

THE DYNASTY OF
CHERNIGOV, 1146–1246

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The third generation continued: 1146–1164

Vsevolod, the eldest Ol'govich in the third generation of the princes of Chernigov, had risen to the pinnacle of political power in the dynasty and in Rus' by becoming senior prince of the dynasty and by ruling Kiev. It fell to his brother Igor', the next in seniority, to maintain the supremacy of the Ol'govichi in Rus'. To do this he had to secure his authority as senior prince of the dynasty, consolidate the superiority of the Ol'govichi over his cousins the Davidovichi, and replace his brother as prince of Kiev. He could look forward to facing these challenges with the loyal support of his brother Svyatoslav.

The chroniclers describe Igor's ephemeral reign in Kiev in vivid detail. Their preoccupation with his career can be explained, as we shall see, by the significance of his failure and by the unprecedented nature of his death. In evaluating their accounts, we should keep in mind that the chroniclers had different views of Igor' at different stages of his life. Before his death they speak of him as having a violent nature and accuse him and his brother Svyatoslav of being cunning, greedy, and dishonest. They also accuse the brothers of breaking promises, instigating plots, and forcing reconciliation.¹ After Igor's death, as we shall see, the chroniclers looked upon him as a good man, a defender of his patrimony, and a saint. Consequently, when examining the accounts, we must keep in mind the biases of hostile anti-Ol'govichi detractors, of loyal Chernigov subjects, and of pious proponents of Igor's martyrdom.

IGOR' FAILS IN KIEV

After Yaroslav the Wise, Igor' was the third prince from the dynasty of Chernigov to occupy Kiev. His grandfather Svyatoslav and his elder brother, Vsevolod, had usurped power. Igor', however, was the first who succeeded

¹ *Dynasty*, pp. 369–83.

to the capital of Rus' through peaceful means. His reign began under auspicious conditions. Before his death in 1146, Vsevolod seemingly took the necessary measures to secure Igor's peaceful succession. He persuaded the princes of Chernigov, a number of the Monomashichi, and the Kievans to pledge their loyalty to Igor' as his designated successor.² Consequently, after Vsevolod's death, it should have been merely a formality for the same princes and the townsmen to renew their pledges. Unfortunately for Igor', this was not to be the case.

After Vsevolod's death, the Kievans had to acknowledge Igor' as their prince with a new oath of allegiance and negotiate the terms of his rule. Accordingly, he summoned them to Yaroslav's court on the hill, his home ground so to speak, where the Kievans kissed the Holy Cross to all his terms. They refused, however, to install him as prince. This is implied by the chronicler's failure to record the enthronement ceremony in St. Sofia Cathedral at which a new prince pledged his oath to the Kievans by kissing the icon of the Mother of God. Instead, the townsmen went to the *podol'*, where they traditionally met in *veche*. They summoned Igor' to come and kiss the Holy Cross to all their terms. Their actions indicate that they distrusted him.³

Seeing that at least some Kievans were reluctant to accept him, Igor' demonstrated his desire to begin his reign on the right footing by delegating his younger brother, Svyatoslav, to negotiate on his behalf. Given his allegedly volatile nature, this was a prudent tactic. To judge from the reports of chroniclers, his contemporaries looked upon Igor' with hostility. According to one albeit late source, Vsevolod had coerced the Kievans into kissing the Holy Cross to Igor' and they neither liked him nor wanted him to be their prince. The other princes also disliked him and the Ol'govichi. It was said that no prince of Rus' was of the same mind as Igor' except for his brother Svyatoslav.⁴ Consequently, Igor' may well have sent his brother to parley with the Kievans because he was aware of his own unpopularity.

Nevertheless, Igor's willingness to have an intermediary negotiate on his behalf showed that he was capable of discretion. He also demonstrated patience by attempting to appease the *veche* through negotiation rather than by forcing his authority on the people. Such behavior contradicts

² *Dynasty*, pp. 404–11.

³ Ipat., cols. 321–2; Mosk., p. 37. See also I. Ya. Froyanov, "Vechevye sobraniya 1146–1147 gg. v Kieve," *Vestnik Leningradskogo Universiteta*, 8, Seriya Istoriya, Yazyk, Literatura, vyp. 2 (1977), 31.

⁴ Gust., p. 298. Elsewhere, under 1146, the two Davidovichi accuse Igor' of malice towards Izyaslav Mstislavich and to them (Ipat., col. 329). Other anti-Ol'govichi sources observe that Igor' was replaced in Kiev by Izyaslav Mstislavich, "the offshoot of a good root" (svod 1493, p. 233; svod 1495, p. 319).

the chroniclers' claim that he was a bellicose prince. Igor' also took wise precautions. He rode to the lower town with his *druzhina*, but remained at a safe distance from the Kievans while his brother negotiated with them. In this way he not only stayed out of harm's way should the townsmen resort to violence, but also kept his retinue menacingly near to the assembly in a show of force to intimidate it into concluding a speedy settlement. But Svyatoslav was not merely Igor's figurehead. The brothers proposed to act as co-rulers. When Svyatoslav negotiated with the Kievans they instructed him to kiss the Holy Cross in his own name and in the name of his brother. They also made him promise that either he or Igor' would judge their grievances. Finally, after Svyatoslav agreed to their terms they proclaimed, "Igor' your brother is our prince and so are you," and they promised to betray neither the one nor the other.⁵

Igor's decision to rule Kiev with Svyatoslav had precedent. As has been shown elsewhere, their father, Oleg, and their uncle David had ruled Chernigov together after the Congress of Lyubech (1097).⁶ That dual rule was accepted practice in Rus' during the middle of the twelfth century was later demonstrated by Igor's successor Izyaslav Mstislavich who, as we shall see, would rule Kiev with his uncle Vyacheslav Vladimirovich. Igor', as the elder brother, would presumably assume the role of the senior partner while Svyatoslav, the junior brother, would act as the commander of military operations. Such an arrangement would be a coup for the dynasty of Chernigov. Having its two genealogically senior princes in Kiev would ensure that the capital of Rus' remained in the hands of the Ol'govichi even after Igor's death.

The *veche* seemingly had no grievances against Igor' himself. Rather, it objected to the practices of Vsevolod's former administrators (*tiuni*), Ratsha and Tudor. It demanded that Igor' neither condone such activity during his reign nor reappoint Vsevolod's officials. He agreed and granted the Kievans a *tiun* of their own choosing.⁷ It is impossible to determine how much credence we can give to the citizens' accusations. Disgruntled subjects who had not profited from his administration levied criticisms against any former ruler. Moreover, partisan Kievans were especially hostile to a prince of a rival dynasty, particularly to one who showed signs of insecurity. Since Igor's foothold in Kiev was still unsure, the *veche* adopted the tactic of discrediting the rule of his brother Vsevolod, who had designated him as the successor. In doing so, it pressured Igor' into granting it greater concessions.

⁵ Ipat., cols. 321–2; Mosk., p. 37.

⁶ *Dynasty*, pp. 213–15.

⁷ Ipat., cols. 321–2; Mosk., p. 37.

Igor's readiness to yield to the *veche* once again suggests that he was not as bellicose as some chroniclers claimed. Indeed, his actions reveal his sensitivity to the precarious nature of his candidacy. He realized that to antagonize the townsmen before securing his rule in Kiev would be foolhardy. In the recent past they had effectively assumed the role of kingmakers and had favoured candidates from the House of Monomakh.⁸ Igor' could not afford to give the *veche* a pretext for selecting a prince from the rival dynasty.

