Daniil escaped to Galich. Certain boyars in the town informed him that Iziaslav and the Polovtsy were marching on his town, Vladimir in Volyn'. But, as he realized that this was a ruse designed to lure him out of Galich, he remained where he was until a boyar

and had to be buried in four mass graves (see the Novgorod Fourth Chronicle, *PSRL*, IV [1915], 212; the Moscow *svod* of 1479, *PSRL*, XXV [1949], 125; the Nikon Chronicle, *PSRL*, X [1885], 101; cf., the Sofiiskii First Chronicle, *PSRL*, V [1925], 209; and the Ermolinskii Chronicle, *PSRL*, XXIII [1910], 73).

22. The Novgorod First Chronicle records four instances in the 1220s on which the Lithuanians attacked Smolensk either directly or in passing when raiding the lands of Novgorod: *NPL*, pp. 61, 263 (s.a. 1223); pp. 61, 264 (s.a. 1224); pp. 64, 269 (s.a. 1225); pp. 68, 275 (s.a. 1229).

23. *PSRL*, vol. II (1908), col. 772.

24. See Table I:28. This is a spurious account. The Hypatian Chronicle misplaced information from 1239 at which time Mstislav Glebovich defended Chernigov against the Mongols. For a detailed analysis of this account, see M. Dimnik, "The Siege of Chernigov in 1235," *Mediaeval Studies*, vol. XLI (1979), forthcoming.

25. The Igorevichi were the sons of Igor' Sviatoslavich; see Table I:10.

rebellion forced him to flee to Hungary.²⁶ In the winter Daniil and his younger brother Vasil'ko attempted, unsuccessfully, to recapture Galich.²⁷

The Hypatian Chronicle also gives extensive information concerning Mikhail's activity in Galicia under the year 1235: chiefly conflicts between him and Daniil as the former proceeded to consolidate his authority over the principality. It states that Mikhail — accompanied by Iziaslav Vladimirovich, Poles, Russians and the Polovtsy — marched against Daniil. The campaign failed and he returned to Galich. In the summer, Daniil and Vasil'ko retaliated by marching against Galich where Mikhail and his son Rostislav had fortified themselves. The Romanovichi failed to take the town because, the chronicler explains, Mikhail had many Hungarians helping him. The two brothers therefore withdrew and, in the autumn, they concluded peace. Despite the peace agreement, the chronicle states that, in the same year, Daniil marched against Mikhail in Galich. On this occasion the latter negotiated peace and agreed to give Daniil the town of Peremyshl' northwest of Galich.²⁸ Later the Ol'govichi regained the town from the Romanovichi.²⁹ Although it is not stated in the sources, there can be little doubt that the rivalry in Galicia, as we shall see, influenced Daniil's policy concerning Kiev in 1236.³⁰

While Mikhail was securing control over Galicia, the Vsevolodovichi of Rostov-Suzdal' attempted to gain a foothold in Kiev. The Hypatian Chronicle explains that Iaroslav Vsevolodovich of Pereiaslavl' Zaleskii took the town from Vladimir Riurikovich. However, "he was not able to retain possession of it and returned to Suzdal'; it was taken from him by Mikhail."³¹

The Novgorod First Chronicle has somewhat different information concerning these events.³² It states that Vladimir Riurikovich and the

26. According to an Hungarian source, Daniil was present at the coronation of King Béla IV on "Sunday, the eve of the ides of October," i.e., 14 October 1235 (*Historia critica regum Hungariae stirpis Arpadianae ex fide domesticorum et externorum scriptorum*, S. Katona [ed.], 42 vols. [Posonii et Cassoviae, 1779-1817], V, 754).

27. *PSRL*, vol. II (1908), cols. 772-74. The Hypatian Chronicle has all this information under the year 1234. It may be assumed, however, that Daniil came to Kiev, in reply to the summons sent to him by the grand prince, in December of 1234 at the latest, since the chronicle states that he and Vladimir then campaigned in Chernigov from the feast of the Epiphany (6 January 1235) to the feast of the Ascension (14 May). After their failure to take Chernigov, they withdrew to Kiev in May. Iziaslav came with the Polovtsy after the two princes returned to Kiev. His attack, therefore, probably occurred toward the end of May or in June 1235.

28. *Ibid.*, col. 775-76.

29. *Ibid.*, col. 777.

30. See below, p. 39.

31. *PSRL*, vol. II (1908), col. 777.

