

Adrian Jusupović, *Kronika halicko-wołyńska (Kronika Romanowiczów) w latopisarskiej kolekcji historycznej* [The Halych-Volhynian Chronicle in the Annalistic Historical Tradition], Cracow: Avalon; Warsaw: Instytut Historii PAN, 2019, 204 pp. (with illustrations)

As is well-known, no clear-cut or generally accepted order of succession developed among the princes of Old Rus', and variations on the notion of partible inheritance of possessions and power played out among members of the Riurikid house until the fifteenth century. Such forms of inauguration-ritual as enthronement took place, with churches often serving as venues and senior churchmen officiating,¹ yet Latin Christian notions of coronation (let alone unction performed by a prelate) as a constitutive act did not gain purchase in Rus' political culture. Consequently, the allocation of princely 'seats' and possessions, and issues of seniority within a 'principality' (itself a mutable construct), was an apple of discord between those having a genealogical or geographical case. So, too, was the right to control the paramount seat of Kyiv (Kiev). One contender was an ambitious prince who had spent some time as master of Volhynia, Roman Mstislavich. He managed to seize control of Kyiv and, briefly, to maintain there a compliant lesser prince. However, upon Roman's death in battle in 1205, his two small sons and heirs had slim chance of any hold over the main seats in the south-west. Their Byzantine-born mother looked to the Hungarian king, Andrew II, who gave asylum to her elder son. These fertile, accessible and populous regions of the south-west drew in contenders from the other branches of the Rus' princely house, along with non-Rus' potentates, not least the Hungarian ruler himself. The configurations of rival princes' seats and territorial dominions remained in flux for more than a generation. The death in 1228 of Mstislav Mstislavich, long ensconced in Halych, took a dominant figure out of the arena. But it was essentially thanks to the aegis of the irresistible Mongol khans that Roman's elder son, Daniel, secured lasting hegemony in the south-west, in the mid-1240s. By this time, the sacked city of Kyiv had little to offer a prince, even in terms of the prestige accruing from residence there.

These features of political culture, especially the looseness of inauguration-ritual within the confines of the Riurikid 'blood-group', brought a certain edge to historical writing and rewriting in Rus'. Records — or purported records — could serve the practical purpose of determining which prince held what at the behest of whom, along with their birth-dates and ancestry, besides

¹ See now Alexandra Vukovich, 'Enthronement in Early Rus: Between Byzantium and Scandinavia', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia*, 14, 2018, pp. 211–39 (p. 219).

details of pacts made between them and, occasionally, the ‘testament’ of a dying prince. More broadly, they could also glorify the deeds, piety and other accomplishments of a present-day prince or a long-dead heroic ancestor, in hopes of legitimizing this prince’s regime and improving the succession prospects of his heir or heirs. Creating a credibly positive narrative was — and indeed still is — indispensable to any regime heavily reliant on election or negotiation for legitimization. How effective such means were is open to question, and only very rarely do hints survive of the nature of the relationship between a chronicler and a princely court. One could make a case for downplaying the political significance of the relationship, in that the writer (or team of writers) was in clerical or monastic orders and might therefore exert autonomous judgement, especially if there was a ‘rapid turnover’ in princes at the nearest major seat. Furthermore, the number of persons aware of the composition or maintenance of a chronicle at any one time is likely to have been modest, while those capable of reading it would mostly have been clergymen, too. However, the inter-princely agreements sealed by ‘kissing the cross’ were not infrequently overseen by bishops,² and one should not underestimate the capacity of princes and their entourages to consult, or seek to rewrite, the contents of a chronicle. Besides, the foundation-myth of the Riurikid dynasty is a principal feature of the *Povest’ vremennykh let*, which was incorporated in many later chronicles.