After Igor' kissed the Holy Cross and departed for dinner, the chronicler reports, townsmen pillaged the court of the erstwhile *tiun* Ratsha and those of other officials. Igor' dispatched Svyatoslav to quell the riot. He also sent envoys to Izyaslav Mstislavich in Pereyaslav', demanding his support. But Izyaslav refused to give it. The Kievans therefore invited Izyaslav to be their prince because they did not want the Ol'govichi.⁹

The sources do not agree why the Kievans rioted. The Hypatian chronicler implies that Igor's personal conduct was not the cause. At first he writes that the townsmen rioted against Vsevolod's former officials. Later, however, when the Kievans invited Izyaslav to Kiev, their main grievance was directed against the Ol'govichi as a family. They objected to Igor' and Svyatoslav's rule because they wished to prevent Kiev from becoming the inheritance of the Ol'govichi.¹⁰ Nevertheless, other sources unequivocally state that the Kievans were displeased with Igor'. One claims that they were coerced into kissing the Holy Cross to him although they neither liked him nor wanted him to be their prince.¹¹ Yet another asserts that they sent for Izyaslav because Igor', after occupying the throne, acted contrary to the promises he had made to the *veche*.¹²

It is difficult to assess the veracity of these reports. More than likely, Svyatoslav and the *veche* conducted their negotiations in good faith, but a bellicose anti-Ol'govichi faction rioted because it wanted to take revenge on Vsevolod's former officials and to undermine Igor's authority. This pro-Izyaslav group undoubtedly claimed that the townsmen were coerced into kissing the Holy Cross to Igor'. Indeed, it must have been in reference to this faction that, at an earlier date, a pro-Chernigov chronicler (to judge from his bias) wrote that the Kievans had deceived Igor' when Vsevolod had insisted that they pledge their allegiance to his brother.¹³ Thus, an

⁸ Vsevolod, Igor's elder brother who, in 1139, usurped Kiev, was preceded on that throne by Vladimir Monomakh and three of his sons, Mstislav, Yaropolk, and Vyacheslav (*Dynasty*, pp. 312–50).

⁹ *Ipat.*, col. 322. ¹⁰ *Ipat.*, col. 323. ¹¹ *Gust.*, p. 298. ¹² *Mosk.*, p. 37.

¹³ *Ipat.*, cols. 320–1; *Dynasty*, p. 410. See Hrushevsky, *Ocherk istorii Kievskoy zemli*, pp. 169–70. Concerning the tendentious reporting of the Chernigov chronicler, one probably employed by Svyatoslav Ol'govich, see S. M. Solov'ev, *Istoriya Rossii* (M., 1963), kn. 2, vol. 3, pp. 112–13.

undercurrent of opposition to the Ol'govichi had already existed when Vsevolod attempted to secure his brother's succession.

The chroniclers fail to record whether Igor' broke his agreement with the *veche* before or after the mob plundered Ratsha's court. Consequently, we must determine the sequence of the two events if we are to establish who broke their oath first. According to the Hypatian account, the rioters attacked the courts of the officials immediately after Igor' took his oath and rode to dinner. Such a rapid sequence of events would not have given Igor' sufficient time to make administrative appointments. We may conclude therefore that the anti-Ol'govichi mob violated the *veche's* oath and therewith freed Igor' of his promises to the Kievans.

The misconduct of Vsevolod's *tiuni*, his alleged coercion of the Kievans to support Igor', the latter's unpopularity, and his reappointment of Vsevolod's officials were all reasons that helped to persuade the malcontents to rebel against the Ol'govichi. But the most cogent consideration for them was that they did not wish to become an inheritance for the Ol'govichi. Their accusation implies that the princes of Chernigov were attempting to secure their permanent rule over Kiev by handing over control of it from one senior prince to the next. This news supports our contention that Igor' and Svyatoslav were initiating dual rule. According to such an arrangement, Igor' would be succeeded by the eldest surviving Ol'govich, who, presumably, would be Svyatoslav.

Significantly, the Kievans did not object to becoming the patrimony of one princely family; they objected to becoming the inheritance of the Ol'govichi. They, or those supporting the Mstislavichi, had already adopted Vladimir Monomakh and his descendants as their dynasty.¹⁴ Following Monomakh's death in 1125, the Kievans had selected, according to the order of lateral succession, Monomakh's eldest surviving sons: Mstislav, Yaropolk, and Vyacheslav.¹⁵ In 1139, Vsevolod Ol'govich foiled their plans by evicting Vyacheslav from Kiev. Before his death, he had designated Igor' as his successor presumably with the intention of displacing the Monomashichi permanently and making the Ol'govichi Kiev's hereditary dynasty. In 1146, by inviting Izyaslav, the citizens not only demonstrated their intention to reinstate the Monomashichi, but also to confine their choice to the family of Monomakh's eldest son, Mstislav.

As a result of this rivalry, the system of lateral succession, which Yaroslav the Wise had allegedly inaugurated, once again underwent modification.¹⁶

¹⁴ *Dynasty*, pp. 267–72, 276–7, 298–300, 305–8. ¹⁵ *Dynasty*, pp. 305–50.

¹⁶ Concerning Yaroslav's alleged system of succession, see Dimnik, "Testament," pp. 369–86 and *Dynasty*, *passim*.

Izyaslav violated the genealogical order of succession within his dynasty because according to it, he was not in line to rule Kiev. His uncles Vyacheslav of Turov and Yury Dolgorukiy of Suzdalia were on higher rungs. By accepting the summons to Kiev, therefore, Izyaslav challenged the Ol'govichi and pre-empted the claims of his uncles. As a result, the prospects for peace looked bleak. Fortunately for Izyaslav, his uncles were unable to challenge him immediately because of the distance that separated them from Kiev.

Izyaslav's main concern was to evict the Ol'govichi. In addition to the Kievans, he had at his disposal the pagan Black Caps (*Chernye klobuki*) and the inhabitants of the entire Ros' river basin (Poros'e).¹⁷ Just the same, Izyaslav's address to his supporters reveals that he considered it important to establish his claim according to moral legitimacy in addition to military might. He therewith implicitly acknowledged that he was violating the traditional practice of succession and the oath that he had made to Igor'. Izyaslav justified his usurpation by explaining that he had acknowledged Vsevolod's political seniority out of respect for his age and owing to their personal bond.¹⁸ As has been shown elsewhere, Vsevolod had indeed used his various associations with Izyaslav to make him pledge support for Igor'.¹⁹ Following Vsevolod's death, however, Izyaslav considered himself released from any promises he had made to Vsevolod under duress.

Moreover, Izyaslav did not hesitate to point out that even though Igor' was the designated successor and his own uncles were ahead of him in genealogical seniority, he also had a legitimate claim. He had recourse to the age-old maxim that Kiev had been the throne of his grandfather and father. Igor' was unable to back his claim with similar authority. He had failed to obtain it because Monomakh had pre-empted his father, Oleg, and denied him his rightful turn in Kiev. Therefore, according to the age-old maxim and Yaroslav's system of lateral succession, Igor' had no claim to Kiev.

