THE EMERGENCE OF THE TITLE VELIKII KNIAZ’ IN RUS’ AND THE PVOEST’ VREMENNYKH LET

This article examines the issue of when the title of Velikii Kniaz’ was first used in the light of accumulated textual analyses of the Povest’ Vremennykh Let. Section 2 presents the current state of research. Section 3 outlines the historiographical viewpoints on the Povest’ and how the time of its composition relates to first use of the title. Particular emphasis falls on four Byzantine-Rus’ treaties mentioned in the Povest’. It is argued that the time when first version of the PVL emerged – the 1110s – sets a terminus ante quem on the introduction of the title of Grand Prince in Kievan Rus’. Section 4 investigates two other sources discussed in current research: a letter by Metropolitan Nikephoros to Prince Vladimir Monomakh, and the seal of Prince Mstislaw. Section 5 offers two explanations of why the title entered Byzantine usage and of when conditions for it became ripe in Kievan Rus’.

Keywords: Kievan Rus’, Povest’ Vremennykh Let, Byzantine-Rus’ treaties, Velikii Kniaz’

1. Introduction

While historical generalisations are imprecise by nature, one cannot explain certain historical phenomena without them, mostly due to lack of reliable information. One such generalisation is that titles assumed by heads of state and communities reflect at least two sets of features: rulers’ social, communal and self-perception, and the perception and terminology employed by foreign allies or enemies who may have left the written records.

* I would like to thank Dr Ben Outhwaite and Mr Peter Skipp who painstakingly edited this paper. I am grateful to Dr Julia Krivoruchko and Dr John Lind for their comments. A draft of this paper was presented before members of the Centre for Mediaeval Studies, University of Southern Denmark at Odense in September 2009. My research visit to the Centre was made possible by the Nordic Centre for Mediaeval Studies’ mobility scheme. I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the members of Centre of Mediaeval Studies and in particular to Dr John Lind, Dr Kurt Villads Jensen and Mrs Karen Fog Rasmussen.
The present paper deals with the first appearance of the title Velikii Kniaz’ [великий князь], usually rendered Grand Prince that is still popular among successors to the Romanov dynasty in exile. Though several pieces of research have been published on the subject over the past 30 years, I shall argue that an examination of one of the written sources that each of them took into account – the Povest’ Vremennykh Let (PVL or the Primary Chronicle) dated in the 1110s– allows us to further analyse and restrict the dating of its first use. In its outline of the tenth-century events, the PVL provides the texts of four Byzantine-Rus’ treaties (inserted to its annual articles of 907, 912, 944 and 971) that feature the title Velikii Kniaz’ for the first time. Hence, these few dates allow to scholars in the past to theorise whether the title Velikii Kniaz’ emerged in the tenth century and was rightly recorded in the treaties’ texts; whether it appeared prior to the composition of the PVL and entered the treaties’ texts as updated term; or at some point following Primary Chronicle’s composition in the twelfth century.

The phrase Velikii Kniaz’ comprises the words velikii and kniaz’. Bakalov and Slavova observe that the earliest recorded appearance of the latter word dates from the ninth century, when Boris-Michael, the Baptiser of the Danubian Bulgarians in the 860s was first titled kniaz’ in Old Bulgarian literature.1 Apart from a single instance of the adjective velikii in the colophon of the Miscellany of Prince Sviatoslav of 1073 that was translated for Bulgarian Tsar Simeon (see summary below) which Poppe adopts as an expressed point of view;2 this adjective was not appended to the title of kniaz’ during the First or Second Bulgarian Tsardoms.3 There is, however, epigraphic evidence that velikii, in the form of megas, had been applied to form the title Megas Zhupan in ninth-century Bulgaria. In 1963 the silver cup of Megas Zhupan Sivin was discovered and subsequent exploration of the site of discovery showed it had been a grave good. I shall return to the issue below.4

Even recent scholarship generally assumes that the title Velikii Kniaz’ must have existed in Ancient Rus’ since the tenth century because of its appearance in the Byzantine-Rus’ treaties mentioned above. Indeed, many scholars of mediaeval Rus’ history do not consider dating its earliest use an issue to be examined: the majority of studies on historical processes or legal practices of Ancient Rus’ do not look into its origin.5

---

3 See T. Slavova, loc cit. on the First Bulgarian Tsardom. During the Second Bulgarian Tsardom the title was given to minor local dignitaries with a number of public functions, see I. Biliarski, Institutsite na srednovekovna B’ilgaria. Vtoro b’ilgarsko tsarstvo, Sofia 1998, 296–303.
4 T. Totev, Sreb’rna chasha s nadpis ot Preslav [na Sivin zhupan], Izvestiia na Arkheologicheskiia institut 27 (1964) 5-15.
5 V. Vodoff, La titulature des princes russes du Xe au debut du XIIe siecle et les relations exterieures de la Russie kiévienne, Revue des études slaves 55/1 (1983) 139-150; and A. Poppe, Words, 159-161; offered broad overview of pre-Revolutionary and Soviet historiography on this subject. A. Filiushkin summarised the latest academic opinions in A. Filiushkin, Tituly russkikh gosudarei, Moskva – Sankt Peterburg 2006, 12-48.
Instead of providing a broader historiographical survey, in this paper I shall summarise the main points of three recently published studies of A. Poppe, A. Tolochko and M. Dimnik on the subject that offer a number of arguments in favour and against dating the first use of the title between the mid-eleventh and early thirteenth centuries. This will raise new questions and offer different perspectives on the matter by interpreting available sources and the PVL. In this way, I shall try to narrow the dating of the first use of Grand Prince as a title.

I will also argue that current research and widely accepted theories on the composition of the PVL allow for the proposition that the late eleventh century to the early twelfth century might have been the period when the title of Grand Prince was introduced by the Byzantine chancellery, as shown by the Byzantine-Rus’ treaties, and subsequently adopted by the Kievan Princes in communications with the Byzantine Empire. The Kievan Princes did not immediately take up the title in their correspondence with Princes elsewhere in Rus’ since they were not initially concerned with the semantics of the adjective velikii.

The following paragraph of Poppe’s study concerning the application of Grand prince in the Byzantine-Rus treaties inspired me to deal with the matter of this article:

From the text of all three documents we can clearly infer that velikyi/megas was not part of an official title for the Kievan ruler, but was rather an adjectival epithet which was used by the Byzantines not only for the princes of Kiev but also for their own emperors. On the contrary, the full title of the Kievan ruler in these texts is kniaz’ rus’kyi/archōn Rhōsias, whereas other princes are mentioned without reference to the country.6

In Poppe’s opinion, Velikii Kniaz turned into title by the end of twelfth century, while by then velikii was applied inconsistently as an adjective describing the prince. I see no reason of correcting treaties’ texts as I find that Poppe does not consider the explanation that the tenth-century Byzantine-Rus treaties might be composed following Byzantine-Rus treaties contemporary to the time of creation of the PVL. Given princely association with the composition of the chronicle, it would not be unlikely if its author had access to such documents. This may account for the use of velikii kniaz in texts of the treaties and may imply that the title of Grand Prince was already adopted by Kievan rulers at the beginning of the twelfth century. Late eleventh-century – early twelfth-century Byzantine-Rus treaties most likely existed but were not preserved among the Byzantine and Rus documents from that time. The same applies for the other Byzantine treaties almost all of which did not pass the tests of time and the two captures of Constantinople.