32. The Novgorod First Chronicle, unlike the Hypatian Chronicle, correctly places this information under the year 1235 (*NPL*, pp. 73, 284). Since it records events which occurred only in that year, it does not mention Mikhail's initial attack on Kiev.

troops from Kiev, along with Daniil and the forces from Galich, marched against Mikhail in Chernigov. While the princes were pillaging the environs of the town, Mikhail's ally Iziaslav Vladimirovich "fled" in search of reinforcements among the nomadic tribes of the Polovtsy in the steppe south of Kiev. Mikhail came out of the town and, by means of a trick, killed many of Daniil's troops and drove off the attackers. Daniil barely escaped with his life and Vladimir was forced to withdraw to Kiev.³³ When Prince Iziaslav arrived with the Polovtsy, he was joined by Mikhail and troops from Chernigov. Together they marched on Kiev, captured it, and the Polovtsy took the grand prince and his wife prisoner. After the victory Mikhail occupied Galich and Iziaslav became grand prince of Kiev. Later, the Polovtsy released Vladimir for a ransom. The first entry under the following year, 1236, states that Iaroslav Vsevolodovich occupied Kiev.³⁴

These two sources appear to give conflicting information concerning the sequence of events which took place in Kiev during 1235 and 1236; they seemingly disagree as to which princes replaced each other on the throne of Kiev from the time when Vladimir was captured to the occupation of Kiev by Mikhail. As has been noted, according to the Hypatian Chronicle, Iaroslav Vsevolodovich took Kiev from Vladimir and the latter was replaced by Mikhail.³⁵ But the Novgorod First Chronicle states that Iziaslav Mstislavich³⁶ occupied Kiev after Vladimir was captured in 1235. The Polovtsy released him later in the same year. Then, under the following year, it states that Iaroslav occupied Kiev³⁷ implying, contrary to

33. Tatishchev, who no doubt is quoting an unknown source, alone gives more detailed information concerning the "trick" which Mikhail used to drive off the attackers. He states that Mikhail, having mustered all the available soldiers, came out of Chernigov and spoke to Daniil "with much flattery." He promised Daniil many gifts if the latter would abandon Vladimir and persuade him to lift the siege. Daniil listened to Mikhail and attempted to convince the grand prince to end the hostilities. Then at night Mikhail attacked Daniil and killed so many of his soldiers from Galich that Daniil barely escaped. After that Vladimir retreated to Kiev (Tatishchev, IV, 372).

34. *NPL*, pp. 73-74, 284-85. Długosz presents a unique version of this account which, presumably, was written at the court of Iziaslav Vladimirovich. It states that after Prince Koloman (i.e., Andrew) died, Daniil Romanovich occupied Galich. Iziaslav Vladimirovich, confident in the support proffered to him by the Polovtsy, marched against Daniil with the intention of laying claim to Galich for himself. Daniil was defeated and surrendered. But Vladimir and "his brother" (i.e., the boyar Miroslav, see *PSRL*, vol. II [1908], col. 774), who had brought aid to Daniil, were captured. Because of this, Galich passed into the hands of Mikhail Vsevolodovich with the approval of Iziaslav (Długosz, book 6, col. 633).

35. *PSRL*, vol. II (1908), col. 777.

36. There were two princes named Iziaslav involved in the battle of 1235: Iziaslav Vladimirovich, an Igorevich who brought the Polovtsy; and Iziaslav Mstislavich, a Rostislavich who occupied Kiev (see Table II:22). Concerning the identities of these princes, see M. Dimnik, "Russian Princes and Their Identities in the First Half of the Thirteenth Century," *Mediaeval Studies*, XL (1978), 170-77.

37. *NPL*, pp. 74, 284-85.

the Hypatian Chronicle, that he replaced Iziaslav Mstislavich and not Vladimir.

Given these apparently contradictory accounts, it is not surprising to find that historians also are divided in their opinions concerning the order in which the princes replaced each other in Kiev. N.M. Karamzin, who seemingly had access to what are now unavailable sources, states that Iziaslav did not stay in Kiev for long in 1235. He was replaced by Vladimir after the latter had been released by the Polovtsy. Following negotiations between Daniil Romanovich and Iurii Vsevolodovich, grand prince in Rostov-Suzdal', Vladimir had to hand over Kiev to Iaroslav Vsevolodovich.³⁸ S.M. Solov'ev suggests that Vladimir, after his release, was not able to recapture Kiev from Iziaslav.³⁹ He points out that, on leaving the Polovtsy, Vladimir probably lived with the nomadic Torks⁴⁰ (presumably in Torchesk south of Kiev).⁴¹ Since the Novgorod First Chronicle gives the entry concerning Vladimir's release as well as the information about his capture under the year 1235, M. Hrushevsky believes that he was probably released in that year after spending only a few months in captivity.⁴² V.T. Pashuto is also of the opinion that Vladimir returned from captivity in 1235;⁴³ however, he seems undecided concerning the order of events. In one place he states that Mikhail took Kiev from Vladimir after the latter returned from captivity and then gave the throne to Iziaslav Mstislavich of Smolensk.⁴⁴ Later, in the same monograph, he writes that Iziaslav Mstislavich occupied Kiev after Vladimir was captured, but, on being released, the grand prince returned to Kiev only to be driven out by Iaroslav.⁴⁵

