

Christian Raffensperger. *Ties of Kinship: Genealogy and Dynastic Marriage in Kyivan Rus'*. Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University, 2016. Distributed by Harvard UP. Harvard Series in Ukrainian Studies. x, 414 pp. Tables. Notes. Works Cited. Index. \$49.95, cloth.

In this sleek and smart volume, Christian Raffensperger shares his insights regarding the descendants of Volodymyr Sviatoslavych the Great (who are called “Volodimeroviči” in the book) and about the process of tracking dynastic marriages in Kyivan Rus'. Raffensperger's project was undertaken in partnership with the MAPA project of the Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University. The goal of the book *Ties of Kinship* is very ambitious. The author rightly notes that “Rus' is actually deeply interconnected with the rest of medieval Europe, even though medievalists don't typically acknowledge it” (“Ties”). Thus, the book under review is addressed not merely to Slavists but to all medievalists who are interested in the history of Kyivan Rus'. One of the virtues of this book is its practical approach.

The study opens with an introduction by Raffensperger (1-12), in which he describes his treatment of Rus' dynastic marriages. Here, he provides a clear and thoughtful explanation of the sources and his methodology. The author follows the path paved by the classic work of Nicolas de Baumgarten “Généalogies et mariages occidentaux des Rurikides russes du X-e au XIII-e siècle” (“Genealogies and Western Marriages of the Rus' Rurikides from the Tenth to the Thirteenth Century” [see 4]). Parts 1 and 2 of Raffensperger's book are painted in very broad strokes. Part 1 of the book (13-176) deals not only with the marriages of the descendants of Volodymyr (“Volodimeroviči”) that occurred before 1146 but also with medieval political relationships; it covers five generations of the family, and Raffensperger discusses the matrimonial politics of the whole dynasty. The author cites familiar episodes and well-known sources. However, he attempts to show and correct the mistakes that scholars have made when dealing with the matrimonial politics of Iaroslav the Wise and his sons. Raffensperger presents his arguments clearly and authoritatively.

Part 2 of the book (177-382) includes twenty-two genealogical charts, which also refer to dynastic connections with the imperial family of Byzantium, the royal families of Poland and Hungary, and so on. In this part, Raffensperger made full use of his database to reconstruct the genealogies of five generations of the dynasty of Volodymyr the Great (“Volodimeroviči”). This prosopographic part of the book is of great importance for understanding the process of the integration of Rus' women into medieval Europe. The care and comprehensiveness with which Raffensperger studies the prosopographic database are evidence of his erudition. Thus, this part of

the book is an indispensable resource for medievalists interested in the dynastic marriages of Kyivan Rus'.

Unfortunately, Raffensperger's approach toward the medieval sources is not always the most successful. Some of these sources could be more fittingly described as unreliable sources. He believes that the late Nikonian Chronicle and Tver Chronicle contain adequate information for his lists. As a result, the author includes in his lists legendary figures from these Chronicles such as "Baškord of the Polovcians" and "N. N. Vsevolodkovna" (see, e.g., 248-49). He uses the late Polish and Hungarian sources in a similar way (thus including "Vyšeslava Svjatoslavna" (see, e.g., 234-35), "N. N., 'Premislava' Volodimerovna" (see, e.g., 335), "Marija Svjatopolkovna" (see, e.g., 256), and so on). However, Raffensperger ignores the complexity of the later stages of these medieval texts. So, for example, the name "Anastasija," the daughter of Iaroslav the Wise ("Jaroslavna"), is shown to originate from this late Hungarian historiography (see, e.g., 350).

In accordance with the ideas of Alexander Kazhdan, Raffensperger rejects the marriage between Oleh Svjatoslavych ("Oleg Svjatoslavič") and a Byzantine woman named Theophano Mouzalonnissa, "archontissa of Rus'." He rightly considers that the Mouzalon family was prominent in the thirteenth century and not in the eleventh century (66-67). However, the seals of Theophano Mouzalonnissa date back to the earlier times. Unfortunately, Raffensperger does not refer to some of the newer publications on these seals and some secondary literature dedicated to this marriage (authors such as Werner Seibt, Valerii Stepanenko, Oleksandr Al'f'orov, and Viktor Chkhaidze). His list "Byzantine Dynastic Marriages" (363-70) requires some correction, especially with regard to the Byzantine marriage of the daughter of Volodar Rostyslavych ("Volodar' Rostislavič") in 1104 (see 364, 368). It is true that "the title *carevič* may not always refer exactly to a son of a tsar" (97). On this subject, Seibt argues that Byzantine aristocrat *protospatharios* Basil Spondyles was married to Volodar Rostyslavych's daughter (Seibt 83-95).

Raffensperger argues that Leo Diogenes was not a son of Romanos IV Diogenes but that this mysterious son-in-law of Volodymyr Monomakh may have been "a member of the extended Diogenes family" (98). This is plausible but not necessarily compelling. There is considerable literature on this topic (authors such as Peter Frankopan, Jean-Claude Cheynet, Oleksii Tolochko, and so on) that Raffensperger ignores. The birth date of Anna Porphyrogenneta ("Anna Porphyrogenita") is not "unknown" (e.g., 363). In fact, John Skylitzes wrote that Anna was born two days before her father's death ([Thurn 254, lines 37-39]; on 13 March 963 [Wortley 245, note 1]).

These minor errors in no way minimize the value of this work. The book *Ties of Kinship* is a pleasure to read, and it is truly a model for the future

prosopographic lexicon relating to Kyivan Rus'. This excellent volume will be of interest to scholars of medieval genealogy, prosopography, and history.

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