2. An Outline of Recent Scholarship

In a paper published in 1989, Andrzej Poppe surveys the origin of the title of Grand Prince, the circumstances that required its assumption, and available sources mentioning it. Poppe puts forward the proposition that it was adopted for the first
time by Prince Vsevolod Iur'evich the Big Nest (1154-1212) in 1190. The title was constantly used in relation to him from 1195, as shown by the Laurentian manuscript of the PVL. Poppe argues that it was not until 1194 that Kievan Prince Riurik Rostislavich started using the title in response to Vsevolod’s claims to supremacy among Rus’ princes.7

At the beginning of his study, Poppe discusses the use of the title Velikii Kniaz’ in the Byzantine-Rus’ treaties as they appeared in PVL. Though Poppe adopts some early observations made by L. Götz, such as the one that Grand Prince is a twelfth-century interpolation in the text of the Byzantine-Rus’ treaties in the PVL,8 he disagrees with Goetz on the treaties’ authentic dating. In Poppe’s opinion, Götz was ready “to consider these treaties spurious in the form in which they are preserved, solely because of the use of the term Velikii kniaz’, of which we find no other examples from such an early period.”9 He observes:

The textual form of this passage as it has been transmitted to us is admittedly not perfect, and one can identify small omissions or interpolations made in the beginning of the twelfth century, that is, at the time when these treaties were first added to the PVL. Yet the sceptical opinion of this accomplished historian of the Russian Middle Ages does not seem well-founded. By the same token, however, one must add that the view is unfounded according to which the treaties prove that already in the 10th century a “Grand Prince” was at the head of the old Russian state. Neither point of view takes into account the irrefutable fact that the Slavic text of the treaties is a translation from Greek; but this fact must form the point of departure of all further studies.10

Poppe goes on to survey tenth-century Byzantine sources on contemporaneous titles given to Rus’ Princes by the Byzantine chancellery. Emperor Constantine VII’s De Cerimoniis Aulae Byzantinae and De Administrando Imperio explicitly refer to Rus’ princes with the term archōntes, translated into Old Church Slavonic as kniaz’, and to Olga as archōntissa. Rus’ rulers were not only addressed as archôn by the Byzantines; they also adopted this title for their eleventh-century seals.

Poppe follows P. Schreiner’s explanation on the laudatory use of megas in Byzantine practice, arguing that velikii – a direct translation of megas – was used by the Byzantines as an adjective and was not an integral part of the title.11 He concludes that the texts of the treaties provide no grounds for the supposition that the official title ‘Grand Prince’ existed in Rus’ in the tenth century, or that a group of nobles close to the Russian ruler – barring his relatives – used the princely title.12 And I agree with this conclusion.

---

7 Poppe, Words, 174.
9 Poppe, Words, 161.
10 Idem, 161-162.
12 Poppe, Words, 162-169.
Here is a chronological ordering of Poppe’s arguments:

– The colophon of the Miscellany of Prince Sviatoslav of 1073 is one of the earliest sources in which Sviatoslav is titled *Velikii Kniaz’* and referred to as a *Velikii v kniažekh Kniaz’* [a Grand Prince among Princes]. Poppe agreed with the earlier researchers that the Miscellany was a copy of a miscellany codex translated for Bulgarian Tsar Simeon at the beginning of the tenth century. Simeon’s name was replaced by the copyist with Sviatoslav’s. Thus, *velikii* was originally applied to Simeon and not to Sviatoslav in the instance of *Velikii v cesar'ekh* [grand among Tsars]. In the second Miscellany commissioned by Sviatoslav in 1076, he is not titled *Velikii Kniaz’*; 

– The second group of references to *Velikii Kniaz’* in the eleventh century is found in the Laurentian and Hypatian redactions of the *PVL* and its continuations. Three references are discussed, namely those in the annual entries for 1054, 1093 and 1125/6. These annual entries contain information on the deaths of Iaroslav Vladimirovich, his son Vsevolod Iaroslavich, and his grandson Vladimir Monomakh. Poppe considers the use of the adjective *velikii* in Princes’ obituaries a Byzantine influence, because from the times of the Komnenos dynasty Emperors were extolled with *megas* in post-mortem narratives. He proposes that Vladimir Monomakh’s *milieu* adopted a Byzantine model, as his mother being a Byzantine Princess influenced him with the Byzantine court culture. For this reason, Poppe dismisses these references in the *PVL* and considers them evidence for application of epithets following Byzantine fashion; 

– The third piece of evidence is in Kievan Metropolitan Nikephoros’ letter on Lent to Prince Vladimir Monomakh, dated between 1113 and 1121. Poppe observes that the title *Velikii Kniaz’* appears in the heading but not in the body of the letter. The Metropolitan compares Vladimir’s power to that of Emperor, but still addressed him as Prince. Because of this, Poppe concludes that *velikii* could have been a later insertion into the letter’s heading, since the earliest available copy is in a late-fifteenth – early-sixteenth century manuscript, *i.e.* after the title *Velikii Kniaz’* had become customary in Eastern Europe;

14 The Laurentian redaction of the *PVL* is preserved in the Laurentian manuscript (the earliest) and the later Radzivil and Trinity manuscripts, see Lavrent'evskaia letopis', red. I. Karskii, Leningrad 1927; repr. Moskva 1997, 161, 215, 293. The Hypatian redaction of the *PVL* is preserved in the Hypatian, Khlebnikov and Pogodin manuscripts, see Ipatev'skaia letopis', red. A. Shakhmatov, Sankt Peterburg 1908, repr. Moskva 1998, iii-xii. Note that the date of Vladimir Monomakh’s death is recorded in the continuation of the Hypatian redaction of the *PVL* in the year 6634 (1126), which Poppe did not observe or explained (*ibid.*, 289). The three manuscripts of the Hypatian family of manuscripts apply the title *Grand Prince of All Rus’* to Vladimir Monomakh. The Hypatian manuscript does not tally with the Pogodin and Khlebnikov manuscripts which render the title Grand Prince in the two earlier cases, *i.e.* 1054 and 1093 (*ibid.*, 149 and 207).
15 Poppe, Words, 171.
16 *Idem*, 172.
The next piece of evidence Poppe examines is the following inscription on the drinking silver bowl of Prince Vladimir Davidovich (most likely the ruler of Chernigov, d. 1151): This is the drinking bowl of Prince Vladimir Davidovich, and this is to the health of him who drinks from it, praising God and the lord of the house, the great prince. Poppe considers that velikii here applies to the God and not to the Prince, and that it means ‘famous’ and ‘glorious.’ Therefore, he asserts the bowl cannot serve to date the use of the title of Grand Prince in the early twelfth century;¹⁷

The seal of Prince Mstislav in which he is referred to as the megas archôn Rhôsias is the fifth piece of evidence Poppe adduces. The seal carries a bust of Apostle Andrew on the obverse. Poppe attributes this seal to a Riurikid dynasty Prince who did not have the right to inheritance and did not possess lands, proposing that the Prince was a pretender and that the title was not adopted by the genuine Kievan ruler;¹⁸