To judge from the accounts given by the two chronicles cited above, there can be little doubt concerning the following events. The victory of the two Ol'govichi (i.e., Mikhail Vsevolodovich and Iziaslav Vladimirovich)

38. N.M. Karamzin, *Istoriia gosudarstva Rossiiskago*, 12 vols. (3rd ed.; St. Petersburg, 1830-31), III, 312-13.

39. S.M. Solov'ev, *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen*, 15 books (Moscow, 1960-64) book 2, p. 134.

40. The Torks were a nomadic people living on the steppe south of the river Ros'.

41. Solov'ev, book 2, p. 331, no. 267. Solov'ev bases his assumption on the information found in the Hypatian Chronicle under the year 1235 where it is stated that Vladimir sent Torks to the aid of Daniil Romanovich (*PSRL*, II [1908], col. 775).

42. M. Hrushevsky, *Ocherk istorii Kievskoi zemli ot smerti Iaroslava do kontsa XIV stoletia* (Kiev, 1891), pp. 285-86, and *Istoriia Ukraini-Rusi*, 9 vols. (2nd ed.; L'vov, 1904-31), II, 248.

43. V.T. Pashuto, *Ocherki po istorii Galitsko-volynskoi Rusi* (Moscow, 1950), p. 220.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 216.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 219-20.

over the combined forces of the Rostislavichi and the Romanovichi in 1235 enabled Mikhail to replace Daniil as prince of Galich; meanwhile, the latter fled to Hungary in search of aid. Although the sources fail to record this fact, it appears that similar to Mikhail, Iziaslav Vladimirovich also occupied a town belonging to Daniil. This was Kamenets, a citadel in the eastern region of Volyn'.⁴⁶ Unlike Daniil, who escaped from the field of battle, the fate of the grand prince of Kiev was more ignominious. During the sack of Kiev he and his wife were captured by the Polovtsy and taken prisoner. Mikhail allowed a junior prince of the Rostislavichi, Iziaslav Mstislavich, to replace his uncle on the grand princely throne. Later in the same year, the Polovtsy released Vladimir and he returned to Rus'. The controversy begins here: did Vladimir Riurikovich return to Kiev as grand prince or did he not?

Later chronicle accounts, which do little more than abbreviate the version found in the Novgorod First Chronicle, merely state that the Polovtsy sent the grand prince back to "Rus'."⁴⁷ The Hypatian Chronicle, however, implies that he returned to Kiev as prince since it claims that Iaroslav Vsevolodovich "took Kiev from Vladimir."⁴⁸ The Nikon Chronicle, to a certain extent, appears to corroborate the information given by the Hypatian Chronicle. Following the version of the "*svod* of 1448," as found in the Sofiiskii First and the Novgorod Fourth Chronicles, it explains that Vladimir had ruled on the grand princely throne for ten years when he was captured by the Polovtsy; after his ransom was paid, they allowed him to return to "Rus'." Ignoring the subsequent item in the "*svod* of 1448" to the effect that "Grand Prince Iziaslav Mstislavich sat upon the throne of Kiev,"⁴⁹ it picks up the first item of the entry for 1236 in the "*svod* of 1448" — "Grand Prince Iaroslav Vsevolodovich sat on the throne in Kiev"⁵⁰ — but adds the words "after him" (i.e., "after him [*Vladimir*] Prince Iaroslav Vsevolodovich of Novgorod sat on the grand princely throne of Kiev").⁵¹

Karamzin's explanation of the events which, it appears, was based on some source now lost, gives the key to the problem of the seemingly contradictory evidence of the known sources. He explains that Vladimir,

46. Concerning Kamenets, see M. Dimnik, "Kamenec," *Russia Mediaevalis*, vol. IV (forthcoming).

47. Viz. "the *svod* of 1448" (i.e., the Sofiiskii First and the Novgorod Fourth Chronicles, in *PSRL*, V [1925], 210, and *PSRL*, IV [1915], 214), the Moscow *svod* of 1479 (*PSRL*, XXV [1949], 126) and the Nikon Chronicle (*PSRL*, X [1885], 104) which repeat the version of the "*svod* of 1448."

48. *PSRL*, vol. II (1908), col. 777; cf., the late seventeenth-century Gustinskii Chronicle (*PSRL*, II [1843], 338). It states that after Vladimir returned from captivity *he* drove Iaroslav out of Kiev. However, it agrees with the Hypatian Chronicle when it states that Vladimir occupied Kiev after returning to "Rus'."

49. *PSRL*, V (1925), 210, and *PSRL*, IV (1915), 214.

50. *PSRL*, V (1925), 210; cf. *PSRL*, IV (1915), 214.