Igor' ignored the objection that his father Oleg had not ruled Kiev. He had arguments in support of his succession that, in his view, outweighed that criterion. First, there was the genealogical argument: he was the rightful successor to Vsevolod because as the next in seniority he replaced Vsevolod as the senior prince of the dynasty. Second, he was Vsevolod's designated successor to Kiev. Since Vsevolod's rule was recognized as legitimate, he had the authority to name his successor. Third, Igor' had right on his side

¹⁷ The princes of Rus' allowed nomads expelled from the steppe by the Polovtsy to settle the Poros'e. These nomads (Torki, Pechenegs, and Berendei) became collectively known as the Black Caps. They occupied towns such as Yur'ev, Torchesk, Korsun', and Dveren (see B. A. Rybakov, *Kievskaya Rus' i russkie knyazhestva XII–XIII vv.* [M., 1982], pp. 488–90).

¹⁸ Ipat., cols. 323–4. ¹⁹ Ipat., cols. 317–18; *Dynasty*, pp. 404–5.

because twice, once before and once after Vsevolod's death, the Kievans had acknowledged him as their prince.

But the pro-Izyaslav chronicler had additional arguments supporting Izyaslav's legitimacy. Before setting out from Pereyaslav', Izyaslav turned to the highest moral authority to sanction his usurpation. He went to the Church of St. Michael, where he asked God to assist him. He also obtained the blessing of Bishop Evfimy. Later, before setting out with his troops, Izyaslav once again invoked divine approbation for his usurpation by declaring that God and the power of the Life-giving Cross would give the victory either to him or to the Ol'govichi.²⁰ In other words, if he defeated the Ol'govichi his claim would be justified because God Himself would have granted him the victory. In this way he would be vindicated for his usurpation and exonerated for breaking the pledges that he had sworn to the Ol'govichi.

Igor' commanded the allegiance of the Ol'govichi and he controlled Kiev, but he was unaware of the treachery of his alleged Kievan supporters. The backing of the other princes, who had pledged allegiance to him earlier, was also questionable now that Vsevolod was dead. Consequently, Igor' sent messengers to Vladimir Davidovich and his brother Izyaslav in Chernigov asking if they intended to honour their oaths to him. The Davidovichi took advantage of their cousin's vulnerability by demanding that he grant them additional domains. After Igor' succumbed to their extortion, they kissed the Holy Cross "to Igor' and to his brother Svyatoslav."²¹ With this remark, the chronicler once again alludes to the dual rule of the Ol'govichi. The Hypatian chronicler also adds news that was evidently written by a pro-Ol'govichi chronicler. He reports that after the Davidovichi took their oaths in the Holy Saviour Cathedral (the Cathedral of the Transfiguration of Our Lord), they set out for Kiev. Bishop Onufry, before whom the princes had taken their oaths, proclaimed to the local priests that if anyone violated the promise that he had made to the Ol'govichi, he would be damned.²²

In asking for more towns the Davidovichi demonstrated the opportunism of princes pledging allegiance to one whose power was insecure. In

²⁰ Ipat., col. 323. ²¹ Ipat., col. 324.

²² Ipat., cols. 324–5; compare Tat. 4, p. 202 and Tat. 2, p. 163. The pro-Ol'govichi and pro-Izyaslav biases in the Hypatian account reveal that the compiler used chronicles written at the courts of princes who were involved in these rivalries. Depending on his political affiliation, one chronicler might praise the action of a prince as a divinely inspired act while another might condemn it as the machinations of the Devil (Rybakov, *Kievskaya Rus'*, p. 491). According to some, extracts from Chernigov chronicles were incorporated into the so-called Kievan Chronicle of the Hypatian account (Bagaley, *Istoriya Severskoy zemli*, pp. 299–300; *Istoriia*, vol. 2, p. 332).

this instance, it was also a continuation of the rivalry that the Ol'govichi and the Davidovichi had initiated after Vsevolod occupied Kiev. At that time Igor' and Svyatoslav had challenged their elder brother over the towns that he had allocated to the Davidovichi.²³ When Igor' attempted to secure his position as prince of Kiev, therefore, Vladimir and Izyaslav seized the opportunity to weaken his territorial base. Although the location of the domains in question is not revealed, some of them must have been in the Chernigov lands. Since Igor' had not yet secured his rule over the right bank, it is unlikely that the Davidovichi would have been content with grants of land solely from that side of the Dnepr.

After the Kievans broke their oath to Igor' by inviting Izyaslav to be their prince, he reneged on his promise to them and reappointed two of Vsevolod's former officials: the *tysyatskiy* Uleb (Ouleb) and the *voevoda* Ivan Voitishich.²⁴ Igor' no doubt expected them to be more reliable than the officials Svyatoslav had selected at the Kievans' behest. His main objective in conscripting the two, undoubtedly, was to win the backing of the townsmen who had supported the two officials in the past. Igor's plan had promise insofar as he appointed men from Kiev rather than *boyars* (noblemen) from Chernigov to the Kievan posts. Its weakness lay in the consideration that many Kievans allegedly hated Uleb and Ivan because they had been Vsevolod's henchmen. Surprisingly, the two did win the confidence of the citizens, but for reasons unexplained they deserted Igor' and became ringleaders of the pro-Izyaslav group.²⁵ Consequently, the very men Igor' had conscripted to help him win Kievan support fomented the rebellion. Ironically, one of the pretexts the townsmen used for rejecting Igor' was his reappointment of Uleb and Ivan.

The conspirators also won over the two Davidovichi.²⁶ The treachery of the brothers was unexpected for two reasons: Igor' had just made territorial concessions to them and they had never before severed their political affiliation with the Ol'govichi. After 1127, when Vsevolod usurped Chernigov, the Davidovichi had always collaborated with their cousins against the Monomashichi. Nevertheless, as has been noted, they had established closer ties with Vsevolod than with his brothers. Uleb and Ivan would have used this rivalry to their advantage. For the first time, therefore, the descendants of Oleg and David found themselves in opposing camps.

²³ *Dynasty*, pp. 376–7.

²⁴ In 1117 Ivan Voitishich was one of Vladimir Monomakh's commanders (Ipat., col. 284); in 1128 he served Monomakh's eldest son Mstislav in the same capacity (Ipat., col. 292); in 1141, however, he served Vsevolod Ol'govich (Ipat., col. 307).

²⁵ Ipat., col. 324. ²⁶ Ipat., cols. 324–5.

The two Kievan traitors persuaded Izyaslav to attack the town by promising him that the town militia would desert the Ol'govichi. Meanwhile, they deceitfully advised Igor' and his brother to march against their foe. Before going into the field, Igor' and Svyatoslav proclaimed their innocence and accused Izyaslav of treachery because he had promised them not to seek Kiev. After that, the two sides engaged in a fierce battle and the Ol'govichi were soundly defeated.²⁷

In defeating Igor', we are told, Izyaslav violated the oath that he had made promising not to take Kiev and pledging his allegiance to Igor' and Svyatoslav. This evidence gives us a new insight into the history of the Ol'govichi. As we have seen, Izyaslav had pledged his loyalty to Igor' only once, in Vsevolod's presence. Consequently, it must have been on that occasion that Izyaslav made his pledge to both Igor' and Svyatoslav. This reveals that it was Vsevolod who ordained that his brothers should act as co-rulers.

The military support that Izyaslav received from the towns of the Poros'e region bespeaks widespread disaffection with the Ol'govichi in the Kievan land. Although Igor' must have realized that there was also Kievan opposition to him, he evidently did not anticipate Uleb and Ivan's treachery. Nevertheless, he retained the backing of the Vyshgorodians, who traditionally worked hand in glove with the Kievans.²⁸ Surprisingly, Igor' did not summon the Polovtsy even though they had served as auxiliaries for the princes of Chernigov during the reigns of his grandfather and father.