Poppe next surveys Constantinopolitan Patriarch Lukas Chrysoberges’ 1168 letter to Prince of Vladimir and Suzdal Andrei Bogoliubskii. Though the letter is preserved in a seventeenth-century manuscript, Poppe assumes that it reflects twelfth-century political realities. In the letter, the Patriarch addressed Andrei as paneugenestate archôn and refers to the Prince of Kiev as megas archôn pasës Rhôsias. It appears Andrei had requested the establishment of a metropolitan see at Vladimir, independent from the Metropolitan of Kiev. Declining this, the Patriarch uses the phrase pasês Rhôsias as part of the title of the Kievan Metropolitan. This title of Kievan Metropolitans is confirmed by the evidence of their seals. As Poppe puts it, in this way they emphasised their ecclesiastical sovereignty over all the Rus’ princedoms.¹⁹

Based on these arguments, Poppe comes to the following conclusion:

The necessity of expanding the ideological content of the title of the ruler of all Rus’, which perhaps first become apparent beyond the borders of Rus’ – on the Bosporus – appeared in the era of declining authority of the princes of Kiev, of the diffusion of the dynasty, of the growth of centrifugal forces and of devaluation of the title itself. The title ‘Grand Prince’ could not take on the function of a connecting link for the disintegrating Kievan Rus’. On the contrary, it served those princes who, while solidifying their own principalities, strove to acquire influences on matters of common concern. However, they were not backed by the throne of Kiev but by “the right of the eldest in the land of Rus’. The new title was intended to ensure the lasting nature of their success; even though it was not originally intended for them, it accurately expressed their own aspirations and the position which they had in fact assumed. Therefore, it was not by chance that it was the ruler of the vigorous state between the Oka and Volga who was the first to usurp the title of “Grand Prince”. In a period in which the various lands and principalities were rapidly growing apart, the spread of the title “Grand Prince” was only a question of time.²⁰

¹⁷ Idem, 176-177.
¹⁸ Idem, 178.
¹⁹ Idem, 180-181.
²⁰ Idem, 183-184.
Shortly after the publication of Poppe’s study, A. Tolochko and M. Dimnik disagreed with his hypothesis about the dating of the first appellation of Grand Prince and its explanation. Noting modern scholars’ misperceptions on formal mediaeval titles, Tolochko points to a number of pieces of evidence in continuations of the PVL, which oppose Poppe’s conclusions. Testing Poppe’s method, Tolochko argues that a number of other pretenders could also be considered first users of the Grand Prince title. He is reluctant to hypothesise, however, on when the title was first used by the Princes of Kiev.21

In Kniaz’ v Drevnei Rusi, Tolochko discusses the Polish version of Poppe’s paper published in 1984.22 He offers several arguments against Poppe’s conclusions and refuses to conjecture when the title of Grand Prince was adopted formally, partly because he claims it is difficult to argue that mediaeval rulers used formal titles consistently. Tolochko moreover states that these formal titles evolved during the Middle Ages and that their exact dating was often an issue of contradiction occasioned by the few sources available from the period. He observes that seeking consistency in formal mediaeval titles is a material mistake reflecting modern misunderstanding of mediaeval realities.23

Tolochko furthers the observations from his book in 2009 and offers a number of critical remarks in a recent review of a volume of Poppe’s collected papers. Based on current thinking, he questions Poppe’s conclusions on the composition of PVL continuations in the Laurentian and Hypatian manuscripts. If one follows M. Priselkov’s observations on the Suzdal continuation of Laurentian manuscript, which has undergone two stages of reworking (1193 and 1212), then Poppe’s proposed consistent use of Grand Prince since 1195 has to have followed Vsevolod Iur’evich’s death. The title has to be considered a sobriquet applied by the continuator of the PVL post-mortem. Following this line of enquiry, Tolochko remarks that the same applies to Vsevolod Iur’evich’s rival, Prince Riurik Rostislavich of Kiev, who also did not adopt the title in his lifetime to use it in competing with Vsevolod. He notes that if one accepts M. Priselkov’s thesis that a version of the PVL was composed in Suzdal in 1212, one has to consider another explanation and dating for the dissemination of the title of Grand Prince in surviving PVL manuscripts, and more precisely within the reign of Vsevolod Iur’evich’s successors Iurii and Constantine. By then, however, Vladimir-Suzdal Rus’ had lost its leading role among Rus’ principalities as both heirs had launched internecine warfare. Tolochko concludes that following this line of reasoning one cannot argue for the title of Grand Prince emerging amid conflict and rivalry between Vladimir and Kiev, but rather for it resulting from inter-dynastic competition between the successors of Vsevolod the Big Nest.24

23 Tolochko, Kniaz’, 129.
The third author, M. Dimnik, by examining Poppe’s arguments proposed that the title of Grand Prince was applied for the first time in the period following the death of Vladimir Sviatoslavich (d. 1015) by his sons, Mstislav and Iaroslav, who successively resided at Kiev.

Dimnik examines not only the sources presented earlier by Poppe, but also a number of fifteenth–seventeenth–century chronicles, the Paterikon of the Kievan Cave Monastery, and the ecclesiastical statutes of Princes Vladimir and Sviatoslav. He argues that the 1010s is the earliest possible period when the title of Grand Prince might have been used. The following table summarises his sources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prince</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Earliest Manuscript dating from</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vladimir Sviatoslavich</td>
<td>1015</td>
<td>Hypatian redaction of the PVL</td>
<td>XVth century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vladimir Sviatoslavich</td>
<td>n. a.</td>
<td>Paterikon of the Kievan Caves Monastery</td>
<td>XIIIth century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iaroslav Vladimirovich</td>
<td>1051</td>
<td>Paterikon of the Kievan Caves Monastery</td>
<td>XIIIth century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iaroslav Vladimirovich</td>
<td>1054</td>
<td>Commission Manuscript of the Novgorod First Chronicle</td>
<td>XVth century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iaroslav Vladimirovich</td>
<td>1051–1054</td>
<td>Statute of Prince Iaroslav concerning the Church Courts</td>
<td>XVth century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iziaslav Iaroslavich</td>
<td>n. a.</td>
<td>Paterikon of the Kievan Caves Monastery</td>
<td>XIIIth century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sviatopolk Iziaslavich</td>
<td>1106–1108</td>
<td>Zhite i khozhenie Daniila</td>
<td>XVth century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sviatopolk Iziaslavich</td>
<td></td>
<td>Paterikon of the Kievan Caves Monastery</td>
<td>XIIIth century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vladimir Vsevolodovich Monomak</td>
<td>1116</td>
<td>Hypatian redaction of the PVL</td>
<td>XVth century</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dimnik expresses uncertainty as to the attribution of the seal of Mstislav. He proposes Mstislav Vladimirovich (1024–1036), Prince of Chernigov,26 and Mstislav Sviatopolkovich (d. 1099), who summoned the Princes with the right of succession to Liubech in 1097 and ruled in Galich, as the most probable addressees of the letter.