51. *PSRL*, X (1885), 104.

after being released by the Polovtsy, replaced Iziaslav in Kiev. Vladimir was later obliged to hand over Kiev to Iaroslav Vsevolodovich.⁵² Karamzin, therefore, confirms the information in the Hypatian Chronicle — that Vladimir returned to Kiev as grand prince after his captivity.

The Novgorod First Chronicle does not mention that Vladimir came to Kiev but neither does it deny this.⁵³ To be sure, a close scrutiny of its account shows that it also confirms Karamzin's contention, for it reveals that Iaroslav's take-over of Kiev occurred peacefully, implying that it was pre-arranged. It states that Iaroslav came to Kiev from Novgorod accompanied by "prominent Novgorodians" and one hundred men from Novyi Torg, an eastern outpost of Novgorod.⁵⁴ At the same time he appointed his son Aleksandr as prince of Novgorod. After Iaroslav arrived in Kiev he kept the "prominent" citizens of Novgorod and the men of Novyi Torg with him for one week and then allowed them to return home. The chronicler concludes by saying that they all returned safely.⁵⁵ It is not stated in this account (nor in any other), that Iaroslav took Kiev by force. Indeed, he left Novgorod with only a handful of its most "prominent" citizens and a mere hundred men from Novyi Torg. This could not have been the make-up of an invading army assembled to capture the most important town in southern Rus'. The men who accompanied him on the journey were no doubt his entourage whose function it was to escort him to his new and prestigious appointment with due pomp. Iaroslav's ceremonial entry into Kiev confirms that he was expected by its inhabitants.

There is one more item of information in the Novgorod First Chronicle which implies that Iaroslav's entry into Kiev was pre-arranged, as Karamzin suggested: he appointed his son Aleksandr to rule in Novgorod in his place. Iaroslav need hardly have taken such an official measure to ensure his control over the town if he were merely setting off to Kiev on a military campaign, the outcome of which was still undetermined. To judge from the Novgorod First Chronicle, a prince made such an appointment only when he intended to terminate his own personal rule in Novgorod.⁵⁶ Thus it can be concluded that Iaroslav

52. Karamzin, III, 312-13.

53. It merely fails to record this information just like the Hypatian Chronicle neglected to mention that Iziaslav Mstislavich became grand prince after Vladimir was taken prisoner.

54. Novyi Torg, or Torzhok as it was also called, is situated southeast of Novgorod approximately midway between Novgorod and Moscow. It was an important trading centre.

55. *NPL*, pp. 74, 284-85.

56. For example, Iaroslav Vsevolodovich appointed his two sons, Fedor and Aleksandr, to rule in Novgorod on two separate occasions, in 1228 and 1231, while he himself ruled in his own principality of Pereiaslav' Zaleskii (*NPL*, pp. 66, 272; 70, 278). Similarly, in 1230 Mikhail Vsevolodovich, who did not wish to remain in Novgorod as prince, appointed his son Rostislav to rule in his stead (*NPL*, pp. 69, 276).

appointed his eldest son to govern because he himself was assured rule in another town — Kiev. The fact that Iaroslav delegated authority over the town to his son, and the confidence he evinced in his grand entry into Kiev, show that there was no doubt in his mind concerning the welcome he would receive. His actions must have been motivated, as Karamzin explained, by the agreement between Daniil Romanovich and Iurii Vsevolodovich. They persuaded, or coerced, Vladimir and the princes of Smolensk to relinquish control of the “golden throne” to Iaroslav.⁵⁷

In light of the above observations it may be concluded that the sequence of events after Vladimir’s release in 1235 was the following. He returned to Rus’ and replaced his nephew Iziaslav Mstislavich as grand prince. Meanwhile, as Mikhail continued to consolidate his authority over Galicia, Daniil and Grand Prince Iurii formed an alliance to curb his expansionist policy. They forced Vladimir to vacate Kiev and gave it to Iaroslav. But the latter was not able to establish his control over the town and returned to Suzdal’; after him Mikhail became the new grand prince of Kiev.

Having established the order of events following the sack of Kiev in 1235, various observations can be made concerning the families of princes which were involved in the power struggle. The sources do not give the reasons for the renewed animosity between the Ol’govichi and the Rostislavichi in the early 1230’s, but Mikhail’s motives are not difficult to discern. Since he was the aggressor it may be assumed that, similar to his father Vsevolod “the Red” and his grandfather Sviatoslav Vsevolodovich before him, he wished to assert the authority of the Ol’govichi over southern and southwest Rus’ by gaining control of Kiev and by establishing his rule over Galich.⁵⁸ Mikhail accomplished this two-fold objective simultaneously as a result of his brilliant triumph in the spring of 1235.