The *Povest’ vremennykh let*, in highlighting Kyiv as ‘the mother of Rus’ cities’,³ broadcast what status attached to a prince in control there and itself served to keep the city at the centre of the political arena. Yet the profusion of contenders for princely seats in the south-west after 1205 lessened the chances of anyone proving able to combine effective dominion there with control over Kyiv. From the above considerations, one might *a priori* expect that this ‘game of thrones’ would prompt the composition of narratives devoted to goings-on in Halych and Volodymyr-in-Volhynia. Such expectations are met by the text known as the *Halych-Volhynian Chronicle* (henceforth *H-VC*), which covers the period from around the death of Roman up to the events of the year 1289. The first twenty years or so represent something of a jumble, partly because of the ‘rapid turnover’ in princes but also because of confusions in the sequence of events. Greater coherence sets in thereafter, with the figure of Daniel Romanovich looming large. But only towards the middle years of the century are his actions recounted in discursive detail, leading scholars to discern some sort of *Svod* (Compilation) made under his auspices beneath the text of the *H-VC* as it now stands. After Daniel’s death in 1264 his brother Vasil’ko, ensconced in the city of Volodymyr-in-Volhynia takes centre-stage,

² Yulia Mikhailova and David K. Prestel, ‘Cross Kissing: Keeping One’s Word in Twelfth-Century Rus’’, *Slavic Review*, 70, 2011, 1, pp. 1–22.

³ These prophetic words are put into the mouth of Oleg, upon seizing Kyiv and installing the boy Igor as prince there: *Povest’ vremennykh let*, ed. Varvara P. Adrianova-Peretts and Dmitrii S. Likhachev (rev. ed. Mikhail B. Sverdlov), Moscow, 1996, p. 14.

followed by one of Vasil'ko's sons. This son, named (confusingly) Vladimir, receives even more elaborate treatment. His death in 1289 prompts a lengthy encomium from the *H-VC* whose text, in its extant form, does not extend much further. A link between Vladimir Vasil'kovich and the *H-VC* (or its immediate predecessor) suggests itself.

These contours of the *H-VC* are more or less common ground to specialists. However, many aspects remain unclear. Fresh bids to address the confusion of the *H-VC*'s earlier part and to elucidate its subsequent parts are therefore welcome. Adrian Jusupović is unusually well qualified to do so. Having (jointly with Dariusz Dąbrowski) edited and translated into Polish the text of the *H-VC*,⁴ he has also published an enlightening study on the region's political history.⁵ He brings these skills to bear in the book under review, equipping it with an admirable Chronological Table. The subject is, as he puts it, 'first and foremost the chronological strategy of the *H-VC* but secondly, and closely connected with this, the narrative strategy' (p. 155). It is worth giving the essence of Jusupović's theses here. The *H-VC*'s opening parts draw heavily on the 'Kyivan Grand Princely Chronicle'. The authors responsible for coverage of the late twelfth and earlier thirteenth century favoured Riurik Rostislavich, at once the father-in-law and formidable rival of Roman Mstislavich. Unsurprisingly, this work, termed by Jusupović the 'Rostislavichi Chronicle', was inimical to Roman: its original notice about his death was critical, and we know of its unflattering portrayal only thanks to the learned Jan Długosz, who had access to an 'uncensored' version of the 'Rostislavichi Chronicle'. The 'Rostislavichi Chronicle' is transmitted via the *H-VC*, whose surviving form incorporates diverse sources, including eyewitness reports. Among these sources could well be Roman's second wife and her circle: identifiable as Euphrosyne-Anna, daughter of Isaac II Angelos, she may be responsible for such details as the journeying of herself and her small sons.⁶ The *H-VC*'s structure becomes tighter and more coherent from 1228 onwards, and this reflects the departure of Prince Mstislav Mstislavich from the scene. Jusupović detects a clear narrative strategy in play henceforth. This is perhaps most blatant in the form of the words put into the mouth of the dying Mstislav, addressing Daniel: he confesses to having 'sinned' in withholding Halych from Daniel and, heeding a mendacious counsellor, handing it over to a 'foreigner'.⁷ For its

⁴ *Kronika halicko-wołyńska: (Kronika Romanowiczów / Chronica Galiciano-Voliniana: Chronica Romanoviciana*, ed. Dariusz Dąbrowski and Adrian Jusupović, Cracow and Warsaw, 2017, MPH s.n., vol. 16 (hereafter *Kronika / Chronica*); *Kronika halicko-wołyńska (Kronika Romanowiczów)*, transl. and ed. Dariusz Dąbrowski and Adrian Jusupović, Cracow and Warsaw, 2017.