---

26 Idem, 267.
bearing the seal (2004, 286-287). Dimnik expresses uncertainty over this attribution and reiterates earlier opinions on both attributions. He also proposes Mstislav Iziaslavich (1125/6–1172) as a third possible candidate. Finally, Dimnik asserts that the adjective velikii in the inscription on the drinking bowl of Vladimir, Prince of Chernigov, describes the Prince and not the Lord. Dimnik observes:

From this data we may conclude that the compiler uses the terms, Velikii and Velikii Kniaz' (or Kniaz' Velikii) interchangeably. It appears that authors used the modifier Velikii as the abbreviated form of "great among princes" (Velikii v knjazech) the manner in which Ioann identified Svyatoslav Yaroslavich in the Izbornik of 1073.

Most recently, in the Addendum to his study, A. Poppe noted that M. Dimnik fails to grasp the essence of his arguments and confront them with appropriate counter arguments. He dismisses the validity of the additional sources Dimnik adduces on the grounds that they have survived in later fourteenth to sixteenth-century copies, and are inevitably prone to falsification and amplification. Poppe disagrees with the attribution of the seal to Mstislav Vladimirovich, but does not comment on the two other proposed attributions. Because of these objections, Poppe reiterated that his interpretation better reflects the uncertain, dubious and limited features of the available sources.

3. The PVL and Dating the First Use of Grand Prince

Despite their disagreements on the interpretation of available sources, Poppe and Dimnik agree on two points: that the tenth–eleventh-century finds of Rus’ princes’ seals demonstrate that they had adopted the Byzantine title archōn, and that the title of Grand prince was a direct translation of the Byzantine megas archōn, so Grand/megas must have been borrowed from eleventh- or twelfth-century Byzantine chancellery usage relating to Rus'. Although J. Malingoudi offered an explanation that complies with Poppe and Dimnik on part of archōn, I find her translation of velikii as περιφανής not convincing, since it does not correspond with any official Byzantine title, but serves as an adjective to the title.

I accept Poppe’s argument that archōn was first applied to Rus’ rulers in De Cerimoniiis, a treatise dated to the mid-tenth century, and that the Rus’ princes most likely adopted it when they converted to Christianity.

---

27 Idem, 288.
28 Idem, 282.
29 Idem, 294.
30 A. Poppe, Christian Russia, 185a-189a.
31 Idem, 186a.
32 Poppe, Words, 162; Dimnik, ‘The Title, 255 and 266-267.
34 Poppe, Words, 162; For an outline of the discussion on the baptism of Olga and the dating of De Cerimoniiis, see G. Litavrin, Vizantia, Bolgariia, Drevia Rus’ (IX – nachalo XII v.), Sankt Peterburg 2000, 154-213.
These observations, however, are not confirmed by information of Byzantine-Rus’ treaties inserted among tenth-century events in the PVL.

Poppe’s findings allow us to hypothesise that in his opinion the title of Grand Prince was most likely a later insertion into the texts of the Byzantine-Rus’ treaties, perhaps in the 1190s. This would be possible only if the PVL was composed post-1190, i.e., if the ‘first redaction’ containing all treaties – as the original manuscript is labelled by A. Shakhmatov in Eastern European historiography who dated it to the 1110s – was written after this date, the second and third redactions (reconstructed by A. Shakhmatov on the basis of the Laurentian and Hypatian families of manuscripts) following. The second and third reductions did not mix up their texts and continuations after the 1110s. To the best of my knowledge, M. Kachenovskii (1775–1842) and S. Stroev (1815–1840) were the first to propose that the PVL should be dated to the thirteenth century or later. Poppe is clearly not their follower, aligning himself rather with the basic viewpoints of A. Shakhmatov’s concept as noted in the second quoted paragraph from his study above.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Shakhmatov developed an opposing theoretical framework to Kachenovskii’s and Stroev’s in several research publications. His stemma of textual development of the PVL was widely accepted by the academic community. In his opinion, the PVL had two basic versions produced in the second part of the 1110s. These were best conveyed by the Laurentian (text until 1304, while the manuscript was copied in 1377 by monk Laurence) and Hypatian (the text was copied in the 1420s) manuscripts. The Byzantine-Rus’ treaties were inserted into the original version of the PVL in the 1110s. Later versions substantially differed both in content and in the facts they convey from the 1120s onwards, but not in the texts of the treaties themselves. The PVL is continued in the Laurentian manuscript with a short chronicle concerning mostly events in southern Rus lands (1110-1161), and a chronicle describing events in Vladimir-Suzdal principality (1164-1304). The Primary Chronicle continues until 1117 in Hypatian manuscript and is followed by the Kievan chronicle (1118-1198) and Galich-Volyn chronicle (until 1292).

Various contemporary and later researchers fine-tuned Shakhmatov’s concept. Yet, regardless of the academic critique that has befallen his theories, no adherent or critic has questioned whether the Byzantine-Rus’ treaties were present in the original version of the PVL. Though debating whether the treaties were translated into

---

35 S. Stroev used the pseudonym S. Skromnenko in his 1834 work, hence: S. Skromnenko, O nedostovernosti drevnei istorii i lozhosti mneniiia kasatel’no drevnosti russkikh letopisei, Sankt Peterburg 1834; He was a follower of M. Kachenovskii, for instance: M. Kachenovskii, O basnoslovnom vremeni v rossiiskoi istorii, Uchenye zapiski Imperatorskago Moskovskago Universiteta 1/ 2 (1833) 277-298.
36 Poppe, Words, 165.
38 For the different directions of research on the PVL inspired by A. Shakhmatov, see Poppe in: A. Poppe, A. A. Shakhmatov i spornyie nachala russkogo letopisaniia, Drevniaia Rus’ Voprosy mediavistiki, 33 (2008) 76-85.
Slavonic in the tenth century or shortly before the composition of the PVL – so S. Obnorskiï and P. Tolochko challenged Shakhmatov’s theory on narratives prior to the PVL – they do not alter his widely adopted view on the presence of the treaties in the original PVL by the beginning of the twelfth century. All later research presumes that the tenth century Byzantine-Rus’ treaties were available in Kiev and circulated as part of the PVL in the 1110s.

The academic community widely accepts that from the late 1110s onwards the PVL split into two main versions to which continuations were appended. The second and third reductions did not mix up their texts and continuations after that point. The treaties texts are relatively stable and no new information is inserted. Hence, the title of the Grand Prince should have existed in treaties’ texts already in the so-called first redaction of the PVL.

Based on these scholarly conventions, I find it difficult for a later editor to update the titles of Princes Oleg, Igor, and Sviatoslav in the texts of the Byzantine-Rus’ treaties to Grand Princes in accordance with contemporaneous twelfth-century etiquette. Although one may agree with Poppe that velikii was used as an adjective and was not part of the title in the eleventh-twelfth century PVL references to Iaroslav Vladimirovich, Sviatoslav Iaroslavich and Vladimir Monomakh, Poppe does not confront the existence of Grand prince title in the Byzantine-Rus’ treaties inserted in the PVL long before the 1190s.