57. It appears that this was not the only occasion on which the Vsevolodovichi asserted their demands on the Rostislavichi. Previously, in the winter of 1228-29, the Novgorod First Chronicle states that, on Iaroslav’s “request,” the prince of Smolensk detained the messengers from Novgorod sent to Mikhail Vsevolodovich in Chernigov (NPL, pp. 66-68, 272-74). Later, in 1239, Iaroslav actually intervened in the internal government of Smolensk. According to the Laurentian Chronicle, he marched to the defence of Smolensk against the Lithuanians. After persuading and defeating them, “he restored order among the inhabitants of Smolensk and appointed Prince Vsevolod [Mstislavich] to the throne” (*PSRL*, vol. I (1926), col. 469).

58. Sviatoslav Vsevolodovich (see Table I:7) became grand prince of Kiev in 1180 (*PSRL*, vol. II [1908], cols. 621-24) and he retained the title until his death on 25 July 1194. After that time it reverted to the Rostislavichi, namely, to Riurik Rostislavich (see Table II:6) (*ibid.*, cols. 680-81). In 1206, two years after Vsevolod “the Red” became the senior prince among the Ol’govichi, he was able to win control over Galich (*PSRL* vol. I [1926] col. 427). After this victory Vsevolod attacked Kiev and took it from the Rostislavichi (*ibid.*). Before his death in 1215 he became grand prince on three separate occasions: in 1206, in 1207 and from 1210 until 1214 (see R.V. Zotov, *O Chernigovskikh kniazakh po Liubetskomu sinodiku i o Chernigovskom kniazhestve v tatarskoe vremia* [St. Petersburg, 1892], p. 273, no. 30).

The immediate and more important outcomes of his victory were that it nullified the alliance between the Rostislavichi and the Romanovichi and gave Mikhail control of Kiev and Galich. The sack of Kiev and the capture of Vladimir, the senior prince of the Rostislavichi, struck a fatal blow to the already tottering authority of the princes of Smolensk; it rendered them militarily ineffectual. Having demonstrated that they no longer posed a threat to his supremacy in southern Rus', Mikhail himself did not choose to occupy Kiev but permitted the humiliated Rostislavichi (i.e., Iziaslav Mstislavich) to remain as figureheads. Instead, he pressed his advantage over Daniil whose position also had become extremely vulnerable.⁵⁹ The latter's forces had been crushed near Torchesk; his erstwhile ally, the grand prince, was a prisoner; the boyars of Galich had driven him out of the town and, consequently, he had been forced to seek aid, unsuccessfully, from the king of Hungary. Mikhail, therefore, occupied Galich and met with no internal opposition.⁶⁰

The success of the Ol'govichi in 1235 brought about another change in the political alliances between the families of princes. As has been seen, in the mid-1220s Mikhail had been an ally of both Grand Prince Iurii of Rostov-Suzdal⁶¹ and Grand Prince Vladimir of Kiev.⁶² But, in the early 1230s, when he challenged the latter for control over Kiev, the Rostislavichi were forced to seek assistance of their former enemy, Daniil of Volyn'. Then, in 1235, as has been noted, the capitulation of the Rostislavichi forced Daniil himself to seek a new ally against the Ol'govichi. His

59. It is interesting to note that Mikhail's father, Vsevolod, also did not attempt to occupy Kiev until the Ol'govichi (i.e., the Igorevichi) had first secured possession of Galich after the death of Roman Mstislavich in 1205. *PSRL*, vol. II (1908), cols. 426-27.

60. Mikhail probably occupied Galich by 14 October 1235 at which time Daniil was attending the coronation of King Béla IV in Hungary; see n. 26 above.

61. The Novgorod First Chronicle records that in 1224-25 Iurii had asked the people of Novgorod to accept Mikhail as their prince because they were not happy with the rule of the Vsevolodovichi (*NPL*, pp. 63-64, 267-68). Later, in 1226, according to the Laurentian Chronicle, Iurii had come to Chernigov to help Mikhail against Oleg Sviatoslavich of Kursk (*PSRL*, vol. I [1926], col. 448). Also, in 1227, Mikhail had given his daughter Maria in marriage to Iurii's nephew, Vasil'ko Konstantinovich of Rostov (*ibid.*, col. 450).