Izyaslav's enthronement in Kiev was undoubtedly the same as the ceremony used in Chernigov. As he approached the town the townspeople, abbots, monks, and priests dressed in their vestments went out to greet him. The procession entered Kiev through the Golden Gates and wended its way to the metropolitan's St. Sofia Cathedral. There, on Tuesday August 13, Izyaslav venerated the icon of the Mother of God.²⁹ He also ratified his promise to defend the town and to abide by the agreements that he had made with the *veche*. Finally, he "sat on the throne of his grandfather and father" located in the center balcony facing the main altar. The metropolitan ordinarily presided over the installation.

²⁷ The most detailed report of the battle is found in Ipat., cols. 325–8. Brief accounts are found in Mosk., pp. 37–8; Lav., cols. 313–14 and elsewhere.

²⁸ Since some forces of the Ol'govichi fled to Vyshgorod, its inhabitants were probably Igor's allies. The town's close association with the dynasty of Chernigov was demonstrated in 1115, when Oleg consecrated the Church of SS. Boris and Gleb (*Dynasty*, pp. 276–82) and in 1146, when Igor's brother Vsevolod chose to be buried in Vyshgorod (*Dynasty*, p. 411).

²⁹ Ipat., col. 327.

The Ol'govichi, in the meantime, were in disarray. Igor's brother, Svyatoslav, escaped but found himself the odd man out in the Chernigov lands where the Davidovichi had sided with Izyaslav. Moreover, the latter neutralized Svyatoslav Vsevolodovich, his and Igor's nephew, by coercing him into pledging his allegiance. Izyaslav also took captive Igor' and Vsevolod's retainers in the Kievan land,³⁰ pillaged their possessions, and confiscated their lands. His forces also desecrated monasteries belonging to the Ol'govichi,³¹ while the Black Caps and the Berendei defiled ecclesiastical institutions.³²

Izyaslav dealt with Igor' most ruthlessly of all. After his forces gained the upper hand in the fighting, Igor' fled to the marshes at Dorogozhichi northwest of Kiev. When his horse got stuck in the mire he was unable to move because he had an infirmity in his legs. Four days later, the enemy found him floundering in the swamps. Izyaslav had the hapless fugitive taken to Pereyaslavl' and thrown into a pit in the Monastery of St. Ioann.³³ Such conduct was unprecedented among the Monomashichi and the Ol'govichi.³⁴ The chronicles report only two earlier occasions on which princes had been incarcerated in like fashion.³⁵ Instead of keeping Igor' in Kiev, however, Izyaslav sent him to Pereyaslavl' where he could not solicit assistance from his Kievan supporters.³⁶ Izyaslav's treatment of Igor' demonstrated that he was prepared to use the most extreme measures short of killing him to remove him as a rival. By incapacitating Igor' he dashed any immediate hopes that the Ol'govichi may have had of ruling Kiev.

³⁰ Ipat., col. 328. The reference to both Igor' and Vsevolod's retainers is further evidence of the continuity of policy and personnel from Vsevolod to Igor'.

³¹ In Kiev, the dynasty's monastery was that of St. Simeon in the Kopyrev suburb (*Dynasty*, pp. 114–15). Outside the town, Vsevolod had founded the Monastery of St. Cyril at Dorogozhichi (*Dynasty*, pp. 389–94).

³² The compiler evidently copied this news from a pro-Monomashichi chronicler, who refused to censure Izyaslav for the impious behavior of his troops in the manner that an earlier chronicler had condemned Igor's father Oleg for allowing his Polovtsian allies to commit similar atrocities (see s.a. 1094: Ipat., cols. 216–17; *Dynasty*, pp. 185, 189).

³³ Ipat., cols. 326–8.

³⁴ In the light of the anti-Ol'govichi sentiments expressed by chroniclers and historians, it is worth noting that the princes of Chernigov never mistreated a rival prince by throwing him in a pit. On the contrary, they had a tradition of providing sanctuary to refugee princes. For example, Vsevolod Ol'govich had given sanctuary to Ivan Berladnik (Ipat., cols. 316–17; *Dynasty*, pp. 403–4). As we shall see, Svyatoslav Vsevolodovich would provide a safe haven for the brothers Vsevolod and Mikhalko, as well as their nephews, whom their elder brother Andrey would expel from Suzdalia. Igor' Svyatoslavich of Putivl' would give sanctuary to Vladimir Yaroslavich of Galich.

³⁵ Yaroslav the Wise threw his brother Sudislav into a pit (Ipat., col. 139). Yaroslav's son Izyaslav threw Vseslav of Polotsk and his two sons into a pit in Kiev (Ipat., col. 156).

³⁶ His decision to imprison Igor' outside of Kiev was undoubtedly influenced by the example of Vseslav of Polotsk. In 1068, the disaffected Kievans had rebelled against Izyaslav Yaroslavich, released Vseslav from the pit, and proclaimed him prince (Ipat., cols. 160–1; *Dynasty*, p. 66).

Igor's reign in Kiev lasted less than two weeks. A number of factors contributed to his downfall. Most important was the Kievans' opposition. Although Vsevolod had named Igor' his successor, the townsmen refused to accept him. Assuming the role of kingmakers once again, they helped Izyaslav to stop Oleg's descendants from making Kiev their hereditary domain, just as in 1139 Vsevolod had prevented Monomakh's heirs from achieving the same objective. As a result, neither dynasty secured an undisputed right of succession to the capital of Rus'. Instead, it would become the prize for the strongest contenders from among Vsevolod Ol'govich's sons and from the House of Monomakh. Igor's fate, therefore, was a milestone in the history of succession to Kiev.

Igor's pride and volatile personality were handicaps to his success. As we have seen, the chronicler claimed that, aside from his brother Svyatoslav, Igor' had no friends either among the Kievans or the princes. It is not surprising, therefore, that he failed to win the support of all the princes who had backed his brother Vsevolod. A number of those who had promised the latter that they would be loyal to Igor' did so from fear of Vsevolod; after he died, therefore, they deserted Igor'. Among these, as we have seen, were the Davidovichi and Izyaslav of Pereyaslavl'. Nevertheless, following Izyaslav's usurpation, the relationship of the Ol'govichi to a number of other princes improved. Volodimerko Volodarevich of Galich had challenged Vsevolod for control of Volyn'. After Vsevolod died, that controversy ceased and the opportunity for restoring amicable relations between the two families returned. Izyaslav also estranged his uncles Yury of Suzdalia and Vyacheslav of Turov, who had prior claims to Kiev. Their strained relations enabled the Ol'govichi to approach the two uncles as allies.

Another reason for Igor's failure was his relatively small territorial base. Before Vsevolod occupied Kiev he had all the resources of Chernigov at his command. At the time of Vsevolod's death, however, the Davidovichi and not Igor' ruled the dynastic capital. In keeping with his seniority among the Ol'govichi, Igor' probably governed the provincial capital of Novgorod Severskiy.³⁷ Moreover, unlike Vsevolod, whose personal domain lay in the extensive Vyatichi lands, Igor' owned a smaller domain constituting the regional center of Gomiya, on the river Sozh, and three towns in its vicinity.³⁸

³⁷ The evidence, as we shall see, that his brother Svyatoslav fled to Novgorod Severskiy after he escaped from Izyaslav's pursuers confirms that the stronghold of the Ol'govichi remained loyal to Igor' throughout the crisis. Concerning the towns that traditionally belonged to the Novgorod Severskiy territories, see Zaytsev, pp. 80–1.