It is important to examine alternative viewpoints in this case, since by disagreeing with them, one limits further the possible explanations as to how the title of Grand Prince entered the texts of the Byzantine-Rus’ treaties. Furthermore, should Poppe’s hypothetical dating of the title and the Sceptics’ dating of the PVL be dismissed from consideration, the earliest use of Grand Prince must have been contemporary to, or earlier than, the arrival of the Byzantine-Rus’ treaties in Kievan Rus’ and their translation into Slavonic – assuming that arrival and translation were separated by some

39 S. Obnorskiî, Iazyk dogovorov russkikh s grekami, Iazyk i myshlenie 6-7 (1936) 79-105.
41 Most scholars adopt Shakhmatov’s opinion that the treaties were available in Slavonic to the composer of the PVL before the 1110s (A Shakhmatov, Povest’ vremennykh let i drevneishie russkie letopisnye svody. Razyskanie o drevneishikh russkikh letopisnyh svodakh, t. 1, kn. 1, red. V. Ziborov, Sankt Peterburg 2002, 30; ibid, Povest’ vremennykh let i ee istochniki, Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoi literatury 4 (1940) 111-122) D. Likhachev follows his opinion, see D. Likhachev, Povest’ vremennykh let, t. 2, Moskva-Leningrad 1950, 425; V. Istrin suggests, on the other hand, that the treaties were translated and used in the „Chronikograph po velikomu izlozeniiu“, which he hypothesised was created by abbreviating the Chronicle of George the Hamartolos prior to the 1050s, see V. Istrin, Dogovory russkikh s grekami X veka, Izvestiiia otdeleniia russkogo iazyika i slovesnosti Akademii nauk 29 (1925) 383-393 (391).
42 The historiography survey on the treaties is provided by Andrei Sakharov, see A. Sakharov, Diplomatiia Drevnei Rusi IX-pervaja polovina X v., Moskva 1980, 84-89, 148-155, 210-222; ibid, Diplomatiia Sviatoslava, Moskva 1982, 53-90.
43 For the bibliographical survey see the article on the PVL in Slovar’ knizhnikov i knizhnosti Drevnei Rusi (XI – pervaja polovina XIV v.), red. D. Likhachev, Leningrad 1987, 337-342.
years, as is generally and widely accepted. In other words, the treaties were translated prior to the 1110s and inserted into the PVL at that point. In the light of this explanation, Dimnik’s proposals to date the title of Grant Prince in Kievan Rus’ to several instances in the eleventh century should be taken more seriously and further researched so to establish more closely when exactly the Rus’ rulers adopted this title.

4. Observations on the Other Sources

The earlier dating of the first use of Grand Prince than Poppe’s 1190s proposal finds two indirect confirmations in Metropolitan Nikephoros’ letter to Vladimir Monomakh and in the seal of Mstislav. At the end of this section I will also add and discuss the evidence presented by the silver bowl of Vladimir Davidovich.

S. Polianskii and M. Gromov published a five-work collection of Metropolitan Nikephoros’ texts: epistles to Vladimir Monomakh on Lent and the Latin creed; an epistle to Iaroslav Sviatopolchich, prince of Murom, on the Latin creed, an epistle to an unknown prince, and a sermon on Lent.44 Two epistles to Vladimir Monomakh are copied in all found manuscripts, with the one on the Latin creed followed by the one on Lent. Since Vladimir was styled Prince in the former work and Grand Prince in the latter, Polianskii dated the latter after 1113, when Vladimir was enthroned in Kiev.45

The earliest manuscript containing both Nikephoros’ works is РНБ, ОСРК Q. I. 265 (Tolstoi collection) dated to the late fifteenth – early sixteenth centuries. Both are found in six other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century manuscripts. Three of those stem from a single codex.46 Though Poppe argues that the colophon of Nikephoros’ epistle on Lent was edited and a later scribe from the fifteenth century inserted ve-likii, it remains to be proven textually that all seven manuscripts originate from a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century common codex. It further remains to be proven that both epistles had circulated independently and that the one on Lent was updated and that both were then copied into a single manuscript that served as a protograph to all known manuscripts. It is only if such textual connections were to be established that one could accept that it was not Nikephoros or his translator those persons who had written the formal title of Vladimir Monomakh into the colophon of his epistle. I would refer to A. Tolochko’s opinion of a lack of consistency in titling given that Vladimir is addressed as Prince and Grand Prince in two subsequent epistles by the same author and that one ought not to expect consistency due to differing mediaeval and modern mentalities. This would explain the use of more than one title for the same person or within one century.

I find that such inconsistency has a possible explanation. Thus, the seal of Vladimir Monomakh, as published by V. Ianin has a Greek inscription that reveals he

46 Idem, 29.
considered it proper to use the title archōn rather than megas archōn.\footnote{V. Ianin, Aktovye pechatyi Drevnie Rusi X-XV vv., t. 1, Moskva 1970, 16-17.} On the other hand, the seal reflects not only the Prince's self-perception but also chanceller's practice of the time. Given that his seals – including those worded in Old Church Slavonic – were found in Kievan Rus', it could be argued that their use was more domestic than international. I am unaware of the discovery of any of Vladimir Monomakh's seals outside Kievan Rus' that might convey different impressions he might have wished to impart to foreign counterparts. V. Ianin's opinion that Rus' princes and their contemporaries did not distinguish greatly between archōn and megas archōn comes very much down to the same point.\footnote{Idem, 22.} One should also bear in mind that educated people – monks and other clerics – were employed both in the chancelleries and scriptoriums of the Kievan Princes and in the Metropolitan see.

This is the context into which one ought to put Nikephoros' letter and all his other compositions. They were most likely written in Byzantine Greek and translated into Slavonic, as the Metropolitan was a Greek appointee from Constantinople.\footnote{On Nikephoros' knowledge of Greek and Slavonic see S. Franklin, Greek in Kievan Rus', Dumbarton Oaks Papers 46 (1992) 71-72, while his life and works are depicted in S. Polianskii, Bogoslovsko-filosofskie vzgliady mitropolita Nikifora, Drevniaia Rus': Voprosy medievistiki 4 (2001) 97-99 and Tvorenia mitropolita Nikifora, 12-26.} One may also assume with reasonable certainty that the clerks of his chancellery – whether monks or laymen – were well aware of the dissimilarity in titles used in the chancellery's Greek and Slavonic outputs. A possible explanation is that the early twelfth-century translator of Nikephoros' letter took into account that it was not common practice to style the Kievan Prince \textit{Grand} in internal correspondence; he thus left this part of the title in the colophon, as in the Greek original, while following established practice to the body of the text, since it was for domestic distribution. Such rare translators might have been employed not only by the Metropolitan, but also in the prince's chancellery to carry out diplomatic exchanges with the Byzantines. This is highly probable: \textit{De cerimoniis} confirms that a Presbyter accompanied Olga at her imperial palace reception;\footnote{De cerimoniis II, 597} we also know that clerics served as conflict mediators during most of the mediaeval period. In other words, the use of Grand Prince in Metropolitan Nikephoros' letter to Prince Vladimir Monomakh and in the Byzantine-Rus' treaties should not be considered accidental or a later interpolation, but as a mere reflection of early twelfth-century practice in Byzantine-Kievan Rus' relations.