⁵ Adrian Jusupović, *Elity ziemi halickiej i wołyńskiej w czasach Romanowiczów (1205-1269): Studium prozopograficzne*, Cracow, 2013.

⁶ Jusupović, *Kronika halicko-wołyńska* (hereafter Jusupović), pp. 34-37, 44. See also Alexander V. Maiorov, 'The Daughter of a Byzantine Emperor — the Wife of a Galician-Volhynian Prince', *Byzantinoslavica*, 72, 2014, pp. 188-233.

⁷ *Kronika / Chronica*, p. 124; Jusupović, p. 68.

coverage of the period from 1228 until 1244, the *H-VC*'s framework is, for the most part, firmly chronological. It most probably derives from a laudatory narrative, and Jusupović draws attention to a statement about rebellious boiars that can only have been written during Daniel's lifetime.⁸ However, the text has been reworked slightly so as to write into the story Daniel's brother and successor, Vasil'ko. Through analysis of occasionally manifest insertions and the occurrence of the dual form in the *H-VC*, Jusupović shows how episodes originally 'starring' Daniel alone were reworked so as to give Vasil'ko a part in the action (pp. 76–77, 83–84).

For the following period, from 1244 until around 1260, the formatting of the *H-VC* changes, and this owes much to the *Svod* of Daniel, which seems to have been composed at the start of the 1260s. The framework becomes less clear-cut, due to a profusion of parallel accounts; these are organised thematically, making flashbacks or pursuing the course of events years ahead of subsequent sections in the text. It was, presumably, the original author of the *Svod* who wrote in justification of this departure from the narrative strategy of year-by-year entries. He asserts 'the duty of the chronographer (*kronograf*) to write about everything and all that has happened', invoking *inter alia* the 'Greek' and 'Roman' systems of reckoning, and 'how Eusebius the Pamphylia and other chronographers have written'.⁹ Ranking himself in the tradition of the celebrated Eusebius of Caesarea¹⁰, the author was aspiring to the loftiest cultural heights, with the aim of further dignifying and legitimizing Daniel's regime. Highly educated, he probably belonged in some sense to the prince's circle, drawing on his own experiences, oral informants (perhaps including Daniel himself), and also on the princely archive. He gives an extensive account of Daniel's journey to the Mongol Horde in 1245/46 and his obeisance before Khan Baty; he received a patent (*iarlyk*) of authority at the court of the Khan.¹¹ Only from around this time did Daniel's hegemony in the south-west become more or less assured, and the chronicle's change in narrative strategy is itself a product of this. Also quite full is the account of the coronation of Daniel performed by a papal legate in 1254, likewise serving to enhance legitimacy.¹² So, too, does the description of the building-works and the church furnishings at Chełm, which Daniel sought to make a sacral centre, if not his principal seat.¹³ That these episodes should feature Daniel alone is scarcely surprising, given their accent on his unique status. However, as Jusupović observes, the insertions that were later made to highlight the role of Vasil'ko (based in Volodymyr-in-Volhynia) are fairly restrained

⁸ *Kronika / Chronica*, pp. 154, 155–56.; Jusupović, pp. 76–77.

⁹ *Kronika / Chronica*, p. 331; Jusupović, p. 102.

¹⁰ Eusebius' admiration for his mentor Pamphilus (martyred in 310) was such that he took to naming himself 'ho tou Pamphilou', a form which the *H-VC*'s usage reflects.