62. In 1226, presumably as a sign of good will, Vladimir Riurikovich had sent Metropolitan Kirill to Chernigov and there the latter was instrumental in restoring peace among the Ol'govichi (*PSRL*, vol. I [1926], col. 448). Two years later the Hypatian Chronicle states that the grand prince and Mikhail joined forces in order to attack Daniil Romanovich in Volyn' (*PSRL*, vol. II [1908], cols. 753-54). In 1230, according to the Laurentian Chronicle, Vladimir sent Metropolitan Kirill and Mikhail sent the bishop of Chernigov, Porfirii, to Iurii Vsevolodovich in Rostov-Suzdal' hoping to reconcile Iaroslav Vsevolodovich with Mikhail (*PSRL*, vol. I [1926], cols. 455-56). Finally, on 6 April 1231 the Rostislavichi and the Ol'govichi, as well as other princes, were in attendance at a congress in Kiev; the chief purpose of this meeting was to determine the strategy the allies would adopt against their common foe, Daniil Romanovich (*ibid.*, col. 457; see also Dimnik, *Mediaeval Studies*, XL [1978], 165-80).

initial hope had been to obtain assistance of the king of Hungary, the nearest sovereign who had a vested interest in Galicia.⁶³ But this proved to be a futile quest and he returned to Volyn'. Through the winter of 1235 and the spring of 1236 Daniil and Vasil'ko, relying solely on their own resources, attempted to regain their losses from the Ol'govichi. This too proved to be hopeless. Finally, it appears that Daniil became resigned to the fact that, without the aid of allies, he could not drive out the Ol'govichi from Galicia. Karamzin points out that he reached an agreement with Grand Prince Iurii in 1236. This alliance was unprecedented: never before had the prince of Volyn' been forced to seek the assistance of the Vsevolodovichi from the distant principality of Rostov-Suzdal'.

The Vsevolodovichi in their turn were also eager to diminish the power of the Ol'govichi. Despite the fact that Grand Prince Iurii had cultivated Mikhail's friendship in the past, the growing tension between his brother Iaroslav and Mikhail over Novgorod in the late 1220s and the early 1230s⁶⁴ strained Iurii's relationship with Mikhail. Finally, the events of 1235 terminated their friendship. Mikhail's unprecedented success against the Rostislavichi and the Romanovichi did not auger well for the Vsevolodovichi. Although the chronicles do not state that Mikhail was interested in reasserting his claim to Novgorod after 1235, the threat of his renewed intervention must have appeared menacingly real to the Vsevolodovichi. Therefore, like Daniil, they too sought to curb Mikhail's expansionist policy. To this end Iaroslav Vsevolodovich, who also harboured personal animosity toward Mikhail over Novgorod, was delegated to champion their cause and to challenge the Ol'govichi by occupying Kiev in 1236. The immediate effect of his action was to force the Rostislavichi to relinquish Kiev; its long term and more important objective, obviously, was to curtail the increasing power of the Ol'govichi.

Iaroslav's mission reveals desperation on the part of the Vsevolodovichi and the Romanovichi. It was the first time that the Vsevolodovichi

63. According to the Novgorod First Chronicle, the Hungarians were driven out of Galich in 1219 by Mstislav Mstislavich, "the Bold" (*NPL*, pp. 59, 260-61). However, later in 1226, the Hypatian Chronicle explains that Mstislav Mstislavich returned Galich to the Hungarians (*PSRL*, vol. II [1908], col. 750), but in 1234 Daniil Romanovich drove them out again (*ibid.*, col. 771).

64. The Novgorod First Chronicle explains that in 1229 Mikhail, on behalf of the citizens of Novgorod, demanded that Iaroslav return Volok Lamskii (a frontier outpost southeast of Novgorod which, along with Novyi Torg, was of strategic importance to Novgorod's eastern trade route) (*NPL*, pp. 68, 274-75). Later, in 1230, according to the Laurentian Chronicle, Iaroslav prepared to march against Mikhail because the latter "had not been faithful to his oath." The two princes, however, were reconciled through the intervention of the prelates of southern Rus' (*PSRL*, vol. I [1926], cols. 455-56). Despite this agreement, in the winter of 1231-32, Iaroslav raided the northern regions of Chernigov with the help of the other Vsevolodovichi and the Novgorodians (*NPL*, pp. 71, 280; cf., *PSRL*, vol. I [1926], col. 459).