³⁸ Ipat., col. 311; *Dynasty*, pp. 373, 375; O. A. Makushnikov, "K voprosu o topografii letopisnogo Gomiya," *Tezisy Chernigovskoy oblastnoy nauchno-metodicheskoy konferentsii, posvyashchenoy*

As we shall see, he also controlled an unspecified number of smaller settlements scattered throughout the Chernigov and Kievan lands.³⁹

The chronicles tell us nothing about Gomiy, but archaeological excavations have revealed that it was a strong economic center with a *detinets*, suburbs, and trading quarters. The fortified part of the town was some three times larger than the ones at Lyubech, Trubchevsk, Vshchizh, and Putivl', but less than half the size of that in Novgorod Severskiy. The chronicles do not report the existence of any monasteries, but the discovery of cells in caves reveals that Gomiy had a cave monastery like Lyubech, Chernigov, and Kiev. Consequently, it probably also had regular monasteries.⁴⁰ As we shall see, later when Igor' requested Izyaslav Mstislavich to let him adopt the monk's habit, he explained that he had considered becoming a monk when he was still living in his domain.⁴¹ Since Igor' was favourably disposed to monasticism, he may have founded a monastery in his administrative center.

We also learn that Igor's health was unsound. The chronicler states enigmatically that his legs failed him in the marshes. Circumstantial evidence suggests that his ailment may have been sufficiently debilitating to hinder his military activity. It is noteworthy that before the 1140s the chroniclers mention Igor' less frequently than his younger brother, Svyatoslav.⁴² The chronicler refers to him for the first time after Vsevolod usurped Kiev.⁴³ This is surprising since, given Igor's seniority, he should have played a more prominent role than Svyatoslav. Furthermore, as we have seen, Igor' delegated Svyatoslav to negotiate with the Kievan *veche*. It is not unreasonable to assume that one reason why Igor' kept a low profile on that occasion was his infirmity. From the time of Vladimir Monomakh the Kievans

20-letiyu Chernigovskogo arkhitekturno-istoricheskogo zapovednika (sentyabr' 1987 g.) (Chernigov, 1987), pp. 46–8; Zaytsev, p. 104.

³⁹ Concerning Igor's village located near Novgorod Severskiy, see below, p. 32. In 1142, Vsevolod had granted Igor' the towns of Gorodets Osterskiy (Gorodok) and Rogachev on the right bank of the Dnepr. Neither was located in the patrimony of the Ol'govichi (Ipat., col. 312; *Dynasty*, p. 376). Igor' presumably lost control of these after he was imprisoned.

⁴⁰ See O. A. Makushnikov, "O meste letopisnogo Gomiya v sisteme gorodskikh tsentrov Chernigovo-Severshchiny," *Arkheolohichni starozhytnosti Podeseennia: Materialy istoryko-arkheolohichnoho seminaru, prysviachenoho 70-richchiu vid dnia narodzhennia H. O. Kuznetsova, O. P. Motsia* (gen. ed.) (Chernihiv, 1995), pp. 96–7, also V. Ya. Rudenok and O. A. Makushnikov, "Pervyye speleo-arkheologicheskie issledovaniya v Gomele," *Gomel'shchyna: arkheologiya, istoriya, pamyatniki: Tezisy Vtoroy Gomel'skoy oblastnoy nauchnoy konferentsii po istoricheskomu kraevedeniyu*, 1991 g., O. A. Makushnikov and A. I. Drobushesky (eds.) (Gomel', 1991), pp. 55–6.

⁴¹ Ipat., col. 337; Mosk., p. 38.

⁴² For example, in 1136, Vsevolod did not send Igor' but the younger Svyatoslav to rule Novgorod (NPL, pp. 24, 209; *Dynasty*, pp. 337–8). In 1139, when Vsevolod usurped Kiev, Igor' again is not mentioned as assisting Vsevolod, while Svyatoslav is named (Ipat., col. 302; *Dynasty*, pp. 349–50).

⁴³ Ipat., col. 302; *Dynasty*, pp. 349–50, 352–3.

consistently selected military champions as their princes; they looked upon older or physically debilitated candidates as undesirable. Because of Igor's handicap, therefore, the hard-nosed Kievans probably preferred to have the healthier Izyaslav as prince.

Igor's defeat had catastrophic results on his political career. He lost the position of senior prince in Rus' and, following his incarceration, he became an ineffectual senior prince of the Ol'govichi. Moreover, his deposition had serious repercussions on the fortunes of the Ol'govichi. In addition to losing Kiev, he also lost control of all the Kievan towns that fell under the jurisdiction of the prince of Kiev.⁴⁴ The Ol'govichi therewith not only forfeited the primacy that they had enjoyed in Rus' during Vsevolod's lifetime, but were also relegated to a position of the least importance in their dynasty. Within some two weeks they lost two senior princes, Vsevolod and Igor'. This limited the number of active princes in the family to the two Svyatoslavs. Igor's brother assumed the role of acting senior prince. He had to champion the cause of the Ol'govichi alone, however, because Izyaslav placed his nephew, Svyatoslav Vsevolodovich, under house arrest. Svyatoslav Ol'govich's task was made all the more difficult because the resources of the Davidovichi were greater. What is more, they enjoyed Izyaslav's favour.

SVYATOSLAV OL'GOVICH FIGHTS FOR SURVIVAL

During the course of two tumultuous weeks the balance of power in the dynasty had swung sharply in favour of the Davidovichi while the fortunes of the Ol'govichi had plummeted. Following the death of Svyatoslav Yaroslavich in 1076, when the political lot of his sons had reached its nadir, the task of championing the dynasty's cause had fallen on Oleg. After Igor's capture in 1146, the task of keeping the Ol'govichi politically alive fell to Oleg's youngest son, Svyatoslav.

Before investigating his fight for survival, let us acquaint ourselves with his relatives. His deceased brother Vsevolod was survived by his wife Maria, the sister of Izyaslav of Kiev,⁴⁵ and by his sons, Svyatoslav and Yaroslav.⁴⁶ Vsevolod also had two daughters; almost nothing is known of the one, while the other, Zvenislava, married Boleslav "the Tall" (*Wysocki*) of the

⁴⁴ The chronicles identify some eighty urban centers within the boundaries of the Kievan land (P. P. Tolochko, *Drevnyaya Rus'*, *Ocherki sotsial'no-politicheskoy istorii* [K., 1987], p. 117).

⁴⁵ *Dynasty*, pp. 254–5.

⁴⁶ Svyatoslav's date of birth is unknown, but he had become politically active by the early 1140s, suggesting that he was born in the 1120s (*Dynasty*, pp. 362–3). Yaroslav was born in 1139 in Kiev (Ipat., col. 306; *Dynasty*, pp. 361–2).

Piast dynasty.⁴⁷ Igor's unidentified wife, as we shall see, was living in Novgorod Severskiy; the couple evidently had no children.⁴⁸ Svyatoslav himself married a Polovtsian princess in 1108, with whom he had Oleg and a daughter.⁴⁹ His wife died before 1136 because in that year he married a Novgorodian woman.⁵⁰ The chronicles have not yet reported the existence of their children. Even less is known of the Davidovichi. From later information, however, we learn that Vladimir had a son named Svyatoslav and that Izyaslav had an unnamed daughter.⁵¹ From genealogical considerations, therefore, the future of the Ol'govichi looked more secure than that of the Davidovichi who were dangerously close to extinction.