The second piece of indirect evidence that the title of Grand Prince was used before the 1190s is in the seal of Mstislav. Poppe offers a possible identification of the seal's owner, namely Mstislav, a Prince without a realm who lived in the second half of the eleventh century. Poppe proposes this Mstislav as the likeliest owner due to observations by V. Ianin in his analysis of mediaeval Rus' seals. In Ianin's view there is a connection between the Christian name of the seal's owner and his patron-saint
and that Mstislav’s seal should be dated to a period between the late eleventh and first quarter of the twelfth century due to its iconography. Since no other known Prince was named Mstislav and held a Christian name Andrew, none of the Rus’ known princes was taken into account. In addition, Poppe notes a correspondence between the owner’s Christian name and the patron-saint’s portrait on the obverse of the seal in forty of the more than a hundred princely seals found in Rus’. This is a statistically insufficient correlation between a Prince’s Christian name and the patron-saint on his seal. Indeed – and without going into detail as the issue is subject to separate research – more than half of discovered seals suggest the opposite. As the seals of Kiev’s Rus’ Princes follow the production methods and iconography of Byzantine seals, I will refer to N. Oikonomides’ observations not only on Emperors’, but also on many thousands of Byzantine officials’, churchmen’s, and lay people’s seals:

It is often quite difficult to guess the motive that dictated an individual’s choice of iconography. Sometimes the boullaterion’s owner chose his homonymous saint, whom he considered his patron, while in other cases the choice seems to be motivated by family devotion. The Angeloi family, for example, often chose the Annunciation for their seals; was this because an icon of the Annunciation was the family’s palladium or because the family name was angelos (“angel”)? Occasionally the choice of patron saint is easily explicable: the metropolitans of Chalcedon had their seals decorated with a portrait of St. Euphemia, martyr and patron of their city; those of Thessaloniki chose the city’s patron, Demetrios; while the confraternity of St. Zotikos had this saint represented on its official seal.

Oikonomides’ observations suggest that one should research not only the connection between the ruler’s Christian name and the patron-saint depicted on the seal, but also whether: a sub-branch of the Riurikids did not have their own patron-saint; whether a ruler adopted the patron-saint of the city or principality he ruled; whether a ruler did not change the patron-saint on the obverse of his seals when he perchance changed principalities; or whether a Prince would adopt the patron-saint of the church which hosted his enthronement.

In light of this, a possible identification of Mstislav’s seal has been omitted: Mstislav Vladimirovich the Great (d. 1132), whose Christian name was Theodor. Now, although I could not link Mstislav Vladimirovich to a city that revered the Apostle Andrew (the latter was not a patron saint of Novgorod, Belgorod or Rostov, whose seats Mstislav occupied before his accent to the Kievian throne), a connection could be made with the PVL account of the Apostle Andrew visiting Kiev on his way to Rome.

---

51 The figure of one hundred seals reflects the knowledge of Poppe and other scholars by 2006-7, see Poppe, Christian Russia, 186a. Ianin published only thirty-seven seals in 1970, see Ianin, Aktovye pechaty, 15.
This account refers to events predating the *PVL*. I find that princely reverence to the Apostle Andrew ought not to be discounted because it was through him that Kievan Rus’ became part of the spread of Christianity according to the *PVL*. Therefore, if the owner of Mstislav’s seal happens to be identified as Mstislav the Great, this might be taken as another piece of evidence of an early adoption of Grand Prince and one closer to the composition of the *PVL* and the period of the Byzantine-Rus’ treaties insertion into its text.

The third piece of evidence to be examined here is the inscription on the silver bowl of Vladimir Davidovich:

\[ \text{
\begin{align*}
\lambda \varepsilon \omicron \varsigma \alpha \varsigma \alpha \upiota \lambda \delta i \varphi o \nu \\
\kappa t o \ \pi z \ \eta \varepsilon \ \eta l o m u \ \mu a \ \tau a d o r l e \\
\alpha \chi e l a \ \epsilon o g a \ [\eta] \ \chi r o g o \ \varphi \iota \pi o \delta a r \\
\text{βαλικογο} \ \kappa h
\end{align*}
\]

The bowl was discovered in Sarai Berke on the Volga, the Golden Horde’s capital from the second half of the thirteenth century to 1395 when Tamerlane seized it.\(^54\) The only Prince in Kievan Rus’ history by name of Vladimir Davidovich who might have been a Grand Prince was considered the Prince of Chernigov in the twelfth century and the earlier researchers attributed the bowl to him. However, in a recent survey A. Medyntseva makes the following observations: the lexical and graphic forms found in the inscription have a number of similarities with epigraphic and textual examples present therein but rather exceptional in the twelfth century such as \(\nu\) and \(\gamma\), which were quite regular in later time. She also notes an exception in the shape of \(\eta\) that could be found in an eleventh-century graffito at the St Sofia Cathedral in Kiev. The orthography of \(\lambda\) finds parallels in a cross inscription of 1134. Yet, the writing of \(\varepsilon\) and \(\omicron\) finds examples in the thirteenth-century cross of Sviatoslav Vsevolodovich and in the fourteenth-century pieces of literature. Apart from the cross inscription, Medyntseva finds similarities between the bowl’s inscription with decorative forms of \(\kappa o, \kappa, \eta, \varphi, \text{ and } w\) on mosaics at the Kievan Monastery of Archangel Michael built in 1108.\(^55\)

What is more important is that Medyntseva reconstructs the draft of the inscription which differed considerably from the final version. The draft has been preserved in the remains of black ink found in the margins among the letters and in the non-engraved margins of any single letter. By reconstructing the underlying inscription Medyntseva demonstrates that the draft did not include the word Prince or any of its abbreviations at its close. Hence, she concluded that *Velikii* was applied to the Lord.\(^56\)

---

\(^{54}\) V. Egorov noted and questioned the traditional dating of capital period of Sarai Berke, proposing that it was the Golden Horde’s capital between the 1330s and 1390s, see V. Egorov, Istoricheskaiia geografija Zolотoi ordy v XIII-XIV vv., Moskva 1985, 112-113.

\(^{55}\) A. Medyntseva, Gramotnost’ v Drevnei Rusi po pamiatnikam epigrafiki X-pervoi poloviny XIII veka, Moskva 2000, 104-110.

\(^{56}\) *Idem*, 107-108.
Furthermore, the researcher notes a number of linguistic phenomena that suggest the origin of the craftsman who made the bowl and its inscription was from the southern Rus'. Medyntseva made parallels in her research with a silver drinking cup made by a Russian craftsman in the Golden Horde with a similar dedication to health and wassail as in the first half of this bowl’s inscription. That silver cup is dated to the fourteenth century.

Overall, Medyntseva is ready to consider a later dating of the bowl, though she does not convincingly date the however unusual abbreviation of Prince and of the verb drink in the inscription to the late thirteenth or fourteenth centuries.

Following on from the observations made above about the Byzantine-Rus’ treaties, I would argue that Nikephoros’ letter, Mstislav’s seal, Vladimir’s bowl and the treaties, being arguably the only pieces of evidence reflecting contemporaneous or partly contemporaneous practice, support and confirm each other. The treaties convincingly demonstrate that the title of Grand Prince became customary and popular by the 1110s, and this indicates the Rus’ reception of the Byzantine diplomatic model used to address the Kievan Prince as early as the second half of the eleventh century.