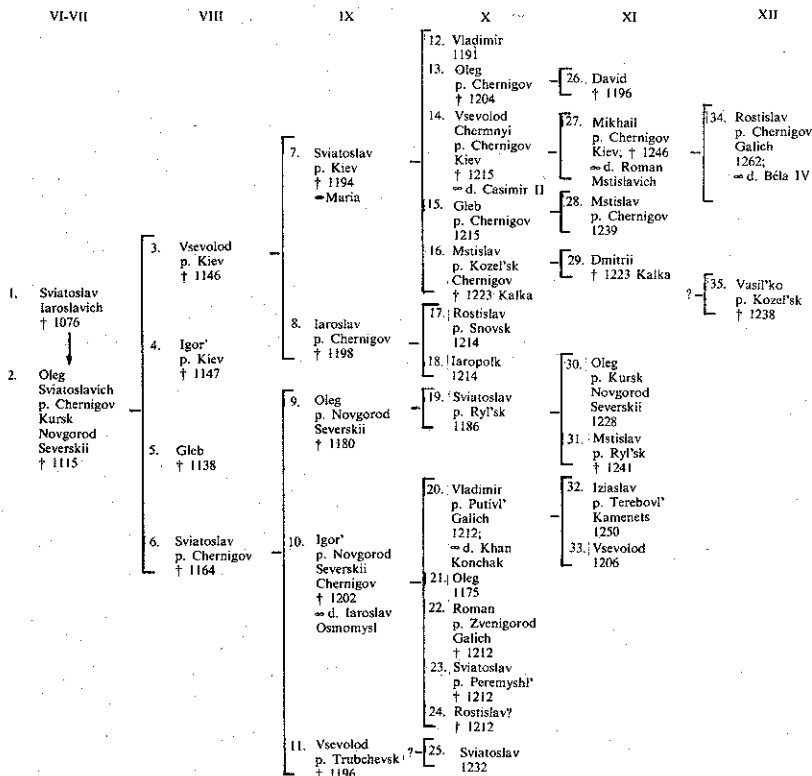
deemed it vital to their security in northeast Rus' to attempt to occupy Kiev. Indeed, it was also the first time since Andrei Bogoliubskii razed the town in 1168 that a prince from Rostov-Suzdal' sought to win control over the "golden throne." However, in 1236 its occupation was less momentous. According to the Hypatian Chronicle, Iaroslav was not able to establish his rule over it and "returned to Suzdal"; it was taken from him by Mikhail.⁶⁵ It is important that, despite their alliance, the princes of Volyn' and Rostov-Suzdal' were unable to prevent him from occupying Kiev. Even though Iaroslav lost possession of the town, the Vsevolodovichi, and especially the Romanovichi, could derive at least one crumb of comfort from their tactic: by forcing Mikhail himself to come to rule in Kiev, they succeeded in weakening the position of the Ol'govichi in Galich.

As has been noted, the majority of historians have argued that the most powerful political centres in Rus' during the first half of the thirteenth century were the principalities of Galicia-Volyn' and Rostov-Suzdal'. The power struggle which arose over Kiev in 1235 and 1236 does not support this contention. After 1214 the politics not only of southern Rus', but of all Rus', were overshadowed by the activities of the princes of Smolensk and the princes of Chernigov. The former retained control of Kiev until 1235. At that time the Ol'govichi successfully challenged them and established their hegemony over southern Rus'. In 1236, therefore, after the Rostislavichi had been eliminated as a primary political force, it was neither the princes of Volyn' nor the princes of Rostov-Suzdal' who replaced them in importance, as historians would have us believe. On the contrary, the two families of princes were forced to pool their resources and jointly combat the escalating power of Mikhail Vsevolodovich, prince of Chernigov. Together they challenged him for control over Kiev but failed.

65. *PSRL*, vol. II (1908), col. 777. The Novgorod First Chronicle makes no reference to Iaroslav's departure from Kiev. The only other sources which state that Mikhail came to Kiev in 1236 are the Nikon Chronicle (*PSRL*, X [1885], pp. 113-14, s.a. 1238) and the seventeenth-century Gustinskii Chronicle (*PSRL*, II [1843], 338).

Table I
OL'GOVICH I

Generation:



Generation:

VI-IX

X

XI

XII

1. Vsevolod
Iaroslavich
† 1093
- ↓
2. Vladimir
Monomakh
† 1125
- ↓
3. Mstislav
† 1132
- ↓
4. Rostislav
p. Smolensk
Kiev
† 1168