After Igor' was defeated in August 1146, Svyatoslav fled to Chernigov. He sent messengers to Vladimir and Izyaslav asking them if they had remained faithful to the Ol'govichi. The brothers confirmed their loyalty.⁵² It is surprising to discover that his cousins were in Chernigov because the last news we had of them was that they had set out to help Igor' and then that they had deserted him. Nevertheless, their presence in Chernigov shows that they had not joined Izyaslav. This is confirmed by the information that they had returned to Chernigov ahead of Svyatoslav, who had fled directly from the battlefield. Furthermore, Svyatoslav's query if they were still loyal to the Ol'govichi is proof that the brothers had not helped Izyaslav, because if they had Svyatoslav would have witnessed their treachery. The Davidovichi were vacillating in their loyalty and if their reply to Svyatoslav was true, they had changed their minds yet again by deserting Izyaslav in favour of the Ol'govichi.

On becoming the most senior active Ol'govich, Svyatoslav considered it mandatory to occupy Novgorod Severskiy, which Igor' had undoubtedly ruled before moving to Kiev.⁵³ We are not informed why, when faced with the urgency of consolidating his authority, he took the circuitous route via Kursk.⁵⁴ As has been shown elsewhere, he had ruled the town in 1141, and we may assume that he still controlled it five years later.⁵⁵ Most likely,

⁴⁷ Ipat., col. 308; *Dynasty*, p. 383. Zvenislava's sister, according to some investigators, was named Anna and married a prince of Galicia (Zotov, pp. 268–9; Baum., IV, 22–5).

⁴⁸ Zotov, pp. 263–4; Baum., IV, 13.

⁴⁹ Concerning their marriage, see Lav., cols. 282–3; *Dynasty*, p. 241.

⁵⁰ NPL, p. 209; *Dynasty*, pp. 337–8; Zotov, pp. 39, 265.

⁵¹ Zotov, pp. 266–7. ⁵² Ipat., col. 328.

⁵³ The chronicles do not state that Igor' was prince of Novgorod Severskiy, but circumstantial evidence supports this contention. As we shall see, he left his wife in Novgorod Severskiy when he moved to Kiev, evidently intending to send for her after he had secured his position in Kiev.

⁵⁴ Ipat., col. 328.

⁵⁵ Ipat., cols. 308–9; *Dynasty*, p. 369. Concerning Kursk, see also A. K. Zaytsev, "Do pytannia pro formuvannia terytorii davn'orus'kykh kniazivstv u XII st.," UIZh, nr. 5 (1974), 43–53.

therefore, he visited the eastern outpost to collect his family and the families of his retinue. His occupation of Novgorod Severskiy was a declaration to the princes of Rus' that he had assumed command of the Ol'govichi in Igor's absence.

The fickle Davidovichi finally decided that, with Izyaslav's backing, they could assert their dominance over the Ol'govichi. Accordingly, adopting a merciless policy towards Igor', they requested Izyaslav to remove him from the political scene by keeping him in the pit permanently. They also sought to deprive Igor' of all family support by insisting that Svyatoslav abandon him and never attempt to free him. After neutralizing Igor' they intended to seize his domains. Their insistence that Svyatoslav vacate Novgorod Severskiy and return to his patrimony of Putivl' suggests that they wanted to appropriate the family capital of the Ol'govichi on the pretext that its rightful ruler was still Igor'.⁵⁶ But Svyatoslav refused to budge. He also remained adamant in his demand that Izyaslav release Igor'.⁵⁷

By ordering Svyatoslav to pledge allegiance to them, the Davidovichi demanded that he formally acknowledge the new status quo. Under Vsevolod, the Ol'govichi had been the dominant family in the dynasty, but following Igor's capture the balance of power had shifted to the Davidovichi. Since they controlled Chernigov and enjoyed Izyaslav's backing, the Davidovichi commanded the military clout to make unprecedented demands on Svyatoslav. They therefore threatened to confiscate his domains if he refused to pledge allegiance. He had to submit to them or go to war.

Significantly, the brothers consistently acted as one. They both pledged allegiance to Igor' and they both deserted him. When Svyatoslav came to Chernigov he found both of them there and obtained pledges from both. Later, they both sent him the ultimatum. After that, as we shall see, they would always act as one, whether it was in their negotiations with Izyaslav or in their dealings with Svyatoslav. Consequently, their conduct bespeaks a sharing of power. Just as Igor' and Svyatoslav had proposed to rule jointly in Kiev, the Davidovichi acted as co-rulers in Chernigov.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Novgorod Severskiy evidently became the patrimonial capital of the Ol'govichi in 1097 at the Congress of Lyubech (*Dynasty*, pp. 219–21, 255–61). As such, it could not become the hereditary domain of any one Ol'govich. After Igor's death, it would pass on to his eldest surviving brother, and if there were none, to his eldest surviving nephew. This system of succession could, of course, be disrupted by force. Since, as we shall see, Svyatoslav's personal patrimony was Putivl', the Davidovichi evidently wanted him to relinquish control of Novgorod Severskiy and reside in Putivl'.

⁵⁷ *Ipat.*, cols. 328–9.

⁵⁸ In a number of instances where princes were co-rulers, the younger prince appeared to be the dominant partner. Thus, Svyatoslav assumed a more active role than Igor'; as we shall see, Izyaslav Mstislavich would be stronger than his uncle Vyacheslav Vladimirovich. Later evidence suggests that Vladimir's brother Izyaslav was also the dominant partner of the two Davidovichi.

Svyatoslav prepared for war by turning for help to Yury Dolgoruki in Suzdalia, who championed the succession rights of the Monomashichi. He maintained that he and his brother Vyacheslav had prior claims to Kiev over their nephews, the Mstislavichi.⁵⁹ Vladimir Svyatoslavich of Murom also brought reinforcements.⁶⁰ This rare reference to the Murom line, which was also descended from the House of Chernigov, is noteworthy. In 1127 Svyatoslav's brother Vsevolod had usurped Chernigov from Vladimir's grandfather Yaroslav.⁶¹ Vladimir's friendship therefore signifies that he did not condemn the Ol'govichi as a family for Vsevolod's transgression. Svyatoslav also won the support of his brother's ally Ivan Rostislavich nicknamed Berladnik. Vsevolod had probably given him a Kievan domain from which Izyaslav evicted him.⁶² Finally, the Polovtsy joined Svyatoslav. He summoned his Polovtsian father-in-law, Aepa the son of Girgen,⁶³ who immediately sent 300 horsemen.⁶⁴ In this way Svyatoslav kept alive his father's practice of summoning the nomads to help him in inter-dynastic wars.

Izyaslav in Kiev expressed no immediate interest in Svyatoslav's preparations for war. Instead, he consolidated his authority on the right bank of the Dnepr by evicting his nephew Svyatoslav Vsevolodovich from Vladimir in Volyn', which the latter's father had given him. Izyaslav compensated the Ol'govich with five lesser towns, including Bozh'skyy (Buzh'skyy) and Mezhibozh'e in the southwest corner of the Kievan land.⁶⁵ Since the two towns were located in the region that was later referred to as the Bolokhov lands,⁶⁶ all five towns were more than likely in that district. As we shall see, during the first half of the thirteenth century the princelings of that region

⁵⁹ During the reign of Yury's brother Yaropolk in Kiev, and later during the reign of Vsevolod Ol'govich, Yury opposed Yaropolk's efforts to place the Mstislavichi on the throne of Kiev and Vsevolod's efforts to place the Mstislavichi on the patrimonial throne of Pereyaslavl'. In both instances Yury and his brothers argued that, according to genealogical seniority, they had prior claims (*Dynasty*, pp. 324–32).