5. Advanced Explanations

Based on the arguments presented in the above sections, I would offer two possible explanations for the insertion of the title of Grand Prince in the tenth-century Byzantine-Rus’ treaties. First, the tenth-century treaties might have been purposefully updated by their translators or editors to reflect contemporary usage at the time of the PVL’s compilation. Second, the texts of these treaties might have been adapted on the basis of eleventh- or twelfth-century Byzantine-Rus’ treaties, the earlier ones transposing the title from the later ones. Whether there are other components and clauses that may reflect eleventh- and twelfth-century Byzantine-Rus’ relationships is a matter of further research.

It is noteworthy that J. Lind demonstrated three decades ago that the place-name of Pereiaslav’ might well have been also inserted into treaties offering a possible analogy to the insertion of velikii. In Lind’s opinion the formula of tribute distribution found in the Byzantine-Rus’ treaties of 907 and 944, first to Kiev, then to Chernigov and Pereiaslav’, closely resembles the order of dynastic succession found

---

57 Idem, 110-111.
58 Idem, 113-114.
59 S. Kashtanov hypothesised that it was Metropolitan Nikephoros who had texts of the tenth-century Byzantine-Rus’ treaties delivered to Kiev, see S. Kashtanov, K voprosu o proiskhozhdenii teksta russko-vizantisskih dogovorov X v. v sostave "Povesti vremennykh let", Vostochnaia Evropa v drevnosti i srednevekov’ i, Politicheskaia struktura drevnerusskogo gosudarstva, Moskva 1996, 39-42.
in Rusʹ after the death of Iaroslav in 1054.61 Without prejudice as to whether the Byzantine-Rusʹ treaties were as written in the tenth century and updated with a number of interpolations, or made-up after contemporary treaties to serve the author’s purposes in the PVL, one may reasonably conclude that they indicate that in the beginning of the twelfth century the Byzantine chancellery addressed the Kievan ruler as Grand Prince. Hence, ascertaining when the title was first applied to the occupant of the Kievan throne is of importance for this study.

There are two minor issues I will note before addressing the dating of the first use of Grand Prince in formal papers the Byzantines sent to the Rus’ Prince in Kiev. The first is to contextualise the title in Byzantine practice and understand what prefixing it with megas might have meant. The second is to try to pinpoint the time when Kievan conditions favoured its adoption.

Poppe’s observation helps with the first issue. He demonstrates convincingly that megas in Byzantine diplomatic practice denoted the more senior or elder of several princely brothers or relatives. Poppe illustrates this with a fragment from the tenth-century De administrando imperio in which Moravian Prince Svatopluk splits his country into three parts among his three sons and anoints his first born megas archōn.62 Though other sources state that Svatopluk had only two sons, Mojmir II and Svatolpuk II,63 the Byzantine appreciation of when megas archōn should be applied is clear.

The practice of prefixing megas to an existing title was used by the Byzantine administration when establishing new offices on the basis of older ones. In De Cerimoniis one finds a description of a tenth-century ceremony for anointment of a new and younger Emperor in which the older, more senior, Emperor is called megas basileus.64 De Cerimoniis further provides a list of honorific titles the Emperor may bestow to foreign dignitaries, among which megalodoxos, megaloprepestatos, megaloprepes, and a number of titles beginning with proto-, epi-, pan-, peri- and eu-, among others.65 One finds further titular distinctions through the use of megas in Bulgarian envoys’ address to the Emperor and Court and in the Emperor’s reply to them, when he asks: ‘πῶς ἔχουσιν οἱ ἓξ Βολιάδες οἱ μεγάλοι’.66

There are more examples of the application of megas among military ranks, such as in the commander-in-chief of the Byzantine field army’s title, megas domestikos [μέγας δομέστικος]. Its earliest appearance dates from the ninth century according to

61 Idem, 364-365.
62 Poppe, Words, 164-165; De administrando imperio, 1967, 181
65 De Cerimoniis II, 679.
66 De Cerimoniis II, 681.
The holder of this office commanded the entire army of the eastern or western provinces under the Komnenos dynasty. Megas doux [μέγας δούξ] was another title containing megas. In Guilland’s opinion it was created in the Komnenos period for the commander-in-chief of the Byzantine navy by upgrading the older title doux with megas. The title had been preceded by megas droungarios tou stolou, commander-in-chief of the Byzantine navy earlier in the eleventh century. Yet another megas military rank was megas hetaireiarchēs [μέγας ἑταιρειάρχης], commander-in-chief of the imperial palatine guard composed of foreigners in the tenth century. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, this office was occupied by distinguished eunuchs and junior relatives of the Komnenos dynasty according to N. Oikonomides. Next, the megas logothētēs [μέγας λογοθέτης] was a civil title given to the chief of the fiscal department of the Byzantine Empire, whose holders are listed by R. Guilland. Although it is not my purpose here to enumerate all Byzantine offices comprising megas, I should finally add the honorific title of megas primikērios [μέγας πριμικήριος]. The title of Grand Primicerius (the person handing the sceptre to the Emperor at Court ceremonies) was also established by Emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates (1078-1081).

Outside the Byzantine Empire one finds megas used in ninth-century Bulgaria which partly mirrored Byzantine administrative practice by borrowing Greek terms. On the bottom of a silver cup found in Preslav and dated to the ninth century, one finds the inscription, Κ(ΥΡΙΕ)Ε ΒΟ(Η)ΘΗ ὙΣΗΒΗΝ ΖΥΠΑΝΟΣ ΜΕΓΑΣ ΒΟΥΡΓΑΦΑΝ. T. Totev argued that after the adoption of Christianity in Bulgaria in the 860s, an abbreviated Christian formula was added between an existing inscription and the cup’s rim. The title zhupan – denoting Balkan Slav tribal chieftain – has been stated to be equal to Prince. Indeed, Ljetopis popa Duklijanina informs that a Veliki Zhupan ruled the Serbian proto-state of Raška between the late ninth and mid-tenth centuries. Given that all manuscripts are from the seventeenth century and later, this source is not found reliable by its editor on early Serbian history, but may still be claimed to reflect a perception extant centuries earlier.