¹¹ *Kronika / Chronica*, pp. 287–94.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 349–51.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 395–404.

for the period from 1244 until around 1260: essentially, they amount to the adding of Vasil'ko's name or, simply, the use of the dual. The explanation for such forbearance offered by Jusupović (p. 111) is convincing: in effect, the detail and the density of the text recounting Daniel's activities and works may have daunted the subsequent redactor(s) and, accordingly, the text of Daniel's *Svod* for this period was left relatively untouched. The self-proclaimed 'duty of the chronographer [of Daniel] to write about everything and all that has happened' seems, ironically, to have spared his text from major reworking!

Towards the end of the reign of Daniel another change in narrative strategy is discernible. The *H-VC*'s framework is, once more, essentially chronological and the figure of Vasil'ko looms ever larger. His activities from his seat at Volodymyr-in-Volhynia receive fuller coverage, and the tone is no longer unequivocally laudatory of Daniel. On occasion, his conduct incurs contempt, as when he is described as 'fleeing to the Poles, and from the Poles to the Hungarians'. As Jusupović remarks, adducing evidence from Latin sources, he most probably went in quest of allies against fresh Mongol inroads, and the chronicle is significantly shy about Vasil'ko's collaboration with the Mongols around this time.¹⁴ Chronicle-writing could well have continued at the court of Daniel after his death in 1264, as witness the eulogy incorporated in the *H-VC*. One may reasonably suppose that by this time more than one narrative was being composed, on behalf not only of Vasil'ko but also of other major players, notably the son of Daniel, Shvarn, who was probably based at Chełm (Kholm). He receives full, sometimes downright partisan, coverage and this could, as Jusupović cautiously surmises, derive from a Continuation of Daniel's *Svod* written at his court, or even from 'some *Svod* of Shvarn' (p. 121). However, by 1269 Shvarn had died, seemingly childless, and that same year saw the death of Vasil'ko. As Jusupović observes, it is uncertain whether any prince gained hegemony after the death of Daniel, or whether 'there were several decision-making centres' (p. 121). This illustrates our suggestion made above, that sponsorship of historical writing was itself of considerable use to players in 'the game of thrones'.

Historical writing was deemed useful by the prince who emerged as predominant in the later decades of the thirteenth century, Vladimir Vasil'kovich. Sometime in the 1280s a learned cleric drew heavily on the above-mentioned narratives concerning south-west Rus' and began working on a Chronicle to set Vladimir morally (albeit not militarily) above other princes, notably his rival, Lev Danielovich, who could count Chełm among his seats. The signs of Vladimir's association with this Chronicle — whose contents will have been very similar, if not identical to the *H-VC* — have long aroused scholarly debate, and important observations have been made quite recently. For example, Oleksiy Tolochko pointed to the use of the 'September-year' for recording Vladimir's death in 1289, suggesting that recourse to such Byzantine-style chronology could be

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 415; Jusupović, p. 114.

connected with a bid for recognition of him as a saint.¹⁵ Jusupović adds additional arguments, noting the use of the ‘September-year’ in the subsequent account of the viewing of Vladimir’s uncorrupted body and final closure of his tomb.¹⁶ He demonstrates the efforts made to depict Vladimir as not only exemplary Christian ruler but even a *filosof*. It may well have been the Chronicler himself who observed him close-up and could detail the progress of the disease (probably leprosy) that began by affecting his lower lip and eventually killed him.¹⁷ The same author will have been responsible for the grandiloquent eulogy depicting Vladimir as monarch-bookman (*knizhnik*) and patron of learning, citing from memory parts of Ilarion’s ‘Sermon on Law and Grace’.¹⁸ Jusupović brings out these facets of the work more fully than has been done before. He notes the Chronicle’s wary handling of Lev Danielovich, criticising his periodic collaboration with the Mongols, yet depicting him in generally positive tones at times of joint-operations with Vladimir or other Rus’ princes. And Jusupović discusses perceptively the detailed coverage of Vladimir’s last days: *H-VC* cites two *gramoty* whereby Vladimir made financial provision for his widow and bequeathed his seat and lands to his nephew, Mstislav Danielovich, an act confirmed by the bishop of Volodymyr-in-Volhynia.¹⁹ Here, too, one may detect the role of historical writing in the dynamics of inter-princely negotiations, so germane to Rus’ political culture.