⁶⁰ Vladimir was the grandson of Svyatoslav's uncle Yaroslav (Baum, 2, XIV, 7).

⁶¹ *Dynasty*, pp. 303–8, 314–20.

⁶² During the winter of 1144 Volodimerko of Galich had expelled Ivan from Zvenigorod after the latter attempted to usurp Galich. Later, Vsevolod Ol'govich gave Ivan sanctuary in Kiev (Ipat., cols. 316–17; *Dynasty*, pp. 403–4).

⁶³ The chronicler claims that the Polovtsian khan was the brother of Svyatoslav's mother (*ui*). Svyatoslav's father Oleg had married a Greek noblewoman (*Dynasty*, p. 160) and it was Svyatoslav who, in 1108, married a Polovtsian princess (Lav., cols. 282–3; *Dynasty*, p. 241). Thus, in 1146, Svyatoslav probably asked his Polovtsian father-in-law to send troops. As we have seen, in 1136 Svyatoslav was married a second time to a Novgorodian woman (NPL, p. 209; *Dynasty*, pp. 337–8).

⁶⁴ Ipat., col. 329.

⁶⁵ *Bouzh'skyi i Mezhibozh'e pyat' gorodov* (Ipat., col. 330). Under 1147, we are told that Svyatoslav controlled Bozh'skyy, Mezhibozh'e, Kotel'nitsa, "all five towns" (*vsekh pyat' gorodov*, Ipat., col. 343) indicating that, in 1146, Svyatoslav had received five towns in all (*Mikhail*, p. 119).

⁶⁶ Concerning the Bolokhov towns, see *Mikhail*, pp. 117–19; also, see below, p. 327.

were allied to the Ol'govichi. It may well be that their loyalty stemmed from the days of Svyatoslav's rule in those towns.

After evicting Svyatoslav from Vladimir, Izyaslav discovered that his immediate enemy was not the Ol'govichi but his own kin. Vyacheslav spurned Izyaslav's authority, seized Vladimir, and repossessed the towns that he had lost to Vsevolod Ol'govich. He alluded to the crux of the problem when he declared that he placed his hope in his seniority. That is, he rejected Izyaslav's usurpation of Kiev because he adhered to the principles of succession prescribed by Yaroslav the Wise. According to genealogical seniority, Vyacheslav was the rightful claimant to Kiev. Moreover, he had been prince there in 1139, when Vsevolod Ol'govich had usurped power. Izyaslav retaliated by dispatching his brother Rostislav of Smolensk and Svyatoslav Vsevolodovich to subdue Vyacheslav. The Ol'govich obeyed and demonstrated his willingness to assist his uncle, at least against princes from the House of Monomakh.⁶⁷

Meanwhile, the Davidovichi reasoned that since they had initiated an evil plot they should carry it out to its logical conclusion by killing Svyatoslav.⁶⁸ Their merciless plan was unprecedented in the dynasty. Ironically, the villains were the sons of the pious David and the brothers of the monk Svyatosha, one of the first princes of Chernigov to be canonized.⁶⁹ We are told that, after Izyaslav Davidovich was allegedly cured from a fatal illness through Svyatosha's intercession, he wore his brother's hair shirt into battle to ensure his safety.⁷⁰ In this way he sacrilegiously used the relic with the assumption that his sainted brother would pray for his safety while he was executing the evil deed.

In addition to appropriating Igor's domain, the Davidovichi also resolved to steal Svyatoslav's lands and asked Izyaslav Mstislavich for help. The princes therefore held a meeting in Chernigov to concoct their heinous plan. Thus, unlike Izyaslav's grandfather Vladimir Monomakh and Svyatopolk Izyaslavich of Kiev, who had used the council at Lyubech in 1097 to secure peace among all the princes in a spirit of reconciliation, Izyaslav and the Davidovichi sought to annihilate the Ol'govichi in a spirit of treachery. Izyaslav commanded the Davidovichi, his son Mstislav, and the Berendei, to march against Svyatoslav. They besieged Novgorod Severskiy

⁶⁷ Ipat., cols. 329–30; Mosk., p. 38. ⁶⁸ Ipat., col. 330.

⁶⁹ According to popular tradition, David died under an aura of sanctity (Loparev, "Slovo pokhval'noe," pp. 16–7, 25–7, 29–30). He became venerated as a saint locally (Arkhimandrit Leonid [L. A. Kavelin], *Svyataya Rus' ili svedeniya o vsekh svyatykh i podvizhnikakh blagochestiya na rusi [do XVIII veka]*. Obshche i mestno chtimykh [Spb., 1891], p. 32). See also *Dynasty*, pp. 301–2.

⁷⁰ Filaret, Archbishop of Chernigov, *Russkie svyatiye*, third edition (Spb., 1882), vol. 3, pp. 225–7; Heppell, *The "Paterik,"* pp. 135–6; *Dynasty*, p. 398.

and slaughtered many inhabitants of the outer town. Later, they withdrew to a village called Meltekovе and sent men to seize Igor' and Svyatoslav's herds: they captured 3,000 mares and 1,000 horses. Others plundered the surrounding villages and set grain and courts ablaze.⁷¹

In the meantime, Svyatoslav asked Yury for assistance. Pledging to help set Igor' free, he rode to Svyatoslav's aid. By campaigning in person he demonstrated his determination to challenge Izyaslav's rule, but at the same time he learned, to his chagrin, that this left Suzdalia exposed to attack. Izyaslav instructed Rostislav Yaroslavich in Ryazan' to invade Yury's lands.⁷² Rostislav's willingness to pillage Suzdalia shows that the prince of Kiev commanded the loyalty of at least one prince from Ryazan' or, rather, that Rostislav backed the Davidovichi. As we have seen, Svyatoslav had solicited the support of Vladimir Svyatoslavich of Murom. Thus we see that the princes of Murom and Ryazan' were divided in their loyalties to their relatives in Chernigov.

When Yury reached Kozel'sk⁷³ in the Vyatichi lands, he learned that Rostislav was plundering his domain. He therefore sent his son Ivanko to Svyatoslav's assistance and returned home. Svyatoslav gave Ivanko the town of Kursk with its Posem'e district.⁷⁴ For an Ol'govich not only to relinquish control of a domain but also to give it to a prince of another dynasty was extraordinary. On the one hand, Svyatoslav's action bespeaks desperation. On the other hand, he probably wished to placate Yury for his loss of Gorodets Osterskiy in the southwest corner of the Chernigov lands. Four years earlier, Svyatoslav's brother Vsevolod had taken Gorodets Osterskiy from Yury and given it to Igor'.⁷⁵ Since Izyaslav undoubtedly seized the town after he captured Igor', Svyatoslav could not return it to Yury. He therefore compensated Yury with Kursk. Located on the southeastern periphery of the Novgorod Severkiy lands, it was the most vulnerable town of the Ol'govichi to nomadic incursions. What is more, the Monomashichi had controlled it in the past and its ownership was not yet determined.⁷⁶ Consequently, Svyatoslav gave Kursk away because it was his most expendable domain.

⁷¹ Ipat., cols. 330–2; compare Tat. 4, p. 204 and Tat. 2, pp. 166–7.