From this overview, it is clear that the Byzantines used megas to elevate older offices as growing Byzantine bureaucracy accommodated all manner of imperial

---

68 Idem, 535-551.
71 Idem, Recherches, 312-313.
72 Totev, Sreb’rna chasha, 12.
73 Idem, op. cit, 11-12.
75 Idem, 119, 122.
76 Idem, 9-12.
relatives and allies with ranks and titles. As M. Angold concludes the Komnenos period saw particular pressure on the ninth- and tenth-century Byzantine table of ranks as the expectations of dynastical followers grew apace. Apart from megas, new titles were also formed by adding proto-, hyper- or pan- to older ones. M. Angold observes that the devaluation of older titles was postponed for a while in this way.77

Addressing the issue of the time when Kievan conditions favoured the adoption of Grand Prince title, one can easily discern similar conditions to those in Moravia emerging in Kievan Rus’ after the passing of Vladimir Sviatoslavich in 1015 and of Iaroslav Vladimirovich in 1054. I find the account of events following their deaths too diffuse for proper reconstruction and the period too premature for the introduction of the title. Three of Iaroslav’s sons – Iziaslav, Sviatoslav and Vsevolod – successively ruled Kiev between 1054 and 1093. Therefore, Dimnik is right in his proposal that dating the use of Grand Prince could also be connected to the death of Prince Iaroslav.78 Following the death of Vsevolod Iaroslavich, various successors among Iaroslav’s sons put forward claims and launched internecine warfare. Part of the conflict was about who should rule in Kiev and the proper order of succession. This enmity resulted in the refusal of some Princes to submit to Sviatopolk Iziaslavich who ascended to the Kievan throne in 1093. Because of the rivalry, the Cumans twice defeated the combined armies of Sviatopolk Iziaslavich and Vladimir Vsevolodovich (Monomakh) by the River Stugna in 1093 and torched the monasteries around Kiev in 1096. Defeat forced the Rus’ Princes to negotiate and unite their armies and retinues. Negotiations ended with the congress at Liubech where six Princes – Sviatopolk Iziaslavich, Vladimir Monomakh, Oleg Sviatoslavich and David Sviatoslavich, David Igorevich, and Vasilko Rostislavich – agreed on who was the most senior among them, the order of princely succession at Kiev, and who should rule each province of Kievan Rus’.79

6. Conclusions

One may try to reconcile the views of Poppe and Dimnik on the emergence and use of the title Grand Prince by reference to the observations above, and conclude that a number of events between 1015 and the 1190s facilitated introduction of the title. In my opinion, the former date is too early for the adoption of the title of Grand Prince by the Rus’ ruler. The description of Rus’ political realities in the PVL does not leave an impression of ordered succession. Moreover, the general framework and the details of these events do not find support in independent foreign or local sources. In the early eleventh century, the political realities of Kievan Rus’ were still too opaque when viewed from Byzantium. Moreover, the Constantinopolitan elite was generally indifferent to political turmoil in Kiev, as shown by the obvious shortage of contemporary Byzantine referenc- es. As Kievan Rus’ was a newly adopted member of the Christian family, with church

78 Dimnik, The Title, 264-270 and 306.
infrastructure in the making, the Byzantine church and imperial authorities received less information on events there than they would a century later. Perhaps this could explain why there was no need for the Byzantines to alter their diplomatic etiquette to reflect the Rus’ political situation in the 1010s and the 1020s. Furthermore, the Byzantine administration had not then expanded so rapidly by adding various prefixes to the ranks and titles of its officers, although the tenth-century texts allowed existence of such administrative practice. The latter date – the 1190s – is too late; there are a number of pieces of evidence demonstrating an earlier assumption of the title of Grand Prince.

From my point of view, it is after 1097 that the situation in Rus’ permitted the emergence of a sharp distinction between the Prince residing in Kiev and considered the sovereign of Kievan Rus’ in the eyes of the world and Princes who were simple local potentates. Therefore, adding *megas* to the title of the Kievan Prince initially had much greater significance to the Byzantines as distinguishing the head of state from his subordinates, than to Rus’ politics. The application of *megas* reflects not only features of Byzantine diplomacy and the Greek language, but also mirrors processes under the Emperor Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1018) when a number of old offices were subdivided. Alongside the dubious seal of Mstislav, the problematic reading of the inscription of the drinking bowl of Vladimir, and the puzzling address by Metropolitan Nikephoros to Prince Vladimir Monomakh, the evidence of the *tenth-century* Byzantine-Rus’ treaties may serve to illustrate that the Kievan ruler was considered a Grand Prince in formal papers in the beginning of the twelfth century. Hypothesising whether the texts of the *tenth-century* Byzantine-Rus’ treaties were updated by inserting later phraseology or whether they were essentially composed anew to follow late eleventh- or early twelfth-century analogies is irrelevant to this issue and the dating of the title. In either case, the time when the first version of the *PVL* was composed (the 1110s) and when the four *tenth-century* Byzantine Rus’ treaties were inserted into it puts a *terminus ante quem* for the introduction of the title of Grand Prince in Kievan Rus’. Short of later research re-dating the *PVL*, such a reading of the limited available contemporary sources is one of the better solutions, in that it accommodates both their ambiguities and contradictions.

**ЛИСТА РЕФЕРЕНЦИ – LIST OF REFERENCES**

**Извори– Primary Sources**


De Cerimoniiis Aulae Byzantinae, ed. J. Reiske, Bonn 1829-1840.


Tvoreniia mitropolita Nikifora, red. S. Polianskii & M. Gromov, Moskva 2006
Литература – Secondary Works


Vodoff V., La titulature des princes russes du Xe au début du XIe siècle et les relations extérieures de la Russie kiéviennne, Revue des études slaves 55/1 (1983) 139-150.


Istrin V., Dogovory russkich s grekami X veka, Izvestiia otdeleniia russkogo isyazi i slovesnosti Akademii nauk 29 (1925) 383-393.

Kachenovskii M., O basnoslovnom vremeni v rossiiskoi istorii, Uchenye zapiski Imperatorskago Moskovskago Universiteta 1/ 2 (1833) 277-298.


Михаил Раев
(София, Българска)

ПОЯВА ТИТУЛЕ ВЕЛИКИ КНЕЗ У РУСИИ
И ПОВЕСТ МИНУЛЫХ ЛЕТА

У чланку се, у светлости подробне текстуалне анализе Повести минулих лейа, разматра питање када је титула велики кнез први пут ушла у употребу. У другој целини приказује се тренутно стање истраживања те теме, а у трећој пружа осврт на историографске погледе на Повест и на то у каквој су вези време њеног настанка и прва употреба титуле. Посебна пажња усмерена је на четири византијско-руска уговора из X века која су помину у Повести. Утврђено је да време појаве прве верзије Повести минулих лейа – друга деценија XII века – представља terminus ante quem за појаву титуле великої кнеза у Кијевској Руси, пошто је могуће да се текст уговора заснива на несачуваним византијско-русским
уговорима из почетка XII века у којима се помињала титула великої кнеза. У четвртој целини обрађују се друга два извора значајна за ово истраживање: писмо митрополита Нићифора кнезу Владимиру Мономаху и печат кнеза Мстисла-ва. У петој целини нуде се два објашњења зашто је титула ушла у византијску употребу и када су околности за то сазреле у Кијевској Русији. Као резултат те анализе, чланак нуди нову интерпретацију византијско-русских уговора из X века као сведочанства за појаву титуле велики кнез крајем XI и почетком XII века. С обзиром да ти уговори одражавају политичку стварност блиску време-ну настанак Повесті минулих лейа, аутор истиче да је титула велики кнез још један пример који сведочи о таквом текстуалном утицају. Претпоставке да ли су текстови византијско-русских уговора из X века допуњени додавањем позније фразеологије или су у основи састављени изнова како би пратили аналогије с краја XI и почетка XII века сматрају се безначајним за питање појаве титуле и њеног датирања. У оба случаја време састављања прве верзије Повесті минулих лейа и укључивања у њу четири византијско-руска уговора из X века представља крајњи датум за појаву титуле велики кнез у Кијевској Русији.