Inevitably much is speculative, and Jusupović stresses our ignorance as to when exactly work on the Continuation of the Chronicle ceased (p. 154): in theory, at least, it might have carried on through the reign of Mstislav Danielovich, whose end-date is itself uncertain. The closeness to, if not identifiability of, this Chronicle with our extant text (that is *H-VC*) is, accordingly, uncertain. And, given the difficulty in ‘unscrambling’ the inserts from the original text of the *Svod* of Daniel, one may wonder whether the inserts are all the work of the last redactor, as Jusupović avers (p. 154). Doubtless, textologists will weigh in with further reservations and suggestions, and some historical interpretations may occasionally be open to challenge. Thus one may doubt whether the *H-VC*’s brief mention of the murder in 1208 of ‘the great Roman emperor (*ts’sar*) Philip [of Suabia] at the instigation of the [Hungarian] queen’s brother’ should be dismissed as, in effect, gossip. In giving Philip an imperial title, the *H-VC* registers the way in which his documents had been styling him, and there is no reason to query its essential point that Queen Gertrude, seeking to aid her brother (Bishop Ekbert of Bamberg), arranged for her infant daughter’s betrothal to ‘the son of the Landgrave [Herman of Thuringia], Loudovik (Louis)’: Herman, a formidable

¹⁵ Aleksei P. Tolochko, ‘Proiskhozhdenie khronologii Ipat’evskogo spiska Galitsko-Volynskoi letopisi’, *Palaeoslavica*, 13, 2005, pp. 81–108 (pp. 88–90).

¹⁶ *Kronika / Chronica*, p. 626; Jusupović, pp. 148–49.

¹⁷ *Kronika / Chronica*, pp. 587–88.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 589–93; Jusupović, pp. 141–42, 146–48.

¹⁹ *Kronika / Chronica*, pp. 553–65; Jusupović, pp. 137–38.

figure, enabled the bishop to return from the Hungarian court (where he had sought asylum after the murder) to his see.²⁰

However, given the multi-layered nature of our sources along with the redactions made on behalf of rival or much later princes, such scholarly doubts and debate are inevitable, indeed desirable. Historical acumen and knowledge has seldom been harnessed to textological expertise in the *H-VC* to such good effect. Of particular value is the author's alertness to the political 'charge' of historical writing, the implications of the *H-VC* incorporating the text of the *Povest' vremennykh let* and the 'Kyivan Grand Princely Chronicle'. Jusupović has made an important contribution to the better understanding of our principal source for south-west Rus' in the thirteenth century. And he certainly attains his stated goal of elucidating 'the chronological [...] and narrative strategy' of the *H-VC*.

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²⁰ *Kronika / Chronica*, pp. 27–29; Jusupović, pp. 40–41. See *Die Urkunden König Philipps von Schwaben*, ed. Andrea Rzhacek and Renate Spreitzer, Wiesbaden, 2014, MGH, Diplomata, vol. 12; Peter Wiegand, 'Eheversprechen und Fürstenkoalition: Die Verbindung Elisabeths von Ungarn mit Ludwig von Thüringen als Baustein einer europäischen Allianz (1207/08–1210/11)', in *Elisabeth von Thüringen – eine europäische Heilige. Aufsätze*, ed. Dieter Blume and Matthias Werner, Petersberg, 2007, pp. 35–46. The wealth of mentions of Poles, Hungarians, Czechs and other Westerners and, even, familiarity with their culture, in the *H-VC* is brought out by the PhD thesis of Catherine Philippa Sykes, 'Latin Christians in the Literary Landscape of Early Rus, c. 988–1330', unpublished dissertation, Cambridge, 2017.