5. Roman
p. Smolensk
Kiev
† 1180

6. Riurik
p. Ovruch
Kiev
† 1215?

7. David
p. Smolensk
† 1197

8. Mstislav
† 1180

9. Iaropolk
1176

10. Mstislav
p. Smolensk
Kiev
† 1223 Kalka

11. Rostislav
† 1218

12. Vladimir
p. Kiev
† 1239

13. Iziaslav
† 1183

14. Mstislav
† 1187

15. Mstislav
p. Smolensk
† 1230

16. Konstantin
† 1218

17. Mstislav Udaloj
p. Novgorod
Galich; † 1228
→ d. Khan Kotian

18. Vladimir
1233

19. David
p. Toropets
† 1226

20. Sviatoslav
p. Smolensk
1232

21. Vsevolod
p. Smolensk
1239

22. Iziaslav
p. Kiev
1235

23. Rostislav
1231

24. Rostislav
p. Smolensk, Kiev
1239-40

25. Vasil'ko
† 1218

26. Iaroslav
1245

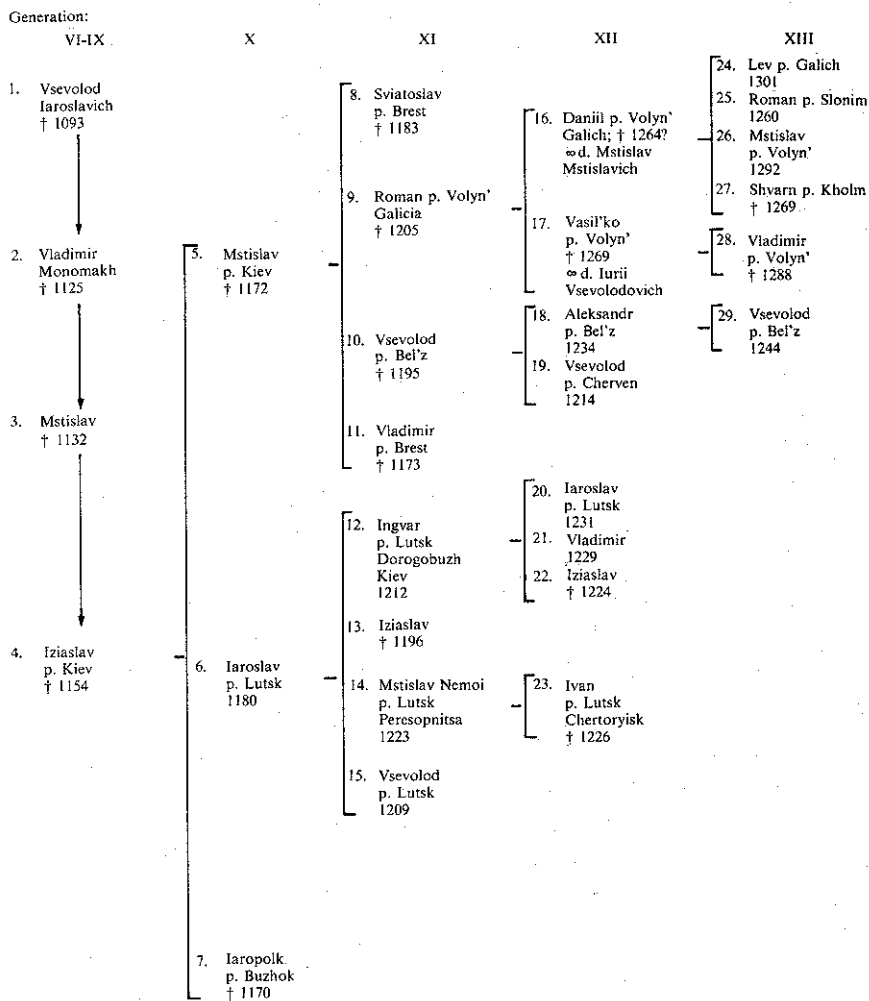
Table III
VSEVOLODOVICH I

Generation:

VI-IX	X	XI	XII
<p>1. Vsevolod Iaroslavich † 1093</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>2. Vladimir Monomakh † 1125</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>3. Iurii Dolgorukii † 1157</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>4. Vsevolod Bol'shoe Gnezdo p. Vladimir † 1212</p>	<p>5. Konstantin p. Rostov Vladimir † 1218</p> <p>6. Boris 1187</p> <p>7. Gleb 1189</p> <p>8. Iurii p. Vladimir † 1238 — d. Vsevolod Chernnyi</p> <p>9. Iaroslav p. Pereiaslavl' Vladimir Kiev † 1246</p> <p>10. Vladimir † 1229</p> <p>11. Sviatoslav p. Iur'ev Vladimir † 1252</p> <p>12. Ivan p. Starodub 1246</p>	<p>13. Vasil'ko p. Rostov † 1238 — d. Mikhail Vsevolodovich</p> <p>14. Vsevolod p. Iaroslavl' † 1238 — d. Oleg Sviatoslavich</p> <p>15. Vladimir p. Uglich † 1249</p> <p>16. Vsevolod † 1238</p> <p>17. Mstislav † 1238</p> <p>18. Vladimir † 1238</p> <p>19. Fedor † 1233</p> <p>20. Aleksandr Nevskii p. Vladimir † 1263</p> <p>21. Andrei p. Suzdal' † 1264</p> <p>22. Konstantin p. Galich † 1255</p> <p>23. Iaroslav p. Tver' † 1272</p> <p>24. Daniil † 1256</p> <p>25. Mikhail † 1248</p> <p>26. Vasilii p. Kostroma † 1276</p> <p>27. Dmitrii p. Iur'ev † 1269</p> <p>28. Mikhail p. Starodub † 1281</p>	<p>29. Boris p. Rostov † 1277</p> <p>30. Gleb p. Beloozero † 1278</p>

Table IV

PRINCES OF VOLYN' AND GALICIA



Explanatory Note: d. = daughter of; p. = prince of; † = died; ∞ = married; the generation after Rurik to which a prince belongs is placed at the top of each column in Roman numerals.