⁷² Ipat., col. 332. Rostislav of Ryazan' was Svyatoslav's cousin, the son of his youngest uncle, Yaroslav (Baum. 2, XIV, 4; compare Baum. IV, 17).

⁷³ The town was located on the steep left bank of the river Zhizdra, a tributary of the Oka. It is mentioned here for the first time (Nasonov, p. 225; *Zemlya Vyatichey*, pp. 128–30).

⁷⁴ Ipat., col. 332. The Kursk Posem'e included the districts of Kursk, Ol'gov, and Ryl'sk (Zaytsev, pp. 95–6).

⁷⁵ Ipat., col. 312; *Dynasty*, pp. 366, 376.

⁷⁶ In 1095 Monomakh's son Izyaslav had ruled it before capturing Murom (Ipat., col. 220; Lav., col. 229; *Dynasty*, p. 193). In 1127 Mstislav took it from Vsevolod Ol'govich and gave it to his son Izyaslav, who now ruled Kiev (*Dynasty*, p. 336).

After welcoming Ivanko, Svyatoslav sent his priest to the Davidovichi suing for peace and condemning them for pillaging his lands and for attempting to kill him. The Davidovichi spurned his rebuke and repeated their demand that he desert Igor' and conclude peace. Once again he refused. They therefore plundered Igor's village and set off for Putivl'.⁷⁷ The chronicler leaves no doubt that the town was Svyatoslav's domain. Since he had given Kursk to Ivanko, we may conclude that Putivl' was the more important of the two towns. Svyatoslav therefore looked upon Putivl' as his patrimonial capital. Izyaslav arrived at the town after the Davidovichi had captured it; the citizens capitulated to him, but just the same, the attackers sacked the town.⁷⁸

The chronicler's description of the plundering deserves comment. First, his detailed list of the items pillaged – 900 stacks of corn, 500 *berkovets* of honey,⁷⁹ eighty jugs of wine, two silver vessels, altar cloths, fabrics sewn with gold thread, vestments, two censers, an incense bowl, the Gospels with covers made of forged metal, bells, and 700 servants – suggests that he worked for one of the Ol'govichi. Second, the plenitude of provisions in the princes' larders bespeaks their wealth. Third, since the allies set out from Igor's village to Putivl' on Christmas Day, they would have attacked Novgorod Severskiy a few weeks earlier, probably in November. By that time the crops had been harvested and the warehouses were brimming over with produce. Clearly, one reason why they chose that time of year to attack was to rape the barns of the Ol'govichi of their winter stores. Fourth, the numerous metal objects testify to flourishing local crafts. Fifth, the plundering testifies to the egalitarian conduct of the princes. Each participant received a share of the spoils from the prince's court in Putivl'.⁸⁰ Accordingly, Izyaslav divided Svyatoslav's possessions into four portions, one for each prince: himself, his son Mstislav, and the two Davidovichi.

To judge from the information that the princes plundered no monasteries, it appears that two of the most important domains belonging to the

⁷⁷ The location of Igor's village (*Igoreve sel'tso*) is not known. According to one view, it was located some 9 km south of Novgorod Severskiy near the river Desna on the road to Putivl' (Golubovskiy, p. 19). This view has been challenged; see V. P. Kovalenko, "Knyazheskie sela v okrestnostyakh Novgorod-Severskogo v XII v.," *Drevnerusskiy gorod Putivl'*, *Tezisy dokladov i soobshcheniy oblastnoy nauchnoy konferentsii, posvyashchennoy 1000-letiyu g. Putivlya*, A. V. Lugovskoy et al. (eds.) (Putivl', 1988), pp. 16–17.

⁷⁸ *Ipat.*, cols. 332–4. The Hypatian Chronicle has a lacuna in Svyatoslav's peace proposal to the Davidovichi. The complete text is in Mosk., p. 38 and Erm., p. 32.

⁷⁹ A *berkovets* was a weight equivalent to ten poods or 360 lb avoirdupois.

⁸⁰ The prince's court was located on the *detinets*; see V. A. Bohusevych, "Rozkopky v Putyvli's'komu kremli," *Arkheolohiia* 15 (K., 1963), pp. 171–4 and O. V. Sukhobokov, "K vozniknoveniyu i ranney istorii Putivlya," *Drevnerusskiy gorod*, *Materialy Vsesoyuznoy arkhologicheskoy konferentsii, posvyashchennoy 1500-letiyu goroda Kieva* (K., 1984), p. 120.

Ol'govichi, Novgorod Severskiy and Putivl', had no monastic institutions before the middle of the twelfth century.⁸¹ The allies did, however, desecrate churches. Since the pillagers set fire to Igor's church, we may conclude that it was made of wood. Moreover, he probably built it as it was dedicated to his patron St. George. The attackers also plundered the Church of the Ascension in Putivl'. To date, archaeologists have not unearthed any masonry foundations of the edifice, suggesting that it also was a wooden structure.⁸² The chronicles do not disclose the identity of its founder, but he was not Svyatoslav's father, Oleg. There is no evidence that he ever resided in the town. Moreover, Svyatoslav's elder brother, Vsevolod, inherited the Vyatichi lands as his patrimony, and Igor' ruled Gomiy near the Dnepr. Their youngest brother, Gleb, who died in 1138, had been prince of Kursk.⁸³ Consequently, Svyatoslav probably erected the church in his patrimonial capital.

It is noteworthy that the citizens of Putivl' refused to capitulate to the Davidovichi and insisted on surrendering only to Izyaslav Mstislavich. Tatishchev has a unique passage in which the elders of Putivl' rebuked the Davidovichi as follows:

Princes, we have kissed the Holy Cross to our prince [Svyatoslav] and cannot violate our oath. But you are breaking your oaths to your brothers [the Ol'govichi] and placing your hope in your military might. You are forgetting how God punishes either the offenders themselves or their children. Do you not remember how Oleg Svyatoslavich [Svyatoslav's father] violated his oath by fighting his brothers, by devastating the lands of Rus' with the Polovtsy, and by carrying off the inhabitants into captivity? And even though he acquired much wealth, do you not see how God is avenging Himself on his children? Princes, consider your own conduct! We, however, will not violate the oaths we have made on the Holy Cross for as long as we live.⁸⁴

If the information is true, it reveals the popular sentiments of the citizens in Putivl' and, perhaps, of many inhabitants in Rus'. According to this view,

⁸¹ Bagaley claimed that the Davidovichi, Vladimir and Izyaslav, founded the Monastery of the Transfiguration (*Spasopreobrazhenskiy monastyr'*) located one quarter of a *verst* to the south of Novgorod Severskiy overlooking the Desna. He based his observation on the evidence (which he failed to describe) provided by a stone found, in 1787, in the old monastery wall when it was being quarried for stones (*Istoriya Severskoy zemli*, p. 291). It is highly unlikely that the Davidovichi founded a monastery in the patrimonial capital of the Ol'govichi. Moreover, if the monastery existed in 1146, the besiegers would have plundered it when they besieged Novgorod Severskiy, and the chronicler would have reported the event.

⁸² Archaeologists have discovered the foundations of a masonry church in Putivl', but they believe it was built at the beginning of the thirteenth century (see below, p. 248).

⁸³ Concerning Gleb, see NPL, pp. 25, 210; *Dynasty*, pp. 174–5, 342.

⁸⁴ Tat. 4, p. 205; compare Tat. 2, pp. 167–8.